



EDUCATION

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Six years: Learning together for the future

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Introduction



Dear parents,

The big day has arrived - your child is starting school! The whole family has been looking forward to this occasion. It marks the start of a new chapter that will bring noticeable change to your family life. Many things will need to be rethought or organised in a different way. The nursery school days are over and your child is now one of the “big kids”. Their days will no longer be shaped by playing, but by systematic and organised learning. Of course, your child is excited and eager to finally learn how to read, write and do maths “properly” like their parents. They have learnt plenty at nursery school, but now things are really getting started.

As parents, I’m sure that you share your child’s excitement and want to be as prepared as possible as you begin this new stage together. First and foremost, you need and want to know what awaits your child at school. After all, alongside home, school will be your child’s most important living and learning environment for many

years. You rightly want your child to experience education and care that prepares them well for life. Brandenburg’s schools do exactly that. All school types impart knowledge and values, develop skills and abilities, build self-confidence and guide individual interests. School equips your child with the necessary tools for a good start to their education and career.

Education and personal development go hand in hand. A close relationship between home and school is the key to stability and future success. Because every child learns differently, has their own personality, and needs individual support for their talent and skills. Together, it’s our job to drive this diversity in a way that children become smart young people and are ready for life beyond school.

Our primary schools have seen significant change in many ways in recent years. There are more all-day schools as well as more supervised activities and programmes. Teachers have greater scope to adapt

to the individual strengths of their pupils by using specific teaching and learning methods. We are immensely grateful to all primary school teachers for this.

Today, schools teach in a way that encourages children to learn. They are not only strictly regulated learning environments for educational and personal development, but places that can also be fun and exciting.

As parents, you are part of this journey and we encourage you to play an active role in this next stage of your child's life by working closely with their teachers. I'm sure you'll have lots of questions. In this brochure, you will learn more about what everyday school life looks like and what awaits your child. I hope you and your child have found this guide helpful in preparing for primary school. Good luck, I wish your child a successful time at primary school.



Steffen Freiberg
Minister for Education, Youth and Sport in
the Federal State of Brandenburg

School entry phase

Building on experiences

When children start school, they are not novice learners. Before starting school, they could already acquire many competencies through diverse and stimulating learning opportunities in their daycare as well as at home. Teaching in primary school builds on this individual knowledge and the children's experiences. In the framework curriculum of Grades 1-10, all competencies of the learning areas children should acquire in different subjects are clearly defined.

The learning needs of children differ at the beginning of school; therefore, each child is met as an individual right from the beginning and supported in their joy of learning, interests, and knowledge acquisition through self-activated learning processes. In the state of Brandenburg primary schools, the basics that form a foundation for learning in secondary general education schools are taught in a joint six-year course of education.

This is not only about knowledge transfer through teaching. Primary school also promotes the methodological, factual, personal, and social competence of learners.



Today, the school is a place where the focus is on the children's living and learning needs, their development potential, their social interaction in the class community and the quality of learning opportunities.

(Joint framework conditions for education in child day care and primary school
https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/schule/lehren_und_lernen/UebergangKitaGrundschole/gorbiks/orientierungsrahmen_neu.pdf)

Learning in the beginners' class during the school entry phase

The school entry phase comprises Grades 1 and 2. During this period, the focus is on developing multiple reading and writing skills, arithmetic and environmental subjects. To assess the overall personality of all learners and enable them to develop and support them optimally, teachers generally assess the learning levels of each individual regarding their mathematic and linguistic competencies in the first six weeks by means of the learning level analysis lIeA or lLeAplus, which is mandatory in the state of Brandenburg. According to the evaluation results, teachers then develop an individual teaching plan for each learner, which comprises the next learning objectives. During a development conversation to which the class teacher invites the parents, the results of the learning

level analysis are explained, and the individual teaching plan is discussed.

Children want to measure their performance against others, which is also very validating for successful and fast learners. But what about those who are not so successful in individual learning areas and who need more support? There are no graded tests in the school entry phase, so the pupils can concentrate on discovery learning and strengthening their curiosity for new experiences.

During the first six months of Grades 1 and 2, teachers capture the educational development of each individual learner on a respective learning development sheet. Based on this, the class teacher invites the parents to a learning development discussion and discusses the competence development of their children with them.

Learning in the flexible entry phase

Where possible, children learn in a FLEX class, a flexible entry phase. They are taught and supported together in a differentiated manner by a teaching team with the help of a qualified special needs teacher in mixed-age classes and target-group-oriented learning groups.

Learners in the FLEX class can learn in these mixed age and grade classes for two years, but it is also possible to switch to



Grade 3 after only one year or make use of a third retention year.

Learning in the regular class

Children in the regular class will also work in flexible and individualised forms of learning and will follow clearly structured instructive lessons. Learners are met where they are in their current learning development and are guided and supported in a competence-oriented way.

