



COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Internal Reflection by School External Review Report by Visitors NEASC Accreditation - ACE Pathway

School Name: Nibras International School

School Country: United Arab Emirates

Visit Dates: November 11-17, 2023

Visit Type: Onsite

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School Overview

Full Name of School: Nibras International School

School Address: Dubai Investment Park, P.O. Box 54084

City/State/Province/Country: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Website: <https://nisdubai.ae/>

Head of School: Dr. Jay Teston

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Please provide an updated narrative introduction about your school to inform future Visitors/readers. (500 words or less). If the narrative submitted with your Preparatory Report is still current, you may use that version here.

Please include:

- enrollment and staffing information (numbers and number of nationalities);
- school location, history, governance structure;
- accreditation, certification and authorization history of the school;
- brief description of Guiding Statements;
- highlights of current strategic or long-range plans.

Suggested uploads to submit to NEASC: Organizational Chart, strategic plan, school profile sheet given to Universities, if available.

Nibras International School (NIS) is the School of Choice in Dubai Investment Park (Dubai, UAE) and its neighboring communities. It was privately owned and family operated, but is now a part of the International Schools Partnership (ISP), a global group of over 75 schools, which ensures outstanding international learning connections, quality assurance, and excellent governance. Currently, NIS enrolls 1496 students from 83 countries who are supported by 192 professional, administrative, and support staff. Besides ISP as the registered school operator, the NIS leadership is supported by a 10-member Board of Advisors. Catering to learners from ages 4 to 18 (Kindergarten to Grade 12), NIS follows the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) Common Core curriculum. By promoting our learners' interests, NIS develops curious, knowledgeable, and self-aware citizens who have the integrity and drive to build a better world. Additionally, NIS also provides a future-proof skill set designed to help learners excel and stand out within their local community and in the global environment.

NIS learners benefit from being part of a wider international community, which provides many additional learning and cultural opportunities. They actively participate in ISP's International Learning Opportunities for Students (ILOS) with the other 75 plus schools under the ISP network of schools. NIS is fully licensed under Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), and most importantly, it is NEASC accredited, a globally recognized standard of excellence that attests to a school's high quality and integrity. NIS is one of the few mid-market American International Schools in Dubai. It has some of the best indoor and outdoor sports facilities for any schools in the UAE. It continues to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses for high school students and is a chapter member of the National Honor Society (NHS), an American academic organization that recognizes outstanding secondary learners' academic accomplishments and their community engagement.

NIS looks forward to further enhancing its elementary and secondary programs, delivering more rigorous academics, and unveiling a cutting-edge facility on its premises. NIS' commitment to excellence remains unwavering, and its dedication to shaping the future leaders of tomorrow is resolute.

NEASC Requested Documents:

- [Organizational Chart 2023](#)
- [High School Profile](#)
- [Strategic Action Plan 2022 - 2024](#)
- [NIS 5 Year Development](#)

Visitor Comments (if any) on School Background:

N/A

Updates

A. What do you consider the most significant changes in your learning community since the last accreditation visit (in brief)?

School response

The combined virtual visit, conducted from May 22 to May 26, 2022, had two main objectives: assessing Foundation Standards alignment and preparing the administration and staff for an Internal Reflection process. Subsequently, the school implemented several significant updates.

- The new leadership team's arrival prompted various curricular reform initiatives, ensuring coherence and rigor in academic programs. As the team enters its third school year, the focus has shifted to deepening practices and understanding their impact on learner agency and learning.
- At the beginning of the school year 2022/2023, the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders were examined. Subject area specialists were appointed as Heads of Department in the secondary division, while two Assistant Heads in the elementary division provide subject area guidance and support to grade-level leaders. These new structures facilitate both horizontal and vertical planning within the divisions, enabling teams to concentrate on curriculum mapping and delivery.
- NIS continued to explore and define its understanding of learning. Through four community discussions held during Teacher Induction, Board Meetings, student assemblies, and parent meetings since August 2022, the school has worked towards visualizing and articulating its definition of learning.
- The NIS Senior Leadership Team fully participates in the ISP Performance Review Process and continually adapts and redefines its membership for effective functioning. The secondary division welcomed a new Head of Secondary, supported by an Assistant Head of Secondary who also serves as the Dean of Academics. Additionally, two new Assistant Heads, the Lower/Upper Assistant Heads of Elementary, joined the elementary division. Furthermore, NIS had the addition of a new HR Manager and HR Officer starting from December 2022. The senior leadership at NIS remains stable while experiencing growth.
- At the beginning of the school year 2023/2024, leadership expanded further with the introduction of Subject Leads (English, Math and Science) in elementary and Dean of Students in secondary.

- NIS action planning discussions commenced following recommendations from NEASC and recommendations from its recent KHDA inspection. Currently, a 5-year strategic development plan is in place, guiding future initiatives.
- As the school returned to regular operations post-Covid, NIS has increased community involvement in its processes. Student leadership groups and organizations have been established to facilitate activities for parents and students. The Parent Academy was launched to provide parents with courses to enhance their understanding of NIS Programs and to further engage in school activities. Community meetings involving parents, teachers, and students were held to unpack the NIS Definition of Learning. Teacher and parent leaders were appointed to support the community throughout this self-reflection process.

Visitor Comments (if any) on Updates

The school's updates were appropriate and well evidenced in documentation and via observation. Further comments on the school's statement of learning and implementation will be commented upon in Foundation Standard 1 and Learning Principle 1.

B. RETURNING SCHOOLS ONLY: Since your last full team visit, are there any additional grade levels, locations, programs or elements to be included in this accreditation review visit? If so, additional preparation may be required before the External Review Visit.

School response

NONE

C. Identify below any recent or planned actions to more fully meet the NEASC Foundation Standards, not described above. Please respond to any previous recommendations following your last visit or any other areas identified during the current review cycle. If you have a documented Foundation Standard Action Plan indicating work on meeting Foundation Standards, please include it when you submit this Report.

School Response

NIS has no documented Foundation Standard Action Plan. However, the visitors gave their observations and comments. NIS acted on each one as documented in the NIS strategic plan for 2022 -2023. Updates on the major comments were described above. Below are some additional actions taken or completed from each standard.

FS1: Learning Structure

During interviews and classroom observations, the visitors noticed the lack of common language in NIS concerning the social-emotional learning area. Therefore, as NIS prepared for its KHDA inspection in early October 2022, it reflected on its ability to deliver an effective social-emotional learning curriculum on top of the currently required Moral Education curriculum. In Kindergarten and Elementary, the HEART curriculum is used to guide teachers in delivering social-emotional learning engagements during a dedicated wellbeing time that focuses on building relationships, self-awareness, self-management, social skills and social emotional learning. Morning Meeting time further supports the building of adult to student relationships and builds a strong sense of community. CHIL (Child Initiated Learning) in the KG supports learners in self-initiated learning enhancing their ability to self-regulate, manage emotions and behaviors and establish caring relationships. In secondary, a homeroom program was incorporated within the schedule to facilitate the intellectual, social-emotional, and career development of our learners. This program focuses on and develops life

skills through a holistic journey in secondary, enabling our students to make a difference to the world in which they live.

FS2: Organizational Structure

NIS has made considerable strides to give everyone a competitive compensation package. It has installed salary ranges for the various positions within NIS. Still, to further boost transparency, it is recommended that NIS create an active scale with different steps to show clearly and confidently where various staff members are and can move to in the future. Implementing this scale will allow NIS to continue to hire highly-qualified and KHDA approved staff with relevant experience to teach at NIS.

NIS fully agreed with this recommendation and has escalated this conversation with its operator – International Schools Partnership Group (ISP). The group has facilitated the adoption of a Compensation and Benefits Policy which schools under the group have to follow. NIS will begin its study in Fall 2023 and adopt its own scale for implementation and following the group's new policy.

FS3: Health, Safety and Security

The NEASC-CIE Visiting team has no recommendations/observations on Standard 3.

FS4: Finances, Facilities and Resources

The Visitors identified that NIS needs to be careful of its exposure every year to "outstanding debts," which are directly related to the outstanding student fees, and needs to consider ways to reduce its exposure in the future. NIS has been highly successful this school year with its "outstanding debt" collection. With improved economic conditions and increased trust and support from the community, families are more willing to complete and satisfy their past financial obligations.

FS5: Ethical Practice

The Visitors commented that NIS creates additional opportunities for parents and learners to be involved in the Internal Reflection and improvement planning committees. Also, the school allows teachers, parents, and learners to get involved in creating policies and procedures that affect their daily life at school. As the school returned to regular operations post-Covid, NIS has provided the general community with more involvement in the school processes. Student leadership groups and organizations were put into place to facilitate activities for both parents and learners. The Parent Academy was formally launched this school year to provide parents with courses to understand NIS Programs better and be a part of the NIS activities. Community meetings within parent, teacher, and student groups were conducted to unpack the NIS Definition of Learning. More discussion groups were scheduled during the year as the community continues to be involved in the self-reflection process. Teacher and parent leaders were put in place to help the community navigate the journey.

FS6: Boarding and Residential

N/A

Visitor Comments (if any) on Foundation Standards alignment

Foundation Standard 1: Definition of Learning

The Visitors followed up on several areas raised from the report from the virtual Learning Principles Preparation Visit with respect to Foundation Standard 1. There was a shared community understanding and practice of the school's adopted definition of learning, staff and student understanding of "student agency," curriculum mapping, and multidisciplinary planning and provision.

The school has in place a clear definition of learning that was developed over multiple stages through committees that engaged appropriate stakeholders. There are now green shoots beginning in the school, showing that teachers and students have a common understanding of high-quality learning. With that said, there is more work to be done on further embedding shared practices and deeper understanding of the school's adopted definition of learning. Some next-step recommendations are to:

- explicitly and strategically teach students, especially in the Elementary and Middle Schools, the key vocabulary used in the definition of learning;
- consider featuring key words and practices from the definition of learning (acquisition, application, enquiries, empower, innovator, sustainable) through assembly time and thematic focus into the curriculum to further build students' conceptual understanding and their ability to apply these to their learning;
- build a community understanding, especially among students, of what "learner agency" means in practice.

Curriculum

Further, the school has established a K-12 curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices, and principles of assessment. The school has invested in and is utilizing Rubicon Atlas for curriculum and skills mapping, leading to a better-aligned horizontal and vertical curriculum. This is ongoing work.

There are some emerging examples of multidisciplinary learning happening across the school. For example, the school has begun to use "subject collaborations" where students have the chance to work in a multidisciplinary context. This initiative, along with "co-curricular hour," have the right intentions in pursuit of multidiscipline curriculum opportunities and student choice, but now will need further structure in identifying the intended Impacts of the program, their monitoring for quality and intention, and their assessment.

One area that still requires significant development and training is curriculum modification and adaptation. Planning needs to be further developed to meet the diverse needs of groups of students and individuals.

Foundation Standard 2: Organizational Structure

The school has in place a clear governance and leadership structure. The recent acquisition of NIS by the International Schools Partnership (ISP) has been observed to be a smooth transition for both school leadership and the wider community. Roles and responsibilities are well defined, and faculty and staff are qualified for the roles to which they are assigned.

Expectations are defined in policy and are carried out and observed in practice; however, a few policies (such as the Admissions Policy) were out of date, and others (such as the Inclusion Policy) had two different versions submitted to the Visitors. The Visitors would recommend that the school establish a

policy and procedures overview calendar to create visibility of review dates, version updates, and sign-offs.

The school and external bodies such as Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) have metrics in place that evaluate the effectiveness and functionality of the school's organizational structures. The leadership, capacity for improvement planning, governance, and school partnerships were all rated "good" against rigorous criteria set forth by the Dubai regulator, Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

Foundation Standard 3: Health, Safety, and Security

The school has highly effective arrangements to protect children from all forms of abuse and bullying. All staff members receive safeguarding and child protection training on a regular basis. The school's policies and procedures ensure that students are kept safe within the school. The school has detailed records of the procedures relating to all aspects of safety. While potential risks are swiftly addressed, checks are sufficiently rigorous to ensure that almost all risks are identified early.

Foundation Standard 4: Finance, Facilities, and Resources

The school has in place policies, practices, and procedures that ensure financial health and economic sustainability. A recommendation from the last Preparatory Visit was for the school to develop a multi-year strategic school development plan, and leadership has actioned this recommendation. A review of, report on, and strategy for the school's unique selling points have been completed and are informing the school's priorities. For instance, the school is expanding the campus to meet the increasing enrollment demands and to offer appropriate facilities to match the demands of High School learning and student life.

The school has shored up its procedures and practices for the collection of outstanding tuition, and after a review of the budgeting for the current academic year, future financial forecasting, and the management of debt-to-income ratio, NIS is in a strong position financially with the full support of its operator (ISP). Governors ensure that all the necessary staffing and resources are provided.

Foundation Standard 5: Ethical Practice

The school has further developed visibility on key policies and practices. Specifically, the school has published a transparent pay and benefits structure to staff so that they are clear on where they stand and can advance within the school based on performance and years of service. Systems and practices in HR, policies, and procedures are becoming more consistent and better understood by the community, ensuring that employees, learners, and parents are treated fairly, equitably, and ethically.

Internal Reflection Process

Note: The school should complete this section toward the end of the Internal Reflection period.

Describe your school's Internal Reflection process. How did the learning community engage all stakeholders? Reflect on the impact of the Internal Reflection on your community's 4 Cs (Conceptual Understanding, Commitment, Capacity and Competence) as it relates to ACE Learning and school transformation. Additional information regarding the 4 Cs can be found in the ACE Ecosystem document. (Doc03) (500 words max)

School response

NIS has taken a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of learning within our classrooms and across our community at large. This reflection process started by soliciting input from all stakeholders, appointing steering committee leads, refining our definition of learning, and developing a rubric to guide the learning framework within our school. The following are the impacts of these actions with respect to conceptual understanding, commitment, capacity, and competence.

Conceptual Understanding:

The appointment of steering committee members and the refinement of the definition of learning show that NIS has a strong conceptual understanding of the importance of collaboration and clarity in achieving educational goals. The fact that NIS used the developed rubric as a tool to evaluate learning processes demonstrates a deep understanding of the importance of ongoing assessment and evaluation in achieving our educational mission.

Commitment:

By soliciting input from all stakeholders, NIS has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that everyone's opinion is heard and considered. The appointment of steering committee members shows that NIS is committed to taking a collaborative approach to improving learning. Senior leadership's use of the developed checklist as a tool to evaluate learning processes at NIS demonstrates their commitment to improving the quality of education.

Capacity:

By appointing steering committee members, NIS has shown that it has the capacity to mobilize resources to achieve a common goal and reflect upon our processes. Team leads coordinated to unpack each learning principle which demonstrates that the institution has the capacity to facilitate collaboration and teamwork amongst staff. The use of surveys to solicit input from stakeholders shows that NIS has the capacity to gather and analyze data to inform decision-making.

Competence:

By refining the definition of learning and developing a rubric to guide the learning framework within, NIS has demonstrated its competence in designing effective educational strategies that will effect change at all levels of our learning community. Further, senior leadership continues to use and calibrate the developed rubric as a tool to evaluate learning processes at the institution which shows that NIS has the competence to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its educational strategies.

NIS' actions have had a significant impact on commitment, capacity, competence, and conceptual understanding. By soliciting input from all stakeholders, appointing steering committee leads, refining our definition of learning, developing a rubric, and initiating a checklist for monitoring the implementation of our new definition of learning to guide the learning framework within NIS, we have demonstrated a strong commitment to strategically improving the quality of education.

NIS has also shown that it has the capacity to mobilize resources and facilitate collaboration between and within its community, the competence to design effective educational strategies, and a solid conceptual understanding of the importance of ongoing assessment and evaluation.

Visitor Comments

The school has made significant strides with engaging the self-reflection process, and has meaningfully reflected on where it is in the transformation journey. The Leadership Team has a secure conceptual understanding and has put into place the tools needed for establishing and evaluating a shared culture of high-quality learning. Next steps will be to further monitor the implementation and culture of practice and documenting evidence of self-evaluation for intended Impact. There is strong commitment from the Senior Leadership Team, and they are now well positioned to further develop teachers' and other stakeholders' understanding, practice, and culture of high-quality learning aspirations. Capacity to

improve is strong and evident in the school's improvement trajectory over the past two academic years.

Guiding Statements

Shared Understanding of High Quality Learning

In ACE-aligned schools, the Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning is grounded in the 10 ACE Learning Principles and Impacts, as well as other Impacts a school might have identified. Through the ACE Internal Reflection process, you worked to further clarify your community-wide understanding of High-Quality Learning. These efforts will help you identify the Major Learning Plans that can close the gaps between what your school aspires to and its current reality.

A. Describe or list the ideal characteristics, skills, and attributes of your learners/graduates.

School response

NIS learners are individuals who possess a passion for learning, a curiosity for exploring new ideas, and a dedication to personal growth and development. The ideal NIS learner is someone who possesses a range of skills and attributes that enable them to be successful in their pursuit of knowledge.

Key characteristics of an ideal NIS learner include:

1. **Curiosity:** A NIS learner is naturally curious about the world around them and always seeks to understand more deeply.
2. **Perseverance:** NIS learners are persistent in the face of challenges and setbacks, and they don't give up easily.
3. **Open-mindedness:** A NIS learner is open to new ideas and perspectives, and they actively seek out diverse viewpoints.
4. **Self-motivation:** NIS learners are highly self-motivated and take initiative in their learning journey.
5. **Critical thinking:** NIS learners are skilled in analyzing information, questioning assumptions, and making sound judgments.
6. **Adaptability:** NIS learners are adaptable and can adjust to changes in their learning environment or circumstances.
7. **Effective communication:** NIS learners are skilled in communicating their thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.
8. **Collaborative:** NIS learners understand the value of working with others and are effective team players.

We place a particular emphasis on our TORCH Values of being Tolerant, Organized, Respectful, Caring and Honest as they guide our students through their holistic NIS journey. These values allow our learners to possess a combination of intellectual curiosity, perseverance, open-mindedness, self-motivation, critical thinking, adaptability, effective communication, and collaboration. These attributes enable them to be successful in their pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.

B. Describe the type of pedagogy and conditions that your learning community believes will lead to learners developing the characteristics, skills, and attributes indicated above.

School response

To cultivate the characteristics, skills, and attributes of an ideal NIS learner, the faculty employ a range of best pedagogical practices that promote student engagement, critical thinking, and self-directed learning. Some of the best pedagogical practices for achieving these goals are:

1. **Active learning:** Encouraging our learners to actively engage in the learning process through activities such as group discussions, problem-solving exercises, and project-based learning.
2. **Inquiry-based learning:** Fostering curiosity and critical thinking skills by encouraging our learners to ask questions, investigate, and draw their own conclusions.
3. **Self-directed learning:** Encouraging our learners to take ownership of their learning process by setting their own learning goals, designing their own learning experiences, and reflecting on their progress.
4. **Differentiated instruction:** Recognizing that our learners have different learning styles, interests, and abilities, and tailoring instruction to meet their individual needs.
5. **Collaborative learning:** Encouraging our learners to work together in groups to solve problems, share ideas, and learn from one another.
6. **Experiential learning:** Providing opportunities for our learners to apply their learning in real-world settings, such as through internships, service learning, or project-based learning.
7. **Feedback and assessment:** Providing constructive feedback and ongoing assessment of progress, to help our learners reflect on their learning and set new goals.
8. **Culturally responsive teaching:** Acknowledging and valuing the diversity of our learners' backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, and incorporating this into the curriculum and instructional practices.

By incorporating these best pedagogical practices into their teaching, NIS educators can help cultivate the characteristics, skills, and attributes of an ideal NIS learner. This can result in learners who are curious, self-directed, critical thinkers, effective communicators, collaborative, adaptable, and motivated to continue learning throughout their lives.

C. To what extent are these characteristics, skills and attributes widely accepted, understood and shared by school stakeholders, and evident to an observer in your school today?

School response

Established schools recognize the value of active and student-centered learning practices, and strive to implement them fully. NIS envisions a shared learning community, where educators, administrators, students, and families work together to create a positive learning environment that fosters growth and development for all stakeholders. Shifting away from traditional passive learning, the new NIS leadership team's arrival in 2020 prompted various curricular reform initiatives, ensuring coherence and

rigor in academic programs. The team introduced a new range of best pedagogical practices that promote student engagement, critical thinking, and self-directed learning. As the team entered its third school year, the focus has shifted to deepening practices and understanding their impact on learner agency and learning. To solidify the commitment towards more active and student-centered learning practices, NIS continues to enhance both teacher and student capacity.

NIS continues to develop teacher capacity by providing professional development opportunities and support for teachers to learn about and implement best practices in teaching and learning. This has included workshops, coaching, mentoring, and peer collaboration. Through professional development opportunities teachers continue to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to design and implement engaging and effective learning experiences for their learners. This is best demonstrated through the Induction Program, Best Practice Wednesdays, Teacher Buddies, Peer Observations including Board Members, and other job-embedded PD opportunities.

Building learner capacity involves providing opportunities for our learners to take an active role in their learning, develop self-directed learning skills, and engage in collaborative learning experiences. This has included promoting student voice and choice, encouraging our learners to set their own learning goals, and creating opportunities for our learners to work in groups and solve problems together through their performance tasks and/or inquiry projects.

As NIS works towards building both teacher and student capacity, it is important to acknowledge that this process takes time, resources, and support. NIS is making changes to its policies and procedures to create a culture of active and student-centered learning. As such, the practices listed above are currently in process, and are mostly understood to be the preferred method of learning within our NIS community.

By working together to build capacity and shift away from traditional passive learning practices, NIS is strategically creating an environment that fosters growth and development for all members of the community.

D. Process: How did the community decide upon items A-C above? Has the Internal Reflection process affected your learning community's understanding of High-Quality Learning? If so, how?

