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## Philosophy and Objectives

### Philosophy

At ACS Egham International School, we offer the International Baccalaureate Programme in our Lower, Middle and High Schools. The curriculum and instruction are based upon respect for unique learning styles and understanding of our international student population. Our school promotes high standards of scholarship, responsibility and citizenship in a supportive learning community. We implement a developmental, student-centred approach to instruction following an inquiry-based, interdisciplinary curriculum. The success of our school relies on the partnership between students, parents and staff in providing a positive and enjoyable educational experience.

As a school community, we embrace the attributes of the International Baccalaureate (IB) learner profile. IB learners strive to be: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, risk-takers, balanced, caring and reflective.

ACS Egham International School inspires, encourages and supports the development of the child as an independent, life-long learner.

### Objectives

At ACS Egham International School, we:

- Encourage students to become responsible, contributing citizens of the school and the world
- Nurture an abiding sense of integrity and personal accountability
- Develop cooperative skills through collaborative, activity-based learning
- Foster respect for self and others, as well as for natural and created environments
- Promote active involvement in community service, both locally and globally
- Address a variety of learning needs, such as English as an additional language, native language, special education, enrichment and counselling, within the resources available
- Prepare students for success at the next stage of their education, including admission to competitive universities worldwide
- Strive for constant improvement by actively seeking input from students, parents and staff and by referencing academic research and external agencies
- Facilitate ongoing professional development for staff
- Enhance everyone's understanding of our school's vision, philosophy and practices.

ACS Egham International School's Philosophy and Objectives guide our work in fulfilling our vision to achieve excellent in international education and promoting consistent values throughout our school community.

## Welcome from the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) Coordinator

All children are special and all children are unique. The students at ACS Egham are special in the way that they combine a rich and varied experience of life with a strong urge to learn and a deep-seated sense of inquiry.

The PYP curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of the particular students represented at ACS Egham. The PYP is written specifically for internationally mobile children and aims to create a strong sense of awareness and identity. All curricula transmit values and beliefs. The PYP makes these values and beliefs explicit and encourages children to reflect on their own opinions and assumptions.

The PYP is based on the latest educational research and believes that each child has their own personality, learning style and combination of intelligence types. Opportunity is given, within a structured framework, for students to explore their own interests and questions.

Internationalism is a key aspect of the PYP curriculum. The students are exposed to alternative perspectives and examples of working methods and data from around the world. Teachers use tried and tested techniques from many countries and search for new ideas from different cultures.

ACS Egham is a dynamic and reflective community. All involved regularly reflect on progress made and the next steps to be taken. Students are very closely involved in their own education. From classroom discussions with the teacher and self-administered assessments to student-led conferences children are strongly directed towards taking responsibility for their own learning.

The teachers at ACS Egham are committed to child centred learning and the PYP. Learning opportunities are tailored to meet the needs of the individual child, group or class.

Teamwork is an important part of the PYP for both students and teachers. Students will frequently work with others from the same class or grade, or across the school, to maximise learning. Teachers meet several times a week to ensure that the learning taking place in the classroom, and beyond, is appropriate, challenging, engaging and relevant.

The PYP, committed teachers and lively students combine to make ACS Egham an exciting place to learn and grow.

The Programme of Inquiry details the Science and Social Studies curriculum content for each grade throughout the year. Further details can be obtained from the classroom teacher or PYP Coordinator. The Long Term Plans for the single subjects provide information on the relevant curricula. Copies of the scope and sequences for each subject, including Language Arts and Mathematics, are available in the Lower School Library.

## The IB PYP Information for Parents (1 of 2)

The IB PYP is an international curriculum framework designed for children between the ages of 3 and 12 years. The programme focuses on the total growth of the developing child, addressing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare. The PYP combines the best research and practice from a range of national systems with a wealth of experience from international schools to create a relevant and engaging educational programme. The PYP offers a comprehensive, inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. It incorporates guidelines on student learning styles, teaching methodologies and assessment strategies.

### Language and Literacy

The PYP emphasises the importance of children making connections between their experience and the incremental pieces of new information they encounter. The programme supports the child's struggle to gain understanding of the world and to learn to function comfortably within it, to move from not knowing to knowing, to identifying what is real and what is not real, to acknowledging what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. To do this the child must integrate a great deal of information and apply this accumulation of knowledge in a cohesive and effective way.

### Inquiry based

Teaching methods build on students individual knowledge and interests and emphasise learning how to learn and how to find out, using both traditional and contemporary media. Inquiry, as the leading but not exclusive pedagogical approach of the PYP, is recognised as being intimately connected with the development of children's comprehension of the world.

