



ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING

CURRICULUM POLICY

Reviewed: April 2022

Abstract

Acorns International School (AIS) is committed to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum through a wide range of experiences. AIS is guided by the principles of intercultural understanding, global mindedness, personalised development and active participation in the 21st century society.

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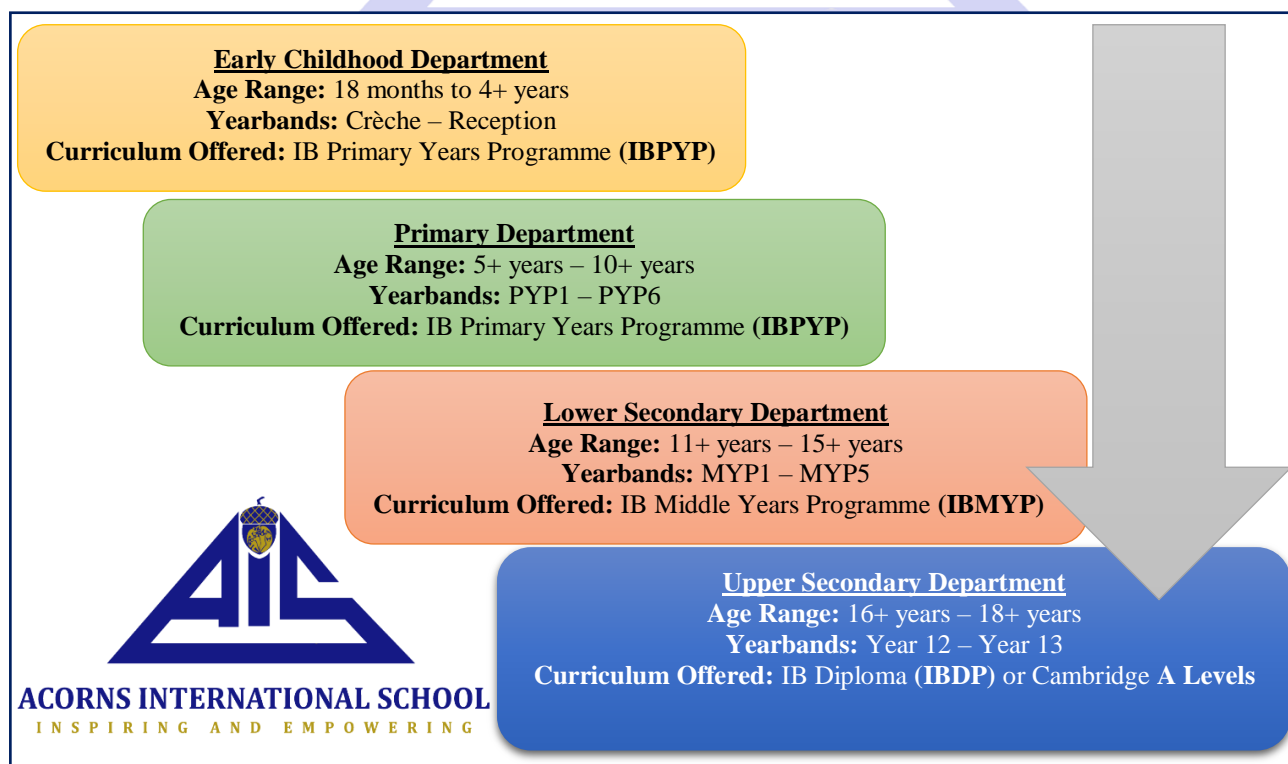
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Curriculum Policy

AIS provides a caring and nurturing educational environment, within an international setting, where all the members of the community feel safe, protected, loved, supported, encouraged and empowered in their personalised learning journey. The school is committed to educating the whole child by providing the very best international education programme possible. AIS is guided by the principles of intercultural understanding, global mindedness, personalised development and active participation in the 21st-century society.

AIS is committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum through a wide range of experiences. From Early Childhood (EC) to Year 6 in Primary, we follow International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP) curriculum framework; in Secondary Year MYP1 to MYP5, we follow International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP); and at Upper Secondary Level from Year 12 to Year 13, our learners will have two options to choose from i.e. International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) or Cambridge A Levels.

The curriculum not only includes the formal requirements of education, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that are organised to enrich the experience of children. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', where the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. To achieve these goals, they need rigorous academic preparation and a passion to become the best they can be. Through our engaging, inquiry-based environment, students reach their full academic potential and become responsible, caring, multilingual, and culturally literate global lifelong learners.