School response

The internal reflection process has been a powerful tool for NIS to evaluate its working definition of what high-quality learning looks like, sounds like, and feels like across our learning community. This process has forced our learners, teachers, parents, and administrators to critically examine its practices, policies, and procedures and consider how they align with the school's mission and vision, learner/graduate profile, and TORCH values.

As part of this reflection process, NIS has evaluated its current practices and identified areas where it can improve its support for student learning. NIS assesses how effectively it is meeting the needs of diverse learners, whether it is providing enough opportunities for student voice and choice in the learning process, and whether it is effectively promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the use of rubrics.

The NEASC reflection process has also helped NIS to engage in a dialogue with various stakeholders, including our learners, parents, board members, faculty, and staff, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how high-quality learning is experienced by different members of the community. By involving a wide range of perspectives, NIS now better understands the various ways that high-quality learning impacts our learners' knowledge, skills, and understanding.

Ultimately, the internal reflection process has served as a catalyst for NIS to renew its commitment to high-quality learning and to identify concrete steps that it can take to improve its practices and better support student learning. By embracing this process, NIS will improve upon its mission of meeting the needs of all learners and providing an enriched High Quality American education that is truly transformative.

Visitor Comments on the school's Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning

Leadership has demonstrated their conceptual understanding of and competence regarding the future-ready attributes they aspire their learners and graduates to acquire as a result of high-quality learning provision. They have clearly articulated and defined the skills, dispositions, and characteristics that graduates will need to engage further study and work beyond their formal schooling experience. As next steps, the school might consider identifying the evidence it could evaluate to understand its graduates' acquisition and self-reflection on who they have become as learners and citizens. The school might consider culminating experiences for students at key stages in their educational journey, perhaps through coursework or capstone projects, to have opportunities to demonstrate their learning and understandings. This approach could support the school in evaluating the Impact of teaching and learning and the extent to which students have grown and acquired future-ready skills and dispositions.

While leadership has clearly defined high-efficacy pedagogical practices, these are very much a work in progress. In the vast majority of observations, teachers are delivering teacher-centered instruction and need further development and support in evolving their understanding and practice of student-led learning; there are opportunities for teachers to consider their roles as mentors, coaches, and facilitators of learning. The school will want to continue to develop its Best-Practices Wednesdays with more explicit and bespoke professional development. A question that school leaders should continually ask is, "How do we know that teachers understand, apply, and refine the stated best pedagogical practices?" The school has effectively engaged the range of stakeholders in defining a definition for high-quality learning; now it just needs more time, nourishment, and monitoring.

Other Guiding Statements

What other statements exist that describe your community's core values? (e.g., mission, vision, beliefs, values). Has the Internal Reflection process and focus on learning prompted the community to reflect on or adjust any of the other major guiding statements? If yes, please describe how.

School response

Mission:

Students develop a sense of themselves, as well as the world around them. By making connections within and between cultures, NIS opens the hearts and minds of students so they embrace challenges and opportunities, share ideas and purpose, and truly influence others to make a positive difference.

Vision:

To empower the next generation of global leaders who can excel anywhere in the world.

TORCH Values:

Our students and community are encouraged to follow our TORCH values and demonstrate them in everyday life. We ignite the TORCH of Learning as we strive to be – tolerant, organized, respectful, caring and honest.

Core Values:

NIS believes that each individual has a unique potential to amaze. Our goal is to nurture that potential to ensure our students learn, lead and inspire so that the world becomes a better place.

Our core values are the foundations that enable:

- **Creative Thinkers:** Create dynamic and technology enabled risk-takers who can innovate and lead their own learning journey.
- **Aspirational and Adaptable Learners:** Consistently challenged by high standards and aspired to strengthen their skills.
- **Reflective Learners:** Become active participants in a lifelong learning process, fostering curiosity, creativity and an on-going cycle of self-improvement.
- **Effective Communicators:** Empower responsible and respectful citizens to voice their own opinion and express themselves in various situations and mediums.

Visitor Comments

As discussed in Foundation Standard 1: Definition of Learning, the Visitors recommend that the school further reflect on and design approaches to explicitly and strategically teach students about their Guiding Statements (TORCH Values and Core Values).

- The school might consider featuring key words and practices from its value-proposition statements (TORCH Values and Core Values) through assembly time and thematic focus into the curriculum to further build students' conceptual understanding and their ability to apply these to their learning.
- Further build a community understanding, especially with students and teachers, of what these values mean in practice and how to assess efficacy in understanding.

NEASC-CIE Learning Surveys

NEASC Learning Surveys are intended to be collected from a range of stakeholders and analyzed as part of your Internal Reflection process.

In the space below, please summarize the insights and understandings gained from analyzing the Community Surveys from various stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, leadership and governance. You may organize your response as you wish – such as by stakeholder group or by theme.

Please indicate to what extent the Surveys have helped to inform and guide your Internal Reflection.

School's analysis of the key themes that emerged from analyzing the survey results.

The NEASC learning surveys have played a crucial role in our continuous improvement process at NIS, and their insights have been invaluable. We've gathered feedback from all stakeholders, including learners, faculty, leadership, and parents. These surveys have provided us with a comprehensive understanding of our school's strengths and areas that need attention.

Through the analysis of NEASC learning survey results, we've identified several key takeaways:

- **Areas of Strength:** The surveys have highlighted that our school community highly values a safe and engaging learning environment. This positive atmosphere has contributed to academic excellence and social growth among our learners.
- **Supportive Atmosphere:** The data revealed that we've been successful in creating a supportive atmosphere, which has enabled our students to excel academically and improve socially.
- **Improved Engagement:** Survey findings have indicated that our students are engaged in their learning experiences. This insight has driven the development of new initiatives and programs aimed at further enhancing student engagement and achievement.
- **Professional Development:** NEASC learning surveys have also guided us in recognizing the need for ongoing professional development for our teachers. We've used this feedback to provide additional opportunities for our educators to grow and enhance their teaching skills.

In summary, the NEASC learning surveys have been instrumental in our internal reflection process. They have not only helped us identify our strengths but have also pinpointed areas requiring improvement. These insights have been the foundation for strategic initiatives aimed at continually improving the quality of education we offer at NIS.

Visitor Comments on the school's analysis of its survey results and use of this data in the Internal Reflection process

The school presented an analysis of its stakeholder survey attitudes and trends. The analysis was clear in identifying trends and areas of strength, and further consideration and development. With that said, the Visitors requested an update and evidence on the Action Plan emerging as a result of the survey outcomes. The school reported that it needed to develop a strategic response and Action Plan based on the outcomes of the surveys. A critical next step will be for the school to action/evidence its response to the already-analyzed stakeholder survey results. The school may wish to conduct a survey once each academic year to monitor perceptions and progress against the priorities for development identified in the survey.

ACE Learning Principles

Instructions for School's Internal Reflection Committee(s)

For guidance on this important first step, we invite you to access the additional resources available in the Toolkit.

Then, for each of the 10 Learning Principles (or minimum 5 LPs for schools conducting their second ACE Internal Reflection), one or more groups of representative stakeholders should:

1. **Ensure Understanding:** Review and discuss the examples, the guiding questions and the optional resources.
2. **Envision the Future:** What is your committee's vision for how your school could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?
3. **Assess the Current Reality:** How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek. Ask stakeholders through focus groups and surveys, observe learning in action and gather artifacts of learning to determine your rating. You will indicate your self-rating on the Developmental Continuum for each Learning Principle that you review. Choose a few (3-5 max) pieces of evidence for each Learning Principle. The evidence should represent where your school is today regarding one or more of the Impacts of that Learning Principle. Please label each piece of evidence and indicate why you chose it.
4. **Plan to Achieve the Vision:** How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?
5. **Identify Impacts:** What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?
6. Finally, discuss drafts with other ACE Committees to look for synergy and conflicts. Share draft report versions with the ACE Design Team. NEASC recommends that the Design Team organize a community event to share the findings of each ACE Committee and work together to determine which of the suggested actions should be combined or prioritized into 3-4 Major Learning Plans. The Major Learning Plans may be a synthesis of several LPs' work or be more specific to certain LPs. The responses below should be finally agreed and submitted by the ACE Design Team.
7. Ensure that the learning from the Learning Principles committee is used to inform/influence the community's Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning.

Learning Principles Development Continuum

When considering current evidence of impact, which of the following five rubric statements most closely describes the learning community's current position in relation to each Learning Principle?

The school (and later the visitors) should rate "Current Reality" for each of the relevant Learning Principles on the Developmental Continuum.

In the narrative sections for each of the 10 Learning Principles below, schools with multiple divisions/programs are invited to discuss how separate divisions or programs may vary from one another, but to choose one whole school rating that best describes its current position for each Learning Principle.

Not Yet Evident The learning community has not yet begun to reflect on this Learning Principle. It may be committed to improving its programs, structures, practices, and conceptual understandings but has not yet embraced or recognized the need to shift toward transformational approaches to learning.
Thinking About It The learning community has begun to think about the need to shift toward approaches to learning that are aligned with the ACE Learning Principles and its chosen future vision. The learning community is having initial conversations about its aspirations compared to what is currently observed in practice. An understanding of the implications for teaching and learning is developing.
Working On It The learning community has embraced the shift that is needed and begun to plan how to bridge the gap between its aspirations and current reality. The learning community has decided on what learning Impacts it is targeting; systems and structures are being designed, approaches are being trialed, and the community is gathering early feedback to inform the next phase.
Living It The learning community is aligned with this Learning Principle and that alignment is evident across the learning community. The learning community has structures and systems in place that are leading to the desired Impact on learners. The learning community is gathering evidence, artifacts, and stakeholder feedback to ensure that all learners are benefiting.
What If? The learning community and its practices represent a qualitative shift that is innovative in design and transformative of the structure, purpose, and practice of schooling.

Learning Principle 1

Learning builds understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions that can be applied across different situations. Learners become responsible and successful global citizens by actively engaging with complex real-world issues.

Impacts

1.1 Learners use critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, technological and research skills and transfer their learning across disciplines to solve local and global problems within real-world contexts. They do so with increasing autonomy over time.

1.2 Learners develop an ethical mindset and a global perspective when they engage with real world problems and issues.

1.3 The learning community has clearly defined goals for student growth in understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions, which contribute to each learner's ability to become responsible global citizens.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by incorporating the following elements consistently:

1. **Differentiated work:** We recognize that learners have diverse learning needs and abilities. To embrace this principle, we will provide differentiated work that caters to individual strengths and challenges. For example, in a science class, learners with a strong understanding of the topic can be given more advanced projects or research assignments, while those who require additional support can receive extra guidance and practice.
2. **Real-life connections and application of learning:** We believe that learning is most effective when it can be connected to real-life situations. To embrace this principle, we will provide opportunities for our learners to apply their learning in practical contexts. For instance, in a mathematics class, learners can work on real-world problems such as budgeting or analyzing data sets from current events.
3. **Mind mapping:** Mind mapping is a valuable tool for organizing thoughts, making connections, and promoting critical thinking. We will encourage our learners to use mind mapping techniques to explore complex ideas, brainstorm solutions, and enhance their understanding of various subjects.
4. **Proposing solutions:** To foster problem-solving skills and student agency, we will encourage our learners to propose their own solutions to challenges they encounter. Whether it's a classroom issue, a community problem, or a global concern, our learners will be empowered to think critically and develop creative solutions.
5. **Self-assessment:** Self-assessment is a vital component of a learner's growth and agency. By encouraging our learners to reflect on their learning, set goals, and assess their progress, we promote a sense of ownership and responsibility for their education. Our learners can use rubrics, checklists, or journals to evaluate their work and identify areas for improvement.
6. **Hands-on skills and transfer of learning:** In physical education and in other hands-on subjects, we will provide opportunities for our learners to develop practical skills through active participation. This includes engaging in physical activities, team sports, and cooperative games that promote teamwork, problem-solving, and the transfer of learning to real-life situations. Similarly, in science inquiries learners will use their inquiry skills linked to real-life situations and transfer their learning into application.
7. **Student voice and agency:** We believe in empowering students to have a voice in their learning. At NIS it is important to provide opportunities for our learners to make decisions, express their opinions, and contribute to the classroom and school community. This can be

achieved through student-led discussions, project choices, or involvement in decision-making processes.

8. **Responsibility and successful citizenship:** To foster responsibility and successful citizenship, we will engage our learners in setting goals, establishing class rules and essential agreements, assigning class jobs, and organizing community events. These activities promote a sense of ownership, teamwork, and a commitment to contributing positively to the school and local community.
9. **Moral and dispositional development:** Our learners will have opportunities to develop their moral and dispositional qualities with the guidance of the NIS TORCH values but not limited to but also include qualities such as empathy, compassion, and integrity. Through activities that encourage teamwork, group work, and supporting one another, our learners will learn to value and appreciate the diversity of perspectives and work collaboratively towards common goals. By embracing these elements, our learning community aims to create an inclusive, engaging, and student-centered environment that nurtures independent thinking, problem-solving skills, responsible citizenship, and a lifelong love for learning.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS, we've embarked on a progressive approach to instruction through inquiries that incorporates collaborative projects and learners' personal interests and passions. This dynamic framework rests on three core pillars, each meticulously designed to enhance the educational experience for our learners.

First and foremost, we recognize that every learner is unique. To honor this diversity, we employ differentiated instruction to cater to individual needs and abilities. By tailoring the pace, depth, and content of our teaching, we ensure that each learner is both challenged and engaged.

In the pursuit of critical thinking and organizational skills, we introduce mind mapping as a fundamental tool. This empowers our learners to visually chart their thoughts and make meaningful connections. Simultaneously, self-assessment becomes a routine practice, encouraging our learners to reflect on their progress, set personal goals, and take ownership of their learning journey.

Our commitment to practical knowledge is unwavering. We believe in grounding instruction in real-life situations and practical contexts. We inspire our learners to apply their learning to address real-world challenges and encourage them to proactively propose solutions. As much as possible hands-on skills development takes center stage across subjects and courses.

At the heart of our educational philosophy is the concept of student agency and responsibility. We actively involve our learners in decision-making, from goal-setting to rule establishment and event organization. Through collaborative teamwork and unwavering support, we nurture not only academic growth but also moral and dispositional qualities, preparing our learners to thrive in a world that values knowledge, application, and character. NIS is committed to providing an engaging, relevant, and student-centered educational experience.

Evidence:

1. Inquiry-based / Personal Inquiries:
 - Differentiated work to cater to individual needs and abilities.
 - Mind mapping to organize thoughts and promote critical thinking.
 - Self-assessment for student reflection, goal-setting, and ownership of learning.
2. Real-Life Connections and Application:
 - Connecting learning to real-life situations and practical contexts.
 - Encouraging students to propose solutions to challenges they encounter.
 - Hands-on skills development in physical education and other subjects.
3. Student Agency and Responsibility:
 - Fostering student voice and agency in decision-making.
 - Engaging students in setting goals, establishing rules, and organizing events.
 - Developing moral and dispositional qualities through teamwork and support.

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 1	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School			XX		
Visitors			XX		

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, several actions, resources, and programs can be implemented:

1. **Professional Development:** Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding and implementation of differentiated instruction, real-life connections, and student agency. This can include workshops, conferences, and collaboration with experts in the field.
2. **Curriculum Design and Resources:** Developing and updating curriculum materials and resources that align with the vision. This includes creating diverse and adaptable lesson plans, incorporating real-life examples and applications, and integrating technology tools that support personalized learning and student engagement.
3. **Assessment Strategies:** Implementing a variety of assessment strategies that align with the vision, such as inquiry-based assessments, portfolios, and self-assessment tools. This will provide a more holistic understanding of our learner's progress and allow for the identification of individual strengths and areas for growth.

4. **Community Partnerships:** Building partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and community members to provide authentic learning experiences and connections to the real world. This can include internships, guest speakers, mentorship programs, and service-learning opportunities.
5. **Student Support Services:** Providing additional support services, such as tutoring, mentoring, and counseling, to ensure that all our learners have the necessary resources and guidance to thrive in their learning journey. This will help address individual needs and promote student agency and success.
6. **Technology Integration:** Leveraging technology tools and platforms to enhance differentiated instruction, facilitate real-life connections, and support student agency. This can include online learning platforms, interactive simulations, virtual field trips, and collaborative tools for communication and inquiry-based work.
7. **Student Leadership and Engagement:** Creating opportunities for student leadership and engagement within the school community. This can involve student-led clubs, committees, and projects that allow our learners to take ownership of their learning, voice their opinions, and contribute to decision-making processes.
8. **Parent and Community Involvement:** Engaging parents and the broader community in supporting the vision of the learning community. This can include regular communication, parent workshops, community events, and volunteering opportunities that foster a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration.

By implementing these actions, allocating appropriate resources, and developing relevant programs, our learning community can bridge the gap between the current reality and the future vision. It requires a collective effort from educators, administrators, students, parents, and the community to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that embraces personal inquiries, real-life connections, and student agency.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, we can look for the following evidence and impacts:

1. Student Engagement and Agency:

- Increased learner's participation and enthusiasm in classroom activities and discussions.
- Learners take ownership of their learning through self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection.
- Higher levels of student voice and involvement in decision-making processes within the school community.

2. Academic Achievement and Growth:

- Improvement in our learner's academic performance and achievement across various subjects.
- Demonstrated application of knowledge and skills in real-life situations and problem-solving scenarios.
- Progress shown through formative and summative assessments, including higher levels of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

3. Inquiry-based / Personal Inquiries and Differentiation:

- Evidence of differentiated instruction tailored to meet individual learner needs and abilities.
- Varied learning experiences and resources that address diverse learning styles and preferences.
- Increased use of mind mapping techniques and other personalized learning strategies by students to organize thoughts and make connections.

4. Real-Life Connections and Application:

- Examples of our learners making connections between their learning and real-world situations.
- Projects, assignments, or assessments that require the application of knowledge to practical contexts.
- Feedback from our learners and parents regarding the relevance and usefulness of their learning experiences.

5. Collaborative and Cooperative Skills:

- Increased instances of successful teamwork and collaboration among our learners.
- Evidence of students effectively working together to find different solutions to problems.
- Feedback from our learners on their ability to transfer learning and skills to group projects and community events.

6. Student Well-being and Character Development:

- Positive changes in student behavior, attitude, and character development.
- Evidence of empathy, compassion, and support demonstrated by our learners towards their peers and the community.
- Improved learner participation in community events, service-learning projects, or initiatives supporting social causes.

7. Feedback from Stakeholders:

- Input and feedback from students, parents, teachers, and community members on the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and programs.
- Surveys, interviews, or focus groups to gather perspectives on the alignment of the learning experience with the future vision.
- Regular dialogue and communication channels to address concerns, make adjustments, and improve the learning environment.

By monitoring and assessing these areas, we can gather evidence of progress towards closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community. It is important to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, involve multiple stakeholders, and regularly evaluate the impact of our actions to ensure continuous improvement and the realization of our shared vision.

Visitor Observations on Learning Principle 1

The curriculum has a clear rationale and is broad, balanced, and age-appropriate. It is relevant and effective in developing students' knowledge, skills, and understanding. The learning community has made good progress on designing curriculum based on the principles of Understanding by Design and features end-of-unit performance tasks. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it supports continuity and progression in learning. It features clear cross-curricular links, as well as links to local culture and society. Student performance tasks are becoming more effective at exposing learners to opportunities for engagement with real-world context and challenges that develop their critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, technological, and research skills. Students initiate and lead projects that have positive effects on the local and wider communities.

Specifically, students show positive attitudes towards learning and the school. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the local culture and other world cultures in an international environment. Their social contributions and environmental awareness are strengths of the school. Cross-curricular links are evident in most lessons. The curriculum connects learning to students' experiences and everyday life. For example, the creation of a website on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the aquatic ecosystem social media project are showcased during Exhibition Day. Kindergarten students engaged in a performance task where they had to make a sustainable eco-system, while Grade 3 students experimented with forces and motion by testing materials and their attraction to magnets. Students were heard saying "I am so excited, because I love experiments a lot."

The school provides a wide range of extracurricular clubs and activities. The IT partnerships provide support for technology and robotics competitions. Students compete in the inter-school STEM challenge, and the "Trashion Show" features fashion using recyclable materials. Students work in a digital environment where in the Elementary through the High School they utilize digital platforms to access and organize their learning, including opportunities for research. Students in the Middle School expressed that they valued project-based learning based on real-world context, and expressed their enjoyment of learning. They communicated that school-lessened exams mean more time to engage with peers, and as one focus group put it, "We are developing the skills needed for the future of the workplace: creativity, critical thinking, application, collaboration, learning by doing, evaluation, and understanding."

The school is showing pockets of strong pre-assessment strategies for students to take stock of what they know and don't know, communicating this, and better informing priorities for teaching and learning. End-of-unit assessment practices provide students with opportunities to self-reflect, identify what they have learned, and assess where they stand to grow as evidenced in some end-of-unit reflections. These are emerging and positive practices that the Leadership Team, and some teachers, are beginning to understand and apply in practice.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

As discussed in Foundation Standard 1, there is more work to be done on embedding the definition of learning into a shared community understanding and practice. The school has an abundance of value propositions and skills as part of its Mission and Vision:

- TORCH Values;
- key characteristics of an ideal learner;
- global leaders.

The school might consider consolidating these into a "learner profile" and developing them as an intentional part of curriculum and skills acquisition in the form of transdisciplinary transfer goals. The school will want to consider formalizing sustainable planning time for subject curricular teams and multidisciplinary teams.

Further development of future-ready teaching and learning practices needs to be considered, as much of the teaching was didactic with missed opportunities for students to be responsible to drive their learning. Curriculum adaptations to meet students' different learning needs and teacher provision of support and challenge are areas for development.

The school has identified "best pedagogical practices," and should further utilize these to drive conversations and priorities around student-centered learning where teachers are serving as facilitators and mentors, and for bespoke professional development needs.

Learning Principle 2

Learners grow through regular engagement in creative, ethical, interpersonal, technological, environmental, physical, and entrepreneurial experiences. Learners explore ideas and develop solutions that may have impact beyond themselves.

