



**LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL PORTRAIT**

# St. Janschool

Amsterdam, The Netherlands





# Overview

## ST. JANSCHOOL

- Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Type of school: Primary School, Public
- Number of students: 446
- Number of staff: 39
- Languages spoken in school community: (see language breakdown below) top 8: Dutch, English, Turkish, German, Arabic, Italian, Berber
- Language Friendly certified since: 2019







# Motivation for becoming a Language Friendly School

## THEIR STORY

“Multilingualism is a strength” is the main credo of the St. Janschool, a public primary school with 446 pupils in Amsterdam-West who received their Language Friendly School certificate in 2019. Parents should be free to speak their home languages with their child and in lessons at the St. Janschool, they give special attention to it. Some schools still prohibit other languages than Dutch at school, despite this cutting the connection between parent, child and school. Research shows that home languages support learning Dutch.

Language Friendly School 2020





# Language Friendly Activities

**TOP 3 FOR THE  
ST. JANSCHOOL**

## LANGUAGE OF PREFERENCE

Our main goal remains learning the Dutch language of instruction, but pupils are allowed to do assignments in the so-called language of preference. We do make agreements about that. It's fine doing a paper in Egyptian but with a translation in Dutch. And if pupils want to discuss ideas in their mother tongue during the math class, they can. We trust that they talk about the content and we tell them this.

## LANGUAGE BUDDIES

We also work with language buddies: twenty minutes per week, a number of pupils who speak the same language, voluntarily get together to talk and to read. This way, they see that they are not the only one speaking a different language. This is especially important for young children. They shouldn't keep quiet because they think something is wrong with them.

## WORD CLUSTERS

All students, both multilingual and monolingual, receive word clusters – images of words – to take home and discuss them with their parents. This makes it easier to discuss them together at school. Multilingual children will make the link between the two language registers in their head: so-called translanguaging. It means they start understanding concepts at a deeper level.

# Benefits

## BENEFITS OF BECOMING A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

Since the St. Janschool has become a Language Friendly School, the team says that children exude more confidence when they are allowed to use their own language.





TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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**YOU DON'T NEED TO CHANGE  
ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION  
SYSTEM, YOU JUST NEED TO ADD A  
LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SAUCE.**

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DIENEKE BLIKSLAGER - VICE PRINCIPAL





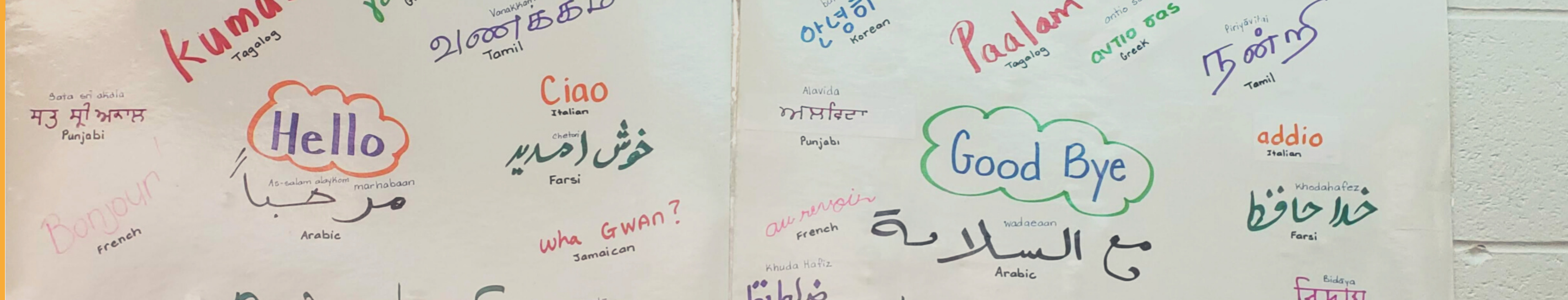


# Tips for Success

## FROM THE VICE PRINCIPAL

"You don't need to change anything about your education system, you just need to add a language friendly sauce. The first step is to get to know the background and the different languages of your pupils. As a teacher, show that you are interested, for example by asking about it and regularly talking about it. Then you can let children choose for which assignments they want to use their mother tongue. When students do not want to speak their home languages, it is highly important not to force them."





# Plans for the Future

## ST. JANSCHOOL

### MULTILINGUAL LIBRARY

The St. Janschool has a multilingual library that they wish to grow as a first priority.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To start educating and giving training to staff on the research behind Language Friendly Schools. Until now the team has not received professional training in how to teach multilinguals. The team discusses the information that they get from publications on learning for multilinguals.



# Useful Links



[Website St. Janschool](#)



[Article in Didactief](#)

# Language Breakdown

TOP 8 ARE  
HIGHLIGHTED

**Dutch**

**English (Australian/  
American/Scottish)**

**Turkish**

**German**

**Arabic**

**Italian**

**Berber**

**French**

Portuguese

Finnish

Chinese

Somali

Polish

Surinamese

Bela-russian / Russian

Spanish

Macedonian

Brazilian Portuguese

Urdu

Angolese

Danish

Eritrean

Bosnian

Serbian

Iraqi Kurdish

Turkish Kurdish

Egyptian

Greek

Language Friendly School 2020



# LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

## Contact

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**RUTU**  
Foundation