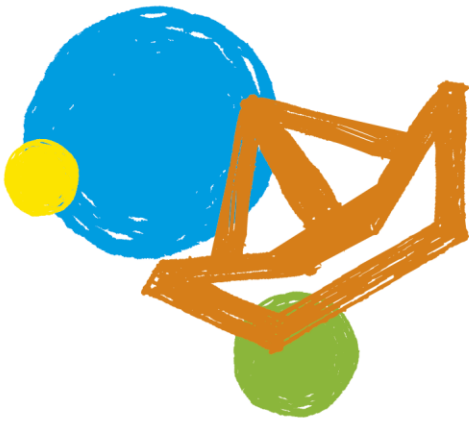


# Q&A

## Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)



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This document contains frequently asked questions and answers. They are divided into four sections:

General .....	3
Curriculum and learning .....	6
Selection criteria and enrolment.....	8
Transition to Dutch schools.....	10

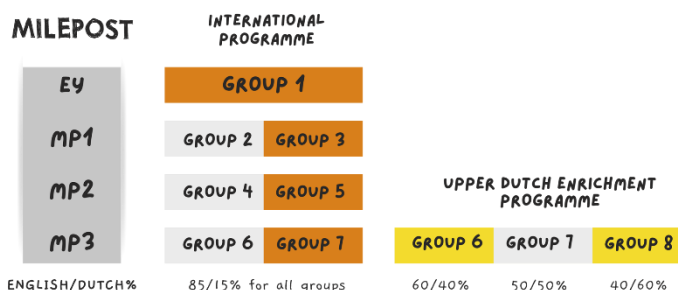


## GENERAL

### Which learning pathways does Optimist International School offer?

Optimist International School offers two programmes, which can be considered as two learning pathways:

- \* The first programme is the international programme running from group 1 – 7. This prepares for international secondary education starting at the age of 11. Most learning is in English and approximately 15% in Dutch to allow students to integrate in Dutch society
- \* The second programme is the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP), an alternative additional programme for our upper primary running from group 6 – 8. This prepares for secondary education in the Netherlands starting at the age of 12. Learning is in English and Dutch; gradually more Dutch is added with an academic focus



### What is the aim of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?

The Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) is tailored for students looking to further engage in Dutch society, offering opportunities to enhance their academic Dutch proficiency within their education at Optimist International School. The aim of the DEP is to provide a smoother transition to secondary education in the Netherlands. Through this programme, students will engage in a Dutch language learning experience, opening doors to future opportunities.

### From which group does the DEP start?

The DEP is offered to students in Groups 6, 7 and 8. For students who are already at Optimist International School, they can start after finishing Group 5. Student coming from externally can start in Group 6, 7 or 8 depending on their age.

### Will the international programme for mobile families still exist?

Yes, Optimist International School will continue to offer the school's international programme in Groups 6 and 7. The DEP is an extra option. We advise families who are in the Netherlands for a short period of time to follow the international programme as this prepares students in the best way possible for further international education abroad. The international programme also offers Dutch language lessons and lessons/activities in Dutch, mainly focused on oral language, social language and some academic language, to allow students to integrate in Dutch society



### When does the DEP start?

Optimist International School will start the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) at the beginning of the academic schoolyear 2024-2025 (September 2024)

### How many children will there be per class in the DEP?

Our teaching is always done in small groups which allows us to tailor to the needs of all children. As an international school additionally we have extra specialists and support in classes by teaching assistants. Our maximum class size is 22, as per our school policy we may temporarily increase that slightly in which case we assign more teaching staff to the group

### How will the international groups and Dutch Enrichment Groups groups be organised?

The groups of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) will be separate classes and not be mixed with groups of the international programme. The reason for this lies in a different spread of the curriculum over years of education. Both within the international programme and within the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) we can have single classes or combined classes, depending on student numbers. In a combined class students in more than one grade level are being taught in the same classroom. In every classroom, single or combined, learners are working at varying levels of learning. You will see flexible seating, work stations, rotations and activity centres. Our teaching assistants and specialists play a key role in this organisation. Teachers and leadership spend a great deal of time determining each classroom's composition: it's all about balance. We look at each student's learning style and needs to ensure there is a well-balanced mix in every classroom.

