



Kindergarten

CURRICULUM GUIDE

APPROACHES TO LEARNING AT TH SCHOOL

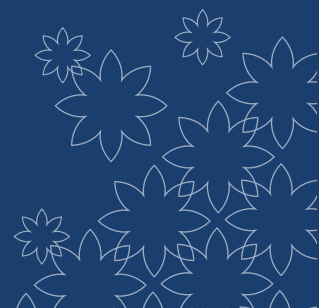
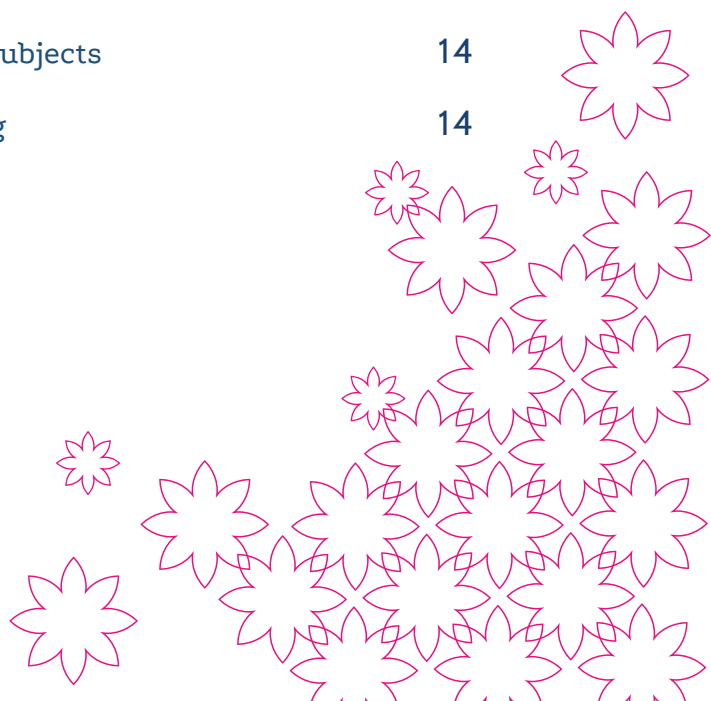


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Our Vision

Empowering the next generation of leaders.

Our Mission

We seek to empower future leaders to:

- Think critically
- Display empathy
- Act with integrity

To achieve this we will:

- Provide a safe, secure and academically stimulating environment
- Support learner outcomes focusing on inquiry, collaboration, play and personal development
- Provide a holistic environment with a focus on students' physical, intellectual and social/emotional development
- Immerse students in an educational community that develops the essential qualities of passion, gratitude and humanity
- Offer a curriculum that encourages learners to engage the world as global citizens valuing international mindedness and an appreciation for diverse points of view
- Cultivate bilingualism focusing on English and Vietnamese language acquisition
- Develop within students the ability to work independently and collaboratively, think critically, analyze data then make informed decisions
- Encourage a deep sense of service and responsibility to protect the rights of all people and the environment
- Innovate with technology to enhance learning
- Inspire creativity through active problem solving and the fine arts

Our Curriculum

In Kindergarten, we follow the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC), which is taught in English and is based on the latest approaches to teaching and learning. Our choice of the International Early Years Curriculum, adapted to the specific needs of our children in our context here in Hanoi works perfectly with our school vision of enabling future leaders.

In readiness for the world our children will encounter as adults, use of the IEYC encourages engagement and enjoyment in high-quality learning experiences that support and extend learning and development personally and internationally.

The philosophy of the IEYC supports a play-based approach to learning. It celebrates teachers identifying children's interests and being responsive by extending learning in a playful and fun way. We believe that it is through play that children understand each other and make sense of the world around them. Children should be able to lead the play or follow the play as they wish. We would expect that within the classroom there is a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Developing Social Skills and Independence

At TH we recognise that young children move from more self-focused behaviour, to learning and playing alongside each other, then learning to collaborate together. This is taught through making connections with other children, sharing needs and wants in a positive way, and understanding and communicating with others.

These crucial social skills are developed through activities focused on playing together with positive encouragement. We give children the skills to work with partners or together in group work, learning to actively listen to others, share ideas and develop concepts together.

Independence and confidence are key to social development. We work with parents to encourage each child to pack their bag, put their shoes on, eat their lunch etc. Children make mistakes and learn from them then grow in the knowledge they are learning to care for themselves.



