

## 24 schools in the Middle East learn with the IPC

There are now 24 schools throughout the Middle East learning with the IPC. This includes schools in Bahrain, Qatar, Israel, Dubai, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman, Syria and Kuwait. Several of these schools are sharing learning experiences and best practice. Here we share the latest news, advice and feedback from just some of them.



Children from Compass International School, Doha testing out their kites during the IPC unit Up and Away

## Jordan becomes the 58th country for the IPC!

There are now schools in 58 countries around the world learning with the International Primary Curriculum. The latest school to join the IPC global learning family is The International Academy – Amman; the very first school in Jordan to introduce the IPC.

Other recent countries to come on board are Luxembourg, Monaco and South Africa.

## Introducing the IPC to Dubai British School

The International Primary Curriculum began at the Dubai British School with a pilot during 2008/9. It was formally introduced a year ago in September 2009. Here we ask Head of the Primary School, Peter Moore how things are progressing:

### IPC: Why did the school make the change in curriculum?

**Peter Moore:** There were two major reasons. We needed to address being 'internationally minded' more comprehensively and consistently, which we felt the IPC would help us to do. And certain aspects of the English National Curriculum, History and Geography for example, as covered by QCA, didn't seem relevant or appropriate to a large number of our children. 'Victorian childhood' or 'Evacuees' aren't necessarily the most relevant topics for children from India or Uganda.

### IPC: What were the immediate benefits you saw in your children as a result of changing to the IPC?

**PM:** Staff and pupils find the IPC thematic units interesting, motivating and relevant. There are greater opportunities for collaboration, problem solving, and links across the curriculum. The children are excited by the unit entry points and motivated to find out more at home. There's more opportunity for the children to reflect on their home and host country.

### IPC: Were there any benefits to the staff – how did they cope with the change?

**PM:** We took a full year to prepare which was essential. The IPC is well planned so that staff could refer to the folders (Teaching Frameworks) and feel confident about what the children

would be learning. There was no need to construct a curriculum from scratch but they were still able to make the most of their creativity and enthusiasm. Staff find the units interesting. The IPC encourages a style of teaching that sits well with the staff and "feels right."

### IPC: Is it important to you that the IPC is cross-referenced to the English National Curriculum?

**PM:** Very much so as we needed to be confident in reassuring the parents that we were still covering all the English National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

### IPC: Have you managed to get involved in the bigger IPC community yet and if so, how much impact is this having on DBS?

**PM:** We have hosted a regional conference here at DBS which allowed us to introduce the staff to IPC in one hit. We have used trainers from the London office which was very successful, have had meetings with another local IPC school, had staff attend IPC training, and staff are beginning to use the Members Lounge, all of which have contributed to a greater understanding and knowledge of how to teach in an IPC way. We still have a way to travel including developing our assessment skills and deciding how to induct new staff.

### IPC: How have the benefits of the IPC evolved over time – for your children and your staff?

**PM:** Staff much prefer the IPC thematic units to the QCA plans we previously followed. Staff are more motivated and interested, as are the children. There's more excitement across the Primary school.

# Case studies

## Making Progress with the IPC

Working with an IPC practicing Principal was a crucial step forward for Emirates International School in Jumeirah for their implementation of the IPC.

The school introduced the IPC in 2003. 18 months ago when Carmel Platt joined the school as Principal of the Primary School, she spearheaded an evaluation of the curriculum. "We could see some real issues," she said. "The teachers were working from three units per year, the units dragged, and not all grades were working on the right mileposts. There was a whole lot of knowledge-based learning. The school had tried to implement a skills focus but the approach and guidance was wrong. There was not enough emphasis on an enquiry driven learning approach. It became apparent that this was not enough coverage or challenge for our children."

Carmel attended the IPC Leadership Conference in Switzerland. "This was my first real introduction to the IPC," she says. "I had come from New Zealand where the pedagogy and philosophy that was developing there was very similar to that of the IPC. So I felt confident that it was absolutely right for our school if we delivered it effectively and I trusted the people at IPC to help me make it happen."

An IPC advisor helped the school IPC team align the units and mileposts and then a practicing Principal from a school in London came out to Dubai. "Because she was currently practicing, she was down to earth, she knew exactly what she was talking about, she had real scenarios to share with us, solutions to all of our issues, and loads of practical advice," says Carmel.

