

## Austria

**Hauptschule HIMBERG**

*This compulsory school (general secondary level with students aged 10-14) features team teaching, interdisciplinary learning, targeted remedial and support measures, student responsibility (e.g. older students assist younger students with studying), close contacts with parents and graduates to get feedback on the value of the acquired skills, vocational orientation and personal counselling for parents and students. There is a compulsory unit dedicated to enabling students to develop social skills, find out how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others, learn how to work in a group, and manage conflicts.*

**Main focus of Innovation:** TEACHERS, CONTENT, RESOURCES, ORGANISATION

**General Information**

**Name of the ILE:** Hauptschule HIMBERG

**Location/Address:** Kirchenplatz 2, 2325 HIMBERG

**Website:** [www.hauptschule-himberg.at](http://www.hauptschule-himberg.at)

**ILE submitted by:** Federal Ministry of Education

**Rationale**

*Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning challenges?*

- Insights gained from deliberate perception and observation are continually incorporated into school, teaching and personality development activities, on the basis of a respectful and appreciative attitude towards all stakeholders
- The teachers and the school head also take part in nation-wide school and teaching development activities
- Active participation in educational developments and activities

A selection from the extensive offering of support measures provided:

- Creative and social learning in all years
- Targeted remedial and support measures
- Team teaching
- Involvement of students in decision-making (e.g., classroom rules, school colour concept, classroom decoration, etc.)
- Delegation of responsibility to students (older students assist younger ones during break-time activities, in the gym, with studying, when disputes arise, etc.)
- Problems are always solved in a collaborative effort together with the students
- Orientation week for first-years
- Special-focus weeks
- Joint-activity weeks: project week (year 5), summer sports week (year 6), winter sports week + language week in the UK (years 7 and 8 in alternation)
- Joint planning and organisation of end-of-year party with students and parents - opportunity for graduates to visit
- Close contacts with graduates, with a special focus on feedback on the value of the knowledge acquired at general secondary school
- Project work
- English as working language (native speaker at the school)
- Information technology

**Evidence**

*Is there any evidence or indications showing that this initiative achieves the outcomes that it is aiming at?*

- The school served as pilot school for trying out the European language portfolio
- It also acted as pilot school for the development of educational standards
- An external evaluation took place within the scope of the “English as working language” programme (University College of Teacher Education Baden)
- The role of the school head as a Leadership Academy graduate was evaluated by the University of Innsbruck
- The school was a member of the net-1 group organised by the Federal Ministry of Education in the field of “reading”
- Currently, the school is taking part in a COMENIUS project along with 7 other European countries.
- As of the school year 2009/10, the school will also take part in a COMENIUS cultural project with the Children’s University
- The school year 2009/10 will also witness the start of the pilot project “NÖ Modellschule” (Lower Austrian model school) as a part of the nationwide secondary school project.

**Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE**

*What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)*

- Teaching at our school is based on the principle of creative social learning. A compulsory unit is dedicated to enabling students to develop social skills, to find out how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others, to learn how to work and live in a group, how to solve problems in a team, how to deal with aggression, how to manage conflicts, etc. (a special curriculum has been developed at the school for this purpose)
- On this basis, we aim to empower students to acquire the subject-matter competencies they need, with top priority being accorded to the best possible personal result for each individual.
- A special focus is placed on self-reliant work
- Curricula developed within the scope of school autonomy
- Learning based on different aids and media (e.g. sbx, Internet, etc.)

**Learners**

*Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?*

At our compulsory school (general secondary level I), we cater to students in the 10-14 age bracket. Our school programmes always include **ALL** students – a total of 206 in this school year.

**Facilitators**

*Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?*

- All teachers at our school have undergone the prescribed education for teaching at a general secondary school, and most of them have additional qualifications in different areas. We place great store by a diverse range of competencies among the teaching team.
- Social learning training / English as working language / alternative instruction methods / fire protection & civil defence / additional sports qualifications (skiing, snowboarding, track & field, karate, archery, canoeing) / Montessori techniques / Klippert methods / special school training / primary school training / information technology, etc.
- Role perception: Being part of a greater whole with lots of personal freedom and options; common objectives for the students can be attained in different ways
- “We are innovators!”
- Coaching teachers for trainee teachers
- Native speaker(s) at the school
- Counselling for vocational orientation

### Organization of the ILE

*How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?*

- Teaching activities at our school are based on diversity: team teaching / working in learning fields / station teaching / individual work / seminar teaching / optional exercises (research lab, creative design, music group, dance, information technology, nutrition, football, volleyball, karate, gymnastics, etc.) / special activities for special skills and talents
- School entry phase for first-years – students have a say in who will be in which form
- Special curricula for learning fields (combinations of subjects) under school autonomy
- Interdisciplinary teaching
- Teaching for all students of one year, regardless of which form they are in
- Specific focal topics (currently “reading” – interdisciplinary and by year)
- Practice-relevant vocational orientation with one-on-one counselling for parents and students
- A range of methods and impulses from different pedagogical schools of thought (SOL, Montessori, Klippert, etc.)

### Learning Context

*In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?*

- The school does not provide any special facilities, but is well equipped and offers lots of learning material.
- Classrooms are opened up to include halls and other rooms into teaching and learning activities, the computer room and the handicrafts room are connected to facilitate combined activities for learning fields.
- Part of the furniture is moveable (flexible tables) to allow various types of groups to be formed
- Cooperation with the local community exists (health day, keep-nature-clean drives, sports activities); meeting point for adults and students: shared use of exercise bicycles at the school, fire brigade, self-defence, etc.
- Participation in and organisation of health days, etc. (students prepare and man stations for primary school children)
- Cooperation with emergency organisations (fire brigade, police)
- “Open house” at various sports clubs (tennis, table tennis, golf, archery, etc.)

### History of ILE

*Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?*

- The initial situation (lack of motivation, students becoming more “difficult”, teaching becoming more taxing, etc.) called for change along the lines of: “What do the children need?” “What do we have to offer them to free up their energies for learning?” This initiative gradually gave rise to the “social learning” method which, during its first year, was implemented by 2 teachers and later on was extended to all forms in the school.
- Teachers have been and still are encouraged to create favourable teaching and learning conditions for the benefit of the students.
- Other major elements in a climate of change are including parents, ensuring an open flow of information as well as respectful communication.
- As school head, I would consider my graduation from the Leadership Academy as one of the major events in our recent history, as it helped me develop a broader, systemic angle.

**Funding of the ILE***How is it funded?*

As this is a state school, the statutory provider (local authority) is responsible for funding. The school does not get any additional support from outside the statutory school system.

**Learning Outcomes***What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?*

Apart from well-known written and oral tests, we primarily assess

- activities carried out to acquire skills and competencies
- development of teaching with a view to meeting educational standards
- project work
- portfolios
- performances, talks, presentations
- exhibitions, competitions, tournaments
- the keeping of reader journals

In this area, we see a potential for development for our school within the scope of the Lower Austrian school model.

**Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE***Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)*

Unfortunately, there is still room for improvement where our written documentation is concerned:

- Website
- History
- Results of external evaluations
- Research report produced by the University of Innsbruck
- Coverage in local and regional media (newspapers and TV)

**Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE**

Common objectives, but different ways to achieve them / discussion of innovative approaches / at times, pressure, but also a lot of encouragement and appreciation / added value for students and teachers / respectful climate among all school stakeholders / all steps taken are valuable – even errors or failures / extensive talks with students, parents and teachers in the interest of a favourable development of each child

- Looking at the bigger picture and thinking outside the box
- Learning by doing /step by step / trial and error