Wellbeing and Engagement

This nurturing environment promotes social and emotional development where well being and engagement are carefully monitored. Children need their most basic needs met before they can learn effectively and make progress.

This diagram shows that our learners need to be well fed and rested, safe and secure, feel a sense of belonging and self esteem before they can achieve their full potential. Therefore learning in Kindergarten takes time and is not a linear process. Our caring team supports children by careful observation and sensitive intervention.



Challenge

The IEYC enables our learners to be challenged at just the right level for them so that they are fully engaged and develop a love for learning, whatever their educational preferences and needs. It allows for our learners to explore and express their learning using international quality resources and facilities.

The International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC)

1. A clear focus on learning and development:

As a KG department we believe that children learn through meaningful play. This play process builds connections in growing brains.

Play can take many forms and be:

- Solitary
- Social
- Parallel
- Co-operative
- Guided by Adults

Meaningful play allows students to relate to the real world and involves practice in applying what they have learned to new scenarios with the support of knowledgeable teachers who scaffold the learning process through observations and assessments.



1. Independence and Interdependence	2. Communicating
3. Enquiring	4. Healthy Living and Physical Well-Being

The IEYC Learning Strands

The IEYC has a set of four Learning Strands that underpin all learning and development.

Each Learning Strand has learning experiences and outcomes that are regarded internationally as developmentally appropriate for the Kindergarten age range.

Each of the four Learning Strands describes what children will experience and learn about through activities woven into IEYC units of learning. The learning strands are separated into A and B experiences - A experiences have the youngest learners in mind and B cover learning experiences providing more of a challenge.

IEYC Learning Strand 1: Independence and Interdependence

This strand focuses on developing personal, social and emotional development. The strand links to the IEYC Personal Goals and the IEYC International Dimension.

By the end of the IEYC most children will have:

IEYC Learning Strand 2: Communicating

This strand focuses on developing a broad range of communication skills including language development, early literacy, early mathematics, ICT and computing, expressive arts and creativity.

IEYC Learning Strand 3: Enquiring

This strand focuses on developing the skills of enquiry through exploring people and the World.

IEYC Learning Strand 4: Healthy Living and Physical Well-Being

This strands focuses on developing a positive attitude to health, self-care and physical Activity.



2. A vision about the kinds of children we are helping to develop:

The following personal goals underpin those individual qualities and learning dispositions that we believe children will find essential throughout the first half of the 21st Century.

There are eight Personal Goals. We want our learners to be...

- Empathetic
- Resilient
- Ethical
- Communicators
- Reflective thinkers
- Collaborators
- Respectful
- Adaptable



Personal goal	Definition
Adaptable	I can cope with change.
Reflective thinker	I am curious about why things are the way they are, and want to find out the answers. I can reflect on my learning to learn more.
Communicator	I can express my emotions and thoughts to others clearly in a variety of different ways.
Resilient	I keep trying even when things are difficult.
Respectful	I treat others and the world the way I want myself and the world to be treated.
Ethical	I can act with integrity in an interdependent world.
Empathetic	I can think about what I've learned and how it affects my life and the lives of others. I can demonstrate fairness and kindness in words and deeds.
Collaborator	I can work with others to achieve a common goal.

Our Mascot for the personal goals is called **Thaddeus** who was named by the children. He is the manifestation of all the personal goals and core outcomes. The Personal goals are made explicit to the students. The turtle is important in Vietnamese mythology and the following story outlines its significance.

Stories of the Hoàn Kiếm turtle began in the fifteenth century with Lê Lợi, who became an emperor of Vietnam and founder of the L Dynasty. According to legend, Lê Lợi had the sword named Heaven's Will given to him by the Golden Turtle God, Kim Qui.

One day, not long after the war and the Chinese had accepted Vietnam's independence, Lê Lợi was out boating on the lake. Suddenly the Golden Turtle God surfaced, prompting Lê Lợi to return Heaven's Will and thank the divine turtle for its help. The Golden Turtle God took back the sword and disappeared into the depths of the lake. Lê Lợi then renamed the lake Hoàn Kiếm Lake, meaning "The Lake of the Returned Sword". (Wikipedia). Hoàn Kiếm Lake is the lake in the centre of Hanoi!



By their nature, the Personal Goals are not age-specific. They apply to students – and adults – and could be reinforced at home.

