



Al-Rayan International School

Primary Years
Programme (PYP)
Curriculum HANDBOOK

2025 / 2026



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Al-Rayan International School Programme of Inquiry 2025–26

ARIS Core Purpose

“We are a diverse community of learners that are committed to **Inspire, Empower** and **Transform** for a better world.”

ARIS Core Values

- Greatness in Everyone.
- Learning with Everyone
- Creativity and Innovation by Everyone
- Service to Everyone

- Change for Everyone

ARIS Characteristics

- Responsibility and Respect
- Passion and Mindfulness
- Collaboration and Communication
- Reflection and Action

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate Organisation aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end, the IBO works with schools, governments, and international organisations to develop challenging international education programs and rigorous assessments. These programs encourage students worldwide to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be correct.

IB Learner Profile

At ARIS we believe in the learner profile. It helps us to share our planet and create a better world! Along with your facilitator and classmates, you will learn about the learner profile and have lots of chances to BE the learner profile!



INQUIRERS

I am an Inquirer. I am curious to learn new things.



THINKERS

I am a Thinker. I think and find solutions to problems.



PRINCIPLED

I am Principled. I follow the rules and take responsibility for my choices. I am honest and fair.



CARING

I am caring. I try to make things better and more positive. I think about others' feelings.



BALANCED

I am balanced. I take care of myself and understand it is important to be healthy in my body and mind.



KNOWLEDGEABLE

I am Knowledgeable. I learn and share my knowledge with others.



COMMUNICATORS

I am a Communicator. I share my views and express my ideas.



OPEN-MINDED

I am open-minded. I respect others' ideas, suggestions and points of view.



RISK-TAKERS

I am courageous. I try new things and think about how to solve problems.



REFLECTIVE

I am reflective. I think about what works and doesn't work and take action to improve.

PYP Curriculum Handbook for Parents

Preschool – Year 6

Welcome to the PYP at ARIS

At ARIS, we believe every child is unique and capable of achieving greatness. The Primary Years Programme (PYP), part of the International Baccalaureate (IB), provides a world-class framework for teaching and learning from Preschool through Year 6.

This handbook is designed to help you, as parents, understand the principles of the PYP and how it supports your child's learning journey.

What is the PYP?

The PYP develops children as caring, confident, and active learners who are prepared for a lifelong journey of discovery. It focuses on:

- Academic growth across all subject areas
- Personal growth through values, skills, and attitudes
- Global citizenship – helping students make a positive difference in the world

At ARIS, the PYP is built around four key cornerstones:

1. International-Mindedness – celebrating diversity and encouraging global awareness.
2. Concept-Based Inquiry – exploring big ideas that connect learning across subjects.
3. Student Agency – empowering children with voice, choice, and ownership of learning.
4. Approaches to Learning (Skills) – building essential skills for success in school and life.

The [Programme of Inquiry](#) is a living document. The units listed may evolve as we collaboratively plan, teach, and assess them throughout the year.

Early Years (Ages 3–6)

Young learners are intelligent, resourceful, and creative individuals who grow, develop, and learn at different rates. Early learning in the PYP is a holistic experience that integrates socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

The power of play is the primary vehicle for inquiry in the Early Years. Play supports thoughtful, intentional opportunities for child-initiated exploration, hands-on learning, and co-construction of understanding between facilitators and young learners. Through play, exploration, and relationships with peers, facilitators, family, and community members, students learn to inquire, build, and test theories to make sense of the world around them.

At ARIS, we encourage children to make connections between life in school, life at home, and life in the wider world.

ARIS is committed to:

- Providing stimulating and thought-provoking learning environments
- Offering effective, ongoing professional development to ensure facilitators remain lifelong learners informed by best practice
- Supporting students and their families throughout the learning journey

The IB Learner Profile

The Learner Profile describes the 10 qualities we aim to develop in every ARIS student:

- Inquirers – curious, ask questions, love learning
- Knowledgeable – explore important ideas across subjects
- Thinkers – use critical and creative thinking to solve problems
- Communicators – express ideas confidently and listen to others
- Principled – act with honesty, fairness, and respect