### What is the most important factor of success of the DEP?

It demands multilingual expertise and expertise in second language teaching, which requires a different approach than general language learning. It also requires strong didactical and organisational skills of teachers. Teachers must be flexible and thoughtful about learning and what language fits best for that learning. It also requires an alignment of both the international and Dutch curriculum, so very good curriculum knowledge of the whole learning continuum. Looking at the composition of the team of Optimist International School, the quality and expertise we have in multilingualism and its didactics, we are confident in our success. Our team of multilingual specialists play an important role in this. We also have great experience and habits of developing our own learning concepts based on a learning continuum. Luckily we also have Dutch teachers in our team with extensive experience in the Dutch curriculum, and the international curriculum at the same time



### Will the DEP be separate to the rest of the school?

No, the Groups 6, 7 and 8 of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) and the international programme Groups 6 and 7 will all be part of the same Milepost (MP3) and will do activities together.

### What will the teacher ratio be?

There are several ways to organise a class of a programme with two languages, for example with one teacher who speaks both English and Dutch fluently, or two teachers where one teacher teaches one language and the other teacher teaches the second language. Some schools work with a team of teachers who combine their strengths and languages, while a homeroom teacher oversees the general well-being and academic progress of students in a specific class. Organisation and staff allocation of the Dutch Enrichment Programme-team has our highest priority and is worked out in the next months.





## CURRICULUM AND LEARNING

### How much Dutch and English will be taught in the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?

Classes in the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) are taught in both English and in Dutch; with the language of Dutch increasing as the child continues throughout the programme. English will support the Dutch learning. Daily children are present for 6 hours and 25 minutes. Our aim is to move towards approximately 60% of the lesson time to be in Dutch and 40 % in English over the three years. A percentage of 60% is on average equivalent to almost 4 hours per day. For next year's Group 8 the percentage will be higher as these students already meet the end attainments of Group 7. For this group we expect to work towards approximately 80% of Dutch. A percentage of 80% is on average equivalent to approximately 5 hours per day

### Is the Dutch taught as academic or social language?



In the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) there will be a focus on academic language. Academic language involves understanding and using language in academic contexts. It is crucial for success in school and academic future pursuits, as it encompasses the ability to understand complex concepts, engage in critical thinking, and communicate ideas effectively in writing and speech. Also social language will be taught as it is essential for everyday interactions. Social language is mainly acquired through immersion and social interaction

### Will there be aims for the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) regarding the level of Dutch proficiency?

Yes, the development of the learning continuum also includes defining specific aims and choosing assessments to determine Dutch proficiency. The aims of Dutch language proficiency will be aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a widely accepted guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe. The CEFR divides language proficiency into six levels, which are grouped into three broad divisions: Basic User (A1 and A2), Independent User (B1 and B2), and Proficient User (C1 and C2). Within this framework the areas Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing are distinguished. Haarlemmermeer Lyceum also works with the CEFR framework. We will determine aims per child, based on a start assessment that we will administer before they start the DEP. Regular assessment and adjustment of goals are crucial to ensuring progress of the students effectively.

### How is Dutch taught and which curriculum and subjects are included?

Through Dutch language lessons, students engage with the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation fundamentals of the Dutch language in a structured environment in speaking, listening, reading and writing. We will use Dutch schemes and assessments for that. Beyond these Dutch language-specific lessons, we incorporate immersive activities and lessons conducted in the Dutch language to provide an academic



context in Dutch. For this we will use our existing curriculum as a starting point, such as the subjects of IPC (Science, Geography, History, Technology, ICT, International, Music, Art), Mathematics, Language arts, Health & Well-being and Physical Education. Gradually all subjects will be taught in Dutch over three years; in next year's Group 8 all subjects will be taught in Dutch in one year as this group already meets the end attainments of primary education. We will specifically focus on language and vocabulary needed at secondary to prepare students for heavy language subjects such as History and Biology. Additionally, we will offer a subject like Study skills, focused on planning, managing tasks, as a preparation for secondary education.

### **What additional subjects will be taught in the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?**

Students will have opportunities to further develop executive functions, essential mental skills for secondary education and beyond. They help students to plan, focus, juggle multiple tasks, stay focused on a task, develop healthy habits, social relationships and self-esteem

### **Will the curriculum for students transitioning from Group 7 of the international programme to Group 8 of the DEP be a repetition?**

Group 8 of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) is designed to be academically challenging, incorporating age-appropriate IPC-units designed for group 8 or IMYC1 students. It is not simply a repetition of Group 7 in Dutch



## SELECTION CRITERIA AND ENROLMENT

### How do I enrol my child to the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?

Enrolment for a place in the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) is offered to students only after a consultation with Optimist International School teaching staff and Multilingual specialists. The student's linguistic and academic profile is carefully considered when deciding if the offer of a place in the DEP can be made. The final decision is made by parents

### Are there minimum requirements for the level of Dutch or English for the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?

