

Evaluation report

IB World Schools Department

Programme Evaluation Report

Head of School: Philip Lee

School Name: RAK Academy

School Code: 002230

School Address: Ras AlKhaimah – Dafan AL Khor

IB Programme(s): Primary Years Programme

Programme Coordinator: May Jomaa

Date: Wednesday 8 November 2023

Student ages in which all students are engaged in PYP: 5-6, 6-7, 7-8, 8-9, 9-10, 10-11

Evaluation Team

Primary Years Programme

Evaluation Leader: Abdennaceur Saadaoui

Programme Leader: Seden Chouseinoglou

School and Programme Leadership

Dear Philip Lee,

Thank you for completing the programme evaluation self-study process. The International Baccalaureate (IB) recognizes that this process requires considerable time and effort from the entire school community. We appreciate the effort that you have made and hope that the insights gained along the way will be valuable in further developing your programme(s).

Please review the feedback in this report carefully as it provides important guidance for the development of the programme(s) that will help your school achieve the optimum outcomes for students.

IB programme evaluation is built on the premise that IB programmes, when implemented with fidelity, ultimately lead to the achievement of the IB mission. The primary aim is to support schools in continuously developing their capacity to implement IB programmes in order to have a greater impact on student outcomes through the development of teacher and leader practice.

We hope that through this process school leadership will gain a deeper understanding of both the aspects of the programme that are being implemented effectively and the aspects that need further development. The process supports the school—as a learning community—to develop the capacity to work intentionally and strategically to develop its IB programme(s) and enable school leaders and teachers to better direct their efforts and resources.

A. School Context

School & Community Description

Ras Al Khaima Academy PYP School is located in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaima, UAE. The school offers an attractive educational experience for students and parents. With a high-quality International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) curriculum, the school promotes concept-based learning and global citizenship. Qualified teachers and individualized attention create an optimal learning environment. Co-curricular activities, parental involvement, and character education further enrich students' development. The school ensures a safe and supportive atmosphere while providing comprehensive assessment and reporting. RAK Academy PYP school stands out as a well-rounded institution dedicated to academic excellence, personal growth, and preparing students for a diverse and interconnected world.

The surrounding community exhibits a range of socio-economic backgrounds, including both local Emirati families and expatriate residents from various countries. The school actively engages with the community, fostering strong relationships and promoting cultural understanding. Through events, collaborations, and outreach programs, RAK Academy PYP school encourages interaction and cooperation between students, parents, and members of the surrounding community. These interactions provide opportunities for cultural exchange, community service, and the development of a broader perspective for students, preparing them to become global citizens. By fostering a strong connection with the community, RAK Academy PYP school creates a supportive and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes mutual respect among all members of the school community.

At RAK Academy PYP school, the student body and staff comprise individuals from diverse national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. This diverse mix of backgrounds fosters a rich cultural exchange within the school environment, promoting tolerance, understanding, and the celebration of different traditions and perspectives. Because of its multicultural nature, the students and staff at RAK Academy PYP school represent a variety of linguistic backgrounds which enhances cross-cultural learning and communication within the school community.

For the academic year 2023-2024, the British and PYP schools have been joined under one campus, creating a cohesive and integrated educational institution. This move allows for a seamless educational journey for students, starting from the early years in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and continuing through the British curriculum. By consolidating the schools into one campus, RAK Academy now operates as a whole school, offering a comprehensive and unified educational experience for its students.

B. Programme strengths

Purpose: Sharing an important mission

- Purpose (0101)
 - **Purpose 1:** The governing body and school leaders articulate a purpose for learning that aligns with the IB's philosophy and mission. (0101-01)
 - The governing body and the school pedagogical leadership team have developed clear goals and procedures to engage the school community in developing a holistic approach to learning and teaching which aligns with the IB philosophy.
 - **Purpose 3:** The school community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile. (0101-03)
 - The school demonstrates its commitment to an IB education by running a yearly learner profile of the month initiative to promote each attribute and provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own attributes and identify areas of improvement.

Environments: Providing essential structures, systems and resources

- Leadership and governance (0201)
 - **Leadership 4:** The school implements and reviews systems and processes to improve the operation and sustainability of its IB programme(s). (0201-04)
 - The school uses data and a review process to monitor and develop the programme of study for students. The regular review of all PYP documents including POI, policies, and scope and sequence, along with the use of surveys to solicit feedback on the different aspects of all school life are examples of such development.
- Student support (0202)
 - **Student support 1:** The school provides relevant human, natural, built and virtual resources to implement its IB programme(s). (0202-01)
 - The school's facilities are adequate, safe, functional, well-maintained and support the school's mission and students' learning as demonstrated by the allocation of sensory rooms and inclusion rooms to support the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students.