Inquiry is the process initiated by the learner or the teacher which moves the learner from his or her current level of understanding to a new and deeper level of understanding. This can mean:

- Exploring, wondering and questioning
- Experimenting and playing with possibilities
- Researching and seeking information
- Collecting data and reporting findings
- Clarifying existing ideas and reappraising events
- Deepening understanding through the application of a concept or rule
- Making and testing theories
- Making predictions and acting purposefully to see what happens
- Elaborating on solutions to problems.

Inquiry involves an active engagement with the environment in an effort to make sense of the world, and consequent reflection on the connections between the experiences encountered and the information gathered. Inquiry involves the synthesis, analysis and manipulation of knowledge, whether through play for younger children and through more formally structured learning in the primary years.

### Integrated

The subject areas of Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Technology and Health are taught through interdisciplinary themes in order to help the students make connections between the subjects, thereby facilitating more effective learning.

### Learner Profile

To provide education for international understanding and to nurture globally minded citizens who are:

- Communicators
- Thinkers
- Enquirers
- Risk-takers
- Knowledgeable
- Principled
- Caring
- Open-minded
- Balanced
- Reflective

## **The IB PYP Information for Parents (2 of 2)**

### Concepts

The key concepts have relevance within and across subject areas. Expressed as questions, these eight ideas are explored through each topic studied. The concepts shape the extended, structured inquiry – units of inquiry – that are a distinguishing feature of the PYP. The school plans and implements a set of these units each year at each grade level. Collectively, these units form a transdisciplinary, coherent, school-wide component of the PYP, the programme of inquiry.

### International perspective

In order to make the most of the diversity of background and experience of our students, the PYP synthesises the best from educational systems around the world. The PYP aims to develop international sensitivity through key questions derived from the concepts and through the content of the written curriculum

## Language Arts (1 of 2)

Language is fundamental to learning and permeates the entire PYP. By learning language as well as learning about and through language, students nurture an appreciation of the richness of language and a love of literature.

The ACS Egham Lower School Language Arts scope and sequence identifies the major expectations considered essential in the PYP. These expectations are arranged into three main strands: oral communication, written communication and visual communication. These communication strands are organised into sub-strands which include listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. Each of the sub-strands is addressed separately, although in practice they are interactive and interrelated elements of the programme.

### Oral communication: listening and speaking

Oral communication encompasses all aspects of listening and speaking, skills that are essential for language development, for learning, and for relating to others. Listening involves listening to people and to texts for general meaning (i.e. for gist) and for precise meaning (i.e. for the key points). Students learn how to listen attentively, to understand and evaluate what they hear, to think about both literal and inferred meanings, and to respond appropriately.

Speaking involves the pronunciation, intonation and stress of speech: vocabulary development; communicative competence; the use of grammar; and the speaker's fluency and accuracy. Oral language is used to communicate, reflect, gather, process and present information. Speakers use oral language to ask and answer questions; relate and retell; persuade; talk about needs, feelings, ideas and opinions; and to contribute to discussions in a range of formal and informal situations.

### Written communication; reading and writing

Reading is for enjoyment, instruction and information, and reading helps us to understand and clarify ideas, feelings, thoughts and opinions. Literature in particular offers a means of understanding ourselves and others and has the power to influence and structure thinking. Students are introduced to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and have opportunities to read for their own interest, pleasure and for information.

Reading is gaining meaning from text. The process of reading is interactive and involves the reader's purpose for reading, the reader's prior knowledge and experience and the text itself. The reader learns about direction, spacing, punctuation cues and about the general features of text. Effective reading depends on the skillful integration and application of semantic cues (meaning), syntactic cues (structure), and graphophonic cues (sound-symbol relationships), using a variety of reading strategies (e.g. using picture cues, context cues, prediction, phonics, sight vocabulary, punctuation, and syntax).

Students learn how to understand, interpret and respond to the ideas, attitudes and feelings expressed in various texts; to think critically about what they read; and to be able to make predictions and inferences based on information that is both explicit and implicit in a text.

Writing helps make sense of the world. It is a powerful means by which to remember, develop, organise, gain self-knowledge and communicate ideas, feelings and information. Purpose and audience contribute to the form and substance of writing as well as to its style and tone. Learning to write is a developmental process and students initially focus on meaning rather than accuracy. Grammar, spelling, handwriting, punctuation and paragraphing are taught gradually through writing practice.

The writing process involves creating an environment where students can acquire the skills to achieve written products for a variety of purposes. The written product can be formal, informal, personal or reflective. It can be informative, persuasive, poetic, or in the form of a story or dialogue.

