

IB Asia Pacific  
Primary Years Programme  
Authorization Visit Report

Northbridge International School Cambodia  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

School Code: 003902

12-13th September 2011

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## Primary Years Programme Authorization Report

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<b>Visiting Team</b>	<b>Leader</b>	Karen O'Connell
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### COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains the visiting team's commendations and recommendations. 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 commendations and recommendations in order to assist your 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 PYP.
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##### **Commendations**

The visiting team commends the school for:

1. commitment to the principles defined in the IB mission statement.
2. having clear and close connections between the school's published statements of mission and philosophy and the beliefs and values of the programme.
3. ensuring that the beliefs and values that drive the programme are shared by all sections of the school community. This was evident in all meetings with students, staff and parents.

##### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. continues to embed the qualities, attitudes and characteristics described in the IB learner profile and attitudes into the school and classroom environment in authentic ways.

2. continues to find ways of informing parents that build on an understanding of the beliefs, values and practices of the programme. Consider delivering some of the parent information in Khmer.

### **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 the school for:

1. the PYP coordinator developing a climate of open communication and careful expression of ideas, attitudes and feelings. All staff have been involved in the implementation and are greatly supported. The school is also open to parents who have opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas with the school. There is a great sense of community within the school.
2. providing interactive teaching areas that are safe, secure and stimulating environment based on understanding and respect. Students commented on the essential agreements developed in their classrooms, which clearly articulate a need for understanding and respect.

#### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. further provides resources that offer access to different cultures, perspectives and languages. Additional mother tongue resources and resources reflecting broader perspectives are planned for purchase in the future.
2. provides students with further opportunities for learning about issues that have local, national and global significance, leading to an understanding of human commonalities. In particular focussing on ensuring there is a local connection to units of inquiry.

### **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 the school for:

1. the CEO who is explicitly supportive of the programme, and has allocated sufficient funding for the effective implementation and ongoing development of the programme.
2. appointing a programme coordinator with sufficient support and resources to carry out the responsibilities of the position. The programme coordinator has

a good understanding of the principles of the programme and is providing effective leadership.

3. building time for collaborative planning and reflection into all teachers' schedules.
4. systems in place ensuring the continuity of the programme; this includes an induction system for new staff and ongoing staff professional development.
5. providing professional development opportunities for the principal, programme coordinator and teaching staff, including attendance at appropriate IB conferences, meetings and/or workshops, and access to the online curriculum centre (OCC).
6. providing learning environments and opportunities for learning that support the pedagogy of the programme of inquiry.

### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. further recognizes and promotes the role of the library/media centre in the implementation of the programme. The library has a central role in the facilitation of both student and adult inquiry. Consider a system where the teacher librarian plays an active role in facilitating the program of inquiry across the school.
2. reviews its language policy with particular focus on mother-tongue support. Khmer is the host language offered at the school. It is important that discussion takes place on how to make this more persuasive throughout the school and seen as being valued. Included in this is consideration to the current time allocation.
3. provides professional development opportunities for the primary principal and the PYP coordinator; consider sending them together to the IB PYP Pedagogical Leadership workshop. Attendance by the leadership team could enhance pedagogical leadership of the programme even further.

### **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.
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### **Commendations**

The visiting team commends the school for:

1. developing a coherent, articulated programme of inquiry.
2. developing a programme of inquiry and corresponding unit planners that are the product of sustained collaborative work involving all the appropriate staff.

## **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. implements a system of regular review to ensure the horizontal and vertical articulation of the program of inquiry.
2. carefully considers the balance between disciplinary and transdisciplinary planning and teaching. Review timetables to show the disciplinary nature of the programme.
3. develops a systematic approach to integrating subject specific scope and sequences with the POI. This will assist in identifying stand-alone units separate from the programme of inquiry. In particular this needs to be done for stand-alone mathematics and language.
4. continues to develop a comprehensive, coherent written curriculum for all subject areas so that it meets the educational needs of the students at the school.