Now Emirates International School is seeing the difference. "Teachers work corroboratively to plan programmes of work, sessions are focused on student

learning, we share IPC questions, issues and successes, and we have a good core group that is now driving the IPC through the school. We've created a primary school coordinator and another for junior school who meet frequently to strategically plan IPC progress together; no one's on their own. All our teachers now have passwords to the IPC Members Lounge so that they can access unit learning and resource ideas. Everyone is making the most of what's there for them. Everyone – the children and the staff are enjoying the changes. They're loving the new units, it's made a whole difference to the school. This renewed enthusiasm is integrated and extended very well into our language



Children from Park House English School in Qatar learning with the IPC unit Health and Fitness

programme with some really fantastic writing. The key is to make sure you have the right guidance throughout implementation."

Carmel says that as a leader, networking with other IPC leaders has been crucial. "It's been vital. Since the Swiss Conference I attended the IPC Leadership Conference in London with Howard Gardner. This isn't just about implementing the IPC. This is about my leadership skills and about the development of my thinking after thirty years in education. It's also about meeting up with other leaders and sharing experiences; that's absolutely helpful."

Carmel has advice for other schools at the early stages of IPC implementation: "visit other schools and if you can't, then visit their websites to understand how they are using the IPC within their schools. Attend IPC conferences; they are invaluable for your learning and for your networking. Send your staff to the IPC Summer School; it's really good for your people to get a deeper understanding of the IPC and to share the experiences of other teachers. And importantly, invite the IPC into your school. I've only found them totally helpful and they can guide you in the best possible way for your school. That's what's important."

## Developing International-Mindedness

The IPC was introduced to Al Khor International School in Doha in 2004 to provide more international content within the learning. Jarlath Madine, Head of Primary says "For many expat children here, this is the first real learning they experience about their home country and they also learn about everyone else's home country too. The IPC is helping us to develop a sense of world citizenship and universal values.

The recent earthquake in Haiti is an example of where we as a school community looked at the problems facing them and what we could do about it. The Year 4 classes have studied the IPC Earthquakes and Volcanoes unit and were able to relate much of their learning in that area to this particular situation. Additionally, the international approach of the IPC helps our children to look at situations from more than one perspective. As a result, their maturation increases considerably. All of our children have developed a more global perspective within their learning. I would certainly advise other schools in the Middle East to consider it seriously."

# Learning focused conferences coming to the region

## April Learning Conferences in Doha

Two learning-focused conferences will take place at Compass International School in Doha this April. The first is *Everything that Matters About Learning and Nothing that Doesn't* from April 23rd to 24th. This conference by Fieldwork Education, draws together committed and passionate educators from around the globe, and will be led by Martin Skelton and Pam Harper, both highly respected individuals in the fields of learning and school leadership. The conference will explore four key questions:

- What is learning?
- What helps learning happen?
- The 'Learning Dashboard' – What evidence counts and how do we assess for learning?
- What makes a learning-focused school different?

And from April 30th to May 1st, come and join us at the *IPC Great Ideas Workshop*. This conference is designed to provide very practical advice focusing

on three crucial areas for all teachers – Resourcing, Recording and Researching and will be relevant for Early Years as well as primary age teachers. This conference will also feature IPC Great Ideas Learning Conversations. These will be round-table group discussions creating the chance for a sharing of issues, experiences and ideas with other IPC teachers, facilitated and supported by IPC advisors.

Both conferences will be hosted by Compass International School in Doha (CISD). Since it was established in 2006 – growing from 13 to 520 students – the primary children at CISD have been learning with the IPC. Here Headteacher John Todd explains the impact this has had on the school and how CISD will benefit from the forthcoming conferences:

“From the beginning, we have tried to embrace the whole of the IPC philosophy. This has been challenging and rewarding and forced many of us to re-evaluate our professional practice, moving from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. We have changed dramatically over the last three years as we have gained deeper understanding of

the whole learning idea.

When I first started working with the IPC it was a worry; there was no examination focus and no pressure on students. Now I have changed my mind and am happy with this because I have seen it work. There is no pressure to perform and no pressure to deliver but still the success is evident. Now for our children it's all about loving the learning. The IPC, in a very rigorous and thoroughly planned way, makes learning fun. Because it's fun, our students learn without stress and sometimes without even realising it.

Working with IPC and Fieldwork Education, we are part of an organisation where children's learning is important and is at the centre of everything. The forthcoming conferences will help us as a school to focus even more on the learning and we hope that school teachers and leaders, not just from the Gulf but from across the world will join us.”