As motivation and a positive attitude are important factors in learning to read and write, it is essential that learners view themselves as capable readers and writers, having acquired a complex set of skills, attitudes, behaviours and expectations related to language.

## Language Arts (2 of 2)

### Visual communication: viewing and presenting

Viewing and presenting are fundamental processes that are powerful and significant in developing literacy.

Visual images immediately engage viewers allowing them instant access to data. Therefore, opportunities are provided to explore the function and construction of images in order to critically analyse a wide variety of media. Learning to understand and use different media expands the sources of information and expressive abilities of students. Presenting information is an important skill that requires experience and practice.

Language is a major connection between home and school. In the PYP classroom cooperative activities optimise development of all the languages. Mother tongue development is actively encouraged and supported.

Language Arts teaching and learning is supplemented by a wide range of materials and resources including 6 + 1 Traits, Making Meaning, Sitton Spelling and THRASS.

## Mathematics

The PYP views mathematics not as a fixed body of knowledge to be transmitted, but as a way of thinking and a language for understanding meaning. To study mathematics is to inquire into this language and to learn to think in this way.

The ACS Egham Lower School mathematics scope and sequence identifies the expectations considered essential in the Primary Years Programme (PYP). These expectations are arranged into five interwoven strands of knowledge. In number and pattern and function, students inquire into the number system, and its operations, patterns and functions. This is where students become fluent users of the language of arithmetic, as they learn to understand its meanings, symbols and conventions.

The remaining strands, data handling, measurement and shape and space, are the areas of mathematics that other disciplines use to research, describe, represent and understand aspects of their domain. Mathematics provides the models, systems and processes for handling data, making and comparing measurements, and solving spatial problems.

**Cognitive psychologists have described the stages through which children learn mathematics:**

- Constructing meaning
- Transferring meaning into signs and symbols
- Understanding and applying.

**As they work through these stages, students use certain processes of mathematical reasoning:**

- They use patterns and relationships to analyse the problem situations upon which they are working
- They make and evaluate their own and each other's ideas
- They use models, facts, properties and relationships to explain their thinking
- They justify their answers and the processes by which they arrive at solutions.

In a PYP classroom, mathematics is a vital and engaging part of students' lives. Students in the classroom are very active with an underlying sense of organisation and cooperation. Teachers and students are asking questions of each other, trying out and demonstrating ideas in small and large groups, using the language of Mathematics to describe their thinking, generating data to look for patterns and making conjectures.

Students are encouraged to use multiple strategies, developing an understanding of which strategies are most effective and efficient. The students are given an opportunity to communicate their mathematical thinking and strategies to others and to have time to reflect upon them.

Appropriate and regular assessment is essential in monitoring what students have learned. There are ongoing formative assessments as well as summative assessments. Assessment activities are carefully planned, and opportunities for differentiation of students are included.

The University of Chicago Everyday Mathematics scheme is used as the core of the curriculum. This scheme is supplemented by a wide range of other materials and resources.

## Science and Technology

The ACS Egham Lower School Science and Technology scope and sequence is arranged into four main strands: living things, Earth and space, materials and matter and forces and energy.

In living things students inquire into issues related to themselves and their environment. In Earth and space students extend their inquiry to include the study of planet Earth and its relationship to the universe. Materials and matter and forces and energy focus on the study of the origins, properties and uses of solids, liquids, gases and energy sources.

Science and Technology provides opportunities for students to engage in scientific investigations by making accurate observations, handling tools, recording and comparing data, and formulating explanations using their own scientific experiences and those of others. Students gain experience in testing their own assumptions and thinking critically about the perspectives of others in order to further develop their own ideas.

Science and Technology is used to provide explanations and models of behaviour for phenomena and objects around us. It is used to investigate the interrelationships between the natural, physical and material worlds. The PYP considers the Science and Technology curriculum to be driven by skills and concepts rather than content.

PYP Science and Technology is a way of thinking and a process that strives for balance between the construction of meaning and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. A PYP Science and Technology classroom provides an environment that stimulates and challenges students' ideas.

Transdisciplinary units of inquiry are entry points into Science and Technology learning through which students will experience what it is like to think and act like a scientist. Students and teachers work together to identify things they already know that might be relevant to an inquiry, what they want to know, what they need to know to answer their questions, and how best they might find that out.

The study of Science and Technology can be used as a vehicle for teaching critical-thinking skills and as a way of exploring the world. The development of ways of investigating and using evidence enables students to interact with the world around them.

## Social Studies

The ACS Egham Lower School Social Studies scope and sequence identifies central ideas considered significant in the PYP. The content is arranged into three main strands: history, geography and society.