- Open-minded – value different perspectives and traditions
- Caring – show empathy and kindness
- Risk-Takers – approach challenges with courage and resilience
- Balanced – stay healthy in mind, body, and spirit
- Reflective – think about strengths and areas for growth

The PYP Curriculum Framework

The 5 Essential Elements



The PYP curriculum is built on five key elements:

1. **Knowledge** – What students should know (subject content and real-life connections).
2. **Concepts** – Big ideas that help students think deeply and make connections.
3. **Skills (Approaches to Learning)** – Practical and transferable learning strategies.
4. **Profile Attributes** – The attitudes and values that shape students into internationally minded, responsible learners.
5. **Action** – How students apply their learning to make a difference.

Transdisciplinary Themes

Learning is organised through **six big themes** that connect subjects together:

1. Who We Are
2. Where We Are in Place and Time
3. How We Express Ourselves
4. How the World Works

5. How We Organise Ourselves

6. Sharing the Planet

Who we are	An inquiry into identity as individuals and as part of a collective through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical, emotional and spiritual health and well-being. - relationships and belonging - learning and growing
Where we are in place and time	An inquiry into histories and orientation in place, space and time through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - periods, events and artefacts - communities, heritage, culture and environment - natural and human drivers of movement, adaptation, and transformation
How we express ourselves	An inquiry into the diversity of voice, perspectives, and expression through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inspiration, imagination, creativity - personal, social and cultural modes and practices of communication - intentions, perceptions, interpretations and responses
How the world works	An inquiry into understandings of the world and phenomena through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patterns, cycles, systems - diverse practices, methods and tools - discovery, design, innovation: possibilities and impacts
How we organise ourselves	An inquiry into systems, structures and networks through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interactions within and between social and ecological systems - approaches to livelihoods and trade practices: intended and unintended consequences - representation, collaboration and decision-making
Sharing the planet	An inquiry into the interdependence of human and natural worlds through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rights, responsibilities and dignity of all - pathways to just, peaceful and reimagined futures - nature, complexity, coexistence and wisdom

Specified Concepts:

The PYP is committed to a **concept-driven curriculum** as a way to support inquiry, learning, and teaching. Concepts help students to think more deeply, make connections, and transfer their understanding to new situations. These concepts are used to organise and design the curriculum, fostering conceptual understanding.

The **specified concepts** are introduced, explored, and reinforced both **explicitly** and **implicitly** through the Units of Inquiry. They are assessed throughout each unit to ensure that students develop a strong and lasting understanding of them.

Form	What is it like? The understanding that everything has a form with recognisable features that can be observed, identified, described and categorised.
Function	How does it work? The understanding that everything has a purpose, a role or a way of behaving that can be investigated.
Causation	Why is it like it is? The understanding that things do not just happen, that there are causal relationships at work and that actions have consequences.
Change	How is it changing? The understanding that change is the process of movement from one state to another. It is universal and inevitable.
Connection	How is it connected to other things? The understanding that we live in a world of interacting systems in which the actions of any individual element affect others.
Perspective	What are the points of view? The understanding that knowledge is moderated by perspectives; different perspectives lead to different interpretations, understandings and findings; perspectives may be individual, group, cultural or disciplinary
Responsibility	What is our responsibility? The understanding that people make choices based on their understandings, and the actions they take as a result, do make a difference.

In addition to the specified concepts, students also inquire into **additional concepts** within all curriculum areas. For example, in mathematics, they go beyond simply acquiring knowledge and skills to deepen their understanding of ideas such as **pattern, multiplication, and place value**.

Approaches to Learning (Skills)

The PYP develops skills that children can use in every part of their lives:

- **Thinking Skills** – problem-solving, creativity, reflection
- **Research Skills** – asking good questions, finding reliable information
- **Communication Skills** – listening, speaking, reading, writing, using technology responsibly
- **Social Skills** – teamwork, respecting others, resolving conflict
- **Self-Management Skills** – organisation, time management, resilience

These skills prepare children not just for school, but for life.

