

Swiss schools: Top of the league

Educational excellence starts on the first school benches in Switzerland, with global groups investing heavily

Home to many of the world's most prestigious and top-ranking secondary schools, Switzerland boasts a fine range of educational establishments that offer young students the absolute best in teaching and learning resources. The country has long been a haven for parents wanting to ensure their children experience educational excellence in a supportive multilingual and multicultural environment, while equipping them with the skills and knowledge to achieve ambitious career and personal goals.

With Swiss youngsters aware of the importance of innovation from an early age, it is easy to see why so many leading international schools have invested significant sums in constructing inspiring and welcoming locations for thousands of children from dozens of different countries.

Inspired Education Group has grown quickly in recent years to educate more than 45,000 students across an international network of over 64 schools on five continents, including the outstanding St. George's International School in Montreux. All schools within the group are individually developed and designed in response to their specific environment and location, so ensuring the delivery of excellent education to their respective communities.

St. George's is a vibrant and truly international school, with students from more than 60 different nations that come together to form a diverse and inspiring community of young people. Less than an hour from Geneva by car, the school's 12-acre campus offers both boarding and day school programs that blend together as one to help the coveted establishment achieve its visionary goals and achievements.

"The schools we acquire are all successful schools in the countries and cities in which they operate; it's always key for us to protect what made these schools successful in the first place: their ethos and values," states Nadim Nsouli, founder and group CEO of Inspired. "By being part of the Inspired group they can then benefit from global best practices that we have gathered from operating around the world—the best schools become even better through collaboration and partnership.

"St. George's International School is a very special school; the jewel in the crown within our group. It's probably the oldest school in our network, having been open for more than 90 years, and is located in an amazing setting with the lake and mountains surrounding it. We acquired the school a few years ago and invested large amounts in upgrading its facilities and significantly raising its academic standards.

"It's the type of school I would love to send my children to: a prime loca-



Nadim Nsouli
Founder and Group
CEO, Inspired
Education Group



tion surrounded by amazing natural beauty, an extremely safe environment, top academic performance, sports and performing arts. It's small, while still being part of the best premium schools group globally, having access to international best practices."

Like private and public schools all over the world, the arrival of COVID-19 created challenges for teachers and pupils who quickly and effortlessly made the transition from classroom learning to e-learning solutions. The outbreak accelerated Inspired's digital transition and Nsouli is proud about the speed at which all the group's schools switched to live, synchronous virtual learning, with its school in Vietnam at the forefront of this drive, followed by other schools in the portfolio.

"Taking the lessons from Vietnam, we prepared our schools to go virtual around the world, which allowed us to be significantly ahead of our competitors when governments required schools to close," the senior executive explains. "Our live virtual learning has been extremely successful, specifically because it is live all day following the normal school timetable. The power of the group really came across during this crisis. Our schools benefited not only from the lessons learnt from other schools that shut down before them, but also best practices from different parts of the world on reopening."

Inspired has a very selective recruitment process, with teachers hand-

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picked as part of a dedication to excellence that permeates every aspect of each school. Once appointed, headteachers have the opportunity to become regional leaders with a portfolio of schools to oversee, as part of Inspired's strong leadership development and succession planning. "The head and teachers are what make a school," Nsouli adds. "Our view is the child has only one chance to do well in school that year, so we carefully and continuously develop our teachers, providing coaching and training through one of the largest professional learning communities in the sector.

"Switzerland is an amazing country from every perspective. We are proud to have a school there; the setting couldn't be more ideal for a school. It's a safe and secure environment surrounded by natural beauty, providing amazing international education and is part of a global group that has global reach.

"St. George's International School is a wonderful and vibrant school that, combined with the benefits of being part of Inspired Education Group, offers a school experience like no other in Switzerland," he concludes.