Age	Yearband Guide
18 months+	Crèche
2+	Early Childhood 1
3+	Early Childhood 2
4+	Reception

Inquiry through Play in the Early Childhood Department:

The foundation of our Early Childhood (EC) is inquiry through play-based learning. Play is a critical part of your child's development and will be an integral part of his/her daily schedule at AIS. Research shows that play-based learning enhances young students' academic and developmental learning outcomes. We strive to empower our students to be globally minded and independent learners, who will be able to make a difference in the world. Each week, students will have opportunities to develop in all areas of their lives. Learning to critically think, problem-solve and resolve conflict are vital tools that every internationally-minded person must possess, so AIS places a great emphasis on developing these skills from a young age.

The EC classrooms are set-up as different learning centres that promote inquiry;

- Sensory/Science
- ICT
- Numeracy
- Literacy
- Arts and Crafts
- Dramatic Play
- Fine Motor

The students have time to move throughout the different centres. Also, the students have the following standalone lessons; Music, PE, French, Library, Swimming and Waterplay.

Inquiry Through Play-based Learning

Whether structured or guided, a purposeful inquiry is open-ended and democratic and gives learners choices; Play is one of the most important ways children inquire about the world around them. Consideration for the learner's personal, social and physical development is reflected in the learning environment.

Inquiry through play allows students to explore, discover, negotiate, take risks, create meaning and solve problems – all the important foundations for developing literacy, numeracy and social skills. It is centrally important for the child's physical, social-emotional, language and cognitive development of children.

Assessments at ECDC			
What	When	How	Why
Formative assessment	Ongoing	Teacher observation and recording of feedback against set developmental standards.	For reporting purposes

Age	Yearband Guide
5+	PYP1
6+	PYP 2
7+	PYP3
8+	PYP4
9+	PYP5
10+	PYP6

Primary Years Programme (PYP) at Primary Department:

The Primary department implements the Primary Years Programme (PYP) curriculum that focuses on students becoming internationally-minded and productive global citizens. Throughout the year, the students participate in six transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry, following the themes:

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organise ourselves and
- Sharing the planet

All the concepts covered in Numeracy, Language Arts, Sciences, Social Studies and all individual disciplines will be covered under each of these transdisciplinary themes. This will create more real-life situations, where problems are not just simply “math problems,” but problems that use skills learned in all disciplines.

The PYP concludes with the PYP Exhibition in PYP6, which has students use all the skills they learned throughout the PYP to solve a problem within one of the transdisciplinary themes. We focus on teaching students how to develop the skills necessary to utilise the information they gain in the later stages of their education.

In addition to the major core subjects, such as Language, Math, Social Studies, and Sciences, which are covered throughout the Units, our students have a weekly session(s) in:

- Performing Arts (Dance, Drama and Music)
- Visual Arts
- Physical, Social and Personal Education (PSPE)
- Physical Education (PE)
- Swimming
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Languages (French, Kiswahili and Mother Tongue)

Students at AIS are assessed in a variety of ways, including tests, projects, oral presentations and written reports. Assessment in IB PYP is “criterion-referenced.” This means students are scored

against standards, not against each other. Emphasis will be placed on rubrics to assess student learning. Students may be asked to create a project, draw, act out a performance, give a presentation, or demonstrate some other way to show what they have learned.

The goal is for our students to be able to demonstrate that learning has taken place by showing what they understand and how they are applying that understanding to real life and the world around them. Authentic learning cannot always be demonstrated through traditional tests or exams. At AIS, we believe that assessment is the continuation of the learning process. It is not just an assessment OF learning, but it is also an assessment FOR learning.

Assessments at Primary			
What	When	How	Why
Formative assessment	Every 4 th week of the term	Online MAP assessments for Math, Language and Reading. *Science for the upper year levels only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting purposes ● To plan for future instruction ● To identify learning needs
	Weekly	Student self-assessment against learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflective practice ● Tracking and Monitoring
Summative assessment	Annually	International Schools Assessment (ISA). Paper-based/Online assessment in Math, Reading and Writing for the upper year levels only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting purposes ● Benchmark against like schools who take ISA. ● Inform big policy decisions on teaching and learning.
	End of unit summative	Project/performance-based authentic assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment against essential elements of the curriculum.
	Mid-year/End Year	Internal paper-based assessments across all taught disciplines for all year levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting and recording purposes

PYP6 Exhibition

The PYP Exhibition, which takes place during the final year of primary school, is a culminating experience and a consolidation of a student's learned skills throughout their entire time in primary. The Exhibition is an in-depth collaborative inquiry project that starts from a student's interests and passions and extends further into real-world local and global issues: issues that affect their life, community, and the world at large all intending to get them to take meaningful action with regards to these issues. The research and design decisions are student-driven but they receive feedback and support from teachers and mentors throughout the process. The day is marked by a showcase of visual, digital and performance presentations as well as self-evaluative processes. It is the ultimate celebration of PYP learning.

