

AMERSFOORT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SCHOOL GUIDE 2023-2024



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🌐 amersfoortinternationalschool.nl

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to Amersfoort International School. It is with great pride and excitement that we open our doors for the first time to welcome students from all over the world. The 2023-2024 school year marks the launch of our first year as an international primary school. It is anticipated that over the years to come, our school will continue to grow to accommodate up to 250 students from diverse backgrounds.



We hope you will find this school guide to be a helpful tool to learn more about the school's philosophies, policies and founding principles. It is also designed to provide practical information, particularly relevant for students and parents. We look forward to an inspiring and joyful school year!

Jaap Mos, Head of School

CONTENT

The school	5	Class life	15
– School Profile	5	– Mixed aged grouping	15
– Vision and Mission	6	– Daily Schedule	16
– Learning for All	6	– Clothing	16
		• Play Clothes	16
		• Indoor shoes	16
		• Physical Education	17
		• Wet Weather Play	17
Structure	7	– After School Childcare	17
– KPOA	7		
• De Kubus	7		
– International Baccalaureate	8		
• Mission IB	8		
• IB Primary Years Programme	8		
– Beyond Primary Years	9		
• Secondary	9		
• Moving abroad again	9		
Educational Philosophy	10	A Safe Learning Environment	18
– Concepts	10	– Health & Well-being	18
– Inquiry	10	– Health Check-Ups	18
– Play	11	– Allergies and Medical Issues	19
– Inclusion	11	– Safety	19
– Language Learning	11	– Privacy	19
• English Language		– Parental Concerns	20
Acquisition (ELA)	12	– Extracurricular Activities	21
• Multilingualism	12	– Drop Off and Pick Up	21
• Dutch	12	– Food & Drink	21
– Assessment	13	– Accident Injury Insurance	21
– Curriculum	14		
• PYP framework	14	Important Dates	22
		– Calendar	22
		– School Study Days	22

Admissions and fees	23
– General Criteria for Admission	23
– School Fees	23
– Standard Terms and Conditions	23
Participation Council	24
Contact Us	25
Our Staff	26
Our Partners	27
– De Kubus	27
– Dutch International Schools	27
– Partou	28
– ACCESS	28
– IWCUR	28

THE SCHOOL

School Profile

The new Amersfoort International School (AIS) was launched to cater to the needs of the growing international community in the Amersfoort region. As a small primary school, we have the unique opportunity to offer a friendly and tight-knit community that consists of students, families and staff, all of whom represent diverse backgrounds.

AIS aims to become a hub for international learning and global mindedness. We are continually developing partnerships with a variety of educational, cultural, social and supportive organisations in the region. AIS is a member of the Dutch International Schools organisation and works in partnership with ACCESS and other agencies, such as the International Welcome Centre Utrecht Region, to help newcomers relocate to the Netherlands.



Vision and Mission

Amersfoort International School will become a learning community based on inclusion and equal opportunity. We will create a positive school culture that supports students to reach their full potential. We believe in sharing our resources and expertise and that learning reaches far beyond academic development. We also understand and value the fact that our curriculum must meet the needs of our changing community. It is our vision to empower our students to become internationally-minded and successful learners in an ever-changing world.

Learning for All

The word 'all' is key to our mission. It represents our commitment to nurture diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity.

AIS has been modelled to become a center of expertise within a network of other Dutch educational facilities in the Amersfoort region. This initiative aims to promote unification in the region. AIS will serve to compliment other Dutch schools in the region by offering inclusive and equal opportunities to all global citizens.

AIS encourages students to take ownership of their own learning through inquiry. Inquiry-based learning prioritises problems that require critical and creative thinking so students can develop their abilities to ask questions, design investigations, interpret evidence, form explanations and arguments, and communicate findings. We aim to inspire our students to become lifelong learners who will continue to learn new skills and competencies long after they have completed their formal education. It entails not only learning different subjects but also developing an open mind and positive mindset toward the world's dynamism.