Action: Learning That Matters

Heart, Mind, and Action: Learning That Matters

Heart, Mind, and Action: Learning That Matters

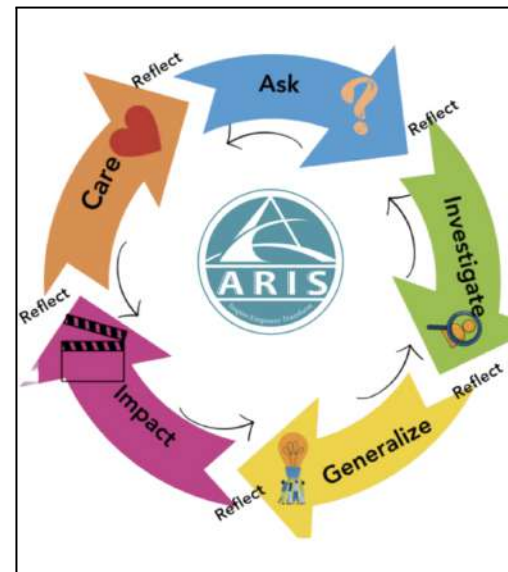
This cycle came to life by merging two powerful frameworks: the Concept-Based Inquiry Cycle (Rachel French and Carla Marshall), which focuses on conceptual depth and transfer of learning, with the Empathy to Impact Cycle (Inspire Citizens), which emphasises empathy, knowledge & skill building, and service learning. Together, they create ARIS's unique cycle that integrates Heart, Mind, and Action.

Heart: We want students to care about what they're learning; to develop empathy and see how learning connects to their lives and why it matters to the world around them.

Mind: Once they care, students dig deeper through concept-based inquiry, asking meaningful questions and exploring transferable concepts. They build knowledge and skills to develop deep and transferable understandings, spotting patterns that move them from factual to conceptual thinking—understanding that goes beyond surface knowledge.

Action: They take informed action, using what they've learned to create positive change and solve real problems in their communities and beyond.

This transforms students from passive listeners into active problem-solvers and changemakers. They don't just study the world's challenges—they develop the empathy, understanding, and skills to address them. When students know they have the power to create meaningful impact, learning becomes personal, purposeful, and alive.



Assessment in the PYP

Assessment helps us understand your child's progress and plan next steps. At ARIS, assessment is:

- Continuous – happening every day during learning
- Varied – using tools like portfolios, rubrics, projects, and tests
- Supportive – helping children grow in confidence and ability

Reporting to Parents

- Written Reports – shared twice a year via Toddle
- Conferences –Three-Way and Student-Led Conferences. Parents are expected to attend all scheduled conferences. They are also welcome to arrange additional meetings with facilitators at any point during the year. Likewise, the school may initiate a conference with parents whenever needed.
- Workshops – opportunities for parents to learn more about the PYP, Targeted Workshops, Coffee morning, newsletters, and ARISVERSITY Modules

We believe parents are partners in learning, so your involvement is essential.

Portfolios

PYP students create a portfolio on Toddle based on a range of experiences. The portfolio is a collection of work selected by the students and facilitators and is a record of students' involvement in learning. It is a celebration of each student's active mind at work and provides a picture of progress and development over a period of time. It is designed to demonstrate success, growth, thinking skills, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. Portfolios enable students to reflect with facilitators, parents and peers in order to identify their strengths and growth as well as areas for improvement.

Enrichment and Enhancement Program

Educational needs are supported through the work of our **Learning Support Facilitators**. At ARIS, we follow an **inclusion model**, in which Enrichment and Enhancement staff work alongside class facilitators to support identified students within the classroom environment.

Students who require extra practice in specific skills may, on occasion, work with the classroom facilitator during Lang C lessons outside the classroom to focus on targeted goals. This practice is exceptional, closely monitored, and regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the student's needs.

Support is communicated clearly to parents. When necessary, **external referrals** may be made for further assessment or specialist support.

The PYP Exhibition (Year 6)



The PYP Exhibition is the culminating project of the programme, where students apply their skills, knowledge, and passions to investigate real-life issues. It is a celebration of their learning journey and a demonstration of readiness for the Middle Years Programme (MYP).