Impacts

2.1 Learners develop and use higher order skills in the creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, technological, environmental and entrepreneurial dimensions of learning.

2.2 Learners actively inquire into and document their development based on a profile and definition of success in creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, technological, environmental, and entrepreneurial dimensions of learning.

2.3 Learners engage with mentors inside the school and in the local and global community to support their efforts to engage with the dimensions of learning in a way that creates local or global impact.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by incorporating the following elements consistently:

1. **Acquisition of knowledge:** We aim to empower learners with essential life skills by encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving, and applying knowledge in real-world scenarios through fostering creativity, innovation, and independent research.
2. **Application of knowledge:** Our goal is for our learners to demonstrate how knowledge can be applied to real-life situations by encouraging learners to collaborate, apply critical thinking skills and evaluate information sources while nurturing hands-on, practical learning experiences through project based learning and end of unit performance tasks.
3. **Growth mindset:** We're committed to fostering character development and intellectual habits. We aim to teach metacognitive strategies, nurturing inquiry and curiosity, and problem-solving skills. We also aim to promote responsible citizenship.
4. **Self-regulation and ownership:** We aim for our learners to take charge of their learning by setting and monitoring goals, managing time management and organizational skills, and encouraging self-assessment.
5. **Reflective thinking and decision-making:** We aim to incorporate regular opportunities for reflection in the learning process where our learners are encouraged to analyze their own learning experiences and outcomes. We encourage our learners to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate choices and decisions and to support them in making connections between their learning and their future goals.

These goals reflect our commitment to providing a comprehensive education, empowering our learners to excel academically, personally, and ethically.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS our learners are engaging with a variety of performance tasks in different subject areas such as Science, English, Math and Social Studies. These tasks provide opportunities for our learners to apply what they have learned in practical ways, and to develop skills that are essential for success in the real world. Performance tasks can take many forms, including research projects, debates, simulations, and experiments, among others. These tasks encourage our learners to think critically, collaborate with others, and communicate their ideas effectively.

An important aspect of creating engaging performance tasks is the integration of real world examples focused on and linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations initiative of Zero Hunger is a great example of how education is aligning with the needs of the world. Learners are being encouraged to learn about the issues surrounding food security, and to explore ways in which they can make a positive impact in their communities.

By engaging with real-life problems, learners are developing a sense of agency and responsibility, and are being empowered to take action to create positive change. We do this by:

Positive Attitudes and Perceptions: A positive classroom environment is fostered through classroom essential agreements (KG1-G5) and implementing the TORCH values. A growth mindset is encouraged by praising effort and persistence and providing learners opportunities to set and achieve realistic goals.

Acquiring and integrating knowledge: Clear learning objectives and standards are shared with learners and varied instructional strategies to present content are implemented. Active engagement is encouraged through discussions, projects, and hands-on activities.

Engagement and motivation: Learning is made relevant to learners' lives and interests and offers opportunities for voice and choices in learning. This is evidenced through the projects and end of unit performance tasks. Learners are celebrated and achievements and growth is rewarded.

Social interaction and communication: Collaborative learning is encouraged through group activities, discussions and effective communication skills, including active listening and respectful dialogue is taught. A sense of community and inclusivity is fostered in the classroom through our diverse learners. Technology is further used to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Goal-directed and resilient behaviors: Learners set personal goals and a safe space is created for learners to take risks and learn from failures. The wellbeing and homeroom program provide resources for coping with setbacks and next steps for improvement.

Evidence:

1. TORCH VALUES

- Students receiving their TORCH values certificate

- The TORCH Values Bear and Reflection book
- Positive Reinforcement System using TORCH Values and Professionalism

2. GOAL SETTING

- Personal Goal Setting
- Academic Goal Setting
- KG goal setting/reflection & Video

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in **red**) and then the Visitors (in **blue**) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 2	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School			XX		
Visitors		XX			

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision it is important to consider the following points;

1. Developing connections to global issues further to support the acquisition and application of knowledge to real world scenarios. This can be evidenced through our school wide support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Beginning with UAE related issues can help to build a sense of national identity and develop an understanding of global issues and their impact on the UAE.
2. For academic, social and personal goal setting to be an integral part of daily practice where our learners are encouraged to develop a growth mindset and take risks. Celebrating student success.
3. Providing PD for teachers to be able to develop their understanding of how to integrate growth mindset, real life connections and goal setting. This can be achieved through various approaches, such as; best practices and teacher role modeling as well as external speakers.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

1. Learners consistently demonstrate and use higher order skills throughout the dimensions of learning.
2. Learners confidently set personal and academic goals and reflect on these. This can be evidenced through verbal conversations with learners as well as copy book samples. They understand how to use goal setting to achieve success both personally and academically.
3. Local and global issues will be embedded throughout the units of study.
4. Classroom observations would demonstrate how learners apply their knowledge to real life situations, thus developing their sense of agency and empowering them to take action.

Visitor observations on Learning Principle 2

Since the change in leadership in 2020, changes have been made to the structure and content of learning in all sections of the school in order to accommodate opportunities that reflect the qualities outlined within this Learning Principle. Additional courses such as music performance in Secondary School and CHIL (Child-Initiated Learning) in Kindergarten have broadened the opportunities for exploration, creativity, and physical movement. The Visitors observed some teachers exploring how to be creative in their lesson design, embracing opportunities for critical thinking. Learner representatives, teaching faculty, and staff all spoke specifically about projects that linked learning to environmental issues and entrepreneurial endeavors. Learner Council members described how these linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is clearly an area that generates high engagement. Examples provided and/or observed in action were a bottle-recycling campaign that was a Learner Council initiative, and a food and clothing drive for migrant workers in the local community as part of the Social Studies Club.

The school has made progress in providing rich learning opportunities for learners in the format of performance tasks linked to units of learning. These take place at the end of a learning cycle. Speaking about these projects, teachers described how the learners in the Primary section "take control," offering solutions and solving problems. Examples included "how to escape a desert island" and a project exploring the internal and external structures of living things. Rubrics with success criteria were evident, and these included critical-thinking skills following the GRASP approach. Primary learners were able to explain the integral nature of the skills within these projects, and although they said these were given to them rather than co-developed, the rubric was clearly part of the process.

In class, the Visitors observed some examples of explorative learning that facilitated higher-order thinking, often through questioning. For example, in a Kindergarten class the learners were asked "What does it mean to measure something?" and "What jobs need measuring?" Independent exploration was considered within predetermined tasks based on predetermined ability groups. Teachers articulated a desire to provide opportunities for exploration, and said that this was often provided within a prescribed task. For example, Primary learners could choose what to include in their tally chart. In a Secondary English class, learners could choose the subject of their "pep talk."

Comprehensive lesson plans that are aligned across the school specify opportunities for higher-level thinking and questioning. The Visitors observed these plans in place across the school. During lesson observations, explicit teaching of these skills was limited. Evidence of a school-wide skills progression for this area of learning was not observed, although faculty described that the Understanding by Design program provided a starting point grouped by section.

In class, learners in Primary were assigned differentiated tasks based on TORCH groups. Self-reflection within a lesson to ascertain whether growth had taken place was not evident. However, video evidence showed a learner explaining how the "learning pit" helped him track his progress, and Secondary learners described how pre- and post-assessments helped them see progression. In other examples of tracking growth, a Grade 4 class wrote goals for the week during the well-being class that focused on interpersonal skills: e.g., "I want to be kind." Evidence of marking identified areas of growth

for learners in all sections of the school. During lesson observations there was frequent verbal feedback for learners. This was often redirecting language, or clarification of a task. Learners were frequently able to offer answers to a question in a whole-class group setting. There were often occasions where clarification of the correct knowledge was not provided by the teacher as part of the process. The Visitors were not able to observe learners engaging with written feedback, and senior leadership identified this as an area for growth. The school has started to work on transdisciplinary learning. However, there was no evidence of purposefully linking critical-thinking skills across subject areas.

Learners and teaching faculty talked about the visiting speakers who have been to the school to talk about their profession or an area of expertise. In isolated incidents, learners have had a wider Impact where their learner agency has enabled them to pursue an idea: for example, reducing the use of water bottles. The Learner Council has a strong sense of agency and was able to articulate several ideas for the future. They were also able to talk about who they would approach to seek advice. However, there are only a select number of learners who are in this group and have the structure where this is possible.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

- Further develop a skills continuum for higher-order thinking. Embed these skills in the lived curriculum through explicit instruction, application, and reflection.
- Adapt and explore ways that rich learning experiences which are evident within project work could be integrated more consistently throughout the lived curriculum.
- Further build capacity for learners to track their own progress on a continuum rather than within separate learning experiences or units.
- Maintain momentum with relation to the community ventures and broaden the opportunities for students to be mentored through these experiences. All stakeholders in the community were excited about this area, and it provides a great opportunity to address some of the aspirations that lie within this Learning Principle.
- Consider the opportunities for broadening engagement in learning using technology beyond communication, reflection, or as a consolidation tool for learning.

Learning Principle 3

Learners engage with feedback that promotes self-awareness, improvement, and mastery. Learners demonstrate growth and development in a variety of forms.

Impacts:

3.1 Learners reflect on and document their learning relative to academic, creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, and entrepreneurial goals. The school has systems in place for ongoing student reflection, goal setting, and

acknowledgment of growth in all areas.

3.2 Learners play a central role in determining areas of strength, areas for growth, identifying appropriate evidence of learning, and ways in which they will share their learning journey.

3.3 Learners understand and can articulate the current state and progress of their learning.

3.4 Formative and summative assessment activities are routinely used by students and teachers to synthesize learning and gain deeper insights into a student's learning process.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle incorporating the following elements consistently so our learners can engage in feedback that promotes self-awareness, improvement, and mastery which is rooted in the belief that all learners have the potential to grow and develop continuously.

- 1. Creating a Culture of Feedback:** At NIS, we want to establish a culture of feedback where it is safe to offer and receive feedback and have open conversations about areas of growth and opportunity.
- 2. Encouraging Self-Reflection:** Learners at NIS should be encouraged to reflect on their learning and self-assessments to understand their strengths and areas of improvement and engage in their personal target/goal setting.
- 3. Focusing on Growth and Development:** At NIS, having a growth mindset where we promote the idea of growth and development instead of just focusing on mistakes and shortcomings. Learners have the mindset of 'getting better'.
- 4. Encouraging Peer Feedback:** Learners are encouraged to offer feedback to their peers as this enables them to see feedback as a collaborative process. This may create a sense of community, helping everyone to become invested in each other's growth as they foster a sense of responsibility and trust in each other.
- 5. Involving Parents and Families:** Involving parents and families in the learning process and making them part of the feedback loop promotes a shared responsibility for the learners' growth and development.
- 6. Individualized Feedback:** this should be tailored to each learner's needs; this can be reflected in verbal or written feedback.

In conclusion, our vision is to engage feedback that promotes self-awareness, improvement, and mastery creates a culture of growth. At NIS, we want to encourage self-reflection, peer feedback, which is growth-focus, and involves family members.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS, we are actively implementing a robust and inclusive framework for learning and personal development. Our assessment approach encompasses assessments as learning, assessments of learning, and assessments for learning. Central to our approach is a shift towards a continuous growth mindset, which informs our instructional design, assessment practices, grading methods, and reporting systems.

We are committed to fostering a culture of growth and improvement. Within this framework, we are diligently working to design improvements and changes that align with our growth-oriented philosophy. These changes are strategically crafted to support a growth mentality across all aspects of our educational processes. Additionally, we are currently exploring a range of opportunities to actively involve learners in their own growth journey.

In essence, at NIS, our focus is on creating an educational environment where learning is a dynamic and continuous process, driven by a commitment to growth and improvement in both our students and our educational practices.

Evidence:

1. Assessment as Learning:
 - Student self-assessments
 - Students response to teacher in-the-moment written feedback
 - Exit ticket reflections
2. Assessment for Learning:
 - Student checklists
 - Formative assessment samples
 - Student personal goal setting and reflections
3. Assessment of Learning:
 - Summative assessment samples
 - Rubric samples
 - Performance task samples
4. Goal Setting sample
 - Sample student goal setting sheets
 - Sample KG goal setting - video
 - Sample teacher goal setting tracker

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 3	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School		XX			
Visitors			XX		

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, several actions, resources, and programs can be implemented and various opportunities to engage learners in their own growth are being explored.

1. **Adopting a Growth Mindset:** Encouraging and facilitating for our learners to adopt a growth mindset, where they believe their abilities and intelligence can be developed through hard work, can encourage self-reflection and be open to feedback.
2. **Better Feedback Practices:** Teachers provide constructive feedback to our learners and involve them in the feedback process. Teachers should use multiple sources of data and assessment to calibrate grading and offer real-time, in-the-moment feedback.
3. **Individualized Learning and Intervention Plans:** Creating individualized intervention learning plans, which lay out what our learners should work on over an extended period, complemented by milestones and checkpoints thus monitoring learner growth.
4. **Regular Reflective Practice:** Reflective practices can aid our learners to reflect on their learning experiences and achievements continuously, helping them identify areas where improvement is needed.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

1. **Adopting a Growth Mindset:** Student-led conferences will provide a platform for learners to articulate their knowledge and understanding, share their successes, and identify areas that need further development. This would demonstrate that our learners' growth mindset is supporting them in building resilience, stamina and confidently being able to share personal goals and actions needed to achieve them.
2. **Better Feedback Practices:** Including greater learner self and peer assessments, would be evidenced throughout written and verbal feedback. Our learners would demonstrate confidence in receiving and giving feedback.
3. **Regular Reflective Practice:** Reflection and next steps will be a regular practice during DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) where evidence of self- assessment, goal setting and action taken on feedback given will support our learners in getting better. During this time, our learners will take an increasing ownership of their personal goals and by knowing their areas of strength and areas for development, will take the steps to make improvements.
4. **Classroom observations:** Observation of classroom activities and interactions would evidence that teachers are providing in-the-moment feedback and that our learners act on this feedback resulting in them getting better.

Visitor observations on Learning Principle 3

The school has developed a shared understanding of assessment, and there are systems in place that allow students to take an active role in understanding their learning journey. In a Grade 2 math class the students demonstrated understanding of the success criteria, including chart neatness and the presence of labels. They reflected upon their own work, then gave feedback to a peer. In Grade 5

classrooms the students documented their learning using the “learning pit” model. This visual-thinking routine helped students to recognize the various phases of learning (I know the answer/This isn’t as easy as I thought/I am confused/I need to work hard on this/I think I am getting this/I understand this now) and track their progress throughout the unit. In a Grade 8 English course, learners were observed giving themselves ratings on a rubric. This rubric contained clear success criteria and skills for the unit, as well as descriptors for a 1-5 rating system. At the end of the unit students rate themselves again, and this is to be followed by a reflection that compares self-assessment ratings with teacher feedback. Evidence of this practice from prior units is documented in student notebooks.

Students could clearly articulate the success criteria and the purpose of self-assessment throughout the unit, with one learner noting that “It helps me stay motivated and focused on what I need to improve on.” In a Grade 11/12 math class, students were observed completing a formative assessment in groups. The problems were color-coded according to difficulty, and students could reflect easily on whether their current skill level met and/or extended the success criteria for the lesson. The school’s commitment to involving students in the assessment process is clear. In a Grade 6 science class, students were asked to justify their self-assessments on rubrics using evidence. This was not a practice widely observed throughout the school, but is something that the school should consider adding to its robust system of student assessment.

Across all sections of the school, the Visitors noted that students played an active role in documenting their learning journey, and that the school community has a strong commitment to reflection and recognition of growth towards academic goals. However, there is inconsistent evidence that these systems also seek to measure growth in other areas, such as creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, and entrepreneurial goals. In the Secondary School, students can be nominated by teachers or leadership staff for Student of the Month in alignment with the school’s TORCH Values. In Primary, students are commended for their TORCH Values using the TORCH Bear. These types of practices are encouraging signs that the school is committed to growth beyond the academic realm, but there is work to be done in order to involve students in assessing and articulating learning in all areas.

In the Primary School, teachers and curriculum leaders are developing a skills progression. There is some early evidence of this in action, such as Grade 5 students explaining that they could make groups based on skills like collaboration. When completed, this has the potential to help guide students in understanding, measuring, and reflecting on their growth in a variety of ways. In the Secondary School, part of the student achievement is their professionalism grade. Students are assessed on things like promptness and adherence to school expectations. There is potential for student self-assessment and reflection here, and the Visitors encourage the school to think about ways in which these types of systems can also be used to foster a sense of empowerment and student agency.

The school should be commended for its shift towards project-based assessments. While exams and other standardized assessments still play a part in measuring student progress, there is clear evidence that the entire school has embraced the idea of authentic assessments. Grade 6 students were observed presenting posters of Neolithic artifacts. This was a project that assessed standards from both their social studies and art classes. Project-based assessments were on display throughout the school, including Grade 5 biodomes and High School physics catapults. The Visitors saw evidence of projects using the GRASP model in unit plans and other curriculum documents at all phases and subjects in the school.

There is abundant evidence to suggest that the school has a shared philosophy on formative assessment. Kindergarten students were assessed by teachers during “chill time” on social skills taught in a previous lesson. In Grade 4 music, students played a game in which they had to match beats to a song in order to measure their understanding of the lesson objective. In Grade 7 math, students collaborated on a set of problems and then rated their group’s achievement relative to the success criteria. In a High School French class, students were given a speaking task and opportunities to evaluate the progress of their learning. Formative assessment is very much a part of the school culture at NIS. As one student noted, “Pre-assessments are fun because when you do the quiz later on you

can see how much better you have gotten.” Although the formative assessments were clearly meaningful for students, it was less evident how teachers were using that data to make student groups, differentiate tasks, or adjust instruction. Particularly in the Secondary School, students reported that they were placed into groups at the beginning of the year for reasons unknown to them, and that the groups are not adjusted until the end of the semester.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

The learning community has embraced the shift to an emphasis on growth, and has put systems in place that allow students to take a more active role in understanding their learning journey. There is a shared understanding of the role of assessment and feedback. Steps are being taken to reflect on the value of assessments and align them with the school's definition of high-quality learning.

Learners would benefit from consistent and frequent opportunities to assess and document growth beyond academic standards, allowing them to set personal, creative, physical, and entrepreneurial goals that fully embrace the TORCH Values. Systems are in place to recognize some of these areas, but a shift from teacher commendation to student reflection is necessary for learners to truly appreciate their growth in all aspects of their development.

The progress in student self-assessment could be extended to include evidence and justification. The use of scaffolding such as sentence-starters could enhance the rigor and value of the peer feedback systems that are already in place. Teacher feedback cycles would benefit from adding routines that prompt student action relative to the suggested improvements.

Teachers are encouraged to use formative assessment data to create dynamic and differentiated learning opportunities that empower students to take ownership of their learning.

Learning Principle 4

Learners face complex problems, challenges, and issues that promote deep learning. Learners consider multiple perspectives and take informed risks in the pursuit of knowledge.

Impacts

4.1 Learners demonstrate insights gained through mistakes.

4.2 Learners adjust learning strategies and processes as they integrate new information and multiple perspectives.

4.3 Learners develop an understanding of cultures and life experiences different from their own through ongoing exploration, reflection, action, and feedback.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle through establishing a dynamic and engaging learning environment that fosters a culture of risk-taking and exploration.

To achieve this, we will provide our learners with opportunities to take ownership of their learning, choose topics to explore and tools to use to demonstrate their learning. They will be empowered to take risks, think creatively, and explore multiple perspectives while being supported and encouraged by their teachers and peers.

Our teachers will be encouraged and empowered to design learning experiences that promote exploration of global issues. They will be provided with the necessary support and resources to create engaging, project-based learning experiences that encourage students to take risks and think creatively.

The school will foster a supportive learning community where our learners feel safe and supported to take risks, share their ideas and perspectives, and learn from each other. Our learners will be encouraged to collaborate, and teachers will provide regular feedback and support to help our learners grow and develop.

Our learners will be encouraged to explore multiple perspectives by being exposed to different cultures, beliefs, and ways of thinking, and they will be encouraged to understand and appreciate the differences among them. Our learners will have opportunities to share their own cultural experiences with each other and to explore different perspectives first-hand.

Through creating an educational environment that fosters a culture of risk-taking and exploration, our learners will be prepared for the world as confident, independent learners who are well-prepared to succeed in college, career, and life.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

NIS follows an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. We believe that promoting a culture of risk-taking and exploration is essential for our learners' success. At NIS, we are committed to providing opportunities for our learners to explore multiple perspectives, experiment, and take risks in their learning.

Through our inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning we encourage our learners to take risks, explore new ideas, and work collaboratively to solve real-world problems. Our learners engage in projects that require them to think critically, communicate effectively, and innovate.

We believe in giving our learners their own voice and choice so that they can have autonomy in their learning. We provide them with opportunities to choose the topics they want to explore, the tools they want to use, and the ways in which they want to demonstrate their learning. This encourages them to take ownership of their learning and take risks in their exploration.

We believe in providing our learners with timely and constructive feedback, and in supporting them as they take risks and explore new ideas. We provide them with opportunities to set goals, and receive guidance on how to achieve them. We celebrate our learners' successes and achievements, and we recognize the effort and progress they make towards those goals. We encourage them to reflect on their learning and growth so they are motivated to further their pursuit of knowledge.

Overall, we are committed to creating a learning environment that promotes risk-taking and exploration. We believe that this will support our learners to develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed in college, career, and life.

Evidence:

1. Inquiry-based learning
 - Project guidelines
 - Rubric samples
 - Student samples
2. Student Voice and Choice
 - Project guidelines
 - Rubric samples
 - Student samples
3. Feedback and Goal Setting
 - Teacher feedback
 - Student goal setting
 - Student reflection

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 4	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School			XX		
Visitors		XX			

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, we will foster risk-taking and exploration of different perspectives as it places an emphasis on student-centered and inquiry-based learning. Providing our learners with opportunities to work on real-world problems creates an environment that encourages experimentation and innovation.