Shaping the school day

Shaping the school day

Contrary to most daycares, the teaching day usually has a fixed rhythm. Planned learning times alternate with incorporated, regular break times. Initial teaching, however, is strongly focused on the needs and diversity of children. For this reason, initial teaching has many elements based on play, alternating with open and guided types of learning, and break times adjusted to children.

- learning in tandem
- learning at stations
- workshopping.

Learning in a community also refers to learning in places outside of school. For example, learners experience educational opportunities in another context on hiking days, excursions, or class trips. Every out-of-school event is based on a pedagogic concept combined with a defined educational objective.

Learning in a community

Although education is an individual process, exchange amongst each other, dialogue, mutual advice, and support in the group are important, supportive elements towards a positive, respectful learning environment in the class community. Mutual learning in contemporary ways of teaching offers children many opportunities to bring their own competencies in an engaged and joyful way to learning tasks in collaboration with others. The learning methods in primary school, therefore, include self-directed learning, cooperative learning as well as social learning in the teaching concepts of all grades.

This includes forms of teaching such as:

- learning in project groups
- learning with a daily or weekly plan

Individual learning and comparative assessment methods

Every child learns differently and has their own personal learning strategy. This offers the opportunity for challenging lessons in which the strengths and needs of the children are addressed. Here, individual support plays an important role. As in Grade 1, teachers assess the individual learning levels of the learners in the first six weeks of Grades 3 and 5 by means of the learning level analysis IlEA or ILeAplus, which is mandatory in the state of Brandenburg. According to the evaluation results, teachers then develop an individual teaching plan for each learner, which comprises the next learning objectives.

At the end of the school years of Grade 2 and 4 an orientation assessment on German language will be taken, and in Grade 4, an additional orientation assessment in



mathematics. The objective is to assess the learning levels of the grade pairs and use them as a base for the teaching content for the following grade pair. In Grade 3, the competence-related learning levels in certain areas of the subjects German and mathematics are measured, analysed, and evaluated annually in the nationwide, standardised and tried-and-tested test procedure VERA 3.

Special needs education and shared learning

Nowadays, primary school is a school for everyone. Therefore learners with or without special needs learn alongside each other in a class. Qualified special needs teachers guide learners with special educational needs and are, at the same time, the contact person for the whole learner group. From the start, parents are involved in the special needs assessment procedure by the special needs teachers.

Parents can apply for the recognition of disadvantage compensation for children with partial performance deficiencies.

(Special, educational support
<https://mbjs.brandenburg.de/bildung/allgemeinbildende-schulen/grundschule/grundschulzeit.html>)

The subject range



The subject range

German

(Grade 1 to 6)

With the acquisition of reading and writing skills, learners gradually develop literacy. They develop the skill to deal with texts and media, learn grammatical structures, and apply this in oral and written language.

Mathematics

(Grade 1 to 6)

During initial mathematics teaching, teachers tie into the existing mathematical knowledge and skill of learners when dea-

ling with mathematical objects and structures. They develop concepts of numbers in a wide range of contexts and work with them confidently. Learners compare sizes, do estimates and measurements and describe them. During their schooling, they learn different mathematical methods and apply them appropriately.

Science studies

(Grade 1 to 4)

Before enrolling in school, many children are already interested in nature and environmental topics. In science studies, they learn scientific working methods and deal with many topics in the plant and animal world as well as the environment. Based on this, science studies lays the foundation for



successful further learning and working in subjects from Grade 5 onwards.

Art

(Grade 1 to 6)

Every learner has their own idea of creativity and the realisation of creative ideas. In their art classes, they learn different techniques and methods, and experiment with different materials and forms of expression. During painting, drawing, printing, building and sculpting, each learner's practical and creative skills are developed.

Music

(Grade 1 to 6)

In the diversity of music lessons, learners

have a holistic experience of music. They learn much about tones and sounds and unknown instruments from all over the world, they deal with the musical styles of different epochs and get to know the notes. Singing and making music together also enriches social interaction through doing things together in the class community. Music lessons are about making music, to hear music, to understand music – and to dance along with it.

Sport

(Grade 1 to 6)

During sports lessons, learners expand their experience of movement, learn to deal with their own physicality and experience the totality of movement, play and sport. In the



interaction with others, learners experience diversity, learn to take responsibility and how to work in a team, as well as independence and willingness to cooperate.

First foreign language (Grade 3 to 6)

Foreign language teaching normally starts in Grade 3.

In most primary schools, English is offered as a first foreign language. Learners learn basic communicative skills and abilities which are continually developed further, they acquire learning and work techniques as well as effective strategies of learning a language.