History is the study of what we think is important about the human past. Through it we develop an understanding of the past, its influences on the present and its implications for the future. Geography considers the relationship between people and their environment, both natural and built. Through it we develop a sense of place and an understanding of human interaction with the Earth's surface and resources. Society is the study of people and their relationships in society. Through it we develop an understanding of the ways in which individuals, groups and societies interact with each other and how their values shape our social systems. It incorporates the disciplines of anthropology, economics, ethics, politics, psychology and sociology.

Although these strands are considered separately, in practice they are inextricably linked. Social Studies is essentially about people; how they think, feel and act; how they interact with others; their beliefs, aspirations and pleasures; the problems they have to face; how and where they live (or lived); how they interact with their environment; the work they do and how they organise themselves.

Social Studies provides opportunities for students to look at and think about human behaviour realistically, objectively and with sensitivity. It aims to guide students and teachers towards a deeper understanding of themselves and others, and of their place in an increasingly global society.

The Social Studies curriculum provides opportunities for students to:

- Learn how to ask compelling and relevant questions that can be researched
- Gain a secure understanding of their own identity and their place in the world
- Develop an understanding of other cultural groups and an appreciation of other ideas and beliefs
- Gain knowledge that is of genuine importance in understanding the human condition, through the exploration of themes that have significance for all students in all cultures
- Gain conceptual understanding through participating in learning experiences that foster sensitivity, creativity and initiative, leading to socially responsible action
- Gain a sense of time and place in relation to their own experience and the experience of other people
- Gain an understanding of humankind's role in and dependence on the natural world, and learn to apply this knowledge in responsible ways.

Successful learning in Social Studies develops students who are able to select key ideas and significant understanding from the data acquired for a unit of inquiry. Students are able to frame genuine, open-ended questions worthy of sustained research. As they conduct their inquiries, they are able to provide accurate information, valid explanations and empathetic understandings. They are able to identify possible causes of an issue, choose a solution and determine appropriate action to be taken. Through these processes, they develop the habits and attitudes of successful lifelong learners.

## Arts in the PYP

### The Arts provide:

- A means of communication
- Opportunities for developing skills
- A means of expression of both emotional and intellectual perspectives
- Exposure to other cultures and other times
- A means of accessing other disciplines
- A vehicle for wondering, reflecting and consolidating.

The Arts are important areas of learning in the Primary Years Programme. Students learn the disciplines of visual arts, music and drama, as well as learning about the arts (the skills and processes involved) and through the arts (artists, perspectives, themes and ideas using the arts). In all areas of learning, the PYP values imagination, creativity and original thinking. The creative disciplines of visual arts, music and drama are closely connected to each other, as well as having strong links to other disciplines. The creative process is seen as a driving force in learning through inquiry.

The Arts are built into the curriculum as essential areas of learning, not added on as optional extras. Students are exposed to all three Arts (visual arts, music, drama). Visual arts, music and drama are significant disciplines in their own right and are also important sign systems for interpreting and understanding the world. Students are encouraged to consider the Arts as a means of communication and as an expressive language. Implementation of the Arts in the PYP involves full participation of all teachers in the collaborative planning of units of inquiry.

Creativity is at the heart of the Arts. It allows for innovation, interpretation, research, analysis and transfer. Learning through the Arts has a positive influence on self-esteem and creative development, which needs to carry over to all aspects of learning. Valuing imagination and celebrating original thinking promotes initiative and a lifelong love of learning.

Learning through the Arts provides strong links to the student profile. From an early age, students have the opportunity to develop genuine interest, to give careful consideration to their work, to become self-critical and reflective. They are provided with opportunities to communicate about their creative work and to share their understanding with teachers, peers and families. Students are encouraged to develop responsible attitudes and find appropriate ways to take action through the arts, in order to make a difference in and to the world. Appropriate action could involve presenting, exhibiting, celebrating, communicating and sharing in a variety of ways.

## Art

ACS Egham Lower School Art scope and sequence identifies the major expectations considered essential in the PYP. These expectations are: creative processes, elements of art and design, visual arts in society, and reflection and appreciation. Each of the strands is addressed separately, although in practice they are interactive and interrelated elements.

In creative processes, students explore, develop and express their ideas using visual arts. In elements of art and design, students consider the practical and theoretical aspects of art and design: line, shape, form, colour, texture and pattern as well as balance, emphasis, rhythm, unity, variety, repetition, proportion, tension, contrast and space. They also understand the importance of taking care of tools and materials and are aware of health and safety aspects associated with using a variety of tools and materials. Visual arts in society looks at the role visual arts play in their own society and in diverse cultures, both historical and contemporary. In reflection and appreciation, students study and appreciate artworks from a range of cultures and media (including their own work) to develop their understanding of the principles of art and design in the world around them.