Expanding on our staff collaboration opportunities to design and create interdisciplinary projects will further bring together multiple subject areas for example science, math, and art. These interdisciplinary projects will encourage students to explore different perspectives and develop their critical thinking skills.

Enhancing the use of the design cycle to implement the prototyping process, which involves creating multiple drafts/prototypes, testing ideas and repeating designs will provide our learners the opportunity to take risks and experiment with their ideas, helping them to develop their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Celebrating our learners' work that demonstrates risk-taking and exploration, as well as creativity and innovation within our school community and beyond will help to build a culture of experimentation and encourage our learners to take risks and explore new ideas.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

The implementation of the prototype development cycle to show the ongoing experimentation and the feedback provided, as well as evidence of reflection from our learners that shows that they are taking the feedback they received into account before creating a newer version of their prototype.

Guidance provided to our learners for a project from two different subjects that reflects it is an interdisciplinary project and the rubric evidences what each teacher will use to grade the project.

Evidence and the impact of award ceremonies that celebrate our learners who take risks and show progress in their projects from the first prototype to the final submission.

Visitor observations on Learning Principle 4

There is a commitment from the learning community to create a multi-perspective learning environment where students can safely take risks, be reflective, and adapt their learning strategies; however, this does not yet translate into consistent practices seen in the classrooms.

Teachers and learners understand in principle that deep learning requires making mistakes and gaining new insights to adapt the learning strategy from reflection and feedback. As one Grade 8 student commented, "In life, you make mistakes, and they help you learn, reflect, and be ready for next time."

Learners across all grade levels were observed taking risks in the classroom by confidently responding to questions and sharing opinions, with support and encouragement from the teachers in traditional question-and-answer activities. High School students were observed comfortably speaking aloud in French, and correcting themselves following feedback on vocabulary and pronunciation from teachers and peers. However, in assessed activities it was not clear whether students would be rewarded by taking a risk, or if they would score better if they followed the suggested approach. This was evident in High School robotics, when most students chose to build a robot from a standard design rather than take the risk of designing one from their own imagination and possibly having it not work.

Widespread reflection on learning and on assessment was observed by the Visitors, and it was frequently integrated into the lessons. Written feedback is displayed on the classroom walls and in the corridors. Regular teacher feedback and learner reflection were visible in workbooks across all grades. The feedback was sometimes relative to a rubric, and sometimes a narrative.

However, it was not always clear what insights learners gained from this, or how they were guided to adapt their learning as a consequence of feedback and reflection. In most classes, students were not observed changing their learning strategies dynamically. Instead, most lessons saw learning in a pre-defined format, either direct instruction with guided question-and-answer-activities, group exploration, or a student presentation to the class. Reflection was typically observed at the beginning and end of a lesson, limiting the chance for students to dynamically adapt their learning strategy.

There were some exceptions to this. For example, a scaffolded reflection task in High School physics encouraged the learners to consider how to change study strategies to have a better outcome on a test. In Grades 1-3, teachers were in constant dialogue with students to redirect their learning if required. In a High School chemistry class, students were observed adapting their technique based on feedback when their experiment did not give the desired results.

Complex problem solving is integrated into the curriculum through project-based learning, which is carried out regularly at all grade levels and embedded in the curriculum. However, as much of the project work in Secondary is completed at home, this is a missed opportunity to guide the students through the process, focusing more on the end goal. The Visitors noticed that in robotics class, when asked what they would do if their design did not work the way it had been intended, students responded that they would use “trial and error,” but there was no real understanding shown of what strategies would be employed to do that.

It was also not apparent how reflections across subjects were compared to give a more holistic view of a learner’s strengths and weaknesses. Teachers explained that reflections on skills were usually not carried forward from one year to the next, meaning that a long-term skills-based progression was not evident.

Students, staff, and parents reported that they were happy to be part of such a diverse community. There were emerging practices where students showed a true understanding of cultures and perspectives different from their own. For example, culture is celebrated through whole-school events such as International Day, the organization of which is entrusted to the students in the High School Council, something which they spoke of proudly. Elementary students were observed presenting cultural objects in class as a vehicle for discussion and reflection on cultural differences. The TORCH Value system includes tolerance as a cornerstone value. The TORCH system is embedded in the school learning environment from visual displays in corridors and classrooms, to the school uniform, to the TORCH awards and the TORCH point behavior system.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

- The school is encouraged to further reflect on what teaching strategies could be employed to encourage students to take risks without fear that it will impact their final grade.
- NIS might consider embedding time in the classroom to have all projects happening during the academic day rather than at home, as this would give teachers the opportunity to scaffold the problem-solving process, acting as guides and mentors to the learning. Teachers would benefit from professional development on how to foster critical-thinking skills in the classroom.
- Leadership is encouraged to consider the focus of regular professional development, perhaps specifically targeting just one or two initiatives at any one time based on teacher need. This would give the opportunity to explore the focus area(s) in more depth and measure Impact on learning in a systematic way.
- Teachers and leadership could revisit how reflection is used to inform learning, and how reflection across subjects could lead to a deeper focus on skills. Reflection should not just happen at the beginning or the end of a lesson or project, but also midway through in order to enable students to adapt learning strategies and see growth.

Learning Principle 5

Learners have age-appropriate, goal-oriented autonomy over their learning and make informed choices supported by guidance within and beyond the classroom.

Impacts

5.1 Learners demonstrate the skills and dispositions of self-directed learners, such as the ability to ask thoughtful questions, to design a plan to pursue an area of interest, to assess the state of their progress and the ability to see help when it is needed.

5.2 Learners pursue their personal strengths, challenges, interests, and passions in a variety of ways.

5.3 Learners exercise voice and choice in what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate what they have learned.

5.4 Learners develop through self-initiated exploration, research, and discovery.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by providing our learners with the opportunity to and encouraging them to pursue their interests through exploring their personal strengths, challenges and passions.

1. Our teachers and students work together closely to make learning exciting. We believe this helps students become better at thinking critically, solving problems, and communicating effectively. We use special tasks to encourage teamwork, curiosity, and creative problem-solving. These tasks make learning more interesting. We also use projects in our teaching. They bring students and teachers together to work on things as a team. These projects are carefully planned to help students learn how to cooperate and work together. They might involve doing research in a group, giving exciting presentations, or solving real-world problems. We want our students to feel comfortable asking questions and getting help from their teachers when they face challenges during their project-based learning adventures.
2. Our learners are encouraged to pursue challenges through incorporating MAP questions into formative and summative assessments while utilizing resources like IXL to enhance their academic skills and readiness for standardized tests like the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)
3. Our learners reflect on their RIT (Rasch Unit) scores, and are encouraged to think of strategies to improve them, supporting their academic growth. This is done through our learner's self-assessment, learner goal setting in collaboration with teachers, monitoring progress and celebrating learner's achievements.
4. Field trips and workshops are also focused on our learners' interests and learning objectives, our learners are involved in where they would like to plan their field trips based on the materials studied during the term.
5. Providing transparency and consistency in our approach to teaching is important for creating a supportive learning environment for all learners. The Inclusion departments, Gifted and Talented and Focus groups can provide valuable insights into the needs of specific learners, and understanding their key skills and organization can help us tailor teaching strategies to their needs.
6. Parents of our learners who are specialized in specific fields/areas are invited and encouraged to talk to our learners and provide further insight on specific subject matters which can provide

valuable insights and perspectives.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS, we give our learners the opportunity to showcase their voice and choice through project work, this is a great way to enhance their learning experiences. Our learners are encouraged to present their projects to their classes, to their parents and the school community.

Encouraging our learners to participate in co-curricular as well as extra-curricular activities and offering extra credit for work done is another great way to motivate and enhance student learning experiences.

At NIS, we provide extra support and improve students' learning outcomes by providing targeted intervention groups for our learners who are struggling with specific concepts and/or skills.

Setting clear success criteria for our learners' assignments and projects is important for ensuring that they understand the expectations and are able to achieve the desired outcomes. Our learners are provided with multiple choices, such as creating a video, poster, presentation, or model to give them a sense of ownership and control over their learning.

Providing self-assessment checklists is a great way to help our learners from all grade levels understand their progress and set achievable goals. We provide clear criteria for success and encourage our learners to reflect on their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Setting clear goals and tracking our learners progress is important for ensuring that they are making progress and achieving their learning objectives. We use target setting sheets to help our learners understand their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Encouraging independent learning is an effective way to help our learners develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. We provide opportunities for our learners to explore topics that interest them and ask questions, and provide resources and support to help them conduct research and analyze information.

Collaborating with other teachers in particular grade levels is important for sharing best practices and ensuring that teaching strategies are aligned with the curriculum being designed and taught.

Providing targeted support for our learners who are struggling with reading and comprehension is important for improving their learning outcomes. We provide a variety of resources and strategies, such as guided reading and comprehension stations, to help our learners build their skills and confidence.

Evidence:

1. Project Work - Nibras Student Projects
 - Research Paper format
 - Psychology Project Rubric
 - Eyewitness Testimony Research
 - Final Project
2. Targeted Interventions - Nibras Student Interventions
 - Lexia Report Skills
 - Language Plans and Support Strategies
 - Work Samples
3. Self-Assessment checklists - Nibras Student Self-Assessment
 - KG1 Self-Assessment Tracker for writing
 - KG1 Self-Assessment Tracker for Understanding

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 5	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School			XX		
Visitors			XX		

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community we will establish a regular routine or schedule for updating and reviewing target sheets with our learners.

Providing the opportunities for our learners to explore topics that interest them and encourage them to conduct their own research and analysis through inquiry based learning will allow our learners to pose their own problems, questions and investigate their own solutions.

It is important to address the differentiation gap and ensure that all our learners have access to the same opportunities and resources in a variety of ways as well as taking into consideration students who may need extra help, whereby we are creating a learning environment that is inclusive and welcoming for all our learners.

Connecting learners to what they are learning currently, as well as what they have learned and what they will learn a year later, is important for promoting continuity and coherence in the learning process, this should be reflected through our Vertical and Horizontal Curriculum Mapping documents and continuously changed to support the learning process taking place for our learners.

Providing practice and stimulation for MAP Testing is important for helping students prepare and achieve their best results. Our learners should be encouraged to develop the skills they need to be able to articulate their MAP Scores in order to create action plans or target plans that allow them to work towards achieving their personal goals.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

- 1. Learners demonstrate the skills and dispositions of self-directed learners:** Self-directed learners are proactive, curious in nature, and motivated to learn. They set goals, seek out resources, and reflect on their progress. By demonstrating these skills and dispositions, our learners are taking ownership of their learning and driving their own growth.
- 2. Learners engage with their strengths, challenges, interests, and passions in personalized ways:** When our learners have the opportunity to connect their learning to their own unique strengths, limitations, interests, and passions, they are more likely to be engaged

and motivated. Personalized learning recognizes that each learner has different needs and preferences, and allows them to tailor their learning experiences accordingly.

- 3. Learners exercise voice and choice in what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate what they have learned:** Providing our learners with a say in what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their learning promotes autonomy and agency and will give them a sense of ownership over their learning, they are more likely to be invested and engaged. This also allows for more diverse and creative learning pathways, as our learners can explore topics in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them.

Visitor observations on Learning Principle 5

Nibras International School is initiating a culture of autonomy and self-direction. As a senior leader shared, "The current leadership recognizes children as capable learners. Students have significantly grown in confidence and independence regarding self-initiated learning and problem solving, areas in which children struggled post-COVID." Parents mentioned how students set their own goals during parent/teacher conferences and how their children enjoy going to school, stating that it helped to "develop the confidence of students." During observations, there were limited instances of students demonstrating the skills of self-directed learners beyond the summative performance tasks for which the school uses the GRASP assessment method, such as the ability to ask thoughtful questions, design a plan to pursue an area of interest, assess their progress, and seek help when needed. As self-directed learners, in a Kindergarten class the students were observed freely choosing from areas like the "Imagination Station" and "Construction Area" in the shared space. They had independent access to materials and were supported in self-managing their time and emotions. Additional examples include a Grade 5 English class where including citations and quotes in their reports challenges students. In a Grade 6 science Cell City project, a design sheet prompted students to identify areas where they may need help and to reflect on how their thinking evolved throughout the design documentation process. Older students in a robotics class exercised choice, adapting tasks from a standard template and exploring designs by building and testing models, with some students showing a passionate interest in their choices. A member of the Leadership Team reflected that "We have pockets of self-directed learning. Student-initiated actions are happening, but how are we using that? How are we using student questions to drive inquiries? We will know we are completely student-centered when students initiate learning, asking, 'Can I research this vs. this?' When students are involved in planning, and essential questions come from them. This is the goal I am working towards."

The school's commitment to summative performance tasks (GRASP assessment design) is evident through discussions, documentation, and displays, enabling students to exercise voice and choice in how they demonstrate their learning. However, much of the teaching observed by the Visitors was teacher-led or structured inquiry. The school has considered what "engaging inquiries" may look like, and learners understand how learning proceeds through a cycle. For example, a Grade 5 student described the inquiry process for his Biodome Project, explaining that "It starts with a teacher question, 'Can we live on Mars?' Then we imagine, create, test, and reflect." In a Grade 4 project on systems a student explained how they could choose which body system to replicate, while in a Grade 3 English class the Visitors observed students choosing the topic for their report. Students commented that "I'm more interested because it's my choice." The commencement of an engaging inquiry was witnessed by the Visitors in a Secondary music class, where students were independently researching a Romantic composer using a checklist for the required information. The teacher explained they would then use this information during a group project where they needed to create an engaging visual of their choice to convey factual information in a modern way: for example, TikTok videos, memes, and GIFs. During discussions with members of the High School Student Council, they reported having freedom within the curriculum to choose ideas for their project work. They described interdisciplinary projects between math and social studies, and between physics and accounting. This shows that learners can exercise their voice in how they demonstrate what they have learned. Staff members were highly aware of the

students' ability to choose how they demonstrate their learning. In a curriculum meeting, teachers described student choice in a Grade 1 English unit on narrative writing by stating that "The criteria in the rubric remain the same, but students can choose their own story, character, and how to present their narrative through comic strips, books, or plays." Another teacher stated that "Voice and choice are in the projects. There is a high level of ownership, accountability, and engagement. Some teachers give choices for how to convey their learning, including presentation, songs, writing, etc. Teachers are more flexible." This was confirmed by the Visitors, who saw voice and choice in the projects during class observations.

When asked about learner agency beyond the projects (for example, following Primary students' interest in math and English), a member of the committee for Learning Culture (Learning Principles 4, 5, and 6) stated that "Students are grouped purposely using MAP data to try to bring out the best in each other." In a meeting with the Senior Leadership Team it was also noted that "It has been an adjustment for staff, and initially there was a fear that there was a loss of control using a project-based learning approach, with teachers stating 'I'm not talking, I'm not teaching.' Vertical articulation has helped, as well as the realization that learners found it fun and wanted to come to class." It was acknowledged that the school is still working on consistency, but it was claimed that "We are beyond thinking about it. We are implementing and executing; we might fail, but the process is there."

Beyond the classroom it is clear that students feel their voice is heard in the school, as expressed by both the Primary and Secondary Student Councils. Teachers and students explained that the co-curricular clubs are based on students' interests. Middle School students also expressed their pleasure in knowing that when they go to High School they get to select their courses and electives, expressing a strong sense of choice. Students can have a voice in choosing community service projects. For example, the Social Studies Club worked with the Student Council on a food/clothing drive for migrant workers in the local community. This idea came from a non-Student Council initiative. Primary students also explained how they have a voice and can propose ideas for change or improvement. For example, one teacher has a "Crazy Box" where students can add ideas such as longer breaks, uniform ideas, and recycling campaigns. They also spoke about how they could suggest ideas for special days, such as Breast Cancer Awareness Day and International Day.

The school is initiating exploration into the concept of self-directed learning. Instances of self-directed learning were observed in some classes, such as in a KG1 class where learners could freely move through a range of cross-curricular learning stations available throughout the week. Students had independent access to materials, and were supported by adults to self-manage their time and emotions. In a Primary School Arabic lesson, learners were observed making personal choices about what and how they learn. The Visitors witnessed students being given a choice from three differentiated learning engagements to be independently researched on iPads, and noted that students were also given a choice in how to present their learning.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

The learning community has established structures to support goal-orientated autonomy for learners. Plans include the introduction of project-based learning using the GRASP assessment design. There is also consideration for revising goal-setting processes. Internal professional development and Best-Practice Wednesdays are being used to help staff understand and engage with these initiatives, where teachers share and reflect on their practices.

The Visitors encourage the school to sustain conversations around student engagement and voice as identified in the school's Learning Plan 3, "Promote student voice and choice in project execution, creating opportunities for students to showcase their skills and creativity, optimizing student achievement via a growth mindset."

The school may wish to consider what age-appropriate goal-oriented autonomy over learning looks like at different developmental stages: for example, by developing a continuum of self-directed learning skills and dispositions necessary to enable learners to plan their inquiries. School-wide engagement exploring how the role of the teacher changes to help learners build agency would increase voice and choice for learners: for example, by acting as coaches and mentors, co-creating learning experiences, helping learners make decisions about learning something new, and supporting learners in selecting how they could best share their knowledge through creative mediums.

It will be important for the school to continue offering professional development opportunities around agency and autonomy to support a move from structured to guided inquiry, creating space for student questions to drive inquiries. This could include a school-wide book study on inquiry, working with an external consultant, focused learning walks, or professional learning communities collectively inquiring and committing to further improvement. Continued conversations around agency will support the school in the next phase of development, adopting a school-wide approach to learner engagement and autonomy across all areas of the curriculum. Continued conversations about inquiry will enable the school to explore and identify different approaches to inquiry learning, including small-group learning, guided learning, play, problem-based learning, experimentation, and direct teaching. The school should consider when explicit teaching methods have the greatest positive impact on learning.

Learning Principle 6

The learning community applies current research, connects with other learning communities, and uses future-oriented thinking to improve learning for all.

Impacts

6.1 The learning community has an approach to design thinking and inquiry which is understood by all members of the community

6.2 Learners make connections with experts beyond the school environment to aid in their pursuit of solutions to problems that have meaning to them.

6.3 The learning community develops and communicates relevant ideas and conclusions supported by insights gained from observation, current research, and collaboration both within and outside the learning community.

6.4 The learning community engages with complex issues and future trends by developing its own inquiry, trying out novel ideas, and applying design-oriented approaches to addressing complex questions and opportunities.

6.5 The learning community regularly tests ideas and solutions in order to assess their suitability and usefulness and refine them based on understandings developed through the process.

6.6 The learning community collaborates with external partners leading to opportunities for learners to connect to real-world experiences.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by providing our learners with the opportunity to engage in a progressive and inquiry-based approach to their learning, that promotes critical thinking skills, collaboration, and interdisciplinary connections.

1. **We aim to foster critical thinking skills:** We will prioritize the development of critical thinking skills among our learners. This involves encouraging them to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and form well-reasoned arguments. Teachers will utilize instructional strategies such as inquiry-based learning, problem-solving activities, and questioning techniques to stimulate critical thinking in class discussions.
2. **We strive to enhance project-based learning and presentations:** We believe in providing opportunities for our learners to apply their knowledge and skills through hands-on projects and presentations. Inquiry-based learning enhances our learners' engagement, makes connections, fosters creativity, and encourages deeper understanding of concepts. Our learners will be assigned projects and presentations that require them to collaborate, research, analyze, synthesize information, and present their findings in a meaningful and engaging way.
3. **We wish to better implement peer assessment and questioning:** To promote a student-centered approach to learning, we incorporate peer assessment and questioning techniques. Peer assessment not only helps our learners develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter but also improves their critical thinking and communication skills. Our learners are encouraged to assess and provide constructive feedback to their peers' work, promoting a collaborative and supportive learning environment.
4. **We want to make interdisciplinary connections:** We recognize the value of interdisciplinary learning in preparing our learners for complex and real-world challenges. By connecting different subject areas and encouraging our learners to explore the intersections between them, we can foster creativity, problem-solving abilities, and a holistic understanding of complex issues. Teachers will collaborate across disciplines to design projects and activities that encourage interdisciplinary connections and promote a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of knowledge.
5. **We will employ interdisciplinary projects and competitions:** To further nurture our learners' interdisciplinary skills, we will organize interdisciplinary projects and competitions. These initiatives will encourage our learners to work collaboratively, integrate knowledge from different disciplines, and apply critical thinking to solve complex and real-world problems. Such experiences will enhance our learners' ability to make connections between different subject areas, develop innovative solutions, and effectively communicate their ideas.
6. **We will enhance partnerships with other educational institutions:** We recognize the value of testing our ideas and practices with other experts from the industry. It is important for our institution to ground our work on good research and best practices. We will continue to forge partnerships and collaborations with other ISP schools in the network. We are committed to increasing our university partners locally in the UAE and abroad.

Through implementation of these strategies, NIS aims to provide a rich and engaging learning environment that cultivates critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and interdisciplinary connections among our learners.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3

representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

NIS employs collaborative learning, which can be an effective way to help our learners deepen their understanding of a topic, develop communication and teamwork skills, and learn from one another's perspectives. When working in small groups, it's important to provide clear expectations and guidelines for how our learners should work together, as well as opportunities for students to reflect on their own and their group's performance.

