



A Z B U K A RUSSIAN - ENGLISH BILINGUAL SCHOOL

WE HAD A CHAT WITH MARIA GAVRILOVA, FOUNDER AND HEADTEACHER OF THE AZBUKA FOUNDATION, BASED IN HAMMERSMITH W6

How long has the Azbuka Foundation been established?

Azbuka has pioneered bilingual education since 2000. It has become the UK's first bilingual Russian-English primary school and Nursery with ground-breaking language immersion curriculum. It has since won widespread support for its innovative methodology and has been given high ratings across all four areas examined by Ofsted.

What are the key benefits of bilingual education?

Bilingual education is one of the world's most successful and exciting educational approaches. The benefits include: high degree of fluency in a second language and literacy alongside strong academic achievement, cultural competence and understanding, more employment options. But most importantly, another language is the window to another way of thinking and making sense of the world. It enriches life itself.

At what age would you consider introducing a child to a second language?

I would consider introducing a child to another language or continue maintaining child's languages as early as possible and preferably at pre-school age. This is the age when we still acquire as opposed to learn languages. Although you can certainly learn another language at any age

Can you explain a little bit about the structures of your classes?

The class sizes are very small - maximum 12 children. The language distribution in the curriculum



varies depending on the age. At pre-school we start with 80-90% Russian immersion progressing to 50-50% (English/Russian) in core subjects from Year 1. We have an exciting curriculum with a focus on science, languages, creative subjects, music and arts. Our children are lucky to discover the world through real hands on activities and experiments, explore Russian and English as well as world literature and culture and get a chance to interact with talented professionals who frequently visit the school.

Are your tutors a mix of English and Russian speaking?

Azbuka teachers are native speakers/bilingual professionals qualified in the UK, Europe, the Baltic states and Russia.

Who are your families?

Our children come from a variety of families of different linguistic and cultural profiles - bilingual and multilingual families - speaking English, Russian, French, German, Swedish, Thai, Hungarian, Azeri to name a few. They include Russian speaking families, and those where Russian is not spoken. They are united by a recognition of the fundamental value of another language and culture to provide the best future for their children.

For more information about The Azbuka Foundation please visit www.azbukafoundation.org.