Mother Tongue

With a student population representing more than 50 nationalities, we aim to offer opportunities for our students to use and practice their mother tongue. Opportunities for this are included in unit planning at points in the curriculum, and students also have the opportunity to use their mother tongue in events such as Global village and Celebration of Learning.

Age	Yearband Guidelines
11+	MYP1
12+	MYP2
13+	MYP3
14+	MYP4
15+	MYP5

Middle Years Programme (MYP) at Secondary Department:

In our Secondary Department, from ages 11-16, MYP the Programme offers learners the opportunity to explore eight different subject groupings, from a holistic perspective. By holistic, we mean character-driven, skill-based, interdisciplinary, conceptual, and contextual. We prioritize rich teacher-learner relationships, small class sizes, and meaningful, critical and creative engagement in all of our classes. Students in Years MYP1 – 3 study the following subjects:

- English Language and Literature
- Individuals and Societies
- Mathematics
- Integrated Disciplinary Sciences
- Design and Technology
- French and Kiswahili
- Physical and Health Education and Swimming
- Visual Arts
- Music
- Drama

Subject Selection Guidelines

- MYP4 and 5 students have more flexibility in their subject choices. Some of these choices include specializing in a particular science or sciences, such as Biology, Physics or Chemistry, or choosing a particular Individuals and societies course such as Geography or History. They can also choose as Arts/Design course from Visual Arts/Music/Design.
- Every science unit has a practical lab element.
- Design and Technology involves the use of ICT skills, in addition to a wide range of technologies such as 3D Printers and Raspberry Pi.

Interdisciplinary

The more students can view one subject from the various lenses of another, the more fruitful their connections can be. The interdisciplinary nature of the MYP1 – 3 Sciences class and the MYP 1 – 3 Individuals and Societies classes are instrumental in this pursuit.

In every year of the MYP, students must engage in at least ONE Interdisciplinary Unit. Students are assessed on the Interdisciplinary Unit Criteria, Evaluating, Synthesizing and Reflecting. The interdisciplinary unit culminates in an exhibition of the students' learning.

We also conduct an MYP department-wide Global Village Africana Unit and exhibition where students draw on their disciplinary studies to explore an aspect of a global theme from disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Character-Driven

The IB Learner Profile describes the qualities and attributes determined to be most important in creating positive and productive citizens of the world, and the dispositions necessary to be a fruitful lifelong learner, long after they leave our school. Planned projects, assemblies, exercises, and field trips are all used to develop character. The World Scholars Cup is something that we encourage for many of our students, as it builds interdisciplinary understanding and gives them the chance to travel and use their abilities and skills to the benefit of others. Apart from this, we emphasize character growth through the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Scheme, in which students develop skills, physical abilities and service as action, and also take part in adventurous trips and treks to various locations in the region.

Skill-Based

Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills are the skills that are foundational to become a self-motivated learner, which is one of the primary aims of our institution. These skills include thinking, research, self-management, social and communications Communication, Social, Self-Management, Research and Thinking skills. These are both, explicitly and implicitly, taught and assessed in each class throughout the units, in projects such as the Community Project and Personal project, in clubs, workshops and other co-curricular activities. Learners are encouraged to reflect on whether they are a Novice, Learner, Practitioner or Expert in these skills and how they can develop them.

Conceptual

As opposed to teaching mere factual content, we emphasize the importance of conceptual understanding. Conceptual understanding is transferable, allowing learners to make sense of an increasingly complex world across time and place.

Contextual

We believe two things about contextual teaching: one; that learning is primarily achieved when it is found to be meaningful or purposive; and two, a recognition that learning always comes with responsibility. Therefore, each body of work that we undergo, in each class, has an element of the real-world application to both make the learning purposeful and to see the learning applied in responsible and active ways.

Examples of Units of Work taught in the MYP

All units of work are driven by Statements of Inquiry which determine the conceptual and contextual range of study that learners engage with. All MYP units of inquiry have an action element where learners use their learning in some purposeful manner. Units are subject to change as the curriculum develops, but some examples of the types of units are shown here:

- **Statement of Inquiry:** *“Globalization has occurred due to a variety of processes that have changed the world, bringing both opportunities and challenges.”*

Description: An Individuals and Societies unit of inquiry about the causes and consequences of globalization. Explorations will include examples of globalization in language, business, sport and entertainment, and learners will take action by looking at the ways that globalization can promote positive change.

