

Diwan School, Lorient

Interviewer What is a Diwan school and how is it different from an ordinary school?

Head In Diwan schools, Breton is spoken by the children and staff, of course we use French and also English, but what's special is that Science, History and Geography are taught in Breton – total immersion.

Interviewer So do the children know Breton when they start school?

Head They normally start school here at two to three years old, they don't generally speak Breton.

Interviewer When do you start to teach Breton, is it after they've been here two or three years or.....?

Head It's the same as in any school, but here it's in Breton, so the children learn in a very normal manner.

Interviewer At what age do they start with French?

Head They are taught to read French in CP, they start to read in Breton in CP1 together with French.

Interviewer And when do they start in English?

Head English also starts in CP1, when they leave the school, they normally have three languages

Interviewer What happens when they leave school?

Head When they leave, Diwan offers them another Breton speaking school, the closest is in Vannes, and another is in Quimper, after that it's Carhaix.

Interviewer What sort of parents usually put their children into a Diwan school?

Head Doctors, workers, all types really, there seems to be no rule.

Interviewer And why do you think people use Diwan schools?

Head Because they don't want to lose the Breton language and also because they want their children to be bilingual, also class sizes are small – all these things are important to the parents.

Interviewer And at what age do they finish school here?

Head We start from pre-school, so we have three levels in pre-school - then CP CP1 and CP2, and then they leave when they're 11.

Interviewer So the method of teaching you use is total immersion?

Head Yes, but when the teacher sees that the children don't understand, they give an explanation in French, and bit by bit they introduce Breton.

