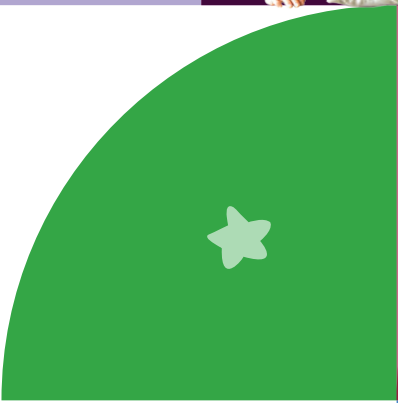




INSPIRING FUTURES

# English Schools Foundation Primary Curriculum Years 1 to 6



## **ESF Primary Schools**

- Beacon Hill School
- Bradbury School
- Clearwater Bay School
- Glenealy School
- Kennedy School
- Kowloon Junior School
- Peak School
- Quarry Bay School
- Sha Tin Junior School

## **ESF All-Through Schools**

- Discovery College
- Renaissance College
- Jockey Club Sarah Roe School (SEN)





The responsibility of educators is no longer just to prepare good mathematicians, good scientists or good historians. The mission of schools is to prepare young people — the decision makers of tomorrow — to live in a complex multicultural society undergoing a rapid process of change and opening up a new world order. Of course, the cognitive component of an educational system is fundamental for the acquisition of intellectual and professional skills. Even more important is the acquisition of attitudes in the learning process in a context of cultural exchanges.

*(Adapted from Gérard Renaud, 1991, p 8)*





## Inspiring Minds



ESF kindergarten and primary students engage with an international, transdisciplinary programme designed to foster the development of the whole child, not just in the classroom but also through other means of learning. The curriculum focuses on the academic, social, physical, emotional and cultural developments of the child.

The nine primary schools, two Private Independent Schools (PIS) and five kindergartens do this through the implementation of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Jockey Club Sarah Roe School through a tailored, school-developed curriculum framework.

At secondary level, we continue with a school-based curriculum in Years 7-9, and then offer Cambridge's GCSE and IGCSE courses in ESF schools, whereas in the two Private Independent Schools the IB's Middle Years Programme (MYP) is offered. At post-16 the majority of students follow the IB Diploma (IBD) programme, or may follow an applied learning curriculum.

We give increasing priority to the teaching of Chinese language, culture and history.

All of our primary schools offer an extended Chinese programme.



**In all ESF schools, there is a clear determination to:**

- Develop internationally-minded young people who will help to create a better world in the future and who recognise their common humanity;
- Create an environment where learners flourish;
- Cultivate strengths through personalised learning;
- Develop relationships in and across schools and with parents and partners.





## Primary Curriculum

ESF primary schools offer a curriculum which provides students with opportunities to be:

- **Inquirers** - Develop natural and systematic curiosity, by developing skills of **inquiry**;
- **Thinkers** - Be creative, critical and reflective **thinkers** who are able to apply their thinking to new situations;
- **Communicators** - Be effective **communicators**, conversant and creative with technologies;
- **Risk-takers** - Be prepared to experiment and take calculated **risks**, to explore new ideas both independently and in collaboration with others;
- **Knowledgeable** - Become more **knowledgeable**, and be able to explore and evaluate ideas and issues;
- **Caring** - Be **caring**, with respect and empathy for diversity in the world;
- **Open-minded** - Be **open-minded**, valuing the language, culture and beliefs of others;
- **Balanced** - Be well **balanced** individuals, resilient in the face of difficulties;
- **Reflective** - Be **reflective** learners, developing an awareness of their own strengths and areas that need improving; and
- **Principled** - Develop underlying **principles** that reflect the values of common humanity, community and respect of individuality.

The curriculum provides an education relevant for the 21st century and is central to the Primary Years Programme. It is based on a set of attributes that inspire, motivate and focus the work of ESF kindergarten and primary schools, uniting them in a common purpose. Through the curriculum, students develop the qualities that will enable them to make a positive contribution to our complex and ever-changing world.