- 1. Creating unit and semester-length inquiry-based projects:** Inquiry-based projects are an engaging way to help our learners explore a topic in depth, develop research and critical thinking skills, and take ownership of their learning. When designing inquiry-based projects, it's important to provide clear guidelines for the scope and focus of the project, as well as opportunities for students to receive feedback on their work as they go.
- 2. Making interdisciplinary connections and some interdisciplinary projects:** Interdisciplinary connections can help our learners see how different subjects are connected and can be applied in the real world. They can also help our learners develop a more holistic understanding of a topic by considering multiple perspectives. When designing interdisciplinary projects, it's important to clearly identify the connections between different subjects and provide opportunities for students to explore those connections in meaningful ways.
- 3. Evidencing student learning on bulletin boards, class presentations, and during school-wide Exhibition Days:** Sharing their learning with others can help our learners develop communication skills and gain confidence in their abilities. Bulletin boards can provide a visual representation of what our learners have learned, while class presentations can allow our learners to share their findings with their peers. Exhibition Days can provide a more formal opportunity for our learners to showcase their work to a wider audience, such as parents or community members. When planning these types of events, it's important to provide clear guidelines for what is expected and provide opportunities for our learners to practice and receive feedback on their presentations.
- 4. Strengthening feedback, peer assessments, and questioning:** Our teachers provide constructive and timely feedback to our students to reflect on their learning journey. Our learners integrate the method of self-assessing their work through self-assessment rubrics that have been created as a tool to not only enhance their work but also as a tool to peer assess each other's work as a development towards successful collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills. Teachers also use open ended questioning to extend students' depth of knowledge in areas of growth.
- 5. Deepening our research-based practices:** As the school community becomes better with inquiry-based practices, it keeps going back to the early discussions regarding Understanding by Design (UbD). Both unit plans and lesson plan templates are continuously tweaked to better facilitate interdisciplinary inquiries and connections. The staff continuously reflects on meeting their growing populations' academic and social-emotional needs through the Response to Intervention (RTI) processes. Professional Development topics are currently focused on learning itself, as the professional community reflects through the lenses of NEASC's ACE learning principles and ISP's Learning First Principles.
- 6. Enhancing partnerships with ISP Network of Schools and Colleges and Universities:** The school has continuously reached out with other ISP network schools to share programs and resources virtually. Surpassing time zones and other physical barriers, NIS has successfully participated in ISP sponsored International Learning Opportunities for Students (ILOS) activities. The staff actively participates in the ISP Communities of Practice where school leaders and staff exchange discourses regarding instructional research, trends, and best practices. The school has actively signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with six local major universities, an effort to

be enhanced as the school seeks more thinking partners that would facilitate smooth transition between institutions. We are committed to increasing our university partners locally in the UAE and abroad.

Evidence:

1: Research Evidence

- Understanding by Design
- ISP's Learning First Principles
- Response to Intervention

2: Interdisciplinary Projects

- Exhibition Days
- Project Guide & Rubrics
- Product

3: Student Engagement

- Collaborative Work
- Music, Art Technology Exhibition
- Co-Curricular & ECA's
- University MOU

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 6	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School			XX		
Visitors		XX			

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, the following steps can be implemented:

1. **Emphasize explicit teaching of critical thinking skills:** While collaborative learning is already implemented, we can further enhance it by explicitly teaching and scaffolding critical thinking skills within these activities. Teachers can incorporate specific strategies like concept mapping, questioning techniques, and problem-solving frameworks to guide our learners' thinking process.

Providing explicit instruction and modeling critical thinking skills will help our learners develop these skills more effectively.

2. **Enhance inquiry-based projects and interdisciplinary connections:** Building on the existing inquiry-based projects, we can provide additional support and resources to teachers to facilitate interdisciplinary connections. This can be achieved by encouraging teachers to collaborate across disciplines and design projects that integrate concepts and skills from multiple subject areas. Offering professional development opportunities and dedicated planning time for teachers to discuss and create interdisciplinary units will help bridge the gap between the current practices and the desired approach.
3. **Increase the frequency of presentations and exhibitions:** While some presentations and exhibitions are already taking place during key days, we can expand these opportunities to occur more frequently throughout the academic year. Presentations and exhibitions allow our learners to showcase their learning and develop their communication skills. Teachers can incorporate regular presentation assessments and provide constructive feedback to help our learners improve their presentation skills. Additionally, organizing exhibitions that involve parents, community members, and experts in relevant fields can further enhance our learners' motivation and engagement.
4. **Implement peer assessment and questioning techniques:** To foster a student-centered approach, we can introduce peer assessment and questioning techniques as regular components of collaborative learning activities and projects. Teachers can provide guidelines and rubrics for our learners to evaluate each other's work, ensuring that the assessments are constructive and aligned with learning objectives. Peer questioning can be facilitated during class discussions, encouraging our learners to challenge each other's ideas, probe for deeper understanding, and promote critical thinking.
5. **Provide professional development and support:** Closing the gap between the current practices and the desired approach requires ongoing professional development for teachers. The school should continue to tap into their external partner resources (ISP and University Partner Resources). Offering workshops, training sessions, and resources focused on instructional strategies, critical thinking, inquiry-based learning, and interdisciplinary connections will equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. Providing mentoring or coaching opportunities can also help teachers integrate these strategies effectively into their classrooms.

By implementing these targeted strategies and providing support for teachers, NIS can bridge the gap and align the current practices more closely with the vision described, ensuring that our learners have ample opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, engage in interdisciplinary learning, and showcase their knowledge and understanding through presentations and exhibitions.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, we can look for the following evidence and impacts:

1. **Student performance assessments:** One way to assess the impact of these techniques is through student performance assessments. This can include evaluating our learners' work from collaborative projects, presentations, and exhibitions. By comparing the quality of our learners' work before and after implementing the strategies, teachers can gauge improvements in critical thinking skills, interdisciplinary connections, and the overall depth of student learning.
2. **Pre- and post-assessments:** Administering pre-and post-assessments focused on critical thinking skills and interdisciplinary knowledge can provide quantitative data on our learner's growth. These assessments can measure our learners' ability to analyze information, solve complex problems, make connections across subjects, and think critically. Comparing the results before and after implementing the strategies can demonstrate the impact on student learning.
3. **Classroom observations and reflections:** Conducting classroom observations and reflecting on teacher and learner practices can provide qualitative evidence of the impacts. Observers can look for indicators such as increased student engagement, active participation in discussions, collaborative interactions, and the use of higher-order thinking skills. Teachers and learners can also provide feedback through surveys or interviews to share their experiences and perceptions of the effectiveness of the implemented techniques.
4. **Portfolios and artifacts:** Student portfolios can serve as evidence of their growth and progress over time. These portfolios can include samples of their work, reflections, and self-assessments. By reviewing these artifacts, teachers can identify improvements in critical thinking, interdisciplinary connections, and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts.
5. **Student and parent feedback:** Gathering feedback from our learners and parents can provide valuable insights into the perceived impacts of the implemented techniques. Surveys or interviews can be conducted to inquire about changes in learners' attitudes, motivation, engagement, and perceived growth in critical thinking skills. Parents can also share their observations and perspectives on their child's learning experiences and outcomes.
6. **Comparative analysis:** Comparing our learners' outcomes, such as standardized test scores or external competition results, before and after implementing the strategies can provide a quantitative measure of the impact. If there is an observable improvement in these measures, it can suggest that the techniques have positively influenced student learning and performance.
7. **Increased targeted activities and partnerships:** As the school's enrollment grows, more ILOS opportunities should be provided thus, ensuring all students benefit from both internal and external rigor of ISP education. As NIS academic rigor improves and as NIS benefits from its changed perception, the school's Counseling Team should actively pursue and increase university partners, making NIS a School of Choice as well among institutions of higher learning.

By utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including our learner's assessments, observations, reflections, portfolios, feedback, comparative analysis, and community partners - the impacts of the implemented techniques can be effectively demonstrated. This evidence will support the claim that the strategies have successfully closed the gap between the current practices and the desired approach, leading to improved learner outcomes in critical thinking, interdisciplinary connections, and overall academic achievement.

Visitor observations on Learning Principle 6

There is evidence that the school community has embraced reflection and is committed to meaningful

improvement. Parent surveys and interviews indicate that leadership is accessible to them, and they feel that they are able to provide feedback that is valued and acted upon. Teachers indicated that they felt leadership valued their feedback on new initiatives. Students report a high level of trust with the adults at school. When asked if he felt comfortable giving constructive feedback to his teachers, one High School student said "Of course -- these teachers not only work hard, but they listen to us because they want to create the best opportunities for our success." The school should be commended for developing a trusting environment and nurturing a safe space where learners feel free to innovate and provide feedback.

There is an emerging understanding of design thinking at the student level. There are clear routines for reflections at the end of lessons and units as observed across the school. An additional element of inquiry and assessment was observed in a Grade 6 science class where students received teacher and peer feedback midway through their Cell City project. Students used a design-cycle visible-thinking routine to reflect on the feedback, critically assess their ideas, and make an amended plan with new strategies for the remainder of the project. This type of continual reflection-and-improvement cycle at all phases of learning was less evident in other observations, but the school's shared values of reflection and feedback make this a very accessible next step.

Reflection practices on the teacher and leadership level are also evident. Curriculum leaders in Primary and Secondary meet regularly with teachers at the end of units to discuss learning strategies and assessments. These formal reflections are noted in the unit-planning curriculum documents. A newly developed self-evaluation process that aligns with both formal observations from leadership and informal observations from peers has the potential to allow teachers to reflect on practices and the Impact on learning. However, the extent to which strategy implementation and reflection practices align with the school's definition of high-quality learning is not well documented. For example, the school has implemented an intervention and co-curricular block in the Secondary School, but there is no evidence to suggest that there has been serious reflection and feedback with regard to its effectiveness and Impact on learning. There is a wide scope of initiatives, and limited time for deep reflection. Release time for middle leaders to function as pedagogical coaches and observe strategies in action is inconsistent and insufficient.

The school has set aside time for teacher collaboration and professional development four days per week. Horizontal (grade-level) and vertical (subject) teams meet regularly to reflect and plan, with some directives or agenda items being set by the Senior Leadership Team. The remainder of the professional development is planned by the Leadership Team. The Visitors were provided with a professional development schedule for the first half of the year. These topics represent a very broad range of initiatives that lack focus on priority areas. The commitment of the school to key aspects of its definition of high-quality learning was not represented in the learning opportunities offered to staff, and the anticipated Impacts on both student and teacher learning were not well defined.

The Visitors observed an aspect of professional development called Best-Practice Wednesdays, where teachers volunteer to share a best practice. In some cases, they are encouraged by the Leadership Team to share strategies following an observation. After participating in a sharing session, teachers meet in grade-level and/or subject teams to discuss implementation, followed by a meeting the following week to reflect. While there are many promising aspects to this type of professional learning, much development needs to be done in order to maximize this time. The scheduling of Best-Practice Wednesdays is inconsistent, this being the first time it has occurred during the current academic year. There is little evidence for a sustainable system of quality assurance, with previous observation by leadership being the only method by which best practices are identified. The connection of these practices to the school's strategic priorities or the definition of high-quality learning was unclear.

There is little evidence of new ideas, current research, or differing perspectives to challenge current ways of thinking. International Schools Partnership (ISP) offers virtual professional development, but teacher interviews indicated very limited engagement with these opportunities. Interviews with the Senior Leadership Team indicate that there is an awareness of teachers' desire to participate in

external professional development and partnership opportunities. However, the Visitors saw very little evidence to indicate that this opportunity is available to the staff. One High School teacher has attended an AP institute. The school has a desire to expand the AP program, but could not offer definitive timelines for offering formal external teacher training. Although internal opportunities exist through collaboration with peers and participation in leadership-driven professional development, the Visitors did not observe any evidence of ongoing research or innovative ideas shaping professional inquiry or challenging established perspectives within the school community. This is a key element of design thinking that will be essential to the school's continuous improvement.

Engagement with community partners outside of the school was more evident on a student level, although there is room for improvement in this regard. The development of university partnerships shows progress, and the Visitors have seen evidence of High School students engaging in meetings with representatives and counselors. Leadership has supported student-led initiatives from groups like the Student Council, National Honor Society, and co-curricular clubs. The Visitors saw evidence of awareness campaigns for autism, dyslexia, and breast cancer, as well as ongoing initiatives like food drives. One student remarked that "Our counselor and Principal always let us come to them with ideas, and the best thing I have done at this school is the beach clean-up and the trip to the autism center. But I wish there was money and more opportunities like this already built into our schooling, because it would help with things like university applications. We are busy and we don't always have time as students to plan these things ourselves." While the GRASP projects at the end of units provide authentic opportunities, meaningful connections with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and/or the local community are only in the early stages of thinking and planning. Experiential and service-oriented field trips are vital if the school is to live its definition of high-quality learning.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

Learners, parents, and students feel that there is a high level of trust, and that leadership values their feedback. Meeting times have been set aside to reflect on current practices and collaboratively plan for the implementation of new ideas and strategies. The transformation into a more learning-focused school has been well received by the staff, who show evidence of commitment to the practices and routines prioritized by the school.

The school would do well to maintain the momentum of transformation by consistently asking "What's next?" Fostering design thinking throughout the entire learning community demands a dual approach: celebrating progress, and critically assessing practices to ensure that they effectively meet the needs of both present and future learners. The extent to which a practice addresses key priorities must be rigorously examined at all points in the inquiry cycle.

The school should develop a more focused approach to professional learning that explicitly identifies impacts on learning and includes provisions for ongoing monitoring, reflection, and refinement. Members of senior and middle leadership are encouraged to increase opportunities for observation of these strategies during instruction.

The structures and time for professional inquiry are in place, but the school would benefit from agreeing on a narrower set of goals that align with its vision of high-quality learning. Utilizing existing expertise through meaningful peer observations and projects should be balanced with engagement in learning opportunities outside the school community. This includes opportunities for external professional development and partnerships for teachers, as well as experiential and service learning opportunities for students. The school's progress will best be maintained when it provides opportunities for new ideas, experiences, and perspectives to challenge current thinking.

The next steps should include the formation of a design team which will drive Major Learning Plans and advance key objectives. Middle leaders, subject heads, and grade-level leaders have the capacity to

carry the torch of change, but only if they are given ample time, direction, and support.

Learning Principle 7

The learning community exhibits a culture of inclusiveness that enables the diverse needs, identities, and interests of all learners and community members to be acknowledged, actively celebrated, and proactively addressed.

Differing viewpoints and opinions are invited in pursuit of an informed and welcoming community.

Impacts

7.1 Access to learning is equitable.

7.2 The learning community actively supports the value and integrity of each of its members.

7.3 Individual and community success is supported through a variety of structures and processes.

7.4 The intended and taught curriculum is rich with opportunities for learners to engage with issues of inequity, disability, racism, poverty, and injustice.

7.5 All members of the community act ethically with respect for all others in the learning community.

7.6 All community members feel like they belong in this learning community.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by incorporating the following elements consistently as a foundation for nurturing a vibrant and inclusive learning environment.

We recognize that a diverse community is a powerful one, and we are committed to fostering an atmosphere where every learner and community member feels valued and included. For this reason, we prioritize diversity and inclusion of children with special education needs, more specifically, every member of our community, from our learners to staff, are integral to NIS's success. Thus the well-being and personal growth of every member is of high importance making our vision one that centers around inclusive activities to ensure everyone feels supported.

In our pursuit of fostering an inclusive and thriving learning community, our vision is to embody a culture where every individual's uniqueness is not only recognized but celebrated. We envision NIS to have equitable access to resources as a given, not a goal; where every voice is heard, acknowledged, and valued. We aim to create a holistic curriculum with supported structures and processes, that not only educates but illuminates, addressing pressing global issues, challenging our learners to become conscientious global citizens.

Our classrooms will be hubs of respect, empathy, and ethical behavior, and our community will stand as a beacon for inclusiveness. We aspire for every learner, staff, and community member to not just feel included, but to know that they are an integral part of our collective journey. Through continuous dialogue, adaptation, and innovation, we will strive towards making our vision a reality, ensuring our community is not just a place of learning, but a space of belonging.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental

Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS our atmosphere of inclusivity is felt throughout our school community, born from the unwavering dedication of our leaders and educators embracing our vision for inclusion and holistic development.

Our comprehensive understanding of disability categories guides teachers during referrals, ensuring our learners receive evidence-based support tailored to their unique needs. While our current toolkit, inclusive of CAT 4, NGRT, and MAP scores, aids us in identifying students of determination, we recognize the potential of integrating more diagnostic assessments. This intention, however, isn't merely about identifying barriers but crafting tailored educational interventions. In line with this, we often seek support from external educational psychologists, ensuring we not only identify but address these learning barriers effectively through classroom instruction accommodations and curriculum modifications.

We view parental involvement as paramount to a child's development. Beginning each year, we consult with parents, reviewing past achievements and challenges to outline future goals. This collaborative approach, which involves creating action plans for TIER 2 and IEPs for TIER 3 learners, highlights our belief in the combined home-school effort in a child's growth. The learner's voice is also integral in this process, involving them in charting their learning journey.

Furthermore, community outreach is pivotal, especially as we've noted parents' wishes for social gatherings. Our events, such as "Picnic Under the Stars" and "Ifar", are testament to our commitment in this arena and we always have a special booth set up for our parents.

Empowering our educators is non-negotiable. This commitment is mirrored in the constant professional development opportunities such as Best Practice Wednesday's where we have offered teacher training on how to set up, support, and sustain a truly inclusive classroom.

Our dynamic curriculum, fortified with appropriate modifications, ensures every learner is not merely a participant but an active contributor to their learning process. This synergy of inclusivity and personalized support boosts our learners' confidence and learning skills.

The evidence is clear in our learner's progress: they're not just absorbing information; they're growing, understanding, and thriving.

Evidence:

1. Transition Documents
 - Student Passport
 - Handover Notes
 - Recent External Assessment
2. Student Support Plan
 - IEP
 - Progress Report
 - Accommodations Checklist
3. Student Independence Enhancement
 - LSA Fade-Out
 - Behavior Tracking
 - Student Reflection
 - SST referrals, exits, notes

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 7	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School		XX			
Visitors		XX			

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of an inclusive school requires several actions, resources, and programs.

1. One approach is to increase the number of learning support teachers, which would expand NIS's capacity to provide inclusive education.
2. Additional assessment tools can also be utilized to improve the accuracy of identifying barriers to learning, thus ensuring that every learner who requires support receives it.
3. In terms of communication and parental involvement, NIS can develop social opportunities for parents of students of determination to meet and collaborate.
4. Ongoing professional development for teachers and staff can also ensure that the most effective and innovative approaches are being implemented in the classroom.
5. Ongoing community discussions to move tolerance of each other's uniqueness and differences to acceptance. Different school teams and committees should work together to facilitate this new realization, in addition to facilitating current discussions, inquiries and projects surrounding inequalities, disabilities, racism, poverty, and justice.

In addition to these actions, resources and programs can help to close the gap. For instance;

1. Access to assistive technology and other supportive devices can be increased to ensure that our learners with disabilities have the tools they need to actively participate in lessons.
2. The development of inclusive curriculum and instructional materials can help to promote accessibility and reduce barriers to learning.
3. A continued focus on using assessment data to inform and guide curriculum and lesson planning can ensure that each learner receives a personalized and effective learning experience.

Overall, these current and future actions, resources and programs can help to ensure that NIS moves closer to its vision of an inclusive school.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

1. **Acquisition of Diagnostic Assessments:** One of the primary indicators of our dedication to identifying and understanding every learner's needs will be the acquisition and regular utilization of diagnostic assessments. These tools will not only allow us to identify specific learning barriers but will also provide insights into the most effective interventions. Observing an increase in the utilization of these assessments in our system will be a clear sign of progress.
2. **Engagement with External Professional Development Providers:** Our investment in the continuous growth and training of our educators is paramount. By collaborating with external professional development providers, we hope to expand our teaching methodology with global best practices and the latest research in special education. Tracking and seeing a rise in the frequency of these engagements and the diversity of training topics will indicate a commitment to staff development.
3. **Creation of More Learning Spaces for Students of Determination:** The physical environment plays a crucial role in learning. By dedicating more spaces tailored for our learners of determination, we're not only facilitating their learning but also signaling our commitment to inclusivity. Observing allocated spaces in classrooms and their regular and effective use, will serve as evidence of our dedication to creating an environment where all our learners can thrive.
4. **Recruitment of Qualified SEN Teachers:** The heart of any educational institution lies in its educators. An increase in the number of specialized SEN teachers on our staff will be a testament to our commitment to providing expert guidance and support to our students of determination. Beyond just recruitment numbers, observing these educators actively engaging with our learners, contributing to curriculum development, and leading training sessions for other staff members will underline our progress in this area.
5. **Deepened curriculum and Inclusion practices:** School curricula and practices directly and intentionally embed critical topics about inclusion and acceptance, inequity, disability, racism, poverty and justice.

Visitor observations on Learning Principle 7

The school community, led by the Senior Leadership Team, has made concerted efforts to develop an accepting and respectful culture within a diverse learning community at NIS. This was evident in observations, meetings, and discussions with all stakeholders at the school. More than one teacher spoke of an open-door policy where concerns are heard and ideas welcomed.

School policies and handbooks document a comprehensive process for those who are identified as needing support to overcome learning barriers or to extend learning challenges. NIS's Inclusion Policy (May 2023) states that "all children have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum matched to their

needs, abilities, and aptitudes." This vision was reinforced in meetings with members of senior leadership, who stated that the school "embraces the individuality of every learner." The policy outlines the school's approach to English language learners, those with additional needs, and gifted and talented learners.

A system for referral, identification, and designation of support is outlined in the policy. In discussions with teachers, it was clear that faculty are familiar with the referral process and that it is applied across the sections. Specialists utilize the INSET days at the beginning of the year to ensure that all staff have the necessary information. IEPs were comprehensive, and outlined accommodations specific to the needs of individual learners. The IEP structure and recommended strategies as a whole were detailed and reflected the stated aims of the policy.

