

## Commendations, recommendations and matters to be addressed

The visiting team's commendations and recommendations are detailed below. Whilst schools are not expected to meet all the *IB Standards and Practices* at the time of authorization, this report uses them as a format for presenting the commendations and recommendations of this report in order to assist the school in the further implementation of the programme.

Section A: Philosophy

### Standard A1

There is close alignment between the educational beliefs and values of the school and those of the programme.

### Commendations

The visiting team commends:

1. The school community and Board of the Esprit Schools for their commitment to the IB philosophy.
2. The school educational leadership team and teachers for ensuring the beliefs and values that drive the programme are shared by all sections of the school community.
3. The school educational leadership team for their vision in developing a community school and for realising and promoting this vision together with the school community.
4. The Board of the Esprit Schools for their intent to share good practice with other Esprit schools, making use of the opportunities presented by the multicultural approach in MYP education.
5. The school educational leadership team and teachers for the understanding of the programme at this stage of development.
6. The teachers for their desire to learn and to engage with the MYP.

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this standard.

## Standard A2

The school promotes international-mindedness on the part of the adults and the students in the school community.

### Commendations

The visiting team commends:

1. The school educational leadership team and teachers for the development of an intercultural awareness policy and the steps taken to put this policy into practice.
2. The school educational leadership team and teachers for providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment based on understanding and respect.

### Recommendations

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The school educational leadership team further support awareness and development of students' mother tongues (for languages other than Dutch and English). **Matter to be addressed**
2. The school educational leadership team further develop the learner profile to become part of the regular discourse of the school

Section B: Organization

## Standard B1

The school demonstrates ongoing commitment to, and provides support for, the programme through appropriate administrative structures and systems, staffing and resources.

### Commendations

The visiting team commends:

1. The school educational leadership team, Board of the Esprit Schools and the City of Amsterdam for the current and planned funding provided for school facilities (in particular Science and Physical Education), resources and teacher training in support of the MYP.
2. The school educational leadership team for the release time provided for the MYP coordinator.

3. The school educational leadership team for the systems in place to guide and counsel students whenever the need arises.
4. The school educational leadership team for the allocation of significant meeting time and the systems put in place to ensure that planning time includes all teachers.
5. The school educational leadership team for the recognition of the importance of arts within the curriculum.

### Recommendations

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The school leadership develop a long term development plan for the MYP, which
  - a. clearly prioritizes areas of development
  - b. includes a realistic timeline for actions
  - c. is shared with teachers

***Matter to be addressed***
2. The school educational leadership team creates a leadership structure within the subject groups to ensure a strong foundation in the development of subjects, especially with regard to vertical planning. ***Matter to be addressed***
3. The school educational leadership team review the allocation of teaching time to create further balance in the curriculum.
4. The school educational leadership team further ensures continuity in development of the programme by investigating further possibilities to retain teachers
5. The school educational leadership team revisits the structure of subjects offered in the last year of the programme in the light of their plans to apply for moderation, taking into consideration:
  - a. The lesson time needed to prepare a moderation sample and the possibilities of creating integrated samples (see section F3.6 of the *MYP Coordinator's Handbook 2008-2009*)
  - b. The necessity for students to study a language A in order to receive the MYP certificate (which might necessitate the school to apply for approval of mother tongue courses, see sections D3.6 and G3.1 of the *MYP Coordinator's Handbook 2008-2009*)

6. The school educational leadership team and teachers review language policy to further include:
  - a. Practices to support development of student mother tongues
  - b. Practices and training to aid subject teachers in fulfilling their responsibilities to support language learning
  - c. Practices that will support progression of the language learning of individual students through the programme (for example through the development of student language profiles)
  - d. Policies and practices to structure transitioning between language levels
7. The school educational leadership team considers including aspects of MYP in the teacher performance interviews and appraisal system.
8. The school educational leadership team reviews and formalizes the job descriptions for area leaders.
9. The school educational leadership team continues their efforts to ensure the day-to-day functioning of ICT.
10. The school educational leadership team and librarian develop a vision with regard to the development of the library.
11. The school educational leadership team ensures that official IB guidelines and instructions are respected, in particular with regard to publicity and registration criteria for workshop attendance.

## Section C: Curriculum

### Standard C1

A comprehensive, coherent, written curriculum, based on the requirements of the programme and developed by the school, is available to all sections of the school community.