STRUCTURE

KPOA

Amersfoort International School (AIS) is a member of Katholiek Primair Onderwijs Amersfoort (KPOA), one of the largest educational organizations for primary education in Amersfoort and the surrounding area. In addition to AIS, KPOA has seventeen other primary schools under its umbrella, including one for special educational needs. The KPOA family of schools are committed to fostering the educational development of children, regardless of their origins or beliefs.

KPOA's motto is, 'We believe in you'. With this statement, KPOA endeavors to guarantee its students' educational development through building trusting relationships and by facilitating the opportunity for them to experience and connect to the wealth of our culture and society. To achieve this, KPOA relies on the power and craftsmanship of its educational professionals to create target-oriented learning processes.

Additional information about KPOA can be found on the (Dutch language) website: www.kpoa.nl

De Kubus

All state-funded international schools in the Netherlands are affiliated with a local Dutch school. Through KPOA, Amersfoort International School is affiliated with De Kubus, a primary school consisting of two campuses. AIS will be located at De Kubus' campus located at 235 Noordewierweg.

International Baccalaureate

Amersfoort International School is a Candidate School* for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP). The school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy – a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that AIS believes is important for our students.

- * Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit www.ibo.org

Mission IB

“The IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. IB programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

IB Primary Years Programme

The Primary Years Programme focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in school and in the world beyond. The PYP offers a transdisciplinary, inquiry-based and student-centered education with responsible action at its core, enabling students to learn between, across and beyond traditional subject boundaries.

Beyond Primary Years

Secondary

After completion of their education at AIS, students will be ready to continue to secondary education. AIS best prepares the students to continue their education at an international or English medium secondary school. Some IB World Schools for secondary schooling can be found in the surrounding areas of Amersfoort, such as International School Utrecht, International School Hilversum and International School Almere.

Moving abroad again

There are IB World schools all around the world. The choice to educate your child at AIS will make transferring to another school in the future much simpler because the connection with the educational programmes at other IB World schools is guaranteed.

This applies to transfers to another school within the primary system (IB PYP), as well into the secondary education systems (IB MYP, IB CP and IB DP).

This ensures that you, as a parent, know that the educational programme of your child(ren) can continue in the event of a move to another (international) destination.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Concepts

At AIS, we have developed our curriculum to be concept-based. Concept-based learning is an educational approach that promotes deep understanding and critical thinking skills among students. By focusing on fundamental concepts, our teachers guide students to make connections between ideas and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. This approach enhances problem-solving skills and fosters independent and lifelong learners.

Inquiry

In addition to concept-based learning, our school also embraces an inquiry-based approach to education. Inquiry-based learning encourages students to explore and investigate concepts through active participation and questioning. By engaging in inquiry-based activities, students actively construct their knowledge, develop problem-solving skills and cultivate a sense of curiosity and ownership over their learning.



Play

A play-based approach that incorporates concepts and inquiry in a primary school setting offers a holistic and enriching learning experience for young learners. In this approach, children engage in purposeful play, guided by their interests and curiosity. Play becomes a vehicle for exploring and understanding fundamental concepts, as well as a means to develop inquiry skills. Research studies have consistently demonstrated the importance of play in early-childhood education, highlighting its positive impact on cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. By integrating concepts, inquiry and play, our primary school provides a nurturing environment where children thrive, develop a love for learning and build a solid foundation for future academic success.

Inclusion

At AIS we recognize that our students each come with their own perspectives, cultures, and experiences as well as varying learning styles and needs. We strive to create an environment where every student can thrive and to do that, AIS takes an equity-based approach to our inclusion; we believe that by removing obstacles for learning, we can make education accessible to everyone. We endeavor to provide a diverse and culturally responsive curriculum that values their unique needs and aspirations, so our students can feel more connected and engaged. A child-centred approach empowers students to have agency over their learning and develop self-management skills. Effective communication and partnership with parents are crucial in tailoring education plans to individual needs.

Language Learning

At AIS, the language of instruction is English. As an international school, we recognize that most, if not all, of our students have a more nuanced language profile than most and will need support and challenges to meet their profile needs.