Observations of lessons and intervention sessions indicated a varied picture of success across the school with relation to implementation of IEP accommodations for learning support. The Visitors observed some teachers using the accommodations in practice, such as redirection of attention, specific seating, and adapted tasks or reinforcing key language. Learners with a one-to-one support were often closely supported, and observations of the learning hubs in both Primary and Secondary demonstrated some strong collaboration between the specialist teachers and support teachers in the areas of planning, implementation, and reflection. There were some observations in Secondary, however, where learners were sitting separately without a task to complete, or trying to engage with the content of the lesson without any differentiation for their needs. In a further observation, learners who could not access the main content were offered a separate task on an iPad that was not related to the main lesson. In the co-curricular intervention block in Secondary, the Visitors observed learners with a wide range of needs and ages grouped together for an intervention lesson. The content of the lesson was selected in order that a diverse group could access it and did not address specific needs, thereby defeating the purpose. In addition, these learners were excluded from participation in enrichment activities that were scheduled at the same time. This choice of approach does not demonstrate equitable access to learning experiences.

The Visitors observed the school's learning inclusion hubs being utilized effectively to support learners with a range of needs and with a variety of strategies, including specific intervention programs and consolidation of learning. The cycle of reflection built in to the IEPs helps focus on the growth of the learner, and it was clear that a multidisciplinary approach is taken to track the progress of these learners. Space for focused, calm, supported work is a challenge, with more than one group observed working side-by-side with different foci. The teachers and support staff were conscious of this and were looking for flexible spaces to utilize, such as the Library.

The Inclusion Policy only briefly outlines the process that is followed for EAL learners. The documentation did not include a referral process. However, in conversations with the EAL team, it is clear that there is a thorough process and this is helping allocate support on an as-needed basis. The homeroom teachers in the Primary section articulated how well the EAL team had responded to the increasing numbers of EAL learners. The team members themselves demonstrated a range of strategies to support a wide range of needs, including small-group survival English, specific language skill instruction, and adaptation of core learning content within the class as push-in. Homeroom teachers are provided with support and strategies to help them address the needs of language learners.

There was evidence of acknowledgement of gifted and talented learners within IEPs. However, there was no indication of specific interventions or targeted learning experiences for these learners. This was reflected in the community survey, where many parents indicated that they did not feel that their child was appropriately challenged.

Nibras staff have worked hard to build a culture of respect throughout the school. In the Kindergarten and Primary sections, learners felt comfortable asking for help or support with an idea or a problem, and where there was a specific need it was clear that many of the adults knew interpersonal strategies

that were appropriate for individual learners. Secondary learners often talked about the counselor as the point of contact for support, and it was indicated that the co-curricular time is a space for learners to ask for support with academic needs. Allocation of time towards well-being in Primary and homeroom in Secondary gives learners the opportunity to work on social and emotional skills.

NIS celebrates the successes of learners in each section within the school day, with awards for growth in a range of areas being awarded in assemblies, corridors full of the celebrations of learning, and parents being invited to exhibitions and end-of-unit showcases of project work. These structures were referenced positively by multiple stakeholders, including the learners themselves. However, the practice of displaying an individual's academic attainment scores on boards should be reconsidered by the school. The comparative nature of such displays contradicts the inclusive approach the school is aiming to embrace.

The moral education instruction gives learners the opportunity to discuss and learn from one another and embrace the diversity of the learning community. Observations illustrated how learners shared their home culture, and the learners were clearly enjoying the opportunity to share their home lives.

In discussions with Primary learners, students talked about enjoying school and that they loved coming because of the learning and the support they receive. The teaching faculty stated that this had been a change that they had observed across all sections of the school, and they themselves commented that they felt connected as a team, that they could contribute to the progress of the school, and that they felt supported and valued by the Senior Leadership Team.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

A continued focus on differentiation in the mainstream would benefit all learners. Although lesson plans indicate a range of approaches, the effective implementation of strategies and the selection of appropriately differentiated tasks is an area of growth. A question for reflection: how can the school maximize the resources available to provide engaging and appropriately challenging lessons for all learners? Measuring Impact is a key component of this.

The school could document in more detail the approach for language learners or those who excel in a particular area. This would provide a point of reference for new staff who are unfamiliar with the processes, assessments, strategies, and reflection points that are in place.

The school may want to reflect on how to build capacity for all teaching staff to support learners with an IEP competently and confidently, thereby ensuring that learning differences are not a reason for exclusion from a task, class, or experience.

As an inclusive school, the Visitors encourage the school to reconsider the use of "data walls," especially where an individual's identity is revealed.

The school is encouraged to reflect on how to incorporate broad themes of inclusion more regularly: for example, diverse backgrounds and socio-economic status.

The school is encouraged to incorporate the needs of students with IEPs in any reconsideration of learning-space use, with the aim of providing spaces that will support students to achieve the stated goals.

Learning Principle 8

The roles of leadership and governance are aligned with the school's learning goals, unified through a common mission, and organized through well-aligned structures that allow informed analysis, communication and decision-making in support of learners.

Impacts

8.1 Decision-making is grounded in the learning community's core values, agreements, and desired goals

8.2 Governance, leadership, and management structures are aligned with, or guided by desired Impacts.

8.3 The learning community systematically utilizes evidence of Impact to direct future plans and actions.

8.4 Progress towards learning Impacts is regularly monitored, communicated to all stakeholders, and used in ongoing planning and implementation.

8.5 Governance, leadership, and management demonstrate a generative mindset, a focus on the future, and a strategic outlook when envisioning how to best support learners.

8.6 Governance, leadership, and management regularly collaborate to explore the future, articulate desired Impacts, and design appropriate approaches and innovations to achieve a common vision.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle with the support of governance, leadership, and management to promote and embody the school's learning norms and values.

The school has consistently improved its approach to delivering high-quality learning experiences for students across all grade levels. As part of our ongoing commitment to growth and development, we are dedicated to integrating the vision and philosophy of inquiry-based learning and learning projects as the fundamental pillar within our school community. This approach is one that all stakeholders actively contribute to, value, promote, and nurture.

NIS learners will take on a more active role to further engage with and collaborate with the governance, leadership, and management on school improvement plans and will excel in modifying impact beyond the learning environment.

The school governance, leadership, and management will continuously work together to identify, articulate, and address potential barriers to sustained improvement and create opportunities to ensure the school's commitment to High Quality Education and its continued improvement with a main focus on student outcomes.

With unwavering commitment and dedication to the NIS learning community's vision, all stakeholders will align policies and procedures with the school's mission, vision, TORCH values, and other guiding statements. This alignment ensures that our learning environments authentically embody the principles of high-quality learning, supported by innovative facilities that embrace inquiry-based learning.

Furthermore, our governance, leadership, and management will persist in creating opportunities for our students and educators to initiate local and global initiatives.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

NIS is led by the Whole School Principal and Senior Leadership team who are effective, inspirational and skilled practitioners, displaying a high level of professional competence. Senior Leaders and colleagues share a clear sense of purpose as a team and successfully communicate and implement the school's policies, norms, and values.

Since our last accreditation visit and local education authority's inspection, both the governance and leadership capacity at NIS has been developed significantly. The restructuring of both teams had a positive impact on both student and staff morale, and student performance outcomes. Governance, leadership, and management are aligned in moving the school forward.

During the last three years, the Board of Advisors has reorganized itself and adopted new By-Laws to guide its operation to move the school's mission, vision, and policies forward. The new Board of Advisors is composed of ten members with representatives coming from ISP (three) and the parent groups from elementary and secondary schools (seven). The school's Senior Leadership Team and Instructional Leadership work side by side with the Board of Advisors.

Both school leaders and staff members have clear job descriptions. They are committed to achieving the NIS vision and working effectively in raising the achievement and personal development of all learners. The leadership and teaching staff have worked tirelessly to establish an inclusive learning environment, with a purposeful school culture in achieving high standards.

The NIS leadership team demonstrates a comprehensive and thorough knowledge of the curriculum, as well as best practices in teaching, learning and assessment. More opportunities have been developed in providing extensive CPD opportunities to teachers across all phases to ensure alignment in teaching and learning and documentation, including: the NIS vision, mission and core values, the UAE National Agenda, school development plans, self-evaluation form (SEF) and departmental improvement plans, in order to deliver an inclusive school environment and High Quality Learning through an inquiry based and project learning ethos centered around student voice and choice.

Evidence:

1. Inquiry/ Project based learning
 - Project Guides/Task Sheets
 - Students leading their inquiry
 - Rubrics related to inquiry projects
2. Student Voice & Choice
 - Students working together on projects
 - Students Buddy Program
 - Project Guides/Task Sheets related to collaboration
3. Collaborations by Stakeholders
 - NIS Organizational Chart 2023

- Board of Advisors Website
- Board of Advisors By-laws
- Board of Advisors Representatives

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 8	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School		XX			
Visitors		XX			

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision we need to ensure effective monitoring of teaching and learning with sufficient focus on the academic progress of our learners in lessons and over time. Documentation needs to be significantly aligned and reflect continuum development in all areas of school improvement and in achieving the UAE National Agenda. The NIS governance, leadership, and management need to continue to work together to achieve and monitor these goals.

The KHDA required Self-evaluation Form (SEF) and the school's departmental improvement plans should be classified as working documents that keep on allowing teams to develop their data stories, develop their curriculum journeys and capture student progress - something that should be part of a structured CPD Program and school improvement process. These are vital documents for the NIS governance, leadership, and management to consider as they plan for the innovative future of their learners.

Another key aspect of closing the gap between our future vision and current reality is to create an innovative learning environment and provide the resources that allow our learners to design, create and showcase their interdisciplinary projects, their project inquiries as well as provide them the opportunity to excel as 21st century innovative learners in a global society that is rapidly changing. This should be a priority for governance, leadership, and management as they articulate and move forward in delivering the school's mission and vision.

Governance, leadership, and management teams should actively utilize and employ all means possible to encourage participation and involvement from students, parents, and the rest of the school community in their deliberations and process to effectively operate the school. Active participation and involvement from all stakeholders will sustain the progress the school has recently achieved and will help the community to continue to thrive.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

The NIS learning environment showcasing and providing the opportunity for students to be more innovative, the evidence of student work being aligned to current trends, and exponential technology and solutions that align with other inquiry and project based learning curricula.

The evidence in student voice and student choice when executing a project and showcasing their diverse skills and creativity. Sourcing opportunities locally and globally for our students to be part of so that they can collaborate with outside agencies and promote their learning on a wider scale.

Another aspect of evidence to consider would be the documentation alignment throughout all phases at NIS and the team approach and articulation for governance, leadership, and management to understand and relate to these documents as they move the mission and vision of the school forward.

Clearly understanding their tasks and responsibilities, the NIS governance, leadership, and management are able to clearly articulate a shared vision and a common language surrounding the future of the school and its stability.

Visitor Observations on Learning Principle 8

Members of senior leadership have taken their community on a strategic and culture-shifting journey over the past three years. School culture, systems, and procedures are strong and well-led. Senior leaders have a conceptual understanding, and are committed and competent to drive learning. The school's self-evaluation process engages all stakeholders, mainly through surveys, and generates a realistic view of the school's performance. The Action Plan developed by school leaders includes reasonable timeframes and success criteria to identify next steps for Impact. The Leadership Team is effective in monitoring teaching across the school and evaluating its Impacts on student learning and other desired Impacts. The strategic direction of the school is planned for and adapted at the school level. This is evident as significant progress in addressing the recommendations through external feedback (DSIB and NEASC), and has improved the school's overall performance.

Governance includes representation of most stakeholders, including parents, leaders, and teachers, and collects their opinions when reviewing the school's performance and inputs to identify priorities and next steps. Members of the Board monitor the school's work and hold the Senior Leadership Team to account for students' academic and social outcomes. Decision making is grounded in the best interests of advancing goals and aspirations for learners, led by the Senior Leadership Team. While school leaders are well aware of where the school is on its transformational journey, there is now a need to further collaborate with governors to share this vision with reference to the ACE protocol. There is opportunity for governors and leadership to collaborate with respect to the school's expansion and strategic thinking, planning, and implementation for learning environment and resources.

Student leadership opportunities exist in the form of Student Councils, and students are well positioned to share and implement their ideas at the school level; there is opportunity for students to have more input and connection with governors. For instance, further opportunities for student leadership and development that are more accessible and strategic to and for all students, especially in the context of global learners, are needed beyond Student Council. An opportunity may lay with students having more chances to provide input at strategic level, including occasions to interact and contribute to governance.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

The Governing Body (parent representation and ISP) should consider further training on the ACE framework, how ACE can work with other requirements such as DSIB, and the ideals of the ISP proposition statements. For example, the Governing Body will want to look for opportunities to take operator learning statements, such as "amazing learning," to look for alignment and overlay within the context of the TORCH Values and key characteristics of learners. There is also opportunity for commonalities and alignment with the DSIB school inspections framework for sustainability and load management of initiatives. The Governing Body at ISP has recently appointed a new Director for Teaching and Learning, and it will be of utmost importance that he be brought into the school to receive a comprehensive briefing on the ACE protocol and the school's ambitious vision for high-quality learning and its Major Learning Plans, and how these can coordinate with DSIB and ISP needs.

Governors and school leaders will want to strengthen their partnership to develop a shared mindset that is future-focused and generative for the school strategic priorities by envisioning how to support learners. There was an expressed opportunity for governors to review professional development budgets so that external, bespoke, and strategic PD for leaders and teachers outside the ISP network will be considered. As the school further refines and begins to embed its Major Learning Plans, it is vital from the onset that backwards planning be embraced to first clearly identify the intended Impacts and the actions and timeline to get there. There is an opportunity, in collaboration between governors and senior leaders, to plan a "governance calendar" to identify key dates for planning, reviews, and evaluation of progress against key priorities and initiatives. As part of this work, governors and leaders at all levels will be well positioned to identify the desired Impacts that they wish to achieve in the short and long term, and define the criteria and evaluation metrics for achievement of those Impacts.

Learning Principle 9

The learning community optimizes physical environments, virtual opportunities, and time to support learning and wellbeing for all.

Impacts

9.1 Learning space (physical and virtual) and the structure of learning time contribute to the achievement of learning goals for learners.

9.2 Learners and teachers have the autonomy to manipulate learning space and time to maximize learning. Learners are given time to pursue interests and passions within the framework of the core curriculum.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by providing our learners with tools to be out of the box thinkers and doers who are both resilient and creative in their learning.

NIS recognizes that in today's world, learners need to be able to challenge norms and think critically to succeed in a manner which extends learning beyond classroom walls to any place and any time within the learners' environment. To this end, NIS encourages its learners to take ownership of their knowledge and design their own paths within the inquiry-based and project-based framework. By doing so, our learners can become more engaged and motivated in their learning, connecting disciplines and ideas across the curriculum.

NIS also recognizes the importance of building skills such as adaptability, resilience, and persistence in our learners. These skills are essential for navigating an uncertain future, both in the world of education and in the workforce. Educators aim to provide students with opportunities to develop these skills through inquiry-based learning and through collaborative learning experiences with peers from around the world within ISP's network. By doing so, our learners can learn from different perspectives and cultures and develop a global mindset.

NIS plans to leverage innovative practices by creating interactive learning experiences for our learners by using technological tools strategically, NIS hopes to create an engaging and immersive educational environment.

This approach to learning can help our learners stay engaged and motivated, as they can see the relevance of what they are learning across cross-curricular domains.

NIS upholds its vision for its learners to become well-rounded individuals who are prepared for the challenges of the future, both in terms of their education and their careers beyond the classroom walls.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.
If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS, our learners are facing many new challenges as they explore and investigate learning standards that call for application of learning.

NIS, recognizes the importance of equipping our learners with the skills they need to navigate these challenges successfully. As such, we are developing our approach to inquiry-based learning and peer assessments, and we believe that these approaches can help our learners to take ownership of their learning and develop the critical thinking skills they need to succeed beyond the classroom and in the future.

One of the ways we are developing our approach to inquiries and project-based learning is by making use of every possible learning space in our school. Our learners have now become more engaged with visible signs of learning taking place outside of the traditional learning environment. We believe that this approach can help our learners to understand the real-world implications of the concepts they are learning. Additionally, we recognize that some learners may be held back from exploring their interests, especially as they move into high school where electives become more limited, and as such plans are in place to develop more opportunities for all learners.

By providing opportunities for inquiries and project-based learning, we hope to give our learners the autonomy to explore their interests and develop their talents in a supportive environment. Through this approach, we aim to prepare our learners to become lifelong learners who are able to adapt to the challenges of the future.

Evidence:

1. Daily Structures
 - KG Class Schedule
 - Elementary Class Schedule
 - Secondary Block Timings for Monday to Thursday Schedule
 - Secondary Block Timings for Friday Schedule
2. Learning Innovation and Space
 - Elementary Students using the outside space for learning
 - Secondary Students using the outside space for learning
 - Students using the playing fields to exhibit their projects.
3. Learning Beyond the Classroom
 - Students carrying out their experiments in the playground
 - Parents visiting an exhibition in the outdoor learning space area
 - Students planting flowers and carry out work on the life cycle of plants.

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 9	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
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School			XX		
Visitors			XX		

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community, NIS is tentatively set to receive funding for additional innovative learning spaces.

These spaces will allow for the curriculum to be fully implemented in more creative and innovative ways which will promote projects that push our learners to consider real world application. Vertical and horizontal alignment in all subjects will facilitate cross-curricular planning.

Anticipating the new facilities, we can ensure that our learning community is working towards the same inquiries and project-based goals and that progress is being made in student learning. Additionally, we will set achievable goals for teachers and our learners and provide them with reasonable deadlines to meet the expectations of this transition. This approach will help to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that progress is being made towards our vision.

Another key aspect of closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision is allocating the necessary resources to support our new facilities. This includes financial resources, staff, and additional classrooms. By providing these resources, we can ensure that everyone has the support they need to implement the curriculum effectively.

Additionally, we will regularly evaluate progress towards our goals and make adjustments as needed. This approach will help us to stay on track and ensure that we are making progress towards our future vision.

By setting achievable goals, and allocating the necessary resources, we can close the gap between what we want our future vision to be like and what our current reality is in order to ensure that our learners are prepared for success in the future.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

Extending learning beyond classroom walls and into the realm of application can have a significant impact on our learner's progress and attainment.

When our learners are given opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, they are able to see the relevance of what they are learning and understand how it can be used in their lives. This approach to learning also helps our learners to develop critical thinking skills and problem-solving

abilities, as they are required to apply their knowledge to new situations.

Additionally, our learners are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their learning when they see the real-world implications of what they are studying.

Overall, extending learning beyond classroom walls and into the realm of application can lead to better learning outcomes, including higher levels of attainment, increased motivation, and improved critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Vistor Observation on Learning Principle 9

The learning community is currently exploring the design of learning spaces and the utilization of time. Design principles are being actively considered and applied to new spaces. The Secondary music teacher expressed satisfaction, stating "As we are growing the program, I'm happy to have a space for students to create and explore." The recent addition of a large technology space, though currently arranged with desks in rows, reflects ongoing developments. In the Kindergarten, teachers are maximizing outdoor space by establishing an outdoor "chill" area aimed at supporting students' social, emotional, and physical development. During observations, students were seen engaging in testing, experimenting, and playing. They participated in a rotation through various learning stations every ten minutes, including a water area, a construction station, a reading area, a physical development station, and a well-being station where students practiced yoga poses. Library spaces in both the Primary and Secondary Schools are strategically utilized to enhance learning experiences. The Secondary Library is open to students whenever it is not booked for a class. In the Primary School, the Visitors observed a Grade 3 class utilizing different seating options in the Library to explore story elements, transitioning from the carpeted area for a whole-class introduction to tables for small-group work.

The Visitors noted that in certain classes, adhering to the school's definition of high-quality learning posed challenges due to limitations in physical space. Some classrooms had limited room for students to actively engage in "engaging inquiries." Learning spaces were frequently observed to be crowded, limiting learners' opportunities for movement and impeding the teacher's ability to easily navigate between different groups or to provide individual support. For instance, the Visitors observed a social studies class which lacked natural light and was relatively small for the number of students present, resulting in direct teaching from the front of the room. Additionally, during the same period, larger spaces in the same area, including the physics room, a more spacious social studies room, and the Library remained unused. Simultaneously, in an upstairs technology room, eight students sat individually in rows during a class.

The Visitors observed several instances where teachers effectively utilized flexible time and space to achieve learning goals. Weather permitting, the school actively promotes the use of outdoor spaces to enhance learning. For example, a Grade 2 math class engaged in a scavenger hunt in the natural environment to collect data, while in a Grade 3 class the students applied their knowledge, skills, and understanding from a science lesson to an outdoor setting, conducting experiments to test materials for magnetism. In the Secondary School, the Visitors witnessed a Grade 7 math class titled "Into the Woods" taking place in the garden area. Students collaborated on learning about equations, with the teacher actively checking in with each group, providing support for group social skills and assisting individual students in applying the PEMDAS rule for the order of operations. The teacher emphasized to a struggling group, "It's everyone's responsibility in the group to ensure everyone understands and can explain together. That's why we are doing this out here."

Teachers acknowledged the challenges posed by COVID, limiting excursions into the local community; however, there is a strong commitment to utilizing the community for real-world learning, aligning with the Strategic Plan catalysts. Parents expressed appreciation for "the opportunity to support school trips, shadow learning, and participate in workshops."

On several occasions the Visitors observed learners having dedicated time to pursue their interests and passions within the framework of the core curriculum. A notable example is found in Kindergarten, where a break-out space referred to as the "chill" area has been designated in a shared corridor. Here learners were seen exploring and expressing creativity at the "Imagination Station" and "Construction Area." A Kindergarten teacher highlighted that this space allows students to follow their interests and extend their learning. Children could be heard expressing enjoyment, saying "it's fun" and "we like toys." The teacher further explained, "In addition to free exploration, teachers can also utilize the space to extend learning. For example, the Construction Area has been set up to support their current unit on push and pull."

As discussed in meetings throughout the school, space was identified as an ongoing concern in the implementation of an inquiry approach to learning and teaching. A Primary teacher noted that "The space can sometimes limit the implementation of the curriculum. We can use the lab at Secondary, but it isn't always available. There is only one lab, and that isn't enough for the Secondary team." Additionally, a Secondary teacher reported facing space challenges with up to 27 students in a small classroom. The Senior Leadership Team also acknowledged the space-related challenges, stating that "We have to provide the space and architecture first. We can plan, but space is an issue when students can't move." Parents echoed these concerns, expressing a desire for "more facilities and resources for children with special needs."