- **Statement of Inquiry:** *“The genre of biography not only enables us to preserve and communicate individual histories as writers but allows us as readers to develop an understanding of how our social context and relationships with others can play a key role in shaping our identities.”*

Description: A Language and Literature unit of inquiry about what biographies are and how to write them. Learners explore why people should read and write biographies and what can be learned from them, and they will take action by sharing the stories of local and ordinary people around them.

- **Statement of Inquiry:** *“Financial, personal and economic change can be understood and simplified using proportional relationships like ratios and percentages.”*

Description: A Mathematics unit of inquiry about how and why ratios and percentages help us when dealing with food or money. Learners explore the role of dividing and finding parts of a whole and take action by analysing the contents and proportions to help us make better and more informed decisions.

- **Statement of Inquiry:** *“Through making models of the world we have understood how place and time relate to motion and we have made the world seem a smaller place.”*

Description: A Science unit of inquiry about how humans have travelled over time, and how they have represented their place in space. Learners will take action to investigate the consequences of mass transportation by motor vehicles on local and global environments and communicate their scientific opinions on the impact of measures to limit pollution from cars.

Assessments at Secondary			
What	When	How	Why
Formative assessment	Twice yearly	Online MAP assessments for Math, Language, Reading and Science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting purposes ● To identify learning needs
	Throughout Units of Inquiry	Practicing the criteria-based skills and gauging progress through the unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflective practice ● Tracking and Monitoring
Summative assessment	End of unit summative	Project/performance-based authentic assessments scored against subject-specific criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment against criteria-objectives unique for each subject
	End of Term 1 and 3 assessments	Internal assessments across all subjects for all year levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting and recording purposes

Mocks	February	Internal assessments Candidates Classes MYP 5, AS, A2, DP2 across all subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting and recording purposes • Guidance on how to prepare for final exams
Curriculum Specific	April/May	MYP/ DP and A-Level externally set and externally marked examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting and recording purposes • Benchmarked summary of achievement • Requirement for graduating with curriculum credential

Age	Yearband Guidelines
16+	DP 1 or Year 12
17+	DP 2 or Year 13

Diploma Programme (DP) and Cambridge A Levels at Secondary Department:

IB Diploma Programme

What is the IB Diploma Programme?

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous and balanced two-year course for ages 16-19. It is rigorous because of its emphasis on depth as well as breadth, as each subject is externally assessed by international moderators. The programme is balanced as subjects are chosen from six mandatory subject groupings, as well as the IB DP Core Elements of writing an Extended Essay, participating in a Theory of Knowledge philosophy class (TOK), and engaging in activities and projects revolving around creativity, action and service (CAS).

What subjects do DP students take? The Diploma Programme allows learners to choose subjects from each of the following subject groups:

- Group 1: **Language (Mother Tongue Language/Best Language)**
 - we only offer **Language and Literature**
 - Language A: Language and Literature (English A)
- Group 2: **Second Language**
 -

- Language B: A foreign language course for students with previous experience of learning the language Or French, Spanish coming soon to increase opportunity to offer bilingual diploma
- Language Ab Initio: A foreign language course for students with no previous experience of that language
- **Group 3: Individuals and Societies**
 - Business management
 - Economics
 - Geography
 - History
 - Psychology
- **Group 4: Sciences**
 - Biology
 - Computer science
 - Chemistry
 - Physics
- **Group 5: Mathematics**
 - Mathematics AA (SL &HL)
 - Mathematics AI (SL &HL) - Coming soon August 2022.
- **Group 6: The Arts***
 - Music
 - Visual arts
 - *Group 6 is optional, allowing learners to choose an additional subject from groups Currently only 3 and 4

Higher versus Standard Level

- All subjects (apart from Language ab initio) are offered at Higher and Standard level.
- A minimum of three Higher Level and three Standard Level subjects must be taken
- Higher level means more knowledge to be gained, more and/or longer examinations and a higher level of study
- Four Higher and two Standard Level subjects can be taken

Diploma Programme Core:

Elements Extended Essay: Learners will write a 4,000-word essay using their research on a topic of the student's choosing. The student is assigned a mentor for the year-long process.

Theory of Knowledge (TOK): TOK is an interdisciplinary philosophy class that asks learners to incorporate various elements of their other subjects as they reflect on the nature of knowledge and how they know what they know. It is assessed through an exhibition and a 1,600-word essay.