If a student has no English or Dutch proficiency at all, it is challenging to follow the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP). It could lead to a cognitive overload and insufficient progress. At the same time, we appreciate that other factors play a role too, for example when the student is in Group 7 and would immediately transition to Dutch secondary education with no English or Dutch proficiency. Therefore a consultation with Optimist International School teaching staff and Multilingual specialists is part of the process

### Will my child be tested to assess the level of Dutch?

At the moment of entering into the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) students will be assessed to determine the level of Dutch and set individual aims as a starting point for further learning. Continuous assessments will be used to monitor progress.

### When do we need to decide for our child to enrol in the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?

This depends on when your child starts at Optimist International School. The Dutch Enrichment programme (DEP) starts in upper primary Group 6. When families in Group 5 re-enrol for a Group 6 place in the following academic year, they will be given the option to enrol for the DEP or our international programme, opening doors to diverse opportunities. For new families joining our school both international programme and DEP will be discussed as part of the admission process

### When can you go from the international programme to the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) and vice versa?

The first year of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) is Group 6, so students of Group 5 can consider the DEP at the end of the school year. The DEP will be most effective when a student attends the maximum length of the programme which is three years (Group 6, 7 and 8). It is also possible to join the DEP from Group 7 onwards or Group 8 onwards. When families are interested, an individual conversation will take place with teaching staff and the multilingual specialist to advise parents on this.





**Will the school fees for the DEP be different?**

No, the fees are the same for all students at Optimist International School.





## TRANSITION TO DUTCH SCHOOLS

### When can my child go to secondary school?

When following the international programme students will continue to an international secondary after group 7 at the age of 11 years old, common in international education. There also is the possibility to transition from the Group 8 of the Dutch Enrichment Program (DEP) to international secondary education. Usually, students will then be placed in MYP2 the second year of the International Baccalaureate (IB) which is age-appropriate, but the final decision of this is up to the discretion of the secondary school. When transitioning to a Dutch (bilingual) secondary school the recommendation is for students to transition after Group 8 of the DEP, as in Dutch education students transition to secondary education at the age of 12 years old.

### Will it still be possible to transition to (bilingual) secondary education after Group 7 of the international programme (non-DEP)?

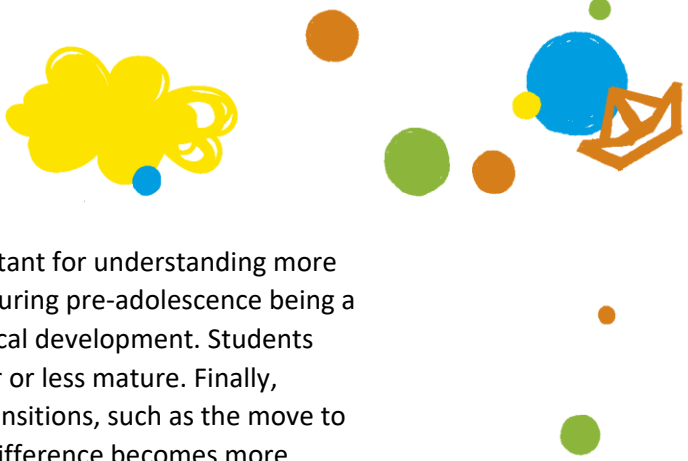
Right now, it is possible to be enrolled in Haarlemmermeer Lyceum after Group 7 of the international programme. However, these students are one year younger than their peers at Haarlemmermeer Lyceum. Haarlemmermeer Lyceum is reconsidering their policy regarding admittance of Group 7 students in the future. As soon as we know more about this, we will inform our parents. We advise parents who plan for their child to transition to Haarlemmermeer Lyceum to choose the option of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP).

### When we want to transition to Dutch secondary education: what is the advantage of coming from the DEP Group 8 compared to the international programme Group 7?

The aim of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) is to provide a smoother transition to secondary education in the Netherlands. Additionally, we want to prepare students better for secondary education developing executive functions, essential mental skills for secondary education and beyond, including time management, attention, focus switching, planning, organization, and self-control.

From our survey we know that our students who transitioned to Haarlemmermeer Lyceum in the past experienced a heavy workload and struggled in class 4 because all lessons are in Dutch from class 4 onwards as all final exams are in Dutch. When their Dutch proficiency is not sufficient yet, repeating a year or transitioning to a lower level of education can be the result. With the DEP we believe students have better chances for success.