3. Our classroom practices which help us achieve our vision:

Here are a selection of some of the practices we employ in class to help us achieve our vision:

Personal goal	Example classroom practices
Adaptable	Play based learning - students are actively engaged as they play and utilise the classroom environment learning to share and make choices.
	Transitions - starting school is a huge step for young children because they are adjusting to new adults, environments and routines as well as learning to part from their carers.
Communicator	Children communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings in many different ways - gesture, talk, creativity and self expression.
	Increasingly children have opportunities to communicate in pairs, small groups and games structured to encourage learning and idea sharing.
Resilient	Learning to share or follow instructions allows children to learn to regulate feelings and cope with strong emotions, and accept help from adults and peers.
	Children have opportunities to overcome challenges and always try their best.

Respectful	Through learning to look after the classroom resources and local environment and making shared rules.
	The IEYC units consider how to develop this personal goal by enquiry.
Ethical	Circle times, stories and real life situations allow children to understand cause and effect or right and wrong.
	Children explore and learn to explain how to make choices and follow rules and routines.
Empathetic	Learning through play helps develop the skills and understanding needed to work alongside others and regulate one's own behaviour.
	Children are taught to think and reflect on their learning about empathy and personal and group impact on others through stories, by relating events and actions to real life scenarios.
Collaborator	In play situations children begin to collaborate by sharing ideas, resources and talking together, allowing young children to choose who they work with often produces the best learning outcomes.
	Teachers give children opportunities to take turns and responsibility for looking after the classroom or leading a line.
Thinker	IEYC learning experiences and meaningful play develop and model the skill of thinking for learning, making mind maps, pictures and diagrams.
	Responding to children's interests supports their thinking by scaffolding possible lines of development.



4. International mindedness:

As our mission and learning definition suggest, we want children to act with integrity in an interdependent world. To encourage this, our International Curriculum explores links to the wider community through every unit of learning and our personal goals help to develop integrity as an ongoing aim.

The IPC is unique in defining International Learning Goals that help young children begin the move towards an increasingly sophisticated national, international, global and intercultural perspective and develop a sense of international-mindedness.

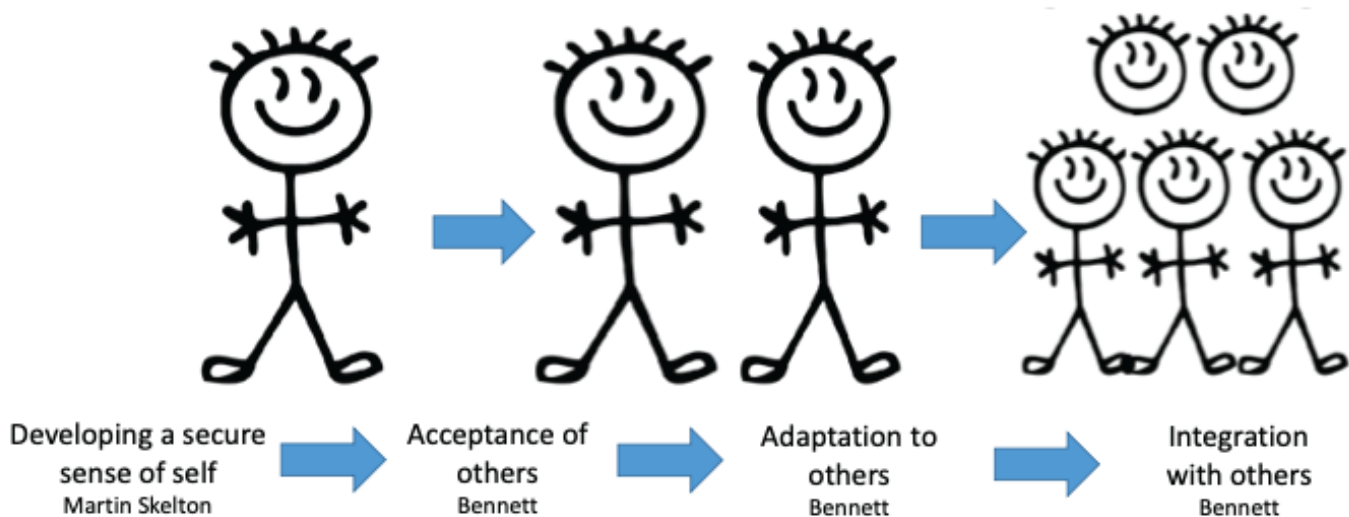
Each IPC unit has embedded within it, across the different subjects, learning-focused activities that help children start developing a global awareness and gain an increasing sense of themselves, their community and the world around them, as well as inspiring positive action and engagement with global issues.