Each language possesses its own unique ways of conveying meaning, offering intrinsic value and significant importance to its users. Through the study of an additional language and its associated culture(s), students develop an appreciation of the fact that languages and cultures are structured systems used to convey meaning in specific ways. Learning a new language also expands students' linguistic and cultural understanding, enabling them to interact appropriately with other speakers.

As they navigate through different languages and cultural practices, students are challenged to reflect upon their own identities and assumptions. This results in a deepening of their comprehension of the power of language. They discover alternative methods of learning, expand their ways of knowing and gain further insights into their own capabilities.

English Language Acquisition (ELA)

All of our students who do not have English as their home language will take part in the full classroom experience and be immersed in English. This means our students will be challenged academically within the same curriculum as their peers. Students who are new to English, will receive more targeted support to help them access the curriculum.

Multilingualism

AIS promotes the use of home and family languages within the school setting. These languages are an essential part of our learning environment, shaping both our school and the learning community. We encourage students to leverage their existing linguistic knowledge to explore similarities and differences between their own languages and the language of instruction (English). As a multilingual community, AIS embraces and celebrates our cultural and linguistic diversity. We value the wide range of languages spoken and encourage families to uphold and enrich their home language(s).

Dutch

At AIS, teaching Dutch is an integral part of fostering multilingualism. Acquiring a new language not only enables communication with people from different cultures but also encourages personal exploration. Languages are intricately connected to the social and cultural contexts in which they are used. They play a vital role in shaping our personal, group, national and human identities. It is our goal at AIS to do the above and not to achieve fluency for our students new to the Dutch language.



Assessment

AIS recognizes assessment as an integral part of our curriculum, but we also know that excess testing can raise stress levels, especially in younger students. Finding a balance is essential as it allows teachers to gauge proficiency while ensuring that children's health remains safeguarded, thus fostering an optimal learning atmosphere. We have therefore chosen to use formalized and standardized tests sporadically throughout the year, relying more on more informal and authentic data to inform us about student achievement.

We understand that reporting is an important way to inform our parent community about their children's progress and development. We also understand the value of holding face-to-face meetings and will do so throughout the year. Written reports will be shared with families twice a year, at mid-term and at the end of the year. As part of their learning, students at AIS will be putting together a portfolio. This will be a compilation of photo and video records to demonstrate a child's progress through the year.

Curriculum

The curriculum at AIS will adhere to Dutch national curriculum standards. The subject areas taught will include language, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and well-being, which includes, but is not limited to, physical education. The Dutch curriculum is supplemented with best practices taken from the New-Zealand national curriculum, which promotes a concept-, inquiry- and play-based approach to teaching. We believe that this multifaceted approach supports our goal of offering an internationally focused curriculum.

PYP framework

The IB PYP encourages schools to take an integrated approach to their curriculum, where connections and meaningful relationships among various subject areas are emphasized. Rather than teaching subjects in isolation, an integrated curriculum seeks to merge disciplines, allowing students to explore topics from a multidisciplinary perspective. For example, in a science-and-literature integration, students may study a scientific concept, such as the water cycle, while simultaneously reading literature that explores themes of water and its significance in different cultures. Similarly, in a math-and-art integration, students can learn geometric principles while applying them in creating intricate patterns or designing structures.

By integrating subjects, students gain a deeper understanding of concepts, develop critical thinking skills and recognize the relevance of their learning in real-world contexts. This approach promotes holistic learning, encourages creativity and enables students to make connections across disciplines, fostering a more comprehensive and meaningful educational experience.

CLASS LIFE

Mixed aged grouping

AIS is a newly opened, small and growing school. As such, we have chosen multi-age classrooms to ensure sufficient social interaction for our students. Multi-age classes in primary school offer numerous benefits for students' academic and social development.

At AIS we believe that classes should be large enough to facilitate meaningful interactions and offer sufficient choices regarding friend and work relationships. However, we also understand that keeping class sizes small enables teachers to best meet our students' needs. For this reason, we will add classes to accommodate student growth.



Daily Schedule

Learning starts at 8:45am, so please be sure your child arrives at school 10 minutes earlier to ensure enough time for students to hang up their coats and change into indoor shoes.

Learning ends at 2:30pm. Teachers will accompany students outside to meet their parents.

