



Students at Champittet can now opt for the IB  
© Champittet

## Champittet in Lausanne to start bilingual IB

by Michele Laird  
Lausanne - 21 May 2009 | 16:51

**Responding to the needs of a growing expat community, the private Champittet Collège in Pully/Lausanne is about to launch a bilingual International Baccalaureate Diploma program in English and French. The IB is the most widely recognized secondary diploma in the world and Champittet's dual language approach will put students at an advantage, especially those who want to go to university in Switzerland. A presentation takes place on 27th May 2009.**

Founded by the Dominican order more than a hundred years ago, Champittet was managed by the Grand Saint Bernard Canons from 1951 and then bought in 1998 by the forward-looking owners of the elite Le Rosey and Beau Soleil schools. Known for its very traditional type of teaching, the introduction of a bilingual program in 2006 was the first step to a deep structural change and a cultural revolution; the IB is the second one.

“It was a natural choice to take Champittet's academic excellence and move it into the mainstream” says Brigitte Morrison, Dean of the Bilingual Section and IB Coordinator. Champittet caters to a growing number of multinational families with “parents who are well travelled and well educated. “ They understand the need to introduce the IB, a program that nurtures “critical thinking” and promotes “lifelong learning skills”.

Roland Lomenech, Champittet's Director General, is referred to as “our fearless leader” by Brigitte Morrison. A teacher for 25 years, he has pushed hard to get things moving, has a clear picture of how they should work, but remains tuned to the needs of everyone involved.

The introduction of the IB is the logical next step forward for Champittet, since students who have chosen to continue the bilingual program in secondary, following the mandatory years in primary, now have an alternative to the *French Baccalaureate* and the *Swiss Maturité Fédérale*, both of which will continue to be offered, but that cannot be passed in English.

In fact, some of the classes will be given in common in French, although careful consideration has been given to make sure that students not only meet the specific requirements of their own diploma, but also those of the higher studies that they wish to pursue, particularly if they are to stay in Switzerland.

For this reason, hours of counselling go into making the appropriate choices, including with the parents, and not all students are admitted into the IB diploma program. A good level of English is a pre-requirement. At the time of writing this article, only ten of the 750 Champittet students are enrolled in the IB for the 2009-2010 school year.

The situation could however change before the end of the summer, especially if more English-speaking students learn about the new direction taken by Champittet. Furthermore, the number of boarders can still expand from the present 50 to a capacity of 80.

Mrs Morrison says that she has received invaluable assistance from Champittet's sister schools, as well as other international schools, particularly ISL, for the setting up the IB Diploma program. The accreditation process is a stringent one and many investments have had to be made, particularly to adapt the science labs.

“Our aspiration is not to change Champittet, but to make it more dynamic” concludes Brigitte Morrison. “We have a progressive Director General who is committed to quality, a highly motivated staff, many of whom are bilingual or English-speaking, and we can offer an incredible choice of courses à la carte.”

A presentation of the program, followed by a visit of the school takes place on 27<sup>th</sup> May at 17h00. Interested individuals or parties, including from HR Departments, please contact Catherine de Lattre, Champittet Collège, T 021 721 05 12.