In addition to this, each thematic IPC unit of learning includes specific tasks related to International as a subject in its own right, as well as encouraging schools to explore the unit from the perspectives of Hanoi, Vietnam and the world.

For our youngest children, international mindedness starts with developing a secure sense of who they are and we use units of learning such as “This is me” to help them discover more about themselves. By learning through play and in small groups the children start to develop a sense of others. They play alongside others initially and then start to interact with others which leads to learning with others and then collaboration as they move through the school.

Through the IPC units of learning we encourage children to progressively look at themselves, their family, their school, their community and their country from their own context and that of other children and people living in another part of the world.

The continuing **decline in egocentrism**



5. Knowledge, skills and understanding:

The IEYC encourages learners to develop their Knowledge, Skills, and Understanding which are all significant in the development of children's learning. These three types of learning are addressed through the four Learning Strands, Experiences and Outcomes.

The definition of Knowledge as a type of learning refers to remembering factual information.

For example: To know what a plant needs to grow.

In the Kindergarten years, Knowledge is continually expanding and can change as new discoveries are made. Learners are constantly exposed to opportunities or provocations to research and gain new knowledge. The assessment of knowledge can be through a variety of formats. These may include capturing curiosity, promoting thinking skills, sustained shared thinking and questioning.

The definition of Skills as a type of learning refers to things children are able to do.

For example: Developing and applying fine motor skill control.

Skills have to be learned practically and need time to be practiced with the teachers modelling, scaffolding and extending their experiences. The assessment of skills is carried out using the outcomes. be to model, scaffold and extend children's experiences.

The definition of Understanding refers to the development or 'grasping' of conceptual ideas and making personal meaning.

Example: How to take care of living things and the environment.

Understanding is personal, and connections have to be made actively by the learner in order to make meaning. At TH we offer multiple opportunities for learners to develop and demonstrate their understanding. Through the learning experiences we provide, understanding is always developing. Understanding is assessed by a judgement of observations carried out over time.

This simple grid is a useful way of looking at how the different types of learning can be experienced and shared with learners and parents to support understanding and awareness of how young learners are developing.



Type of Learning	Learning	Teaching	Assessing
Knowledge	Experiencing	Exposing	Questioning
Skills	Practising	Supporting	Observing
Understanding	Reflecting	Facilitating	Evaluating

6. Connected Learning:

The IEYC is based on the study of units of learning around a theme.

Some examples of IEYC Units are:



Animal Rescuers



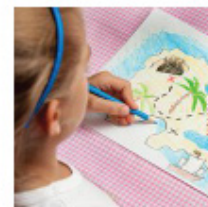
Blast off!



Chattering Children



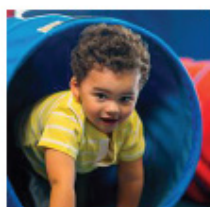
Dinosaur Detectives!



Going Places



Imagine That!



Little Movers
Make Giant...



Loose Parts



Mindful Play



My Toy Shop

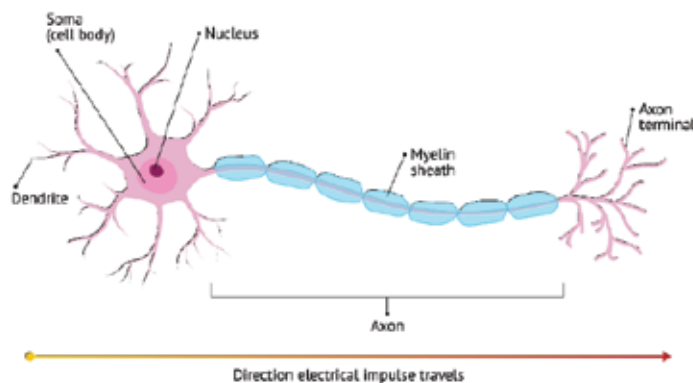
The Kindergarten Team carefully selects from these exciting, engaging and globally relevant units of learning. Each of these units has its own set of IEYC Learning Outcomes.