### Commendations

There are no commendations for this standard

### Recommendations

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The school educational leadership team and teachers review the curriculum, in accordance with the requirements in the guide *MYP: From principles into practice*, to:
  - a. Develop a vertical articulation according to the MYP objectives and align the subject content with these objectives, ensuring the final objectives are met in the last year of the programme
  - b. Include the MYP objectives in curriculum overviews
  - c. Develop a unit planning process and documentation of unit plans

***Matter to be addressed***

2. The MYP coordinator, area leaders and teachers to continue the work in developing learning expectations for the areas of interaction for each year of the programme and to implement these within the classroom.
3. The MYP coordinator, ATL leader and teachers to continue the development of learning expectations and mapping of ATL skills, with particular attention to:
  - a. including ICT skills
  - b. further development of research and referencing skills
  - c. further ensuring a common approach to ATL skills in all subjects

## **Standard C2**

The school has implemented a system through which all teachers plan and reflect in collaborative teams.

### **Commendations**

The visiting team commends:

1. The teachers for their willingness and enthusiasm to collaborate.

### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The school educational leadership team and teachers review the system of 4 project weeks per year to ensure that
  - a. Ongoing interdisciplinary teaching and learning is promoted throughout the school year
  - b. Interdisciplinary teaching and learning deepens the understanding of wider concepts and develops further disciplinary understanding (a new guide on interdisciplinary understanding will be published by the IB, in collaboration with Harvard Project Zero, in the fall of 2009)
2. The school educational leadership team reviews the use of meeting time to allow more teacher initiative in determining meeting agendas especially for curriculum development within their subject groups.

### **Standard C3**

Teaching and learning at the school empowers and encourages students to become lifelong learners, to be responsible towards themselves, their learning, other people and the environment, and to take appropriate action

#### **Commendations**

The visiting team commends:

1. The teachers for creating opportunities for students to be active and independent learners and to encourage critical thinking

#### **Recommendations**

1. The teachers to further develop the use of the available ICT resources in the classroom.

### **Standard C4**

There is an agreed approach to assessment, and to the recording and reporting of assessment data, which reflects the practices and requirements of the programme.

#### **Commendations**

The visiting team commends:

1. The school educational leadership team and teachers for the understanding and application of MYP criteria-related assessment at this stage of development.

## Recommendations

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The MYP coordinator and teachers to further develop adapted criteria for the earlier years of the programme. ***Matter to be addressed***
2. The school educational leadership team and teachers further develop a common understanding and practice of formative assessment.
3. The school educational leadership team review the promotion criteria to align them with the school's philosophy of promotion based on individual personal or academic benefit for the student.
4. The school educational leadership team and teachers to further develop MYP assessment practices by:
  - a. Ensuring descriptors are consistently used to determine achievement levels (decimals and point systems should be avoided)
  - b. Ensuring task specific clarifications are an accurate reflection of the criteria (including all strands)
  - c. Formalizing internal standardization practices within subject groups
  - d. Ensuring uniformity in how the final grade is determined
  - e. Standardizing recording of assessment data, to ensure clear overviews for both teachers and students
  - f. Further informing parents to clarify assessment procedures and reports

Section D: the student

## Standard D1

Students learn to choose to act, and to reflect on their actions, so that they contribute to their own well-being and that of the community and the environment.

## Commendations

The visiting team commends:

1. The community and service leader and teachers for their encouragement of students to find their own activities for community and service.
2. The community and service leader for developing comprehensive expectations which are clear to students and parents

### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The school educational leadership team ensure that no grades are given for the service component of community and service. **Matter to be addressed**
2. The teachers develop further opportunities for students to take action as a result of classroom learning

### **Standard D2**

In the final year of the programme, all students complete a programme-specific project that allows them to demonstrate a consolidation of their learning, in the case of PYP and MYP, and demonstrate the extension and development of their learning in the Diploma Programme.

### **Commendations**

The visiting team commends:

1. The school educational leadership team and personal project coordinator for the implementation of the personal project at this stage of the school's development.

### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that:

1. The personal project coordinator reviews the timeline to balance time for different phases in the development of the personal project.
2. The school educational leadership team and teachers review the implementation of 'individual projects' in MYP1-4 in the light of the personal project as a culminating activity in MYP5 and the tasks involved in running these projects as the school grows.
3. The school educational leadership team and personal project coordinator continue to develop a structured process for the training of supervisors and for the standardization of assessment of the personal project.