Creativity, Action and Service (CAS): CAS requires students to participate in a wide range of experiences inside and outside of school. These activities should be purposeful with measurable objectives and outcomes, should be personally engaging, thoughtful in planning and delivery, and ultimately reflective on how well the outcomes were met.

Students are free to put together their projects that suit their own needs and interests, as well as the needs of their particular communities.

Approaches to Learning Skills: Approaches to learning skills are the skills that are foundational for becoming a self-motivated learner. These include thinking, research, self-management, social and communications skills. These are both explicitly and implicitly taught and assessed in each class.

Examinations: At AIS, each Unit of Inquiry allows students opportunities to demonstrate that learning is taking place. Growth in understanding is not always best demonstrated through a piece of written work or a traditional exam.

The IB assesses student work as evidence of achievement against the written objectives of each DP subject course. These objectives serve the same purpose as the MYP criterion.

Assessment in the IB is both internally marked as well as externally, with work sent and marked directly from the IB. Meaningfulness and fairness are of the utmost importance to the IB in their examinations, and therefore scripts and detailed explanations of conduct are readily available for use with all exams. The written examinations at the end of the DP form the foundation of the assessment in the programme. It aims to be objective and reliable and is externally moderated directly by the IB.

The externally assessed coursework, which is compiled over time, forms an additional basis for DP assessment. This coursework will usually take the form of a portfolio and is physically sent to the IB for marking.

In the DP, students receive grades ranging from 7 – 1, with 7 being the highest available. Students receive one grade for each course taken. Final DP results are a combination of scores from each subject taken. The final DP Diploma is given to students who gain at least 24 points, as long as specific requirements are met within and completion of the three other essential elements of the DP core.

The DP is a two-year programme, with examinations being set for May of the second year. If the students wish, retakes of examinations are possible either in the following November or May testing seasons. Some examinations are not available in the November season, additional fees may incur, and request for retakes will need to be made no later than July.

DP Assessments			
What	When	How	Why
Formative Assessment	November/December/February	Internally set and internally marked examinations	● Reflective practice

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment against criteria-objectives
Summative Examinations	April/May	DP externally set and externally marked examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarked summary of achievement Requirement for graduating with curriculum credential

Cambridge A Levels

What are the Cambridge A Levels?

The University of Cambridge is one of the most distinguished universities in the world. Apart from its rich and rigorous existence as a university, its influence has been felt around the world for generations with its upper secondary programmes.

The University of Cambridge International Examinations, as a part of the Cambridge Assessment, has been a department of Cambridge University and has been carrying out educational assessments internationally since 1863. Tens of thousands of candidates sit for the examinations each year from over 150 different countries around the world.

The Cambridge A Levels, or The Advanced Level, is the gold standard of the Cambridge International Examination qualifications. It is recognised and accepted by numerous universities around the world and particularly well received by universities of the European Union.

What subjects are offered by the Cambridge A Levels?

A Level students choose four subjects in their first year of the programme and drop to three in the second. These are the three that are formally and externally examined at the end of the second year in April-May. Students can choose from the following four subject areas:

- Sciences:
Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- Mathematics
- Humanities and Individuals and societies:
Business studies, Economics, Psychology, Geography, History
- Languages:
English Language, Literature in English, French, Spanish (coming soon)
- Arts:
Art and design
Music

Specific individual subjects within these subject areas will depend upon specific teacher's choices and student need.

Examinations

The subject content of the A Levels syllabuses has been divided into two parts: the AS syllabus which is to be covered in the first half of the programme, and part two of the syllabus commonly referred to as A2'. This open approach enables students at AIS to choose from the following two options:

- Take all A Levels requirements in the same examination session at the end of a course of study, usually at the end of the second year (Year 13)
- Take the AS qualification only – either at the end of a one-year or two-year course

In alignment with the external standards, Cambridge examinations at AIS will officially be proctored during April-May testing seasons, and there are no makeup examinations until the following season. These examination periods will follow the strict codes of conduct expected from Cambridge schools and will be aligned with their timetables, timelines, and time regulations. There are six passing grades within the Cambridge examinations, A* - E, and all grades are marked and determined externally by Cambridge.

Cambridge A Level Assessments			
What	When	How	Why
Formative Assessment	November/December/February	Internally set and internally marked examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflective practice• Assessment against criteria-objectives
Summative Examinations	April/May	Cambridge externally set and externally marked examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benchmarked summary of achievement• Requirement for graduating with curriculum credential

I N S P I R I N G A N D E M P O W E R I N G

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