Visual arts as a discipline includes the development of creative skills, verbal and non-verbal expression, an awareness of the perspectives of others and aesthetic appreciation. Visual arts enable students, including EAL students, to communicate in powerful ways that go beyond their spoken language ability. Through visual arts, students can begin to construct an understanding of their community, their environment, their own feelings and emotions and to develop their cultural awareness.

Art is a part of everyday life. It is a form of non-verbal communication that allows us to convey our ideas, feelings and emotions. Art contributes to personal, social and physical development. Fine motor control is developed in the use of media and tools. Art is both active and reflective. Students are given opportunities to reflect upon their work and the work of others as well as being actively involved in creating. Collaborative activities with other students (older or younger) are encouraged.

Students draw on a wide range of stimuli in their visual arts education: contemporary and historical literature, music, paintings, dance, their own imagination, real-life experiences, feelings and beliefs. They display their work informally as well as formally to help develop an awareness of the audience through practical application.

## Music

The ACS Egham Lower School Music scope and sequence identifies the major expectations considered essential in the PYP. These expectations are arranged into four strands: performing, creating and composing, notation, and listening and appreciation. The performing strand is organised into sub-strands of singing and playing instruments. Each of the strands is addressed separately, although in practice they are interactive and interrelated elements.

In Performing: Singing, students sing a repertoire of songs to display confidence, expression and an awareness of musical elements such as pitch and rhythm. Singing lies at the heart of the music curriculum as the voice is the most immediately available instrument for all students regardless of their age or ability.

In Performing: Playing instruments, students play musical pieces using a range of instruments to demonstrate style, expression, and an understanding of melodic direction, tempo and dynamics. They perform solo and as part of an ensemble for an audience, and follow directions from a conductor.

In Creating and Composing, students use their imagination and musical experience to organise sounds into various forms that communicate specific ideas or moods.

In Notation, students use non-traditional and traditional notation to record their compositions.

In Listening and Appreciation, students are given the opportunity to identify and describe various musical elements such as rhythmic patterns, melodic patterns and form. They distinguish between a range of instrumental sounds and respond to different styles of music, as well as to music from different times and cultures.

Music as a discipline includes the development of creative skills, non-verbal expression and aesthetic appreciation. Music enables students, including EAL students, to communicate in powerful ways that go beyond their spoken language ability. Through music, students can begin to construct an understanding of their environment, recognise patterns and structure and develop their cultural awareness. Music is a part of everyday life. It is a form of non-verbal communication that allows us to convey our ideas, feelings and emotions. Music contributes to personal, social and physical development.

Music is both an active and reflective process. Students should be given opportunities to reflect upon their work and the work of others as well as being actively involved in creating and performing. Collaborative activities with students (in their own class and other classes) are encouraged. Wherever possible and appropriate, links are made with the School's programme of inquiry.

## Drama

The ACS Egham Lower School Drama scope and sequence identifies the major expectations of PYP. These expectations are arranged into six strands:

- Creative exploration and expression
- Technical incorporation
- Performance
- Personal and social development
- Reflection
- Evaluation and appreciation and drama in society.

Each of the strands is addressed separately, although in practice they are interactive and interrelated elements.

In creative exploration and expression, students have the opportunity to develop their imaginative skills and creativity and to apply them in a variety of drama situations. In technical incorporation, students develop their understanding of some of the technical aspects of the drama process such as script writing, stage directions and the management of props, costumes, special effects and set design. In performance, students develop and portray characters and remain in role in a given situation by using voice, body and gesture. In personal and social development, students develop negotiation skills and are able to work independently and cooperatively in small groups. In reflection, evaluation and appreciation, students take time to reflect on their own work and the work of others in order to enhance performance. In drama in society, students discuss experiences of performing arts, explaining the way a story was communicated, recognising theatrical conventions from other cultures and periods while identifying those elements of the production that were effective and those that were not.

Drama as a discipline includes the development of creative skills, verbal and non-verbal expression, an awareness of the perspectives of others and aesthetic appreciation. Drama enables students, to communicate in powerful ways that go beyond their spoken language ability. Through drama, students can begin to construct an understanding of their community, their environment and their own feelings and emotions. They have opportunities to work cooperatively to put together a performance.