[PYPX Handbook](#)

Subject Overview

The importance of the traditional subject areas is acknowledged: language, mathematics, social studies, science, personal, social and physical education, and the arts are specified as components of the PYP curriculum model. IBO has provided the school with subject continuum documents with overall expectations for each subject. The overall expectations are represented in phases, reflecting the stages a learner goes through when developing conceptual understanding rather than grade-level expectations. The single subjects are embedded into the units of inquiry. Science and Social Studies are fully incorporated into the Programme of Inquiry. The relationship between the other subject areas and the units of inquiry will change from one unit to another.



Language Arts

English Language

Language is developed across the whole curriculum, and as a result, all facilitators at ARIS are language facilitators who model and teach the use of language. Learning takes place in authentic contexts, and literature plays a special role in enabling this to happen. Students learn a language when they are using it through speaking, listening, reading and writing in order to understand and express ideas. Facilitators provide opportunities for this to happen in a safe and stimulating environment in order to encourage risk-taking and learning. Our aim is to develop students' ability to express themselves fluently, confidently and accurately in oral, written and visual communication systems. English is the main language of instruction in the school English Language Scope and Sequence

Mother Tongue Language

At ARIS, we deeply value the continued development of students' mother tongues. Whenever possible, we aim to place children in classes with peers who speak the same languages they do, with priority given to students who are new to learning English.

We encourage parents to talk, read, and write with their children in their mother tongue at home. Each year, we celebrate and promote linguistic diversity through **Mother Tongue & Language Day** events. We also integrate the host country's language into **Performing Arts** and **Visual Arts** activities.

ARIS offers four of the main mother tongues spoken by our community: **Spanish, Arabic, French, and Hindi**. For mother tongue courses not offered by ARIS, the school takes responsibility for facilitating these opportunities in collaboration with families. As part of our commitment as an IB school, we work to ensure that students can continue developing their home language, even if it is not part of our standard language offerings. These lessons are coordinated through the Admissions and Administration Office, and ideally take place after school hours or on Saturdays. In addition, ARIS already partners with the Dutch School, which offers after-school language classes on our campus.

While English remains the main language of instruction to support our English-medium curriculum and enhance students' academic potential, we recognise that learning and maintaining other languages fosters cognitive growth, cultural understanding, and social connections within and beyond the classroom.

We also believe language learning is closely tied to cultural understanding. In line with our mission and our commitment to developing international-mindedness, students are encouraged to take pride in their own language and culture while also learning languages other than their own.

To connect with our local Ghanaian community, **Twi** is offered once a week to all students.

Mathematics

Students develop their understanding of mathematical concepts in realistic contexts so that they can recognize the power of mathematics for describing and analysing the world around them. They inquire into relationships, interact with manipulatives and engage in conversations with others. They develop fluency with basic number facts and important skills and use these to solve problems, representing their thinking and solutions using the language of mathematics and symbolic notation. Our aim is to develop students who are fluent in the language of mathematics and can apply their knowledge and understanding to real-world situations. The curriculum is organized under the following strands and we aim to provide a balanced experience across the strands. Mathematical strands

- Data handling
- Measurement
- Shape and space
- Pattern and function
- Number

Math PYP Scope and Sequence

Science

In the PYP, science is viewed as the exploration of the behaviours of, and the interrelationships among, the natural, physical and material worlds. Science in the curriculum encourages curiosity, develops an understanding of the world and enables students to develop a sense of responsibility regarding the impact of their actions on themselves, others and the world. Students actively construct and challenge their understanding of the world around them by combining scientific knowledge with reasoning and thinking skills. The scientific process, by encouraging hands-on experience and inquiry, enables the student to make informed and responsible decisions.

Science strands

- Living things
- Earth and space
- Physical and chemical science

Science PYP Scope and Sequence

STEM at ARIS



STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is integrated into our PYP curriculum to help students:

- Think like problem-solvers – applying inquiry skills to real-world challenges.
- Work collaboratively – using teamwork to design, test, and improve ideas.
- Be innovative – learning through hands-on experiments, design projects, coding, and robotics.
- See connections – understanding how math, science, and technology work together in daily life.



Through STEM experiences, ARIS students develop creativity, critical thinking, and resilience — skills that prepare them for future studies and careers in a rapidly changing world.