Despite challenges with classroom space, the school boasts various shared and flexible areas including two pools, an amphitheater, a cafeteria, a double gym which can be divided into four sections, a science lab, and a garden area. These spaces could be further optimized to support learning by providing outdoor tables and benches in the garden area, or establishing a makerspace in the new technology area with flexible and varied seating arrangements.

Discussions are underway within the learning community regarding time, aiming to develop solutions that align with desired shifts in learning approaches. In the Primary School there is dedicated time allocated for science inquiries using a project-based learning (PBL) approach. A Grade 5 student shared how this project time allowed for group work to "imagine, create, test, share, and reflect." Timetables have been reconsidered in both the Primary and Secondary Schools to incorporate dedicated well-being time. This time serves to address student well-being, drawing from the HEART curriculum in the Primary School and the Be Good People program in the Secondary School, or from student concerns such as vaping and bullying. The Secondary co-curricular timetable is integrated into the school day, providing learners with the opportunity to pursue their interests and passions. The ACE committee members for Learning Ecology (Learning Principles 7, 8, and 9) expressed satisfaction with the block timetable in the Secondary School, emphasizing how it has created space for learners to pursue interests within the framework of the core curriculum. However, it was noted that not all learners have this autonomy, as inclusion support lessons occur during this time. While acknowledging the ethos behind the scheduling of co-curricular classes during the school day, the Visitors strongly recommend that the school reflect on how this aligns with "supporting learning and well-being for all" as stated in Learning Principle 9.

The displays in the corridors serve to honor students' learning, reflecting their lives, families, and cultures while effectively communicating the values of the school. Noteworthy displays observed by the Visitors include descriptions of the observed content, student work, teacher feedback, and links to projects accessible via QR codes. Senior leaders described the Display Policy as a combination of both showcasing and facilitating learning. It was acknowledged that "Worksheets and templates are not a reflection of learning." Teachers are actively encouraged to contemplate questions such as "What does learning look like?" and "What does it tell us about the students?" while ensuring that displays serve as engaging talking points for learners. The Visitors also noted that inside the classrooms some spaces on the walls were utilized to support learning, as evidenced by anchor charts for musical notes observed in the Primary music room.

The virtual learning environment plays a role in students' attainment of learning goals. The Visitors observed extensive use of various digital platforms including Seesaw, Raz Kids, Lexia, TTP, IXL, and Google Classroom. While technology was frequently employed to share lesson objectives or as a substitute for traditional pen-and-paper activities, there were occasional instances of innovation. For example, in a biology class the learners utilized technology to design a museum, and in a robotics class the students employed technology to construct a robot. Additionally, in a High School technology lesson the students were engaged in reflecting on a mid-term project comparing websites they had created to Expo 2020. The teacher facilitated this project by introducing an imaginary company, "Tech One," allowing students to choose between creating a page for a band or sports team. Online resources were provided by the teacher for students to utilize as needed.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

As the learning community continues to create new spaces, it will be crucial to engage in purposeful school-wide discussions on how to address some of the ongoing limitations around learning space, maintaining a clear understanding of the interdependent relationship between effective future-oriented learning and the design of learning space and time. The committee for Learning Principle 9 could take up the charge of continuing the work on planning for and creating learning spaces and timeframes that fulfill this Learning Principle and the school's own commitment to providing an environment that supports "engaging inquiries."

The school may wish to reimagine the use of space to ensure that it is flexible, inspiring, and allows for student engagement. For example, considering a combination of soft furniture such as sofas and easily movable desks and chairs would enable learners to adapt their learning space, creating opportunities for collaboration, independent work, creation, and design. In considering learner needs when allocating classes to spaces, leveraging outside/breakout spaces as much as possible, and using flexible bookings of shared spaces in response to student learning, the school may alleviate some of the space concerns.

The school may want to review how technology is used to optimize learning, support creativity, and empower students to be future innovators. Consideration could be given to using technology for collaboration and creation, and reassessing the no-phones policy to enable students to incorporate creative apps into their learning.

Continued conversations around time and space are essential for creating opportunities for learners to have appropriate independence and autonomy. For instance, the school could consider offering continuous provision in Kindergarten, with blocks of uninterrupted time for students to explore engaging transdisciplinary inquiries in the Primary School. In Secondary, pacing learning and providing students with meaningful choices consistent with learning objectives could be explored to help offer a developmentally appropriate level of challenge.

The Visitors encourage the school to continue considering the walls inside the classrooms from different perspectives such as school culture, the purpose of display, providing a balance between filled and empty spaces, and aesthetics. It is suggested that the school critically examine the quality of displays within classes to determine whether they contribute meaningfully to learning.

Learning Principle 10

The learning community is a healthy environment where all members thrive. Respectful, healthy, ethical, and honest relationships create a true sense of community. Community values are clearly stated, actively lived, and define a distinct, sustained identity.

Impacts

10.1 Members of the learning community express satisfaction with the ways in which they are treated and included as members of that community.

10.2 The community demonstrates an understanding that voice, choice, and self-directed learning are fundamental underpinnings of an individual's sense of engagement and wellbeing. The community is acting upon that understanding by increasing opportunities for voice, choice, and self-directed learning.

10.3 The learning community members are engaged, informed, and supportive of the community's goals.

10.4 Community members experience high levels of personal and professional wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

10.5 Learners use appropriate skills to enhance their own social-emotional wellbeing.

10.6 Learners transition successfully from grade to grade, between divisions and into and out of the school community.

Future Vision

What is your learning community's vision for how you could more fully embrace this Learning Principle?

School response

Our learning community's vision is to fully embrace the learning principle by providing our learners to holistically develop as learners who not only excel academically but also possess a strong sense of character and empathy.

To achieve this, we will continue to prioritize valuing relationships throughout our NIS ecosystem, recognizing the importance of fostering connections among students, teachers, parents, administrators, and all staff members.

We believe that when all stakeholders work together, we can create a vibrant and supportive community that empowers our learners to become stewards of learning and action in the wider community. By making learners active participants in their learning process, we aim to cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility, enabling them to positively influence others around them.

Additionally, we strive to nurture increased creativity among our learners, providing them with opportunities to think critically, explore their passions, and unleash their innovative potential. With support from school leadership and the regional ISP management team, all stakeholders work together to make sure the wellbeing of staff and social emotional needs of the students are front and center in all aspects of school operation. Joint resources are provided to support initiatives promoting staff wellbeing and to fully implement the school's social-emotional curricula for all learners.

With academic rigor and with the learners feeling supported and safe psychologically, students successfully transition from grade to grade as each school year closes. Learners requiring more time and additional support are guided accordingly, with both internal and external resources and provisions.

Finally, we are dedicated to establishing more tangible communication and connection with our alumni and their parents. We recognize the value of their continued engagement and support, and we are committed to creating meaningful avenues for them to stay connected with NIS and contribute to its growth and success.

Current Reality

How far is your school from realizing its vision for this Learning Principle? Evaluate how well your existing programs, resources and practices create the deep learning you seek related to this Learning Principle. Integrate survey findings as appropriate. Share your judgment on the Developmental Continuum below.

School response, including hyperlinks to evidence that support your response. Choose up to 3 representative examples that both bring your school's learning to life and demonstrate where you are today and/or where you hope to go in the future.

If your school's rating below is "What If", then please indicate so here and explain your rating.

At NIS, our learning community thrives within a healthy environment rooted in respectful, ethical, and honest relationships that form the bedrock of our distinct and enduring identity. Our commitment to these values is exemplified through our TORCH principles of tolerance, organization, respect, caring, and honesty, which are actively embraced by students from day one.

This dedication is mirrored in the deepening sense of community between parents and teachers, marked by shared dedication to providing the best education and support, fostering trust and open dialogue, ensuring everyone feels truly satisfied.

We acknowledge the need for improvement in parent communication. We are actively enhancing our methods to involve them more deeply.

We prioritize giving everyone in our community a voice and choice. We make sure we address the well-being of our professionals and the social-emotional needs of our students, ensuring their growth, that they thrive, and they progress each year.

In addition to academic excellence, non-academic events like cultural celebrations and community service initiatives play a crucial role in building our sense of community and belonging. These events connect students with their peers, nurturing responsibility and empathy.

Our commitment to transparent communication extends to addressing grievances through a well-defined policy, ensuring that every diverse voice is valued and heard, further strengthening trust and belonging.

At NIS, we've made significant strides in fostering values and community. Our unwavering dedication to continuous improvement, communication, and ensuring every community member has a voice and choice underpins our mission to provide the best education possible.

Evidence:

1. Communication
 - Schedule
 - Activities
 - Letters
2. Wellbeing and Moral Education
 - Heart Curriculum
 - Moral Education
 - Wellness Surveys
3. Positive Reinforcement
 - Torch Points
 - Professionalism

- Student of the Month

Considering the Current Reality described above (and observed by Visitors), please select the one box on the Continuum that best reflects your judgment regarding the school's alignment with this Learning Principle. The school (in red) and then the Visitors (in blue) will indicate their rating here and also on the Master Rating Grid at the bottom of this report.

Learning Principle 10	Not Yet Evident	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If?
School			xx		
Visitors			XX		

Achieving the Vision

How might current and future actions, resources and/or programs help you close the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To close the gap between the current reality and the future vision of our learning community we are committed to implementing several initiatives.

First and foremost, we aim to establish enhanced transparent and consistent communication with parents through Newsletter, Teacher Communication Logs, Weekly Principal's Letter, Back to School Nights, and Reporting Periods. By keeping parents well-informed about their children's progress, achievements, and challenges, we can ensure a stronger partnership in supporting their education.

Additionally, we recognize the importance of equipping parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in their child's learning journey. We plan to provide training sessions that familiarize parents with different platforms and techniques, as well as goal-setting strategies that enable them to contribute effectively.

Furthermore, we value the input and feedback from parents, especially after parent-teacher conferences. We will encourage reflection and seek both commendations (WWW) and areas for improvement (EBI) to continually enhance our educational practices.

In order to foster a well-rounded perspective on education, we will invest efforts in training and educating parents to recognize the importance of all subjects and their equal contribution to their child's holistic development. Hosting open house events will offer parents an opportunity to engage with their children's learning environment, fostering a deeper understanding of our educational approach.

Lastly, recognizing the diverse backgrounds of our parent community, we will provide additional training tailored for new parents coming from different curricula, ensuring a smooth transition and alignment with NIS's vision and values.

By actively addressing these areas, we are dedicated to narrowing the gap and fostering a stronger and more collaborative relationship with our parents.

Impacts

What evidence will you look for to suggest that you are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision?

School response

To determine whether we are closing the gap between the current reality and the future vision we will look for the following evidence and impacts:

At NIS, we are focusing on enhancing our wellbeing program by introducing wellbeing during homeroom periods across the school. Each phase focuses on embedding a wellbeing curriculum during this allocated time to ensure that our learners can feel supported and make positive choices.

With the appointment of Dean of Students in Secondary, we will be able to better track our alumni and improve our communication with them and their families.

Our enhanced communication with parents through the schools' LMS, emails, back to school nights, and PTCs ensures that parents are involved in their child's learning throughout the academic year. Through our non-academic school activities, parents will continue to be engaged and involved with the school as volunteers and resource experts based on their expertise. Parents are encouraged to give direct feedback and suggestions or through regular surveys which are both reviewed by the Board of Advisors and the Senior Leadership Team for continued school improvement.

Visitor Observation on Learning Principal 10

The Visitors observed that Nibras International School was a cohesive learning community, united around a common set of values, aspiring to form global leaders with 21st century skills.

A high degree of satisfaction was reported and observed throughout the learning community. Learners were respectful with teachers and their peers, and interacted freely and enthusiastically in classroom observations. Members of the School Council reported that they felt like the school was "like a second home," and "it makes well-being for students so amazing." Parents recounted that their children were happy to come to school, and a Primary student said that they "missed school on the weekend."

Teachers felt that they supported each other, and that in turn they were supported by the Leadership Team, describing the culture of the school as one of "acceptance and growth." A new member of middle management noted that he felt his hard work was valued and that he was receiving mentorship in his transition into leadership. Teachers were fully supportive of the initiatives that had accompanied the change in leadership, and many reported that their community had become significantly more collaborative, like "they belonged to a big family" and "they wanted to come to work every day." Teachers and curriculum leads described meetings within and across disciplines to foster horizontal and vertical collaboration. These meetings also serve as professional development opportunities, especially the Best-Practice Wednesday initiative where teachers can present new teaching strategies to the wider staff and reflect on their Impacts.

Teachers aspired to train students to be change-makers. School events such as Picnic Under the Stars, National Day, and International Day were widely talked about and clearly foster strong links within the community. Initiatives to reach out into the wider community (e.g., the fundraising for breast cancer, the visit to the autism center, and the Zero Hunger Project) were also appreciated by all members of the learning community as a way of deepening their commitment to the school's values.

Teachers and parents were enthusiastic about project-based learning. Parents gave examples of their children's engagement and pride in guiding the projects themselves, and noted that they could "see the learning." Teachers, learners, and curriculum leads discussed a variety of different projects (a catapult design project in High School physics, an interdisciplinary project on electric car design in physics and accounting, an interdisciplinary project on kinematics in PE and math). Parents greatly appreciated the initiative to be invited to project presentations, as it gave them a new dimension to celebrate the achievements of the students. However, the Visitors noted that particularly in Secondary, much of the

project work happened at home, meaning that the teacher was not on hand to guide the details of the problem-solving process.

Teachers gave many examples of voice, choice, and self-directed learning in the classroom (e.g., allowing learners to choose how they were assessed, allowing learners to choose more challenging problems in mathematics). However, classroom observations did not systematically see this in action except in isolated activities. For example, in a High School robotics class the learners were able to choose to either follow a standard design or to work from their own drawings, and in an Elementary science class the learners could choose what data to collect. Most classes observed, however, had all the students working on the same prescribed task, frequently in groups.

Learners, staff, and parents could articulate a process whereby they could get information, support, or report a concern, with the one exception that some parents did not know how to directly contact the parents on the School Advisory Board. Parents recounted that they really appreciated the parent workshops, which gave them a better understanding on how to support their child's well-being, particularly when understanding the important transitions between Elementary, Middle, and High School.

The social and emotional learning program is managed through homeroom, using the HEART (Primary) and Be Good People (Secondary) programs. Learners in the High School were able to detail who they would speak to if they had well-being concerns and expressed satisfaction with the provisions that were available, especially the open-door policy of the school counselor. In the Primary School, a dedicated well-being time has been included after morning break in response to student needs.

As the role of the homeroom teacher in Secondary is not a pastoral one, there is a disconnect between well-being support and social and emotional education. The Secondary homeroom classes that were observed showed the delivery of a standard presentation with some traditional question-and-answer activities, and not all students were fully engaged in the lesson.

Learners can define social-emotional goals as part of regular reflection. However, in classroom observations it was not always apparent how these goals were used to enhance well-being, as the Visitors did not often see reference to them during learning. This could partly be because in Secondary, homeroom was introduced this academic year, and the Impacts may not yet be visible. The homeroom program is more established in Primary, and there are emerging practices which bring affective skills into the classroom setting naturally.

The well-being team was able to describe how they manage the transitions between grades and into further education. Learners are prepared for the change from Elementary to Middle School with class activities and an Induction Day. Parents were happy with the support they and their children received to manage these transitions. Learners have support in their applications to college or university through the college readiness program managed by the Dean of Students. Relevant information about the application process is made available to students, and there are parent seminars on this topic through the Parent Academy. Members of Secondary management commented that it would be good to have more connections with alumni in order to help learners visualize their own future path.

Future Considerations Suggested by Visitors

To provide more personalized support to students in Secondary, the school may wish to consider the role of the homeroom teacher and consider including pastoral duties as well as instructional ones. It could also be envisaged that the homeroom teacher becomes the first point of contact between families and the school. The school may also wish to consider how it can bring deeper student reflection and long-term goal setting into the well-being program, possibly focused within the TORCH Value system.

It may be advantageous to foster links to NIS alumni as part of the college readiness program in order to give the opportunity for current students to make connections to past students and benefit from their experiences.

The school may want to consider how to build on the activities that have been driven by student initiatives, and consider how this could be used to deepen the sense of community.

Although the teaching staff fully support the concepts of voice, choice, and self-directed learning of the students, the school should consider concrete ways of bringing this about consistently and regularly across all classes and grade levels. They can do this by observing learning in the classrooms and reflecting on how it is actually taking place.

Learning Principles Single View Grid

Learning Principle	Not Evident Yet	Thinking About It	Working On It	Living It	What If
LP1					
LP2					
LP3					
LP4					
LP5					
LP6					
LP7					
LP8					
LP9					
LP10					

Summary of Major Learning Plans

As you consider all the ways that the learning community might "Close the Gap" between future aspirations and the currently reality as you have described for the Learning Principles above, briefly describe several (no more than 3-4) plans that can powerfully advance your school's vision for learning (Major Learning Plans). Describe your school's Major Learning Plans below.

School response

As we work collectively to advance the vision for learning at NIS, below we have described the major learning plans that will powerfully support our continued journey at NIS.

Learning Principle 3: Learning Plan 1: Enhancing Reflection and Feedback Practices at NIS.

This learning goal is designed to improve reflection and feedback practices among our learners. This will be achieved through the implementation of various strategies, including DIRT Time (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time), standardized student action plans, sentence starters for teachers to provide "in the moment" feedback, divisional strategies to enhance peer-peer feedback, and monitoring of our learner's reflections by teachers. The elementary level will particularly focus on self and peer

reflections in copybooks. Additionally, the school aims to adopt a school-wide approach where our learners can articulate their current learning and connect it with learning targets. Reflective tools will be utilized to facilitate this process. Furthermore, the use of Mote/Google Classroom feedback banks and feedback templates with color coded feedback will be encouraged to support effective feedback provision.

Details:

1. DIRT Time: NIS will allocate dedicated time for our learners to reflect on their learning progress and identify areas for improvement. This practice will enable our learners to actively engage in self-reflection post assessment.
 2. Standardized Student Action Plan: Our learners will develop action plans to set goals, track their progress, and outline steps for improvement. These plans will provide a structured framework for our learners to monitor their learning journey.
 3. Sentence Starters for "In the Moment" Feedback: Teachers will be provided with sentence starters to facilitate immediate feedback to our learners during classroom activities. This will encourage timely and targeted feedback, fostering continuous improvement.
 4. Divisional Strategies for Peer-Peer Feedback: NIS will introduce strategies to enhance peer-peer feedback, promoting a collaborative learning environment. Our learners will be guided on how to provide constructive feedback to their peers, further enhancing their learning experience.
 5. Monitoring Student Reflections: Teachers will monitor our learners' reflections by reviewing their written or digital reflections, engaging in discussions with learners, and offering guidance where necessary. This process will help teachers understand our learners' learning experiences and provide tailored support.
 6. Elementary Level Focus on Self and Peer Reflections in Copybooks: The elementary level will emphasize self and peer reflections in copybooks. Learners will regularly reflect on their learning, document their thoughts, and engage in peer feedback to develop metacognitive skills.
 7. School-Wide Approach for Articulating Current Learning: NIS will adopt a school-wide approach, encouraging our learners to articulate their current learning and connect it with learning targets. This practice will foster a deeper understanding of their progress and enable them to take ownership of their learning.
 8. Connecting Learning through Reflective Tools: Reflective tools such as journals, digital portfolios, or learning logs will be used to connect learning experiences across subjects and facilitate deeper reflection. These tools will enable our learners to make connections and transfer knowledge.
 9. Use of Mote/Google Classroom Feedback Banks: Teachers will utilize tools like Mote or Google Classroom feedback banks to provide efficient and personalized feedback to our learners. These platforms will enhance feedback delivery and streamline the process.
 10. Feedback Templates with Colored Feedback: Feedback templates with colored feedback will be introduced to enhance the clarity and visual impact of feedback. This visual representation will make it easier for our learners to interpret and act upon the feedback provided by teachers and peers.
- NIS has the vision to create a culture of reflection, feedback, and continuous improvement, ultimately supporting our learners in their academic growth and development.

Learning Principle 7: Learning Plan 2: Fostering Acceptance and Inclusion at NIS.

This learning goal is to foster a more accepting and inclusive environment within the NIS community. This goal will be achieved through key strategies, including incorporating acceptance into the TORCH value framework, building a sense of belonging within the learning community, exploring internationalism and acceptance collaboratively, using inquiries to promote socially relevant projects, implementing a curriculum that supports dialogue and debate on these topics, leveraging co-curricular activities and student clubs to promote acceptance, establishing real-life connections from planning documents, and utilizing the ILOS platform for student dialogue and exchange, particularly for our learners in grades 8 to 12.