Drama plays an important part in the language learning process. Through drama, storytelling and creative expression students are exposed to a language-rich environment that builds language skills. Drama is both an active and reflective process. Students are given opportunities to reflect upon their work and the work of others as well as being actively involved in creating and performing. Collaborative activities with other students (older or younger) are encouraged.

## Physical Education

The ACS Egham Lower School PE scope and sequence identifies the major expectations considered essential in the Primary Years Programme (PYP). These expectations are arranged into seven strands:

- Body control and spatial awareness
- Adventure challenge
- Athletics
- Movement to music
- Games
- Gymnastics
- Health-related activities.

Body control and spatial awareness focuses on exploring the human body's capacity for movement, and how to move around and in-between objects and other individuals safely.

Adventure challenge encourages the students to solve problems collaboratively involving physical and critical thinking skills.

Athletics exposes students to the three aspects of athletics: jumping, throwing and running events. It develops the different techniques for the individual events while striving to improve student performance.

Movement to music is concerned with learning to move the body in a variety of ways in response to music, sounds or situations. It also involves awareness of the position of the body and how the body can be used to convey a feeling or emotion.

Games sequentially develops the students' competence, confidence, success and enjoyment of the advanced skills and concepts associated with games and sports.

Gymnastics exposes the students to a variety of gymnastic skills: on the floor, using small equipment and various apparatus.

Health-related activities develops an awareness of the importance of physical activity and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Through PE, students are learning the "language" of physical movement, exploring the skills associated with different strands of PE. They learn to understand what they can and cannot do physically and become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in this discipline. Physical activity is an essential aspect of a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle and learning through PE helps to build self-esteem, confidence, cooperation and fitness. Wherever possible and appropriate, links are made with the School's programme of inquiry.

## Modern Languages (1 of 3)

The PYP requires that children gain experience of learning an additional language during their years in primary school. The PYP seeks to enable children to function as international citizens which, in part, entails the ability to function capably and comfortably within and between cultures. Developing the capacity to speak more than one language is an integral part of this preparation.

The PYP acknowledges the immediate and far-reaching benefits associated with learning additional languages. Not only does an individual enjoy cognitive, personal and social gains by acquiring another language, but the prospects of participating in a highly globalised society increase markedly. Language is a key factor in the development of international understanding and, as such, has a major role in a PYP school.

ACS Egham International School recognises that a study of languages is a foundation for all learning. Our School-wide Language Policy states that language study, including English, Modern Languages and Native Languages, develops understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth and promotes effective communication.

The Modern Language programme encourages students to develop an interest and appreciation of other languages and cultures whilst offering the opportunity to develop a usable command of French. Students work in a positive, encouraging environment to become responsible communicators, engaged in authentic and meaningful learning situations. Skills of listening, speaking, and visual communication are strongly emphasised, as well as reading and writing skills are included in the intermediate grades.

Exposure to French and Spanish begins in Kindergarten as a weekly informal lesson in their regular classroom environment, mainly in the form of songs and games. Students are not expected to attain specific standards and are not formally assessed.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, students have one full semester of Spanish and one of French. They attend 40 minute classes twice a week. Parents of 1<sup>st</sup> Grade students have an opportunity in the third quarter to choose one of the languages for further study for their children. In following academic years, students will remain in the language programme they have chosen – either French or Spanish.

French students who are assessed and found to be fully bilingual/fluent are offered instruction to further their language development at their level. This option is in place until Spanish is offered as a choice to all students in all grades.

In the Middle School, students will be able to select either French or Spanish to study.

## Modern Languages (2 of 3)

The following table shows the current\* Modern Language Programme:

2009-2010 Lower School – Modern Language Programme		
Kindergarten	Equal time Spanish and French. Weekly informal lessons in homerooms exposing students to both languages.	
	Semester 1 French	Semester 2 Spanish
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Semester 1 Spanish instruction twice a week for all students.	Semester 2 French instruction twice a week for all students. At the beginning of the fourth quarter parents/students choose to remain with French or to begin Spanish in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Students continue with modern language (French or Spanish) instruction twice a week.	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Students continue with modern language (French or Spanish) instruction twice a week.	
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Students continue with French instruction three times a week. Students who are fully bilingual or fluent native speakers receive instruction targeted at their level by an additional teacher, where numbers merit.	
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Students continue with French instruction three times a week. Students who are bilingual or fluent receive instruction targeted at their level by an additional teacher, where numbers merit.	

\*Note that the development of the Modern Language programme depends upon enrolment figures and other details that are unavailable at this time. It is planned to offer both languages to all Lower School students within three years. In the Middle School, students will be able to select either French or Spanish to study.