Via Group 8 of the DEP students will have the same age as their peers at Dutch secondary. Potential drawbacks of being a year too young, actually missing one year of education is that this can make it challenging for the students to fit in socially. This can put pressure on a student. There also is the risk of missing out on fundamental



concepts and learning experiences that could be important for understanding more complex material in future academic work. Especially during pre-adolescence being a year younger can make a significant difference in physical development. Students might feel self-conscious about being physically smaller or less mature. Finally, missing a year can also complicate later educational transitions, such as the move to high school, college, or the workforce, where the age difference becomes more pronounced in terms of independence, social norms, and maturity expectations.

### **Does my child need to do the Dutch ‘doorstroomtoets’ (previously called ‘CITO end test’)?**

All students in the last year of Dutch primary schools must complete a primary school leavers attainment test, called ‘doorstroomtoets’ (previously called ‘CITO end test’). This test is taken after an advice for secondary education has been given and may result in the school advice being revised upwards. If a child has lived in the Netherlands for less than 4 years or has insufficient command of Dutch, they are not obligated to take the final primary education test.

We administer standardized assessments. Standardized assessments provide a common measurement for evaluating the performance of students across different schools and countries. This helps to identify trends, gaps, and areas of strength or weakness in education and highlights educational needs of students as long-term progress is visible. For Dutch language teaching there are several providers of assessments amongst which Cito, but this is not to be confused with the former CITO end test.

### **After group 8, can my child still go to an international secondary school**

By the end of group 8 of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP), students also meet the end attainments of the international primary curriculum and are able to transition to an international secondary school. Usually, they will be placed in MYP2 the second year of the International Baccalaureate (IB) which is age-appropriate, but the final decision of this is up to the discretion of the secondary school.

### **Can my child who follows the international programme go to Group 8?**

The international programme ends at the end of Group 7. There is an option to transition from Group 7 of the international programme to Group 8 of the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP). Although the benefits of following the full DEP (Groups 6-7-8) are bigger, this is an option.

### **What is the advice for secondary education based on?**

We have an advisory procedure in place for transition to Haarlemmermeer Lyceum, as can be found on our website.



### **Will our child be the same age as peers after Group 8 at Dutch secondary?**

Yes, Dutch primary schools have a Group 8, most children leaving a Dutch primary school to go to a Secondary school will be 12 years or will turn 12 years by October of that year.

### **How about graduation? Which diploma will students get who finished the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?**

All students following the international programme will receive a diploma for primary international education by the end of Group 7. Students following the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) will have the same diploma and an additional DEP certificate

### **What other benefits are there to being in Group 8?**



By giving students an additional year in primary school, we aim to develop independence and integration skills. Group 8 will provide students opportunities to further develop executive functions, essential mental skills for secondary education and beyond. They help students to plan, focus, juggle multiple tasks, stay focused on a task, develop healthy habits, social relationships and self-esteem. An additional year in primary school will also mean that students are the same chronological age as their peers when starting at Haarlemmermeer Lyceum.

### **When a student transitions from the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) Group 8 to Haarlemmermeer Lyceum, do they still need to follow the Dutch as an additional language (NT2) extra programme?**

This depends on the language proficiency of each student. Currently at Haarlemmermeer Lyceum the international classes of class 1 are grouped together in Havo/VWO classes with three language levels (A0 – A2, A2 – B1, B1 >). Students are transferred to Dutch classes when their language proficiency is sufficient, and consideration is also given to their socio-emotional and cognitive development. After following the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) students would either be able to transition to a higher language level group at Haarlemmermeer Lyceum in the international classes or directly to a Dutch class, depending on the language proficiency and sensitivity.

### **Can my child transition to a Dutch primary school via the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP)?**

When international or newcomer students of 6 years and older arrive in Haarlemmermeer from abroad and are planning to stay long term, they first need to go to a language class after which they can join Dutch schools. This language class is offered by IKC Wereldwijs in Hoofddorp. They don't accept students who have been in the Netherlands longer than a year or come from Optimist International School.



In some situations, Dutch primary schools accept students coming from Optimist International Schools. In these situations, one or two years in the Dutch Enrichment Programme (DEP) will give students a better starting position and will make them feel more comfortable as they can communicate with their peers. Optimist International School has great expertise in multilingualism and second language learning which many Dutch primary schools don't have yet. In these situations, we advise parents to discuss this with the Leadership team.