- The school encourages the use of technology to enhance collaboration and the development of student agency.
- **Student support 5:** The school builds relationships with the wider community that are a source of wisdom and expertise to strengthen the implementation of its IB programme(s). (0202-05)
 - The school bonds well with the school community to reinforce the implementation of the programme. This can be seen in the solid relationship with the parents and the local community involving them in their children's learning and school events such as sports day, library open days, and parents' workshops.
- Teacher support (0203)
 - **Teacher support 3:** The school provides time and other resources for teachers to collaborate effectively in the implementation of IB programme(s). (0203-03)
 - The school allocates adequate time for collaboration and reflection to promote effective planning as evidenced by the grade-level weekly meetings with the programme coordinator and/or a member of the pedagogical leadership team.

Culture: Creating positive school cultures

- Culture through policy implementation (0301)
 - **Culture 3:** The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an academic integrity policy that creates cultures of ethical academic practice. (0301-03)
 - The roles and responsibilities of stakeholder groups in the school community are clearly defined and articulated in the policy, supporting a culture in which the IB philosophy can thrive. This is evidenced by the commitment of the school community to raise students' awareness to adhere to the basic principles of academic honesty.

Learning: Ensuring effective education

- Designing a coherent curriculum (0401)
 - **Coherent curriculum 3:** The school develops, regularly reviews and shares its curriculum in ways that explicitly engage the school community.

- There is a system in place for the regular and planned review of the curriculum, considering the alignment between the British curriculum and the PYP. This is demonstrated by the growth mindset that the school community is embracing to reflect on their practices and collaborative work to enhance learning, teaching and assessing.
- Students as lifelong learners (0402)
 - **Lifelong learners 2:** Students demonstrate and reflect on their continued development of the IB learner profile attributes. (0402-02)
 - Students share their personal IB learner profile with self-confidence and describe how the attributes support them to develop agency and reflect on their progress and learning.
 - **Lifelong learners 3:** Students identify and foster healthy relationships, an understanding of shared responsibility, and the ability to collaborate effectively. (0402-03)
 - The design of learning spaces and learning engagements reflects the strong emphasis and explicit focus the school has on developing a culture that supports healthy, positive and caring relationships.
- Approaches to teaching (0403)
 - **Approaches to teaching 3:** Teachers use local and global contexts to establish the relevance of the curriculum. (0403-03)
 - The school's approaches to teaching have promoted students' awareness of individual, local, national and world issues as demonstrated through the explicit links with central ideas and lines of inquiry in the school's programme of inquiry.

C. Requirements

Based on the review of the programme documentation, observations of the team during the visit and in conversations with members of the school community, all requirements are in place.

D. Development of IB Standards

Purpose: Sharing an important mission	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
Purpose (0101) Schools implement IB programmes to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	

Environments: Providing essential structures, systems and resources	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
Leadership and governance (0201) The leadership and governance of IB World Schools create and sustain high-quality learning environments.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	
Student support (0202) Learning environments in IB World Schools support student success.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	
Teacher support (0203) Learning environments in IB World Schools support and empower teachers.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Offers opportunity for further development	PYP: The school has not yet identified strategies and tools to gauge the impact of professional development on ensuring consistent learning and teaching practices.

Culture: Creating positive school cultures	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB

			Standards
<p>Culture through policy implementation (0301) Schools develop, implement, communicate and review effective policies that help to create a school culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.</p>	<p>PYP: Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p>PYP: Offers opportunity for further development</p>	

Learning: Ensuring effective education	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
<p>Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) Learning in IB World Schools is based on a coherent curriculum.</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	
<p>Students as lifelong learners (0402) Learning in IB schools aims to develop students ready for further education and life beyond the classroom.</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	
<p>Approaches to teaching (0403) IB programmes encourage approaches to teaching that create learning experiences that are shown to be meaningful to the school community.</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	
<p>Approaches to assessment (0404) Learning, teaching, and assessment effectively inform and influence one another.</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p>PYP: Shows development beyond requirements</p>	

E. Feedback on the planning and analysis and reflection of programme development

Programme development strengths

Planning

- The school has selected a clear area of focus for its programme development plan to positively affect students' learning and support them to develop agency. It also encourages the students to integrate and transfer learning to new contexts.
- The school carefully aligned between the chosen area of focus and the practices from the different dimensions of the framework . The identified focus on concept-based inquiry and the development of student agency and conceptual understanding represent a growth area in the essential aspect of the programme.