Details:

1. **Acceptance vs Tolerance:** NIS will emphasize the difference between acceptance and tolerance, encouraging our learners to embrace and celebrate diversity rather than merely tolerate it. This understanding will be integrated into the NIS's TORCH value framework.
2. **Inclusion within TORCH Value Framework:** NIS will incorporate acceptance as an essential component of the TORCH (Tolerant, Organized, Respectful, Caring, Honest) value framework. Acceptance will be explicitly addressed and reinforced through various educational initiatives and activities.
3. **Building a Sense of Belonging:** NIS will focus on building a sense of belonging within the learning community. By creating a safe and inclusive environment, students will feel valued and supported, leading to increased acceptance and inclusion.
4. **Exploring Internationalism and Acceptance:** The NIS community will engage in collaborative efforts to explore internationalism and acceptance. Our learners will have opportunities to learn about different cultures, traditions, and perspectives, fostering a broader understanding and acceptance of diversity.
5. **Using Inquiries for Socially Relevant Projects:** Inquiries will be utilized as a pedagogical approach to promote socially relevant projects. Our learners will investigate real-world issues related to acceptance and inclusion, encouraging critical thinking, empathy, and positive action.
6. **Curriculum Supporting Dialogue and Debate:** The curriculum at NIS will include content and activities that encourage dialogue and debate regarding acceptance and inclusion. Our learners will be provided with opportunities to express their views, challenge assumptions, and develop a deeper understanding of these topics.
7. **Co-curricular Activities and Student Clubs:** Co-curricular activities, such as extracurricular clubs, the National Honor Society (NHS), and other student organizations, will focus on promoting acceptance and inclusion. These platforms will offer our learners avenues to actively engage in initiatives that foster a culture of acceptance.
8. **Real-life Connections:** Planning documents will emphasize the importance of establishing real-life connections to enhance our learners' understanding of acceptance and inclusion. By linking classroom learning to real-world experiences, our learners will develop a deeper appreciation for the relevance and application of these concepts.
9. **Utilizing ILOS Platform for Student Dialogue and Exchange:** The ILOS (ISP Learning Opportunities for our learners) platform will be better utilized for our learners to have dialogue and exchange, particularly for learners in grades 8 to 12. This digital platform will provide a space for our learners to engage in meaningful discussions, share perspectives, and collaborate on projects related to acceptance and inclusion.

NIS aims to create a learning environment that promotes acceptance, inclusion, and a genuine sense of belonging. The NIS community will actively engage in dialogue, projects, and activities that foster understanding, empathy, and acceptance of diverse perspectives, preparing our learners to become compassionate global citizens.

Learning Principle 8: Learning Plan 3: Leadership and Governance at NIS.

Achieving the goal of aligning leadership and governance to support our school's learning goals, mission, and vision involves several action steps.

Details:

1. **Strategic Planning for Alignment:** Governance and Leadership to create regular strategic plans and annual action plans to implement and review progress in all areas of learning.
2. **Professional Development:** Provide professional development opportunities for leadership and governance members, focusing on understanding and applying the school's mission, vision, and learning goals in decision-making processes.
3. **Regular Communication:** Establish regular communication channels between leadership and governance and hold meetings to discuss progress, challenges, and alignment strategies. This builds leadership capacity to oversee and ensure the school's commitment to high-quality education and its continued improvement.
4. **Curriculum and Program Review:** Continuously review the curriculum and learning programs to ensure alignment with current trends, innovative practices, and emerging technologies. This ensures all aspects of the day-to-day management of the school are well organized, impacting positively on students' outcomes.
5. **Student Engagement and Voice:** Promote student voice and choice in project execution, creating opportunities for students to showcase their skills and creativity, optimizing student achievement via a 'growth-mindset' culture.
6. **Global Collaborations:** Seek out and establish partnerships with local and global agencies, providing opportunities for students to collaborate on projects with external partners in support of the UAE National Agenda and Emirati priorities.
7. **Documentation and Articulation:** Ensure all documentation, including policies, procedures, and strategic plans, align with the school's mission and vision. Leadership should regularly review the leadership structure, job descriptions, and evaluation processes to ensure clarity of lines of responsibility, accountability, and communication.
8. **Shared Vision and Language:** Facilitate workshops and discussions to help governance, leadership, and management articulate a shared vision and develop a common language reflecting the school's future direction and stability.
9. **Regular Evaluation and Feedback:** Establish a system for ongoing evaluation and feedback with all stakeholders, using this feedback to adjust and improve leadership and governance practices.
10. **Monitoring Progress:** Continuously monitor progress toward the goal of alignment, setting measurable benchmarks and key performance indicators to assess success. Management staffs the school adequately to fulfill its mission while modeling core values, and ensuring high-quality premises and learning environments.

By implementing these integrated action steps, NIS can create a cohesive and aligned leadership and

governance structure that effectively supports the school's learning goals, mission, and vision, benefiting the school community.

Visitor's comments on the school's Major Learning Plans

The school has proposed appropriate Major Learning Plans for future development and continued transformation in high-efficacy areas, with the caveat of several key areas the Visitors would like governance and the Leadership Team to consider.

- Please review the feedback specific to Foundation Standard 1, and recommendations on “other Guiding Statements.” This feedback could be incorporated into Learning Principles 1-3. The Visitors applaud the school for focusing on Learning Principle 3 and positioning students to be drivers and evaluators of their own learning, though there will need to be some work done on shifting teacher practices to be more consistent in delivering student-centered pedagogy, mentoring, and coaching skills. Consider the overall “architecture” of learning.
- Again, the Visitors are pleased to see the school prioritizing Learning Principle 7: Inclusion. After reviewing the intentions of the Major Learning Plans for Learning Principle 7, the Visitors recommend to the school that inclusion -- provision, scaffolding, challenge, and support -- in lessons needs immediate attention. While lesson planning and systems for identification are in place in most lessons, teachers were not observed to be offering differentiated learning opportunities, but more of a “one size fits all” approach.” It is vital that all staff be upskilled and strategic in the provisions to meet the needs of learners to offer them access and appropriate challenge to meet their needs and abilities.
- The Major Learning Plan regarding governance is well thought out, and plans for high-leverage improvements aimed at enhancing communication, planning, performance indicators, and metrics for success. Please refer to the Learning Principle 8 feedback for consideration into this Major Learning Plan.

The 4 C's:

Conceptual Understanding, Commitment, Capacity, and Competence



Conceptual Understanding How evident is it? How might you strengthen it?

NIS' implementation of inquiry-based learning has been effective in improving our learners' conceptual understanding. Through inquiry-based learning, our learners engage in real-world problem-solving and apply their knowledge and skills to create solutions that address complex challenges. As a result, our learners gain a deeper understanding of the concepts they are learning and see how they apply across learning domains. Inquiry-based learning provides our learners with opportunities to collaborate with peers, work on authentic tasks, and receive feedback from teachers and each other. These experiences support the development of a deeper understanding of the concepts being learned within our school curriculum.

To further strengthen our learner's conceptual understanding, we will ensure that our learners have access to a variety of resources, including experts in the field, technology that supports exploration and visualization of rigorous concepts, and instruction that puts conceptual understanding before tasks. By providing our learners with access to experts, we can help them to develop a more nuanced understanding of the concepts they are learning and to see how these concepts apply in a multi-disciplinary setting. Additionally, by using technology, we can create interactive and engaging learning experiences that help our learners to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts they are learning. Finally, by using inquiry-based instruction with a focus on conceptual development, we can support different learning styles and help our learners to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts being taught.

Visitor Comments on Conceptual Understanding and possible next steps

The Visitors commend the learning community for creating a coherent definition of learning that closely aligns with the philosophy behind the ACE Learning Principles, sharing this with all stakeholders. The definition of learning is the result of purposeful discussions among the Learning Principle committees, fostering a sense of trust and an emerging shared understanding of the school's growth direction. The community has enthusiastically and actively participated in the reflection process, developing an understanding of the ACE process, Learning Principles, and Learner Impacts. While the faculty can define the Learning Principles needed to initiate their journey, the Visitors now encourage the school to cultivate a deep Conceptual Understanding of the ACE Learning Principles. This understanding, aligned with and supported by research, will facilitate the transformation of learning, ensuring that the learning community's Conceptual Understanding of learning shapes, drives, and underpins all initiatives and projects aimed at improving learning and individual student development.

Further efforts to embed a wide Conceptual Understanding of learning throughout NIS's development plans will support the school toward living its definition of high-quality learning. Concurrently, actions to engage teaching staff more widely in developing a deep understanding of what the Learning Impacts look like in the school's context and relating the Learning Principles to classroom practice using

prompts, provocations, and examples from the ACE learning guide and eco-system will ensure that the school continues to transform learning and teaching.



Commitment

How evident is it? How might you strengthen it?

NIS remains committed to providing a high-quality American education to our learners and supporting their academic and personal growth. To achieve this goal, NIS recognizes the importance of being dedicated to its learning community and resourceful in its funding responsibilities. In order to maintain our commitment to high-quality learning, we will continue to focus on the following initiatives:

Firstly, we will continue to invest in our learning community. This includes hiring and keeping highly qualified teachers, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, and ensuring that our learners have access to a wide range of academic and extracurricular activities. We also value the feedback of our learners, parents, and staff, and will continue to engage with them to ensure that we are meeting their needs and expectations.

Secondly, we will be resourceful in our funding responsibilities. This means making strategic decisions that prioritize student learning and the overall success of NIS. We will continue to seek out new opportunities for funding and partnerships, while also ensuring that our existing resources are being used efficiently and effectively. We will also prioritize transparency in our budgeting process, and regularly communicate with our stakeholders about how our funding is being used to support student learning.

NIS is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience for our learners, and by prioritizing student success and engaging with our stakeholders, we are confident that we can continue to provide an exceptional education to our learners now and in the future.

Visitor Comments on Commitment and possible next steps

The leaders at Nibras International School and the wider community are committed to the ACE process. They have the determination to embrace the ACE Learning Principles and the school's definition of high-quality learning. This was evidenced by conversations across the learning community who have tremendous pride in their community and the transformation under the new leadership.

NIS aspires to create global leaders with 21st century skills. There is a real Commitment to project-based learning as a vehicle to develop these skills. PBL is integrated into all curricula and at all grade levels. Interdisciplinary projects are also taking place. Feedback from teachers, parents, and learners indicated that projects were a highlight of the learning at NIS, and this can become a way to strongly embed voice, choice, and self-directed learning into the classroom. Projects should, however, take place during the academic day so that the problem-solving process can be guided by the teacher.

Regular and meaningful reflection was seen in staff and learners alike. This included reflection on good teaching practices.

Moving forward, the Visitors suggest that leadership and staff should identify a few good practices which specifically highlight the elements of the Learning Principles under development. They should reflect on how the learning should be taking place, and how they will see this. These practices should form the basis of ongoing professional development for all staff. By observing these practices in place

across the school, the Impacts on student learning should be measured.

The feedback cycle needs to be closed to ensure that reflection is always used to inform changes or define the next steps. Reflection must be based on the Impacts on learning.



Capacity

How evident is it? How might you strengthen it?

NIS is committed to building the capacity of both teachers and our learners through careful planning and efficient use of resources. The school recognizes that professional development for teachers and opportunities for student growth and development are critical components of high-quality education.

To build teacher capacity, NIS invests in ongoing professional development opportunities for its faculty. These opportunities include workshops, seminars, conferences, and other training sessions that focus on best practices in teaching and learning. NIS also provides opportunities for its teachers to engage in peer observation, mentoring, and coaching, which allows them to learn from one another and improve their teaching practice.

To build student capacity, NIS provides a range of opportunities for student growth and development. This includes co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, community service projects, leadership opportunities, and other experiential learning opportunities that promote our learner's engagement and personal growth. These activities are designed to help our learners develop essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and communication.

In addition, NIS is committed to efficient use of resources to maximize its impact on student learning. This involves careful planning and allocation of budgetary and non-budgetary resources to ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently. NIS also uses data and evidence-based practices to guide its decision-making and resource allocation, which ensures that resources are being used in ways that have the greatest impact on student learning.

NIS is committed to building the capacity of both teachers and our learners through careful planning and efficient use of resources. By investing in ongoing professional development for its faculty, providing opportunities for student growth and development, and using resources effectively, NIS is able to provide a high-quality American education that prepares our learners for success in the 21st century.

Visitor Comments on Capacity and possible next steps

There is evidence of a willingness and Capacity to transform practices and allocate resources in order to help the school advance on its learning journey. Timetables have been adjusted to provide for wellness instruction, homeroom mentoring, and learning intervention. Understanding by Design projects have been widely implemented to help the school live its definition of high-quality learning. The growth in middle leadership opportunities and the creation of positions like the Dean of Students are evidence that the school is willing to use its most valuable resource -- its people -- in ways that are aligned with its Vision and Core Values.

Senior leadership has created an environment of trust, without which the Capacity for change would be greatly diminished. There is a shared understanding that this work is important, and all levels of the community express confidence that the school leaders regularly advocate for resources and policies that will positively impact all aspects of learning. The Visitors observed the Head of School talking to

the whole staff about investments into their “trust bank.” The rewards of this investment can be seen at all levels. Students said that they feel free to share their learning, and teachers noted that their collegial teams were safe spaces for the mutual exchange of ideas. The foundation for innovation has been solidly and intentionally built, thereby creating the Capacity for change.

However, there is a misalignment between the perception of Capacity noted in the school’s reflection and the current reality. While the school has laid the groundwork, a more critical examination of current practices, the extent to which they are implemented, and the real Impact on learning would help the school move further along the Capacity continuum. A deeper understanding of the ACE pathway and its context in this school could aid the Governing Body in providing the resources necessary to make meaningful improvements. The Visitors encourage staff and leadership to engage with the professional development opportunities offered through NEASC to enhance their ability to shift resources intentionally towards systems that support their Major Learning Plans.



Competence How evident is it? How might you strengthen it?

NIS seeks out the best international educators and administrators to ensure the school invests in a competent and well-qualified staff prepared to lead and promote student learning. NIS recognizes that the quality of its faculty and staff is critical to its ability to provide a high-quality American education and achieve its mission.

To attract the best international educators and administrators, NIS uses a range of strategies. These include networking with other schools and educational organizations, participating in job fairs and recruiting events, and leveraging digital platforms to promote job opportunities and connect with potential candidates.

NIS also places a high value on diversity and inclusivity in its faculty and staff. The school actively seeks out candidates from a range of backgrounds and experiences to ensure that its faculty and staff reflect the diversity of its student body and the wider community.

NIS uses a rigorous selection process to ensure that it hires the most qualified and competent individuals. This may involve multiple rounds of interviews, reference checks, and assessments of teaching or administrative skills. NIS also makes use of professional development plans to support new hires as they transition into their roles, ensuring that they receive the training and support they need to be successful.

NIS is committed to attracting and retaining the best international educators and administrators to ensure that it can provide a high-quality education that prepares our learners for success in the 21st century.

Visitor Comments on Competence and possible next steps

The school has allocated time to develop Conceptual Understanding of the Learning Principles as part of the self-reflection process. Once this understanding is secure, focus can shift towards building Capacity to transfer this understanding to action in order to drive change towards wider membership to Competence. Professional development time is planned into the school timetable, and members of senior leadership have articulated a desire to foster lifelong learners through opportunities for growth.

Members of the teaching staff have shown great Commitment to the Vision of the school by adopting new initiatives and sharing strategies both formally and informally. The school may wish to consider external opportunities for Capacity-building as part of their PD program. The Visitors were aware of a high level of trust between staff and senior leaders, creating an environment where innovation within the parameters of the Learning Principles could be explored.

The Visitors observed multiple initiatives being implemented throughout the school. The school now has the opportunity, through the development of Major Learning Plans, to identify specific areas that can align focus. In addition, this will help the school identify and track Impact.

As part of the process of identifying areas for Capacity-building, the Visitors encourage members of the school to look for ways to widen the perspective: for example, shadow a student for the day to observe the structure, content, and learning styles within lessons.

Conclusion

School's Concluding Comments

In conclusion, NIS is taking deliberate and strategic steps to build conceptual understanding of its curriculum, support its commitment to a pathway to a premier international school, foster both student and teacher capacity, and seek out highly qualified and competent educational staff. NIS recognizes that its success depends on its ability to provide a high-quality education that prepares our learners for success in the 21st century, and it is committed to achieving this goal.

Through careful planning and efficient use of resources, NIS is building the capacity of both teachers and learners, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, and investing in technology to support learning and growth. NIS is also attracting and retaining the best international educators and administrators, ensuring that it has the necessary expertise and experience to lead and promote student learning.

Overall, NIS is a dynamic and innovative learning community that is committed to excellence in education. Its focus on building conceptual understanding, supporting commitment, fostering capacity, and seeking out highly qualified staff is helping to create a vibrant and successful school that prepares its learners for a bright and prosperous future.

Concluding Comments by Visitors

As highlighted and evidenced throughout the report, NIS has seen real improvement and change under the leadership of the Principal and leaders at all levels. The school is thoughtful, reflective, and dedicated to bringing the best learning opportunities to students and growth opportunities to staff. The school is heading in the right direction, and is ready to take the next steps of school transformation.

Next Steps and Actions recommended by the Visitors

Foundation Standard 1: Definition of Learning, Curriculum, and Other Guiding Statements

- Strategically teach students about their Guiding Statements (TORCH Values and Core Values).
- Explicitly and strategically teach students, especially in the Elementary and Middle Schools, the key vocabulary used in the definition of learning.
- Build a community understanding, especially by students, of what “learner agency” means in practice.

- Further develop and train staff on curriculum modification and adaptation. Planning needs to be further developed in order to meet the diverse needs of groups of students and individuals.
- Further the development and support of teachers in evolving their understanding and practice of student-led learning; there are opportunities for teachers to consider their roles as mentors, coaches, and facilitators of learning.

Learning Principle 1

- Consider consolidating the school's proposition values (TORCH/Core) into a "learner profile," and integrating values as an intentional part of curriculum and skills acquisition in the form of transdisciplinary transfer goals.
- Consider formalizing sustainable planning time for subject curricular teams and multi-disciplinary teams.
- The further development of future-ready teaching and learning practices needs to be considered.
- Curriculum adaptations to meet students' different learning needs and teacher provision of support and challenge are areas for development.

Learning Principle 2

- Further develop a skills continuum for higher-order thinking. Embed these skills in the lived curriculum through explicit instruction, application, and reflection.
- Adapt and explore ways that rich learning experiences that are evident within project work could be integrated more consistently throughout the lived curriculum.
- Further build capacity for learners to track their own progress on a continuum rather than within separate learning experiences or units.
- Maintain momentum with relation to the community ventures, and broaden the opportunities for students to be mentored through these experiences.
- Consider the opportunities for broadening engagement in learning using technology beyond communication, reflection, or as a consolidation tool for learning.

Learning Principle 3

- Continue to develop consistent and frequent opportunities for learners to assess and document growth beyond academic standards, allowing them to set personal, creative, physical, and entrepreneurial goals that fully embrace the TORCH Values.
- The progress in student self-assessment could be extended to include evidence and justification.
- Teacher feedback cycles would benefit from adding routines that prompt student action relative to the suggested improvements.
- Teachers are encouraged to use formative assessment data to create dynamic and differentiated learning opportunities that empower students to take ownership of their learning.

Learning Principle 4

- The school is encouraged to further reflect on what teaching strategies could be employed to encourage students to take risks without fear that it will impact their final grade.
- Consider embedding time in the classroom to have all projects happening during the academic day rather than at home, as this would give teachers the opportunity to scaffold the problem-solving process, acting as guides and mentors to the learning.
- Leadership is encouraged to consider the focus of regular professional development, perhaps specifically targeting just one or two initiatives at any one time based on teacher need.
- Teachers and leadership could revisit how reflection is used to inform learning, and how reflection across subjects could lead to a deeper focus on skills.

Learning Principle 5

- Promote student voice and choice in project execution, creating opportunities for students to showcase their skills and creativity, optimizing student achievement via a growth mindset.
- The school may wish to consider what age-appropriate, goal-oriented autonomy over learning looks like at different developmental stages.
- Identify and support professional development opportunities around agency and autonomy in order to support a move from structured to guided inquiry, creating space for student questions to drive inquiries.

Learning Principle 6

- Develop a more focused approach to professional learning that explicitly identifies Impacts on learning and includes provisions for ongoing monitoring, reflection, and refinement. Members of senior and middle leadership are encouraged to increase opportunities for observation of these strategies during instruction.
- The school would benefit from agreeing on a narrower set of goals that align with the school's vision of high-quality learning.
- Consider the formation of a design team to drive Major Learning Plans and advance key objectives. Middle leaders, subject heads, and grade-level leaders have the capacity to carry the torch of change, but only if they are given ample time, direction, and support.

Learning Principle 7

- The effective implementation of strategies and the selection of appropriately differentiated tasks is an area of growth.
- The school could document in more detail the approach for language learners or those who excel in a particular area. This would provide a point of reference for new staff who are unfamiliar with the processes, assessments, strategies, and reflection points that are in place.
- The school may want to reflect on how to build capacity for all teaching staff to support learners with an IEP competently and confidently, thereby ensuring that learning differences are not a reason for exclusion from a task, class, or experience.
- As an inclusive school, the Visitors encourage NIS to reconsider the use of "data walls," especially where an individual's identity is revealed.
- The school is encouraged to incorporate the needs of students with IEPs in any reconsideration of learning-space use, with the aim of providing spaces that will support students to achieve the stated goals.

Learning Principle 8

- The Governing Body (parent representation and ISP) should consider further training on the ACE framework, how ACE can work with other requirements such as DSIB, and the ideals of the ISP proposition statements.
- There was an expressed opportunity for governors to review professional development budgets so that external, bespoke, and strategic PD for leaders and teachers outside the ISP network can be considered.
- Plan a "governance calendar" to identify key dates for planning, reviews, and evaluation of progress against key priorities and initiatives.

Learning Principle 9

- The committee for Learning Principle 9 could take up the charge of continuing the work on planning for and creating learning spaces and timeframes that fulfill this Learning Principle and

the school's own commitment to providing an environment that supports "engaging inquiries."

- The school may wish to reimagine the use of space to ensure that it is flexible, inspiring, and allows for student engagement.
- Consideration could be given to using technology for collaboration and creation, and reassessing the no-phones policy to enable students to incorporate creative apps into their learning.

Learning Principle 10

- Consider how to bring deeper student reflection and long-term goal setting into the well-being program, possibly focused within the TORCH Value system.
- Foster links to NIS alumni as part of the college readiness program in order to give the opportunity for current students to make connections to past students and benefit from their experiences.
- The school may want to consider how to build on the activities that have been driven by student initiatives, and consider how this could be used to deepen the sense of community.

Timing of the next Preparatory Visit (generally four years after the External Review Visit)

Consider the first term of the 2029/2030 academic year.

Acknowledgements by Visitors

The Visitors thank Dr. Teston and his team for their open and transparent dialogue and hospitality. It was a real joy to visit the school and interact with its constituents.