## **Standard C2**

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

## **Commendations**

The visiting team commends the school for:

1. providing teachers with the appropriate documentation, including relevant IB publications, in preparation for all planning activities.
2. planning at the school that takes place collaboratively.
3. including provision for easy access to completed PYP planners.
4. documenting planning for units of inquiry on PYP planners that are coherent records of the learning experiences of students in developing their understanding of central ideas.

## **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. continues to monitor how teachers engage with all aspects of the PYP planning process so that they are able to understand the connections across the curriculum. Support single subject teachers (including Languages) to explore connections to central ideas. Connections can also be made to units of inquiry through key and related concepts, lines of inquiry, attributes of the learner profile, attitudes and skills.

### **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 the school for:

1. using a range and balance of teaching strategies to meet the objectives of the programme. This was evidenced through the variety of engagements seen in classes during the visits.
2. providing for grouping and regrouping students for a variety of learning situations.
3. providing teaching and learning at the school, which is supported by a range of appropriate resources, especially ICT support.
4. providing students with opportunities to develop their own questions and lines of inquiry through making individual choices about their learning. The wondering wall is an example of this.

#### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. continues to explore the use of inquiry as a pedagogical approach across the curriculum, by all teachers.
2. further addresses issues of differentiation in all subject areas, focussing on prior knowledge, planning accordingly and taking into account different learning styles will assist with this.

### **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 the school for:

1. providing students with regular opportunities for reflection on their own learning.
2. reporting evidence of the learner profile to all participants in the learning process.
3. having an assessment policy in place in order for teachers to understand the purpose and practice of assessment in schools.

## **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. develops a deeper understanding of formative assessment as a way to enhance students' learning and effectively evaluate the ongoing planning process, in order to meet the individual needs of students.
2. further uses a range of strategies for summative assessment, which are reviewed regularly. Ensure summative assessment tasks assess student's understanding of the central idea and the concepts, in addition to knowledge.
3. continues to develop portfolio essential agreements across the school in order to provide easy access to student work showing evidence of the process of learning and progress over time.

## **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 the school for:

1. supporting students in learning how to reflect on their experiences and make more informed, independent choices.

### **Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school:

1. develops a deeper understanding of 'authentic' student initiated action in order to provide opportunities to be an integral part of the curriculum and/or an extension of the curriculum. The action component is a direct reflection of how the learning experience assists students in clarifying their values, attitudes and beliefs which in turn influences the choices they make.

### **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 the PYP and MYP, and to demonstrate the extension and development of their learning in the Diploma Programme.

The PYP exhibition becomes a requirement in the year subsequent to authorization.

## Conclusion

We would like to express our appreciation to the administration and the entire staff at Northbridge International School Cambodia for arranging a very professional and informative visit. We would also like to thank all support staff and significantly, the enthusiastic students who engaged the visiting team in informative dialogue about their learning.

It is clear that all staff have worked hard to ensure the implementation of the programme in all sections of the school. The staffs have genuinely embraced the PYP framework and have worked collaboratively towards developing curriculum documentation. There has been a significant paradigm shift in the school with all teachers moving toward a move inquiry based approach. The school has provided extensive planning and professional development time in recognition of the journey the school is undertaking.

The school provides a safe climate for learning where all feel part of the community. It was obvious to the team that the students and parents valued the school and appreciated the work of all involved in making learning real, significant and engaging.

## Recommended Action by the visiting team to the IB

The visiting team recommends to the IB that Northbridge International School Cambodia be authorized to offer the Primary Years Programme with the following conditions:

The school Action Plan on the recommendations of the report and using the new standards and practices (2010) for the next phase of implementation (4 years) is submitted to the regional office by **September 2012**.

The school's action plan to the IBAP regional office will assist both the office and the school to adequately prepare for the Evaluation Visit and should be received by the date stated above.

It is recommended that Northbridge International School (with appropriate action on the recommendations) schedule its evaluation visit for **September 2015**.

We congratulate the management and staff of Northbridge International School on their development and achievements thus far.

Respectfully submitted

Karen O'Connell

Betty Brown