

RAK Academy IPK Language Policy IB PYP



Statement of Philosophy

RAK Academy recognizes that the acquisition of language is a dynamic process that permeates all learning to fulfil our Academy vision and mission. It is fundamental to facilitating inquiry which is instrumental to the success of our students as learners, as community members and as lifelong learners. As language is the key to all learning, every teacher within all subject areas at RAK Academy is a language teacher.

The learning process simultaneously involves learning language (as students listen to and use language in their everyday lives), involves learning about language (as students try to understand how language works) and learning through language (as students use language as a tool to think about or reflect on a concept, opinion or issue). These three aspects, operating together in a relevant context, provide the most supportive learning environment for language learners.

The development of mother tongue is crucial for cognitive development and maintaining cultural identity. It also has the potential to increase intercultural awareness and understanding, and enables students to remain in touch with, and maintain esteem for, the language, literature and culture of their home country. It is a strong predictor of their long-term academic achievement, including acquisition of other languages. Respect for differences between languages and between dialects should be promoted.

Admissions

English is the primary language of instruction at RAK Academy. As well as Arabic language is taught daily to all students which for most students is their mother tongue. RAK Academy endeavours to provide a rich and challenging language learning environment in order to maintain the integrity of its academic programme. It is recognized that, as an international school, many students at RAK Academy do not speak English or Arabic as their first language and many of them require support to develop their acquisition of these languages. To this end the school provides language support teachers, ALN teachers and assistants to meet the needs of additional language learners. New students are assessed at the Admissions application stage when applying for entry to RAK Academy. This determines what level of academic support will be required.

Library / Resource Centre

A wide range of literature in the school library extends and supplements classroom resources. The aim is to help students become independent and committed readers, through interaction with a variety of texts in order to develop literacy skills and the ability to engage critically with literature.

The school library includes English and Arabic fiction and non-fiction selections, as well as a selection of other mother tongue books. Additionally, the school has reading schemes in place to support beginner to advanced readers.

In line with the IB philosophy, RAK Academy aims for students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to be:

Inquirers: They inquire into language and use as language structures. They use language acquired information and to make sense of the world around them.

Thinkers: They are able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly.

Communicators: They are competent users of oral and written language forms in a variety of situations. They listen attentively and pay attention to detail. They speak confidently and clearly. They read fluently with good comprehension. They write clearly, concisely and accurately in a style appropriate for the purpose.

Risk takers: They are willing to attempt to read, write or speak in situations where they may not feel totally confident.

Knowledgeable: They have acquired the vocabulary and understanding to discuss language structures, texts forms and literary styles.

Principled: They are aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect and that it must, therefore, be used responsibly.

Caring: They show care in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others.

Open minded: They respect differences and similarities between languages, dialects and personal communication styles. They understand that language can be used as an expression of bias.

Balanced: They can express themselves orally as well as in writing and find a balance between listening and speaking in communicating with others. They read a variety of written material and are able to write for different purposes and audiences.

Reflective: They reflect on their language development and conscientiously work at improving their language proficiency.

The key concepts which drive the learning of language are:

Form: Every language has a form and a structure that makes it unique. Form may vary according to whether language is written or spoken.

Function: The type of language we use varies depending on the circumstances, purpose, audience and genre.

Causation: Language is fundamental to human activity. Many factors affect the development of language.

Change: Language is not static; it changes constantly.

Connection: Language is a major connecting system within, between and among all societies.

Perspective: Language can be interpreted and expressed in different ways. Literature, in particular, offers cultural, historical and personal perspectives on the world, and invites different interpretations.

Responsibility: Language is powerful and can have a profound effect, both positive and negative. Therefore, it must be used responsibly.

Reflection: Through language, we can reflect on our experiences and knowledge.

Arabic

All RAK Academy students are Arabic Language Learners. They are split into Arabic A (Arabic Mother Tongue) and Arabic B (Arabic as another Language). Students are taught Arabic in compliance with the Ministry of Education requirements.

Mother Tongue

The preservation and development of mother tongue languages fosters the celebration of diversity of spoken languages throughout the school. It enables cultural awareness and the appreciation that we are all global citizens. For students whose first language is Arabic or English, mother tongue development is supported directly through the languages of instruction. For students with other mother tongues, language development is encouraged when reading with parents and discussing, reflecting on work at home and during after-school activities. RAK Academy PYP works with such families to find appropriate resources including literature and cultural experiences.

If families arrange for mother tongue instructions with an outside tutor, the school is willing to provide access to a classroom outside of school hours. For any other needs, families are welcome to contact the school where requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Student Support

Since we believe every teacher at RAK Academy to be a language teacher, all teachers differentiate their lessons to include EAL and ALN (Additional Learning Needs) learners.

Referral to the Student Support Team is initiated by Admissions and classroom teachers. The Student Support Team works closely with classroom teachers and specialists to identify and support the learning needs of EAL and ALN students.

Exit from the programme is determined jointly by the Student Support Team, class teacher and demonstrating successful performance indicators from the English scope and sequence showing sufficient progress has been made.

Assessment (see Assessment Policy)

Students at RAK Academy PYP are assessed regularly, both formally and informally, by class, specialists and student support teachers, using a variety of assessment tools and strategies. There are both formative and summative assessments in the study of language and students and parents are kept informed of student progress through:

- Informal parent teacher meetings
- Two/three-way conferences between student, teacher and parents
- End-of-unit reporting
- Student led conferences
- Portfolios
- Termly report cards
- Standardized tests in English and mathematics.

Reading

PM is the main reading scheme. Other schemes supplement and enrich it. Children will be allocated a reading a book that is appropriately levelled to their ability using the PM assessment protocol. Progress through the reading scheme is monitored by regularly listening to the children read, discussion and by assessment with the PM benchmarks. When children have successfully completed all PM reading levels, they are classed as free and independent readers and are able to choose a book from any level /source.

Teaching and Learning (see T&L policy)

The Language Policy involves all strands of language from the IB's PYP Language Scope and Sequence document which includes strands: Oral communication – listening and speaking; Visual language – viewing and presenting; Written language – reading; and Written language - writing. Teaching and learning language at RAK Academy PYP is integrated within all subject areas to form the POI and UOIs. We recognize that language is fundamental to learning and is the foundation of learning throughout the curriculum. All teachers at RAK Academy PYP are language teachers and the instruction is student-centred, concept-driven and inquiry-based.

Monitoring and Evaluating:

The School is aware of the need to regularly review our policies to take into account new initiatives, changes in curriculum or developments in technology.

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Reviewed May 2017, Updated Aug 2019.

Source: Making It Happen PYP