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Summary of matters to be addressed

### **Standard A2**

1. The school leadership team further support awareness and development of students' mother tongues (for languages other than Dutch and English).

### **Standard B1**

1. The school leadership develop a long term development plan for the MYP, which
  - a. clearly prioritizes areas of development
  - b. includes a realistic timeline for actions
  - c. is shared with teachers
2. The school educational leadership team creates a leadership structure within the subject groups to ensure a strong foundation in the development of subjects, especially with regard to vertical planning.

### **Standard C1**

1. The school educational leadership team and teachers review the curriculum, in accordance with the requirements in the guide *MYP: From principles into practice*, to:
  - a. Develop a vertical articulation according to the MYP objectives and align the subject content with these objectives, ensuring the final objectives are met in the last year of the programme
  - b. Include the MYP objectives in curriculum overviews
  - c. Develop a unit planning process and documentation of unit plans

### **Standard C4**

1. The MYP coordinator and teachers to further develop adapted criteria for the earlier years of the programme.

### **Standard D1**

1. The school leadership ensure that no grades are given for the service component of community and service.

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### Concluding remark:

The visiting team appreciated the commitment and enthusiasm for the MYP within the school community and by the school Board. The team was impressed by the commitment of many teachers, particularly the areas of interaction leaders, and the general willingness to learn among all teachers. The level of understanding of certain aspects of the programme was high for this phase of the development of the programme. The visiting team was able to have some in-depth discussion on use of areas of interaction and application of the MYP criteria. The visiting team found that commitment was also evident from the school Board through the funding and resources provided for the school.

The visiting team found that the school provided a safe, respectful and stimulating environment encouraging independent learning. This was mentioned by many members of the school community, including the parents.

At this point in the school's development, the visiting team sees the following areas as priorities for the school's further development of the MYP:

- Further development of the curriculum: The MYP subject objectives need to be articulated for the different years of the programme and the subject content needs to be aligned to these. The curriculum should ensure that the final subject objectives are met in the last year of the programme. The school is advised to extend this articulation into the DP years, thus forming a solid foundation for the secondary school curriculum. Building upon this foundation, the MYP criteria can be adapted for the different year levels and the unit planning process can be further developed according to the requirements in the guide *MYP: From principles into practice*. This process will help the school in making the areas of interaction more central to teaching and learning. The further development of the curriculum is also important for the school in order to build an institutional memory and ensure that teachers who come in new to the school have a curriculum to work from.
- Organization of the subject groups: The visiting team advised the school to create a further leadership structure, possibly through the appointment of subject area leaders, to ensure the development of the curriculum as mentioned above.
- Development of support for mother tongues: Although the support for mother tongue maintenance is mentioned in the language policy, the visiting team did not see corresponding practices and members of the school community commented on the need for further support for mother tongue languages. Moreover, the school will need to plan for students who are not able to meet the final objectives of one of the languages A offered by the school.

- Further grounding of the use of criterion related assessment: Although there is generally a good understanding of MYP assessment practices within the school, further work needs to be done to ensure consistency of practices and to ensure the use of descriptors in determining achievement levels, also for tests. Also, a common understanding of formative assessment needs to be further developed as the visiting team noted that sometimes formative assessment was equated with assessment of ATL skills. Although parents met by the team mentioned that they appreciated MYP assessment, they also needed more clarification about the procedures and the criteria.

The above should provide a basis for setting priorities in a long term development plan for the MYP in the coming years.

It was a pleasure to see the positive attitude towards the MYP and the willingness of management and staff to ensure they are on the right track.

Should the school decide to apply for MYP certification in the near future, the earliest the school can register students is for the June 2011 session. The school is due for its MYP programme evaluation visit N°1 in December 2012. The school is reminded that if they do not apply for moderation of assessment, then reports for monitoring of assessment are a requirement for the evaluation visit (see sections E 3.1 and F4 of the *MYP coordinator's handbook*).

**Progress report:**

Amsterdam International Community School is required to respond to this report as follows:

**By 1 May 2010** submit a **progress report** to the MYP regional manager, following the template provided by the regional office to the MYP coordinator electronically. This report should satisfy the regional manager that the school has fully remedied the *matters to be addressed*. Supporting evidence should be provided with the report.

The recommendations from the visit will be followed up at the next evaluation visit.