Evidencing and analysing

- The school undertook a range of activities, notably feedback on classroom observations, targeted professional development, and a specific focus on collaborative planning and classroom practices to achieve the outcome.
- A variety of gathered and analysed data from GL assessment, along with anecdotal reports from teachers, reflection sections in the unit planners, and student surveys demonstrate the impact of the area of focus on student learning and improvement.

Reflection

- The school's reflection on the programme development plan concluded a positive outcome was achieved, as demonstrated by embracing inductive approaches to teaching leading to student engagement and the achievement of higher attainment results.
- As a result of reflection on this process, the school has transferred and applied aspects of the plan to develop other areas of the programme, including special subjects, English and mathematics.

Areas for consideration

As the school engages in further efforts to develop the programme, it may wish to consider:

Planning

- gathering early feedback on the area of focus and its alignment to expected learning outcomes.
- including a wider range of stakeholders, specifically parents to ensure their voice is part of the planning process.

Evidencing and analysing

- establishing processes for collecting evidence or data at different points throughout the duration of the plan.

- including a wider range of members of the learning community in the analysis of the data or evidence.

Reflection

- fostering strategies to encourage the involvement and collaboration of all members of the school community.

F. Opportunities for future or further programme development

The school identified the following areas as priorities for programme development

Priorities:

- provide parents with more orientation sessions to support them to develop a clearer insight into international mindedness.
- use the school's IB-mandated policies in decision-making and curriculum development.
- seek ways to develop additional opportunities for student voice to enable learners to become more responsible for their own learning.

The Evaluation team has identified the following areas of the programme(s) for the school to consider for future or further development

Future or further development:

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 2:

- The school may want to review the PYP coordinator's workload to ensure she has sufficient time and support to carry out the responsibilities of the role.

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 5:

- The school may wish to consider prioritizing and allocating resources to support staff well-being.

Environments / Teacher support (0203) / Teacher support 2:

- The school may want to provide teachers with opportunities to attend external professional development to further inform their practices and improve student learning.

Culture / Culture through policy implementation (0301) / Culture 2:

- The school may wish to engage all stakeholders in reviewing and evaluating the impact of the inclusion policy to ensure that it regularly informs learning and teaching across the curriculum.

Learning / Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) / Coherent curriculum 2:

- The school to consider collaborative planning, teaching and reflection between classroom and specialist teachers to ensure a robust programme of inquiry that provides students with current, coherent and connected learning experiences throughout their time in school.

Learning / Students as lifelong learners (0402) / Lifelong learners 5:

- The school may wish to consider providing students with opportunities to apply their learning by taking action and demonstrating a commitment to service within and outside the school community.

Learning / Approaches to teaching (0403) / Approaches to teaching 5:

- The school may want to further incorporate differentiation for students' learning needs and styles into collaborative planning and reflection to extend learning for all students.

G. Conclusions of the Evaluation team

RAK Academy fosters a positive and welcoming community of learners, committed to the implementation of the IB programme and the celebration of diversity across the school. The visiting team appreciates the efforts that the school has made hoping that the insights gained along the way will be valuable in further developing the IB programme. During the period under review, the school focused on developing concept-based inquiry to support students to see patterns, make connections, and apply their learning beyond the contexts of the units of inquiry. The school has demonstrated a unity in purpose and a shared commitment to engage in a reflective journey to lay the groundwork for future development plans.

The school has put in tremendous efforts to evaluate practices, highlight areas of strengths and reflect upon the areas that require further development, especially the alignment between the IB PYP framework and the British curriculum.

The school continues to demonstrate a shared commitment to a continuous process of reflection and data gathering and analysis in order to generate actions that align with the school's mission and vision and the IB philosophy.

H. Conclusion of the IB on the school status as an IB World School

Primary Years Programme

The school's implementation of the programme shows close alignment with the IB Programme standards and practices.

We trust that the information found in this report will support the school's continued development of its IB programme(s). Your IB World School manager, Pascal Ashkar (pascal.ashkar@ibo.org), will be in touch with you to follow up on this report and to support your school's ongoing efforts.

Yours Sincerely,



Adrian Kearney
Director, IB World Schools