Clothing

Play Clothes

Because play is a large part of our educational philosophy, we encourage students to arrive at school dressed for play. Our play includes arts and crafts, as well as outdoor play and water play. We encourage students to wear durable, washable clothing and shoes that will enable them to run, jump and climb.

Indoor shoes

At AIS, our students wear indoor shoes while in the building. First, this ensures that our classrooms and other learning spaces remain clean. Changing shoes also supports our younger students in their self-management skills. Please ensure that your child has indoor shoes with them. These shoes should remain at school and can also be used for indoor movement lessons.

Here is an example:



Physical Education

We will have movement lessons at least twice a week, sometimes indoors and sometimes outdoors. For these lessons it is important that students have appropriate clothes. We advise leggings, sports shorts or jogging pants and a T-shirt. They will also need shoes appropriate for movement.

Wet Weather Play

Outside play is very important for healthy bodies and minds. Living in the Netherlands means we have weather that might feel inclement to some. At AIS, we play outside twice a day, even if it is raining. Please ensure that students have rain clothes and rubber boots to wear on rainy days, and coats and other cold weather gear in the winter.

After School Childcare

Amersfoort International school is proud to partner with Partou, one of the largest childcare organisations in the Netherlands.

Partou supports families in creating a balance between family life, career and education. It offers Daycare/Kinderopvang (0-4 years), Pre-school care / Peuteropvang (2-4 years) as well as Afterschool Childcare/BSO (4-12 years). Costs are directly charged by Partou. To find out more, visit www.partou.nl

A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Health & Well-being

The province of Utrecht, which Amersfoort is a part of, has a youth health department (JGZ, Jeugdgezondheidszorg) within its Public Health Service (GGD) department. This group monitors the health, growth and development of children aged from 0 to 18 years old. It provides preventative health check-ups, vaccinations and useful information meetings for families in Amersfoort. The JGZ provides a school nurse and a school doctor to serve the needs of Amersfoort International School students.

Parents are encouraged to contact the JGZ for assistance or to answer any questions they may have regarding the development, health, parenting or general well-being of their children. Depending on the health issue, the JGZ will offer help or refer to the appropriate care provider. The JGZ offers preventative health care. It does not diagnose or treat childhood illnesses or other health problems. For (immediate) medical advice, always contact your general practitioner.

If you have any questions, you can call JGZ on weekdays between 8:30-17:00, at 030-286 33 00. A nurse will call you back within 48 hours. You can also visit www.jeugdengezinutrecht.nl for more information.

Health Check-Ups

The RIVM (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu) is the organization in the Netherlands that registers vaccinations for every child. When you first arrive in the country you will receive a letter from the RIVM asking you to send a copy of already received vaccinations.

When you first arrive in the Netherlands you will receive a welcome letter from the JGZ and be invited to participate in the youth health care program. The JGZ also administers the national immunization program. The JGZ will call you to explain the program and arrange, when necessary, follow-up meetings.

When your children are between the ages of 0 to 4 years old, you will automatically receive invitations for your child's health checks and vaccinations. A youth health nurse or doctor working at a local medical center will be available to discuss your child's development with you and perform a physical check-up.

You can ask any questions you may have about care, parenting, health and development. Additionally, your child will be vaccinated in accordance with the national immunization program.

When your child is 5 years old, and again at the age of 9, he or she will have a healthcare check-up at school. A JGZ assistant will visit the school to measure and weigh the children and test their hearing and eyesight. You will receive an invitation for a follow-up appointment with the school nurse.

Allergies and Medical Issues

A medical alert sheet is created for any child who may be at risk due to pre-existing medical conditions. Parents are asked to ensure that all teachers and parents in their child's class are aware of any allergies their child may have. Please seek advice from your child's teacher and/or class representative for specific details, particularly when providing treats that will be shared with the class.

All medication is kept securely in the school office.

Safety

Amersfoort International School strives to be a safe school in every way. To this end, we have drawn up a school safety/fire evacuation plan, which will be made available on our website.

In addition, a number of company Emergency Response Officers (BHV's) have been trained within the school. These Emergency Response Officers can provide first aid in the event of an accident and will lead the appropriate action in the event that the building must be evacuated.