These characteristics are continually modelled by ESF staff. Through the professional development at ESF, teachers demonstrate their ability to **inquire** into research on teaching and learning approaches, to **think** about the best ways to enhance the learning experiences for their students, to **communicate** about their classroom strategies and to justify practice, to be **open-minded** to other opinions and values, to **take risks** with new ways of thinking and teaching and to **reflect** on their practice. This action has resulted in teachers becoming more **knowledgeable** and well equipped to provide world-class learning and teaching approaches.





## Effective Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Learning in ESF schools is relevant and on the cutting-edge of global innovation, producing excellent outcomes for our students.**

Effective learning for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognises that:

- the knowledge base is growing exponentially, requiring learners to process and evaluate knowledge, not just acquire it;
- the world is changing rapidly, requiring learners to anticipate the unknown and adapt to change, not just respond to it;
- learning to work and solve problems collaboratively is becoming as important as learning to work individually;
- brain development and how we are better understood with implications for teaching and learning;
- developing self-confidence in learners, as well as academic competence, is essential if learners are going to be able to function effectively; affective dispositions in addition to cognitive competence are central to learning;
- constructive critical thinking is a tool necessary for individual and collective survival; students must learn to be able to distinguish sense from nonsense, propaganda from truth and make their own well informed judgments; and
- workplaces increasingly require an ability to transfer skills and learning.

*Adapted from "IB towards a continuum of education" 2008*

The curriculum in ESF schools is designed to stimulate young people to be intellectually curious and equip them with the knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills, reflective practices and attitudes needed to become independent lifelong learners.



ESF recognises that learning is a process. Students of all ages come to school with their own beliefs, knowledge and experience about how the world works. These mental constructs are revisited and revised in the light of new experiences and learning. ESF teachers are expected to use a wide range of teaching strategies and to teach in a way that supports the progress of all students.





## ESF Delivers an Education Worth Having Now and for the Future

### We believe that students in the primary years learn best when:

- their prior knowledge is considered to be important;
- learning is in the context of today's world;
- context is relevant to them;
- they can learn collaboratively;
- the learning environment is stimulating;
- they get appropriate feedback to support their learning;
- diverse learning styles are understood and accommodated;
- they feel secure and their ideas are valued and respected;
- values and expectations are explicit;
- there is a culture of curiosity at the school;
- they understand how judgments about learning are made, and how to provide evidence of their learning;
- they become aware of and understand how they learn;
- structured inquiry and critical thinking are central to teaching in the school;
- learning is engaging, challenging, rigorous, relevant and significant;
- they are encouraged in everything they do in school to become independent, life-long learners.





## Curriculum in the Primary Years Programme

The curriculum in the Primary Years Programme incorporates five essential elements—concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and action.

Students are given the opportunity to:

- gain **knowledge** that is relevant and of global significance – for all students in all cultures;
- develop an understanding of **concepts**, which allows them to make connections throughout their learning;
- acquire transdisciplinary and disciplinary **skills**;
- develop **attitudes** that will lead to international-mindedness; and
- take **action** as a consequence of their learning.



## Transdisciplinary Learning



*To be truly educated, a student must also make connections across the disciplines, discover ways to integrate the separate subjects, and ultimately relate what they learn to life.*

*(Boyer 1995)*



*The PYP endorses a belief that students learn best when the learning is authentic and transdisciplinary — relevant to the real world — where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them.*

*(Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education 2009)*





## IB Primary Years Programme

The most significant and distinctive feature of the IB Primary Years Programme is the six transdisciplinary themes. These themes are supported by knowledge, concepts and skills from the traditional subject areas but utilise them in ways beyond individual subject areas to support the transdisciplinary model of teaching and learning.