Sorbian (Grade 1 to 6)

In the settlement area of the Sorbs and Wends, pupils have the right to learn the Sorbian (Wendish) language and to be taught in Lower Sorbian from Grade 1 onwards.

Natural sciences (Grade 5 and 6)

Based on the experiences and ideas that the pupils have gained in their everyday life and science studies from years 1 to 4, in the natural science lessons, more advanced ways of seeing and working in the natural sciences are developed. Through precise



observations and descriptions, independent questioning, investigation, experimentation and evaluation, and through the presentation of scientific relationships and laws can be experienced. Learners thereby acquire a foundation for the subjects chemistry, biology and physics, which can be built on in secondary general education.

Social sciences (Grade 5 and 6)

In this subject, learners deal with its content of diverse forms of social coexistence in multiple regions of the world in the past, the present and the future. In addition, they deal with the examination of selected topics and phe-

nomena of geography, history, and politics. In this way, the subject introduces the perspectives of the subjects geography, history and political education in secondary schools.

Economy – work – technology (Grade 5 and 6)

The content here also builds on science studies. Learners learn to deal with economic decisions in the private household and understand important interrelationships between households and businesses in the market. They are introduced to technical action in an action-oriented way; they produce, test, and learn to understand technical solution principles.

Lifestyle, ethics and religion

(Grade 5 and 6)

The objective of this subject is to enable learners to develop individual ideas and attitudes as well as promote self-determined, responsible thinking and action. The subject is taught in a non-denominational, religious, and philosophically neutral manner. Parents who would not like their child to attend these classes because their child is already attending denominational religious teaching can inform the school about this in writing and provide evidence of attendance of such classes. Naturally, it is possible to participate in lifestyle, ethics and religion classes while also attending religious instruction.

Religious instruction

(from Grade 1)

The evangelical church of Berlin/Brandenburg, the archdiocese of Berlin and the diocese of Görlitz take responsibility for religious instruction which is offered at many schools from Grade 1. Religious instruction is tied to the framework curriculum of the respective faith community. To enrol a child for religious instruction, parents register them via the school at the respective church, which then takes over the education in the learner group.

Framework curriculum for Grades 1-10 Berlin-Brandenburg

<https://mbjs.brandenburg.de/bildung/weitere-themen/rahmenlehrplaene-curricula-neuer-rahmenlehrplan-1-bis-10.html>



Humanistic life studies

(from Grade 1)

This voluntary, philosophical instruction is done according to the Humanistic Association Berlin- Brandenburg principles and is taught in schools where the Humanistic Association offers classes. In the classes, the principles and values of a humanistic ideology are taught in an age-appropriate way. Here the learners, with their experiences, questions, interests, problems, feelings, and

thoughts, are placed in the centre of the teaching process. They also learn about other ethical convictions, religions, and ideologies.

Parents who would like their child to attend these classes declare this to the responsible school in writing.

(Ordinance on religious and philosophical education in schools (Religions- und Weltanschauungsunterrichtsverordnung - RWUV)
<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verordnungen/rwuv>)

First changes after Grade 4



Since all children learn at different speeds, learners have the opportunity to study in performance and gifted classes in one of the selected secondary schools from the beginning of Grade 5. In order for learners in Grades 5 and 6 to further develop their competencies, they learn in differentiated learning groups. In addition to class teaching, further flexible and differentiated learning opportunities are created which consider the learners' interests.



Performance assessment and grade report

The primary school gradually prepares learners for receiving marks. Performance assessment is measured against the standards of the framework curriculum. As a rule, learners from Grade 3 onwards receive report cards with grades – at the end of each school semester and at the end of each school year. If, however, the majority of the parents' meeting and the majority of the class take respec-

tive decisions, written information regarding learning development can take the place of marks in Grades 3 and 4. Performance assessments include oral as well as written components

(Administrative regulations for performance assessment in schools in the state of Brandenburg (VV performance assessment)
https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/vv_leistungsbewertung)

The transition to secondary schools

In Grade 6, learners are preparing for the transition to Grade 7. In addition to the parents' wishes, the child's abilities, performance and aptitudes are decisive for admission to a secondary central school. This includes the primary school report and the half-year report of Grade 6. In a report discussion with the parents and their child at the end of the first half of the school year, the class teacher discusses the individual primary school report and informs them about the educational programme recommendation that was previously agreed on in the class conference..

Parental participation

Parental rights and co-determination at school

Parents are and remain their child's most important caregivers and are crucial educational partners for teachers. Therefore, parental participation in school committees is desirable.

Parent-teacher conferences

Parent-teacher conferences take place several times during the school year. On the designated teacher consultation days, parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's learning development with the class teacher, but also with the subject teachers, and to clarify open questions. If necessary, solutions are sought together to organise special support and measures within or outside the school in the learner's interest.