For more information on the conferences go to [www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com](http://www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com)



Children from The British School of Al Rehab, Cairo, Egypt in the Valley of the Kings during their trip as part of the IPC unit Go With The Flow

## Introducing Janice Ireland



Janice Ireland is deputy Director of the IPC and supports all the schools in the Middle East. She has many years of experience teaching and leading the IPC and working in the Middle East. Janice is able to help you with all areas of IPC implementation and is also happy to talk to any schools considering the IPC. You can reach Janice directly at +44 (0)20 7531 9696 or email [janice@greatlearning.com](mailto:janice@greatlearning.com)

# News from the UK

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## New English National Curriculum published

The new English National Primary Curriculum is published this February (2010) ready for implementation in September 2011. A direct link to the new primary curriculum is available at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/newprimarycurriculum>

An Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum by Sir Jim Rose, which was published in 2009, forms the basis for the new National Primary Curriculum for England. It emphasised a move towards a more flexible, less prescriptive and yet challenging and rigorous curriculum that keeps the integrity of individual subjects while helping children to see the links between subjects through a more cross-curricular approach. Rose wanted to see engaged children, subjects and themes combined, integrated assessment for learning, more emphasis on the development of personal skills, and a greater emphasis on enabling children to become confident and independent users of technology.

Rose's recommendations are not dramatic changes; they are more an identification of good learning practice (taken from present UK models and from around the globe) placed into a 21<sup>st</sup> century context. He gives schools and teachers the chance to take back much of the day-to-day responsibility for creating engaging, meaningful learning within their classroom – just what over 800 schools in England and around the world are doing right now with the International Primary Curriculum.

This means that for schools delivering the IPC, much of what is being expected from the new Primary Curriculum for England is already being delivered – and more, says Steven Mark, Director of the IPC: "Although global awareness is made mention of in the new document, given that the world our children are growing up in is an interdependent one, the IPC believes that, wherever they are presently living and learning in the

world, enabling children to develop international-mindedness is going to become a key 21<sup>st</sup> century priority. With that focus firmly in mind, we remain passionate in our approach to developing international-mindedness within the International Primary Curriculum."

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## New IPC Cross Reference Document for English National Curriculum

A new Cross Reference document identifying the links between the IPC and the new English National Curriculum is currently being produced. The new Cross Reference document is due to be complete this summer (2010). Further information will be available in newsletters and on the IPC website at that time.

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## Top School in English League Tables Credits IPC with Success

Outstanding school of the year in the 2009 League Tables of English Primary Schools was Hampstead Norreys Primary School in West Berkshire. Headteacher Alex Butler credits the school's adoption of the IPC for the achievement:

"I came to Hampstead Norreys in 2006 expecting these children in rural Berkshire to be engaged, on-task, active learners. But I was wrong. The children were not focused, behaviour was questionable and, although there were some good teachers, the teaching itself was very didactic.

"I'd seen and heard a lot about the IPC before I did anything about it. I spent six months looking at different options and felt the approach of the IPC was right

for us. I wanted us to be aspirational. I wanted a strong focus on learning and liked the focus on a variety of learning styles and the development of life skills within the IPC. The school is in a rural area and there is no cultural mix here so the international aspect of the IPC was very important too. In addition, the staff were desperate to get more connected learning and the IPC core themes were exactly what we were looking for.

"The biggest change since introducing the IPC has been in the way the children learn. Their learning now is so practical and so active, with lots of sharing of learning between the children and between different classes. All this has resulted in total engagement. The learning has come alive for the children and that translates at home to more research, more reading around the theme, and more conversations related to their learning within the family. Each new IPC theme (which lasts about six weeks) starts with an exciting Entry Point which grabs the children's attention and interest. And we always end each unit with an Exit Point which involves the parents coming into school to see what learning has taken place.

"Some people have said the IPC is an off-the-shelf option but that's not true; there's huge depth to the learning process, a real understanding of what ignites children's interest, true expertise of community and international-mindedness, a very careful balance of knowledge and skills in every unit, and some really creative ideas for teaching and for learning with a flexibility to make it your own.

"Because of doing something quite innovative such as the IPC, everyone is watching you! Our success in the League Tables and also in our Ofsted inspection has proved to our Local Authority and to other schools that the IPC really is making a difference for us. It's particularly down to the engagement and to the focus on learning. It's exactly what we were looking for."