### The six transdisciplinary themes are:

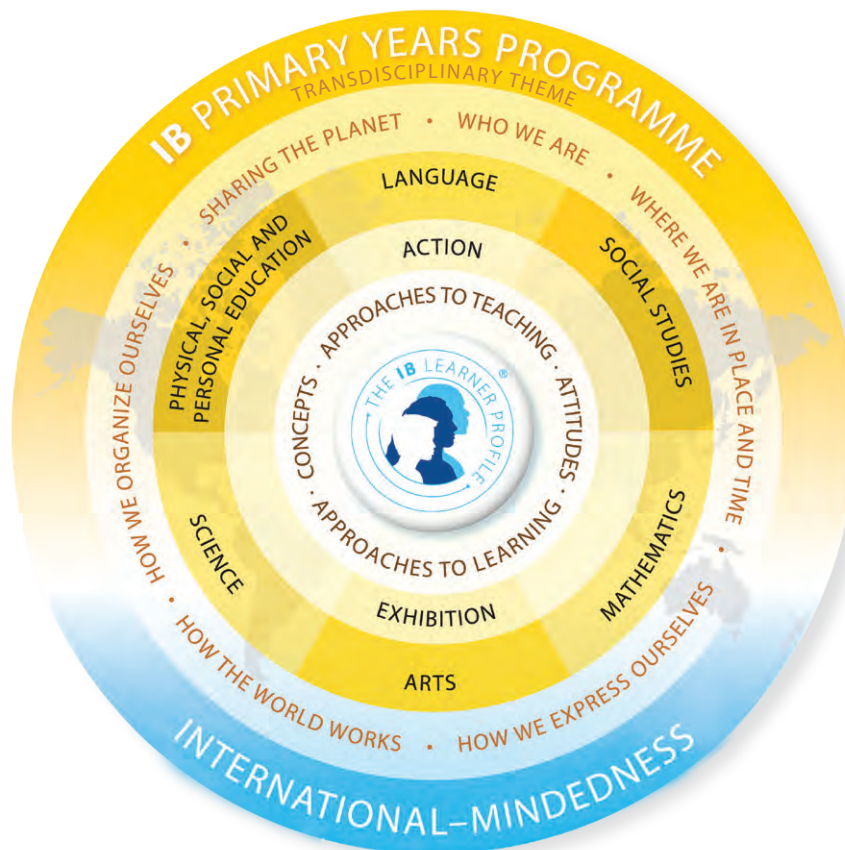
- **Who We Are**  
An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.
- **Where We Are in Place and Time**  
An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.
- **How We Express Ourselves**  
An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.
- **How the World Works**  
An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.
- **How We Organise Ourselves**  
An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organisation; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.
- **Sharing the Planet**  
Learning about the rights and responsibilities in sharing finite resources with other people and living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution

Students inquire into, and learn about, these globally significant issues in the context of **units of inquiry**, each of which addresses a **central idea** relevant to a particular transdisciplinary theme. These units collectively constitute the school's **programme of inquiry**.

## The six transdisciplinary themes are surrounding six subject areas:

### Subject Areas

- **Language (English and Chinese)**
  - Written Language (Reading and Writing)
  - Oral Language (Listening and Speaking)
  - Visual Language (Viewing and Presenting)
- **Mathematics**
  - Number
  - Data Handling
  - Shape and Space
  - Pattern and Function
  - Measurement
- **Science**
  - Living Things
  - Earth and Space
  - Material and Matter
  - Forces and Energy
- **Social Studies**
  - Social Organisation and Culture
  - Continuity and Change through time
  - Human and Natural Environments
  - Resources and the Environment
- **Personal, Social and Physical Education**
  - Identity
  - Active Living
  - Interactions
- **Arts**
  - Dance
  - Drama
  - Music
  - Visual art



## Example of units on a Programme of Inquiry

Age: 5-6

Transdisciplinary Theme

### **Who We Are**

An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.