Privacy

Amersfoort International School considers privacy to be a fundamental component in creating a safe and healthy school climate. Our privacy policies are in alignment with the General Data Protection Regulations (May 2018).

By signing the school's Terms and Conditions agreement, parents accept that it is the school's legal duty to provide requested information to government ministries. This information is usually limited to age and nationality information only.



Parental Concerns

Parents who have any concerns or questions regarding their child or the school are encouraged to bring these issues to the school's attention, so that we can reach an effective and timely solution together.

Your first point of contact is your child's class teacher. Please bring up any issues you may have with the teacher who will work with you to address any concerns. Parents are encouraged to schedule a mutually agreeable time to speak with their child's teacher to discuss any issues.

Depending on certain circumstances, parents may want to address their questions or concerns with a confidential advisor. Confidential advisors are available to address complaints about inappropriate conduct, such as bullying, discrimination, (sexual) intimidation or aggression. If you wish to speak to a confidential advisor, contact one of KPOA's external contact persons, Sylvia van Bracht or Jeroen Meiboom, at evp@cedgroep.nl, or call 010-407159. Confidential advisors are also available to address cases of integrity violation, which could include fraud or the misuse of subsidies. For more information, visit www.cvp-plus.nl (Dutch language).

Extracurricular Activities

Amersfoort International School works with after-school partners to provide a variety of extracurricular activities throughout the year. More information will be provided once the school year is underway.

Drop Off and Pick Up

At AIS we encourage cycling to school. Designated areas have been assigned for bicycle parking. Safety is our priority. More information about parking and other drop-off and pick-up guidelines will be made available before the start of the school year.

Food & Drink

Snack time will take place during the mid-morning and is a moment for students to enjoy a healthy snack to help refuel their bodies for further learning. It is also a moment for socializing and becoming more independent in self-management. We encourage snacks that are healthy and accessible. Snacks should be packed in containers that the students can easily open and close by themselves. Please, no chocolate or sweets.

AIS does not provide lunch for our students, so a packed lunch is necessary. We will have a longer period of time to eat lunch, though independence is still highly valued. Children should be able to access their food independently. We do not have the facilities to heat up lunches, but a warm lunch, in a thermos or tiffin box, is welcome.

Canned drinks or drink packages are not encouraged for a few reasons at AIS. These drinks are often sweet or unhealthy, the packaging is not sustainable, and they are often difficult to open. We encourage all of our students to bring a refillable water bottle instead.

Accident Injury Insurance

The school has a collective accident insurance policy. It provides limited coverage in cases where injuries are not covered by the student's own insurance. It applies to accidents incurred on the way between home and school, as well as during activities that are organised by, and/or under the responsibility of, the school. Please note, damage incurred to school and student property is not covered by the school insurance.

IMPORTANT DATES

Calendar

Amersfoort International School holidays are taken during the same time as regular Dutch school holidays. The school calendar is available on our website and will be updated on a regular basis: www.amersfoortinternationalschool.nl.

- Autumn Break | 16 – 20 October 2023
- Winter Break | 22 December 2023 – 5 January 2024
- Spring Break | 19 February 2024 – 23 February 2024
- Easter | 29 March 2024 – 1 April 2024
- May Break | 29 April 2024 – 10 May 2024
- Pentecost | 20 May 2024
- Summer Break | 15 July 2024 – 23 August 2024

After school care (BSO) is also available on a full-day basis during school holidays.

- * There are strict guidelines for granting permission for extra leave in addition to the 12 weeks of school holidays.

School Study Days

Throughout the school year there are a number of professional development days for staff. On these days the school is closed.

- Wednesday | 27 September 2023
- Monday | 23 October 2023
- Monday | 8 January 2024
- Friday | 16 February 2024
- Thursday | 28 March 2024
- Tuesday | 21 May 2024

- * On these days the school is closed. Students who normally go after school care (BSO) will be welcome at the BSO all day on study days.

ADMISSIONS AND FEES

AIS offers primary education in an English-speaking environment. The school welcomes applications from students from the international community of all nationalities, faiths, beliefs and cultures.