Making connections in the Growing Brain:

Research has informed us that the brain learns by forming connections between brain cells (neurons) related to a concept or idea. This is sometimes referred to by neuroscientists and psychologists as the 'chunking' of information. Neuroscientists suggest that the brain learns 'associatively', always looking for patterns and linking to previous learning, so by engaging children in learning through themes it will make retrieval more likely.

Brain-based Learning

The International Curriculum is influenced by recent neuro-educational research about how children learn best. When we learn, the neurons in our brain become more strongly connected (Jenson, 2008). A neuron is a cell within the nervous system with three parts: the cell body (soma), the axon, and dendrites.



We choose units based on what we have observed about the children to capitalise on their self-motivation and interests. This means we change units yearly and sometimes during the course of a year to reflect the growing interests of the children.

For example, “Going Places” is a unit which reflects the interests and real life experiences of children in this age range because it is a journey of different kinds of transport and travel. It motivates them and drives them to want to find out more.

The Big Picture also offers children, parents and teachers an overarching idea and some questions to consider about the unit.

The Big Picture for Going Places:

A journey can start at any time and take you to exciting places. We go on journeys every day, sometimes by car, sometimes by walking – perhaps we might go on a train, or an aeroplane, or a boat setting sail across the sea. There are many ways we can travel and many adventures we can have. Where would you like to go today?



Teachers use the mind map as a suggested pathway through each unit. Normally an IEYC unit of learning is intended to last about 4 weeks. However, it can be reduced or extended depending on the context, the ages and interest levels of the children and how children’s personalised learning is developed.

7. Rigorous learning:

Our learners are supported by adjusting the curriculum to individual needs. This means that teachers will mould the learning so that everyone can access the work regardless of their ability or language. Children are challenged at their level of learning and extended.

At the start of each unit of the IEYC we provide a letter/ booklet which explains what their children will be learning, what they will be doing at school and how they might help at home. We encourage parents to join in with their children's learning through regular opportunities to get involved with "Ready Steady" and Exit Point activities.

During the first years of school we find some parents need to be reassured that the lack of textbooks and worksheets for the IEYC isn't hindering their children's learning. Without a doubt this is one of the most difficult, but legitimate, issues for parents who are new to TH and other International Schools or Kindergartens. Very often we find that a parent's own experience of education means they may see textbooks as either a cultural necessity or an important indicator that children are working. The proof of the effectiveness of IEYC is seen through improvements in learning rather than the books or materials used. Photographs are crucial evidence that learning is taking place and we share weekly examples demonstrating the kind of learning that is happening in our classrooms.

8. The IEYC Process of Learning:

Across the course of a year, the students will enjoy learning from a diverse set of units which are chosen to ensure a broad and balanced exposure to learning in all subjects. Within each topic of learning, the students follow a process of learning designed to support them.

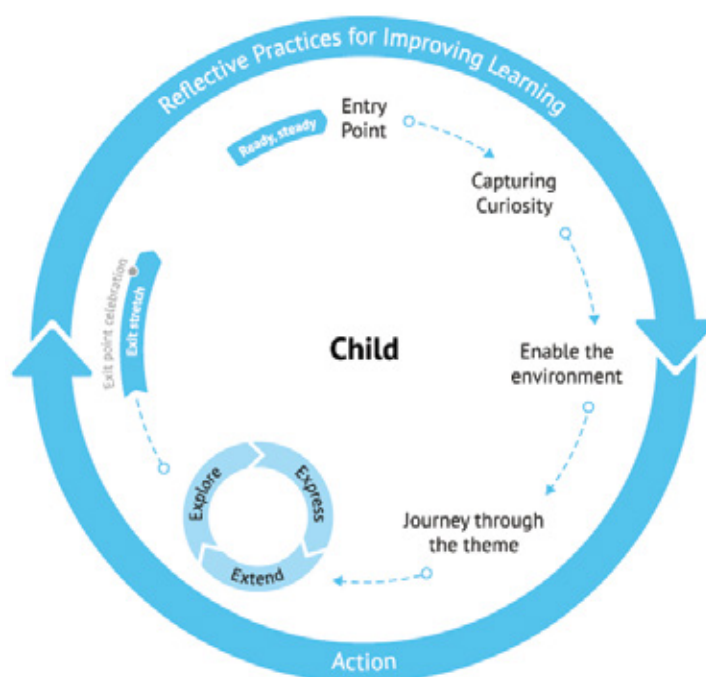
Ready, Steady and Learning Links

IEYC units of learning begin with a 'Ready, Steady' element that allows a short period of time for children, families and the school/setting to familiarise themselves with the theme and organise for the Entry Point and the learning opportunities that will follow. The Ready, Steady element allows teachers and families to collaborate and introduce resources, language and concepts that can be used within the unit. Children can then experiment and familiarise themselves with these through the activities provided before the Entry Point.

