

Istituto Sperimentale ‘Rinascita – A. Livi’

Type of school: lower secondary school (pupils aged 11 to 14)
Name of School: Istituto Sperimentale ‘Rinascita – A.Livi’
Headmaster: Pietro Calascibetta
Address: Via Rosalba Carriera, 12
Postcode: 20146
City: Milan
Country: Italy
Telephone: 00 39 02 4230503
Fax: 00 39 02 428324
Website: www.rinascita-livi.it
Email: segreteria@rinascita-livi.it
presidenza@rinascita-livi.it
preside@rinascita-livi.it (headmaster)

Introduction

‘Rinascita – A. Livi’ is a well-known experimental lower secondary school located in Milan, the second biggest town in Italy. The main mission of our school is to research and experiment with different communicative and relational contexts capable of supporting effective learning. Our second mission is to train and develop teachers and to share our teaching techniques with neighbouring schools interested in innovative teaching methods.

In the school year 2005/2006, Rinascita will have a total number of 321 pupils (aged 11 to 14), coming from different areas of Milan. The school currently has 59 subject teachers and a varying number of special needs and support teaching staff. It offers a full time programme to all pupils.

A brief history of Rinascita

Our school was founded by ANPI (National Association of Italian Partisans) in 1945. At the beginning, it was a boarding school providing vocational training with the aim of educating responsible citizens after the second world war. Only some years later this innovative kind of training centre was turned into a lower secondary school and in 1974 it became an experimental state school.

School facilities

Our facilities include large classrooms, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a canteen and a wide range of laboratories where students can get hands-on experience. Just to mention a few, there is a computer lab, an arts lab, a music lab, a science lab, a maths lab, a technology lab, a robotics lab. Most labs are equipped with updated computer facilities. The school grounds also provide grassy areas and good outdoor sporting facilities, such as a football pitch, a volleyball court and a basketball court.



A classroom decorated by the pupils



Pupils at work in the maths lab



Outdoor sporting facilities



The school canteen at lunch time

Teaching method

Our pupils are exposed to two different kinds of activities: curricular subjects and projects. Subjects (Italian, two Modern Languages, namely English and German, History, Geography, Maths, Science, Technology, Music, Art, Physical Education and Religion, which is optional) are taught through timetabled lessons as required by the national curriculum and enable students to get basic skills. Throughout the three grades of school, pupils are usually taught in mixed ability classes of approximately 23, although we also teach many subject areas in smaller groups. Pupil learning is supported by one or more teachers working in partnership in the classroom or in the lab. Such flexibility allows us to ensure that pupils get the valuable differentiated support they need with classwork and that they are able to achieve success. Projects are developed and coordinated by the team of teachers working on a particular class group. Their purpose is to make pupils feel they belong to the school community, to contribute to their personal development and of providing pupils with the opportunity to put into practice the things learnt during classtime. Our projects can be divided into the following three categories: activities which aim at personal and social development, activities which make pupils take an active part in school life (writing and editing the school newsletter, organising special events, decorating the classrooms and so forth), and finally interdisciplinary studies on topics such as peace and ecology to expand their knowledge of the world, to make connections and see relationships among various subject areas, and to make school a place where it is possible to generate ideas and culture.

Curriculum organization

We offer a relevant and challenging curriculum aimed at personal development. On top of the subjects prescribed by the national curriculum, among which it is worth mentioning the teaching of two foreign languages, we also offer CLIL classes (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and music classes. The instruments taught at Rinascita are the violin, the piano, the guitar and the flute. The school orchestra and the choir give concerts to celebrate

special events during the school year. There is also a wide range of relevant projects that our classes can join throughout the three grades of school, for example Sex Education.

Parental involvement

We value the involvement of parents in all school issues and we like to work in partnership with them because we strongly believe that leadership should be shared. Not only do we encourage parents to take an active interest in their children's learning but we also aim to get them involved in school committees. A few times a year, the school holds open days when parents are welcome to come to classes together with their children. Parents and the community alike are also invited to join teachers for seminars held regularly throughout the school year as a form of lifelong learning.

Pastoral organisation

In each of the three years of lower secondary school, a pupil's general welfare is monitored by a tutor. Tutors meet their tutees on a regular basis to have oversight of the personal and social development of the children, to review progress and to set targets. Tutors move up the school from Grade 1 to Grade 3, in order to ensure continuity of care and contact with parents.

Research and training

We are committed to sharing our enhanced expertise and facilities with other schools and teachers. To this respect, we have recently started to work in partnership with Scuola Città Pestalozzi Comprehensive Institute, situated in Florence, and with Don Milani lower secondary school, located in Genoa, and we are also in contact with local universities. The purpose of setting up this network of schools is twofold: to turn the three schools into laboratories where action research in the field of education is being carried out, and the results made widely accessible to other schools, and to train pre service as well as in service teachers. In agreement with our partners, our school is currently investigating the following areas: integrated learning (teaching through interdisciplinary projects), self evaluation, tutorship, portfolio, school as a community. The teaching materials created by our staff are stored at school and available for consultation. We also offer inservice teacher training on demand, mainly to teachers working within the regional bounds, and we organise workshops for parents and educational staff. We advise university students working on theses, lecturers carrying out studies or pieces of research, and we also help pre as well as in service teachers interested in running workshops with their students. It is possible for inservice teachers to do an internship at our school. At the moment we offer training periods to teachers interested in the following areas: The role of the tutor, Science and Maths, History and Geography, Food Education and Cooking, Citizenship Education, Integration of diversely able pupils. Groups and individuals from Italy and abroad interested in visiting us and getting an insight into our school are welcome.

Assemblies

While in traditional education students are allowed to organise school meetings with their peers only at upper secondary school level, monthly assemblies for each of our 15 class groups are an established feature of our school. The assemblies cover current issues and look at the way we live and work together, giving pupils room for reflection.

Delegates

Another distinctive feature of Rinascita is the organisation of a number of students committees. These give students a voice and are supervised by teachers. At the beginning of the school year, each class group will appoint two pupils per committee. The delegates will then take part in the meetings held throughout the year, debate issues of concern to the pupils life at school and report back to their class groups.

Transition to upper secondary school

Most of our students opt for liceo, a kind of upper secondary school. Only a minority pursue their studies in vocational training centres.

Further information

Should you need further information about the school, please do contact Pietro Calascibetta at the following email: preside@rinascita-livi.it