### **Central idea**

People's relationships with each other can have an impact on well-being

### **Key concepts**

- Function
- Connection
- Responsibility

### **Related concepts**

- Cooperation
- Friendship
- Balance

### **Lines of inquiry**

- How we develop relationships
- How relationships affect us
- Roles and behaviours within relationships

### **Subject areas**

Personal and Social Education, Social Studies



Age: 8-9

Transdisciplinary Theme

### **How the World Works**

An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.

### **Central idea**

Changes in the Earth and its atmosphere impacts on the way people live their lives

### **Key concepts**

- Causation
- Change
- Connection

### **Related concepts**

- Geology
- Adaptation
- Energy

### **Lines of inquiry**

- How the different components of the Earth are interrelated
- Why the Earth has changed and is continuing to change
- Human responses to the Earth's changes

### **Subject areas**

Science, Mathematics, Social Studies



Age: 10–11

## Transdisciplinary Theme

### *How We Express Ourselves*

An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.

#### Central idea

Rituals, traditions and artifacts provide a window into the beliefs and values of cultures.

#### Key concepts

- Function
- Perspective
- Reflection

#### Related concepts

- Beliefs
- Diversity

#### Lines of inquiry

- What constitutes a culture
- Significance of rituals and traditions
- How artifacts symbolize beliefs and values

#### Subject areas

Chinese, English, Arts, Social Studies



The importance of the traditional subject areas is acknowledged. The subject areas of language, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, and personal, social and physical education (PSPE) are specified as components of the PYP curriculum model. It is also recognised however that educating students in a set of isolated subject areas, while necessary, is not sufficient. Of equal importance is the need to acquire skills in context, and to explore content that is relevant to students and that transcends the boundaries of the traditional subjects.





## Delivering Exceptional Learning Outcomes for all Students

The curriculum in ESF schools provides students with learning experiences that are engaging, relevant and challenging, in a stimulating learning environment. Students are encouraged to be curious, inquisitive, to ask questions, and to explore and interact with their local and global environments.

Our curriculum enables each student to develop in a manner and at a rate that is unique to them. Learning is differentiated through the use of a range of teaching and learning strategies that cater for the different abilities, interests and learning styles of students. Students are supported to become independent learners.

In our schools, guided inquiry is the leading approach to learning, which allows students to take responsibility and be actively involved in their own learning.

**Inquiry is the process initiated by students or the teacher that moves students from their current level of understanding to a deeper level of understanding.**

**This includes:**

- exploring, wondering and questioning;
- experimenting and playing with possibilities;
- making connections between previous learning and current thinking;
- making predictions and acting purposefully to see what happens;
- collecting data and reporting findings;
- clarifying existing ideas and reappraising perceptions of events;
- deepening understanding through the application of a concept;
- making and testing theories;
- researching and seeking information;
- taking and defending a position;
- solving problems in a variety of ways; and
- reflecting on learning.



*Taken from "Making the Primary Years Programme Happen" – Page 29*

Explicit teaching of knowledge and skills is used to support learning. In language students are explicitly taught skills in reading and writing, listening and speaking, viewing and presenting. In the area of mathematics students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in number, space & shape, measurement, data handling and pattern and function strands. Explicit learning outcomes and the learning process are made transparent to the students.





## Chinese in the Primary Years



Chinese is a mandatory core subject in primary years, students attend daily lesson of 45 minutes in Years 3 to 6 and 30 minutes in Years 1 to 2. The ESF Primary Chinese Curriculum and the newly launched Scope and Sequence provide a framework and guidelines for the three-pathway programme, catering for students who learn Chinese as a foreign, second or near native language. Each pathway is different in the nature of learning, but each provides opportunities for students to learn at an appropriate pace whilst being appropriately challenging. Central to our teaching philosophy is empowering students to learn through fruitful and enjoyable learning experiences. The four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing are taught in all three pathways. The Chinese programme maximises the opportunities for students to reach a level that would help them to live and work in a Chinese speaking community. The programme is taught in Putonghua and Cantonese and other dialects are equally respected.