Teachers will send a Home Letter at the start of the 'Ready, Steady' element. The Home Letter will inform families of the unit theme and the significant experiences expected to be offered within the unit. It will invite collaboration and encourage our families to work together with the teachers.

Entry point

The entry point is an activity for children that begins each unit of work and provides an exciting introduction to the work that is to follow.



Capturing Curiosity

Capturing Curiosity follows the Entry Point and involves teachers sensitively observing and questioning children to help understand what children want to investigate further and learn about within the theme. It builds on learning from the Ready, Steady and Entry Point.

Capturing Curiosity enables the teachers to identify children's previous experiences and current interests that can be built upon to help children make connections with their new learning.

Enable the Environment

Enable the Environment is informed by Capturing Curiosity and ensures that the learning environment responds to children's interests, curiosity and needs. It ensures that the high levels of well-being and involvement needed for deep enquiry are established and continue to flourish throughout the unit.

Journey Through the Theme

In the IEYC, Journey through the Theme allows connections between previous and new learning. For the youngest learners it is also an opportunity to review what has already happened and been experienced within the unit.



Explore, Express and Extend

This is a mini-cycle which is repeated multiple times within each Learning Block and is included because it recognises the ongoing nature of learning and development, and the need for time, space and pace to consolidate Knowledge, practise Skills and increase Understanding within the earliest years of life.

Exit Stretch

Each unit finishes with an Exit Stretch which is a process of concluding an IEYC unit of learning. The Exit Stretch helps children and adults reflect, share and celebrate what they have learned; as a process it should extend over a period of time.

Revisit and Reflect

This is another ongoing part of the learning process. With young children we support and scaffold this part by learning activities which encourage them to think about their experiences during the unit.

9. Independence and interdependent subjects

Our units are organised around a theme which helps children to see how different learning can be linked enabling them to see the big picture of their learning and connections through our holistic approach to learning.

Our specialist teachers in PE, Music and Art will make cross curricular links to the IEYC unit where appropriate.

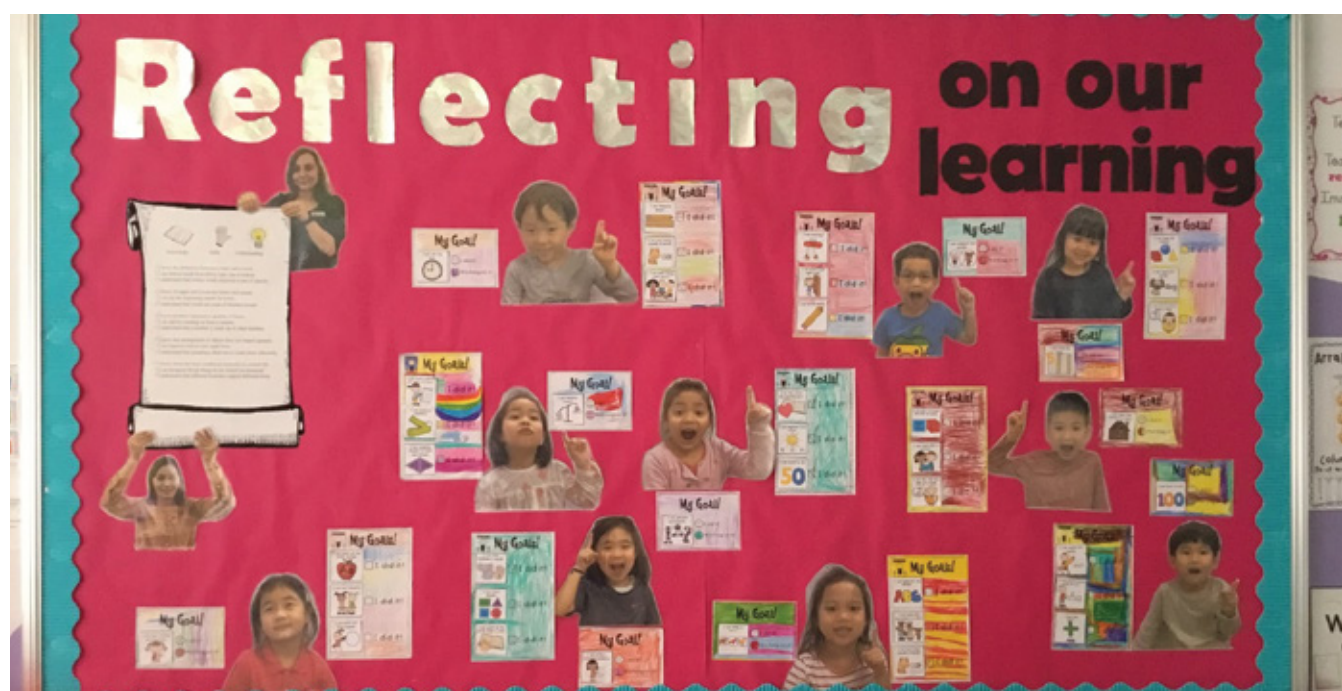
Our literacy programme will complement the IEYC unit where appropriate. Children also learn that the personal goals support them in all areas of learning.