The parent meeting

In this meeting, parents can inform themselves about teaching concepts, curriculum requirements and performance assessments as well as their evaluation criteria for report cards. In addition, the teachers provide information about cooperation with the after-school care centre or other extracurricular partners. Parents vote in this forum on hiking days, excursions and class trips and are informed about the respective educational goals by the class teacher. Furthermore, the parents' representatives are elected for a period of two years.

The parent conference

The elected parent representatives are members of the school's parent conference and represent the interests of the parents of their class.

The school conference

Some parent representatives are elected to the school conference and represent the interests of the school's parents in cooperation with elected teachers, learner representatives and the school administration. Together, the members of this body implement the resolutions passed in their area of responsibility.

School as a place of learning and living

School as a place of learning and living

School today is not only a place where knowledge is imparted but also a place that creates a variety of stimulating learning opportunities for learners and offers space for individual development and social interaction. To ensure this, many schools in the state of Brandenburg offer all-day learning.

The Reliable Half-Day Primary School (Verlässliche Halbtagsgrundschule, VHG)

Reliable Half-Day Primary Schools (VHG) offer, among other features, rhythmic lessons that take into account the learners' resilience, ability to concentrate and need for physical activity. Here, extended learning opportunities are integrated into a teaching day adapted to the learning opportunities, therefore, participation in VHG is compulsory for all learners.

All-day schools with open forms

The primary schools with all-day programmes in open form not only provide school activities in addition to the timetabled lessons but also offer services in partnership with daycares and other cooperation partners.

In addition, the teaching day is structured in such a way that the learners experience an open start to the day. Lessons are scheduled in learning blocks of 90 minutes each and are alternated with active play and break periods.

Learning at an all-day school in open form is only possible if 60% of the parents give their written consent for their child to participate.

The after-school care centres

After-school care centres are important cooperation partners of the primary schools. They offer a wide range of day care services for the children. The close interlocking of this direct cooperation between the school and the after-school care centre offers the possibility of quality care and support for the learners in the afternoon.

(Administrative regulations on all-day provision at schools of general education (VV-Ganztage)
https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/vv_ganztage)

Contact persons

Regional contact persons

The first contact persons for parents should be the teachers at the relevant school or the school management if questions or problems arise.

The school councillors in the state education offices are also available for parents' enquiries.

- **State Education Authority Brandenburg an der Havel (administrative districts: BRB, PM, TF and the city of Potsdam)**
Magdeburger st. 45
14770 Brandenburg an der Havel
Telephone: 03381397400
E-Mail: poststelle.bb@schulaemter.brandenburg.de
- **State Education Authority Cottbus (administrative districts: LDS, EE, OSL, SPN and the city of Cottbus)**
Blechenstraße1
03046 Cottbus
Telephone: 0355 4866-0
E-Mail: poststelle.cb@schulaemter.brandenburg.de
- **State Education Authority Frankfurt (Oder) (administrative districts: MOL, LOS, BAR, UM and the city of Frankfurt (Oder))**
Gerhard-Neumann-st. 3
15236 Frankfurt (Oder)
Telephone: 0335 5210 400
E-Mail: poststelle.ff@schulaemter.brandenburg.de
- **State Education Authority Neuruppin (administrative districts: OHV, OPR, PR, HVL)**
Trenckmann st.15
16816 Neuruppin
Telephone: 03391 40444 55
E-Mail: poststelle.np@schulaemter.brandenburg.de

For further reading

- **MBJS—education—schools of general education—primary schools**
<https://mbjs.brandenburg.de/bildung/allgemeinbildende-schulen/grundschule.html>
- **Common orientation framework for education in day care and primary school**
https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/schule/lehren_und_lernen/UebergangKitaGrundschule/gorbiks/orientierungsrahmen_neu.pdf
- **Law on schools in the state of Brandenburg (Brandenburgisches Schulgesetz - BbgSchulG)**
<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/gesetze/bbgschulg#19>
- **Ordinance on the course of education in primary schools (Grundschulverordnung – GV)**
<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verordnungen/gv>
- **Administrative regulations for the primary school ordinance (VV-GV)**
<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/vvgv>
- **Administrative regulations for performance assessment in schools in the state of Brandenburg (VV-Leistungsbewertung)**
https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/vv_leistungsbewertung
- **Administrative regulations on all-day programmes at schools of general education (VV-Ganztag)**
https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/vv_ganztag
- **Framework curriculum for grades 1-10 Berlin-Brandenburg**
<https://mbjs.brandenburg.de/bildung/weitere-themen/rahmenlehrplaene-curricula-neuer-rahmenlehrplan-1-bis-10.html>
- **Ordinance on religious and philosophical education at schools (Religions- und Weltanschauungsunterrichtsverordnung - RWUV)**
<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verordnungen/rwuv>