Chinese culture is a prominent element in the curriculum and an indispensable part in units of inquiry of the PYP. Students learn about Chinese people, their history and society in daily lessons and in a wide range of specially designed activities. Those conducted locally and in the mainland supplement classroom learning with authentic rich experiences.

In Year 6, all students complete a transitional assessment to ensure their placement in secondary school is appropriate.

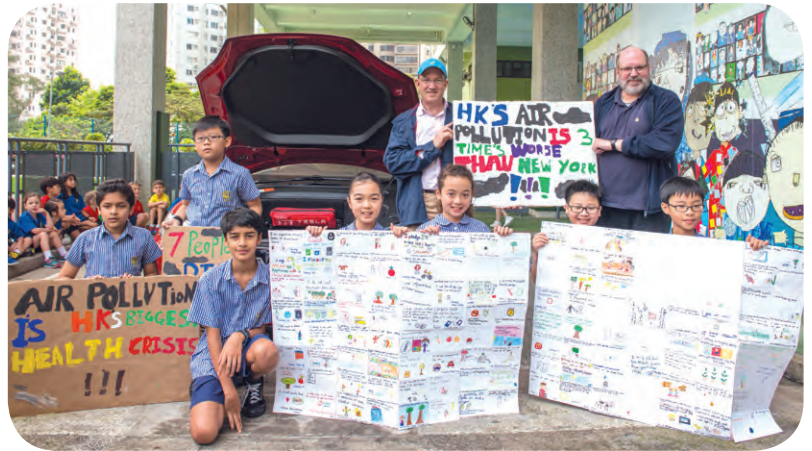


## Taking Action as a Result of Learning

An expectation of ESF kindergartens and primary schools is that successful inquiry will lead to responsible action, initiated by students as a result of the learning process. This action will extend students' learning, or may lead to a wider social impact.

Through the Primary Years Programme our schools meet the challenge of providing all learners with the opportunity and the power to choose to act; to decide on their actions; and to reflect on these actions in order to make a difference in and to the world.

In the PYP effective action does not need to be on a large scale. It can begin at the most immediate and basic level: with the self; within the family; within the classroom, the hallways and the playground. Effective action can be a demonstration of a sense of responsibility and respect for self, others and the environment.





## Enhancing Learning Through Assessment Practices

**The prime objective of assessment in ESF primary schools is to provide feedback on students' learning.**

Assessment is an important part of our curriculum framework as it both enhances learning and provides opportunities for students to reflect on what they know, understand and can do. Teachers' assessments and feedback to students provide guidance, the tools and the motivation for students to become more competent, more skillful and better at understanding how to learn.



The purpose of assessment is to:

- determine what the student knows and understands;
- inform and differentiate future teaching and learning;
- monitor student progress ;
- provide feedback to teachers, students and parents;
- monitor the effectiveness of the learning programme; and
- inform the professional development of teachers.

Students are assessed both formatively and summatively.

- Formative assessment is interwoven with daily learning and helps teachers and students find out what the students already know in order to plan the next stage of learning.
- Summative assessment occurs at the end of the teaching and learning process and provides students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned.



Teachers use a range of school-based and ESF-wide assessment strategies and feedback techniques, including:

- writing samples;
- benchmarks and continuums;
- structured observations;
- anecdotal records;
- performance tasks;
- standardised assessments
- rubrics or guiding descriptors;
- portfolios of work;
- student/teacher/parent conferences; and
- formal reports

These assessment strategies are used in conjunction with other forms of assessment, which include standardised tests, in order to assess student performance, basic skills levels and the efficacy of the programme.



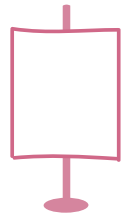


## The Exhibition



Students who are in their final year of the programme carry out a collaborative inquiry project, known as the Exhibition.

The Exhibition represents significant learning, synthesising the essential elements of the Primary Years Programme and sharing learning with the whole school community. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the learner profile that they have been developing throughout their learning journey in primary school.



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