10. Assessment that improves learning:

As Kindergarten teachers we are assessing all the time! In the daily learning schedules of the school day, we are constantly adapting responses, providing language and vocabulary and interacting with children to extend their learning through activities and their self chosen play. IEYC classrooms are busy and purposeful environments in which, every day, teachers capture information through planned and spontaneous interactions and observations.

Therefore it is important for us to assess knowledge, skills and understanding and we report these findings to you as parents twice a year.



APPENDIX:

Each learning strand is made up of the following knowledge and skills which are explored across the Kindergarten:

IEYC Learning Strand 1: Independence and Interdependence

Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themselves as a unique individual with a cultural heritage, positive qualities, abilities, views, feelings and personal needs • Similarities and differences between familiar people and communities • Familiar celebrations and traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow familiar routines • Convey ideas • Express and self-regulate emotions • Form positive relationships and respond to own and others feelings • Recognise there are boundaries within specific contexts • Play, cooperate and collaborate with others in a variety of situations • Approach routines and tasks with increasing confidence and independence

IEYC Learning Strand 2: Communicating

This strand focuses on developing a broad range of communication skills including language development, early literacy, early mathematics, ICT and computing, expressive arts and creativity.

Early literacy:

Communicating through speaking and listening:	
Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mother tongue language, language of instruction and other languages if appropriate • The roles and needs of listeners and speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express themselves in a variety of contexts 14. Use past, present and future tenses • Recall and retell a sequences of events • Participate in discussions • Follow and give simple instructions consisting of two or more parts

Communicating through reading:

Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How print conveys meaning • What has been read to them • What they have read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use phonic awareness to decode simple words • Recognise and read some common words and familiar sentences

Communicating through writing:

Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How numbers represent quantities • A range of mathematical language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply phonic awareness in writing activities • Write and spell some common words and simple sentences

Early maths:

Communicating through number:

Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How numbers represent quantities • A range of mathematical language • The names of a range of shapes and measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count beyond 10 • Order numbers and identify which number comes before and after; is one more or less than a given number • Add two single digit numbers together using practical materials • Subtract two single digit numbers using practical materials • Solve simple problems involving halving, sharing and doubling • Compare quantities and objects according to shape and measures • Solve simple mathematical problems involving shape and measures

ICT and computing:

Communicating through ICT and Computing:	
Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safe use of everyday technology • The uses of computers and technology in familiar contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a range of technology • Use a range of technology to store and retrieve information • Select and programme technology according to the task and purpose
Communicating through expressive Arts and Creativity:	
Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uses of a range of art tools, materials and musical instruments • A range of songs and music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment and express ideas using a range of art tools, materials and musical instruments • Represent ideas through music, movement, dance, role-play and drama

IEYC Learning Strand 3: Enquiring

This strand focuses on developing the skills of enquiry through exploring people and the World.

Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities and differences in people, living things, the environment and materials • How things can change • Features in the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posing questions • Exploring ideas • Making observations • Providing simple explanations

IEYC Learning Strand 4: Healthy Living and Physical Well-Being

This strands focuses on developing a positive attitude to health, self-care and physical activity.

Knowledge and an increasing understanding of:	Skills of being able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of healthy eating and physical activity • How to stay safe and how to seek help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care of basic hygiene and personal needs • Demonstrate control, coordination and increasing confidence in a range of physical activities



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