Social studies

In the PYP, social studies is viewed as the study of people in relation to their past, their present and their future, their environment and their society. The social studies curriculum encourages curiosity and develops an understanding of a rapidly changing world. Students develop an understanding of their personal and cultural identities through social studies, as well as the skills and knowledge needed to participate actively in their classroom, their school, their community and the world: to understand themselves in relation to their community. ARIS aims is to develop students' understanding of the world around them, historical and geographical influences and the role of individuals in communities. Social studies strands

- Ways of knowing and systems
- Critical global citizenship and culture
- Continuity and change for reimagined futures
- Interconnected places, spaces and relationships

Social Studies Scope and Sequence

Personal, Social and Physical Education (PSPE)

PSPE in the PYP is concerned with the individual's wellbeing through the promotion and development of concepts, knowledge, attitudes and skills that contribute to this wellbeing. Well-being is intrinsically linked to all aspects of a student's experience at school and beyond. It encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and social health and development, and contributes to an understanding of self, to developing and maintaining relationships with others, and to participate in an active, healthy lifestyle. PSPE is actually the combination of two curriculum areas, PE and PSE, which are described below.

PSPE PYP Scope and Sequence

Physical Education (PE)



Through Physical Education in the PYP, students are learning the “language” of physical movement and explore the skills associated with the different areas of PE. Students learn to understand what they can and cannot do physically. They become aware of their own strengths and areas to develop in this discipline. Physical activity is an essential aspect of a balanced, healthy lifestyle and learning through PE helps build self-esteem, confidence, cooperation and fitness. Our aim is to stimulate students’ awareness of their own physical fitness and to simultaneously develop an interest and appreciation of sport and physical activity. Swimming is included in the program for students in **GYear** 1 to 5

PE strands

- Identity
- Interactions
- Wellness
- Movement

Arts



Arts are integral to the PYP. They are a powerful mode of communication through which students explore and construct a sense of self and develop an understanding of the world around them. Arts provide students with a wide range of opportunities and means to respond to their experiences and engage with historical, social and cultural perspectives. The students are stimulated to think and to articulate their thoughts in new ways and through a variety of media and technologies. The PYP recognizes that not all learning can be supported solely through language and that arts as a medium of inquiry also provide opportunities for learning, communication and expression. Learning about and through arts is fundamental to the development of the whole child, promoting creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills and social interactions. At ARIS arts are identified as dance, drama, music and visual arts.

Arts strands

- Responding
- Creating

Arts PYP Scope and Sequence

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

In the PYP, the ever-increasing impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on teaching and learning is recognized. The use of technologies is integrated as much as possible into student inquiries. ICT provides opportunities for the enhancement of learning, and may significantly support students in their inquiries, and in developing their conceptual understanding. At ARIS, technology is considered as a tool for learning, albeit with its own set of skills, as opposed to an additional subject area. Use of ICT The following six ICT skills are relevant to all learners. Each skill is transdisciplinary and will support learning both within the transdisciplinary program of inquiry and within the subject areas:

- Investigating

- Creating
- Communicating
- Collaborating
- Organizing
- Becoming responsible digital citizens

Library

The library is viewed as the hub of a PYP school in which students develop essential information and literacy skills by accessing a range of media and texts. Students will visit the library on a scheduled basis with their class once a week. All students will borrow books to take home during this time. Parents and students are welcome to visit the library at other times when the librarian is present. It is important that students return their borrowed books. A replacement fee will be charged for any lost or damaged books or bags. [Library Guidelines 25-26](#)

Further info: <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/>

Al-Rayan International School Program of Inquiry 2025-26

Our Programme of Inquiry (POI) maps out the learning journey for students across all year levels in the Primary Years Programme. It outlines the six transdisciplinary themes and the units of inquiry taught under each theme, showing how concepts, skills, and learner profile attributes are developed over time.

[The POI](#) is a living document — meaning it evolves as teachers plan, teach, and assess learning collaboratively. Units may be refined or adapted to better meet the needs of our students, respond to current events, and ensure authentic, meaningful learning experiences.

At ARIS, we are committed to nurturing lifelong learners who are confident, caring, and globally minded. Through the PYP, your child will not only gain academic knowledge but also the skills, attitudes, and values needed to thrive in a changing world.