AIS is a state-subsidised international school and therefore, admission is subject to conditions set by Dutch legislation.

General Criteria for Admission

- The student has a non-Dutch nationality/is a foreign passport holder and one of the parents/legal guardians is temporarily in the Netherlands;
- Or, the student has Dutch nationality and has lived and attended school abroad for at least two years;
- Or, the student has Dutch nationality and has a parent/legal guardian (with whom the student will be living) who will move abroad within two years.

Another condition is that the school programme should be appropriate for the student's needs and the student will be able to benefit from the programme.

Admission to the school will be confirmed only after it has been established by the Head of school that the programme is appropriate for the child's needs and a place is available.

School Fees

To secure administrative processing of a new student, AIS requires a one-time registration fee of 250 euros per child.

Questions regarding financial matters may be directed to financieel@kpoa.nl.

Standard Terms and Conditions

On our website, www.amersfoortinternationalschool.nl, you will find the most up-to-date version of our Standard Terms and Conditions. The document explains eligibility, fees and the process of registration and application. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all required payments are made on time using the prescribed procedure.

PARTICIPATION COUNCIL

Dutch regulations regarding participation of parents and staff regulate the establishment of a participation council (MR) in schools in the Netherlands.

Through the council parents and staff have an advisory role for areas of the school vision and planning. The council is comprised of elected members proportionally divided between staff and parents. Meetings of the council are attended by the Head of School.

Given the scope of the staff team and the parent community during the year 2023-2024, AIS plans to initiate the establishment of the council during the year 2024-2025. In the process, there will also be a role for the participation council of De Kubus, with which AIS is affiliated.

CONTACT US

Location

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OUR PARTNERS

De Kubus

AIS is affiliated with De Kubus, a Dutch primary school. The partnership goes beyond just sharing the school building. AIS will partner with De Kubus where possible and appropriate. Thus, enabling our students to integrate with their Dutch school mates. The cooperation will include the joint celebration of typical Dutch events such as “Sinterklaas” and “Avond Vierdaagse” and may also include movement lessons and special classroom activities.

Dutch International Schools

Amersfoort International School is a member of the Dutch International Schools (DIS) organisation. The group consists of over 40 state-funded primary and secondary international schools in the Netherlands.

This Dutch government initiative was established in the 1990s to offer state-subsidized education to help meet the needs of the international community. The subsidy allows Dutch International Schools to offer high quality international education at competitive costs.

DIS is responsible for supporting internationally oriented education in the Netherlands in English, within the Dutch educational system and specific international target groups. This means DIS schools, including AIS, are accountable to the Dutch Ministry of Education regarding the standards and provision of its high-caliber educational programs and quality management.

For more information, visit www.dutchinternationalschools.nl.

Partou

Partou is the largest childcare organisation in the Netherlands.

Partou: “We are proud to say that we have a lot of experience with children. The things that are important to us are friendship, personal attention, fun and quality!”

Partou has partnered with AIS to deliver after-school care and preschool care for children from the international community of Amersfoort. Students between the ages of 8 to 12 years old can receive after-school care on our school premises at Noordewierweg. Younger students, between the ages of 4 and 7 years old can join the after-school care program at De Kubus’ campus on the Spaarnestraat, (located very nearby the school). Children between the ages of 2 and 4 years old, from international families, are welcome to join Partou’s preschool program, offered at two locations in close proximity to AIS.

To find out more, visit www.partou.nl.

ACCESS

ACCESS is a dynamic volunteer, not-for-profit organisation that serves the needs and interests of the international community. ACCESS provides information and guidance to the international community through their helpdesk, website and expat centres.

For more information, visit www.access-nl.org.

IWCUR

The International Welcome Centre Utrecht Region (IWCUR) helps internationals living, working and studying in Utrecht Region to settle in. IWCUR helps internationals arrange the official procedures upon their arrival, get familiar with life in Utrecht Region and connect to the local (international) community. IWCUR is sponsored by the Province of Utrecht, City of Utrecht, City of Amersfoort and Utrecht University.

For more information, visit welcome.utrechtregion.com.