## Modern Languages (3 of 3)

Language learning instruction focuses on real communication and this focus defines proficiency in an additional language from the PYP perspective.

**The components of competence that learners must possess if they are to be capable of using language for real communication include:**

- Linguistic Structural Competence: referring to knowledge of vocabulary, sound and language structures, through a wide variety of multi-sensorial activities. New vocabulary and language structures are presented in a meaningful context. Students see clearly how the language is relevant to their lives, thus increasing motivation and learning.
- Sociolinguistic competence: knowledge of how to use language appropriately in different contexts. Students acquire developmentally appropriate cultural knowledge for use in authentic situations, such as in correspondence with pen pals and in school trips to France.
- Discourse Competence: linking elements of language together to take part in discourse, for example, conversation, role plays, creative dramatic skits, short oral presentations.
- Strategic Competence: knowledge of appropriate strategies in learning the new language.
- Cultural Competence: appreciation of language and culture (includes sensitivity towards attitudes, norms and cultures in which other languages are spoken.)

The Modern Language department provides a positive experience in the learning of an additional language and aims to develop the attributes of empathy, open-mindedness and risk-taking.

## Personal and Social Education (PSE)

PSE identifies some of the central ideas considered significant in the PYP. PSE is included throughout the curriculum wherever applicable, in addition to opportunities found in units of the programme of inquiry. Here, the content is arranged into four main strands: self-concept, health and safety, interaction with others, organisation for learning.

In self-concept, students develop an awareness of their feelings, beliefs and behaviour. They learn to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. In health and safety, positive lifestyle choices to promote and maintain health are encouraged, and the development of safe behaviour practices at home, school and in the community are considered. In interaction with others, social norms and values are considered, including strategies for the management of conflict as well as the study and acceptance of cultural, racial and religious similarities and differences. In organisation for learning, strategies and choices in relation to becoming a successful learner are developed.

Although these strands are considered separately, in practice they are inextricably linked. Students develop aspects of PSE continually, across the strands, through different disciplines and at their own pace.

PSE provides the models, processes and values for handling social and personal issues and ensuring health and wellbeing. Through PSE, students will develop their self-identity, use appropriate social skills when interacting with others in a range of situations, and learn to communicate and manage their feelings, emotions and opinions. The expectations of PSE emphasise attitudes, behaviours and skills that are closely aligned with the PYP student profile. Students are given guidance to help develop positive attitudes and behaviours in order to meet challenges, make healthy lifestyle choices and serve as responsible, respectful members of society. This guidance is specific, explicit and continuous.

Through exposure to new and difficult issues in a non-threatening environment that students are able to develop their own positive values and prepare for their role as international citizens. The PSE curriculum encourages personal and social education to be a way of thinking that permeates the School. The values, attitudes and concepts advocated within the PSE curriculum are reflected in all areas of School life via the relationships that exist within and beyond the School. They are the founding principles of policies that direct decision making at the School.

## Information Literacy (IL)

The aim of the Information Literacy programme is to develop students' ability to confidently and effectively use the library and computer technology to acquire, process and communicate information and explore the creative ways of transforming data.

The curriculum determines the use of IL. Once teachers have identified the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be developed during a Programme of Inquiry they consider the most appropriate way to use IL to enhance the students' learning and investigate the questions the students are exploring. The IL teachers work closely with homeroom teachers to ensure the maximum benefit is obtained from technology and the library.

Computers are used as teaching and learning tools across all areas of the curriculum in order to support the Programme of Inquiry in the classroom. They are used to assist the effective access, storage, retrieval, organisation and presentation of information, and enhance critical thinking and problem solving skills. Teachers incorporate the use of computers into all areas of classroom programmes as appropriate. All students have access to networked computers in their classrooms. A range of printers, scanners, digital and video cameras and other equipment is provided for use by the children.

Identified computer skills and knowledge are taught in specific computer sessions or incidentally as the need arises.

### Access to IL enhances student learning by:

- Enabling them to access people, resources and ideas that would not otherwise be available
- Enabling them to creatively compile and manipulate information and ideas in various forms from a wide range of sources
- Accommodating varied learning styles, pace and preferences
- Encouraging higher order thinking skills
- Facilitating the production of high quality, creative work
- Increasing motivation for learning and facilitating independent learning.

The library programme aims to foster a love of literature in its various forms and to develop confident and competent library users, independent researchers and recreational readers. The school library has an extensive collection of high quality children's literature, both fiction and non-fiction, which caters for a wide range of students. Students have at least one library session per week, to complement the work undertaken in the classroom. In addition children have individual access to the library throughout the week.

### The literature curriculum includes:

- Introducing children to a wide range of genres through various authors and illustrators appropriate to the students' abilities and interests
- Encouraging children to become independent readers and to interpret, discuss and respond to literature in various ways
- Fostering a love of literature in a stimulating environment where children are happy to be adventurous readers.

### The information curriculum includes:

- The sequential teaching of research skills, encouraging students to become efficient, independent researchers and library users who are confident in using the most appropriate tools to access specific information
- Encouraging the children to interpret and record a variety of information competently to demonstrate their own understanding.

## Assessment (1 of 2)

Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the Primary Years Programme's goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding students through the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts; the acquisition of knowledge; the mastering of skills; the development of attitudes; and the decision to take action. Both students and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing the student's progress as part of the development of their wider critical thinking and self-evaluation skills.

**The purposes of assessment are to promote student learning, to provide information about student learning and to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme. We feel effective assessments:**

- Identify what is worth knowing and assess it
- Have criteria that are known and understood in advance
- Allow students to demonstrate the range of their conceptual understandings, their knowledge and their skills
- Are made up of tasks that require the synthesis and application of their learning
- Focus on big ideas and transdisciplinary skills rather than facts
- Focus on producing a quality product or performance
- Highlight a student's strength and expertise
- Take into account different ways of learning and knowing and are sensitive to personal circumstances
- Use scoring that focuses on the essence of the task and not on what is easiest to score
- Produce evidence that can be reported and understood by students, parents, teachers, administrators and board members
- Are continuous and cumulative
- Are subject to continuous review and improvement.

Continuous assessment provides insights into students' understanding, knowledge, skill and attitudes. These are necessary to plan further activities, which address issues of concern to the teacher and the students. Teachers will use some of the following methods for collecting data about students:

**Observations:** students are observed often and regularly, as part of a group or as an individual and both with teacher guidance and without.

**Performance assessments:** these are goal-directed tasks with established criteria. They are meaningful and significant challenges and problems. In these tasks there are numerous approaches to the problem and rarely only one correct response. Audio, video and narrative records are often useful for this kind of assessment.

**Process focused assessments:** students are observed often and regularly for typical and non-typical behaviours. Teachers use multiple observations and often use checklists, inventories and narrative descriptions.

**Selected responses:** these are single-occasion, one-dimensional exercises. Tests and quizzes are familiar examples.

**Open-ended tasks:** these are situations in which students are presented with a stimulus and asked to communicate an original response. The answer might be a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram or a solution.

**Portfolios:** this is a purposeful collection of student's work that is designed to demonstrate successes, growth, higher order thinking, creativity and reflection. Portfolios should not be thought of as a collection of work but rather as an exhibition of an active mind at work.

Teachers evaluate the types of assessment using the following:

**Rubrics:** these are an established set of criteria used for scoring or rating students' tests, performances or portfolios. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by students as well as by teachers.

**Benchmarks:** these are samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Generally there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric.

## Assessment (2 of 2)

**Holistic scoring:** this produces a single score. It is based on the overall impression of a sample of work, rated against established criteria.

**Analytical scoring:** this awards separate scores for different aspects of the work. This is often used for diagnostic purposes or when students need specific feedback on their strengths and weaknesses.

### Assessment Weeks

In Language Arts and Mathematics, we gather baseline data and measure growth of individual children in specific weeks during the year. It is critical that children attend school these weeks and that they arrive each day on time. Assessment tools and the data gathered from them are shared with parents and students as appropriate.

Using a variety of assessment techniques enables the teacher and student to have a clear idea of each student's learning and performance, which will be communicated to parents through conferences, progress reports, meetings and written communications.

## Standardised Testing

The International Schools' Assessment (ISA) is an annual assessment programme that has been specially developed to measure skills in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and writing for students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Grades in international schools. At ACS Egham, the tests are given in October. Results are available early in the New Year.

ISA is based on the internationally endorsed reading and mathematical literacy frameworks. ISA measures profiles and monitors changes in literacy and mathematical skills across the School, within the class and at the individual student level. It is a culturally broad assessment programme that accurately reports students' knowledge and ability providing information about the growth of literacy and mathematical skills over time and relevant comparisons between international schools. The tests include both multiple-choice and open-ended tasks.

The School report details the performance of the School for each year level in relation to criterion-based standards and provides an overall comparison in mathematical literacy, reading literacy and writing in relation to the mean performance of all ISA students.

The Class report details individual student scores for each year level on each section of the test and provides diagnostic information on each assessment task.

The Student report details performance in relation to scales that describe increasingly advanced skills in mathematical literacy, reading literacy and writing.