BIS I II IES



THIRD ISSUE PRINCIPAL'S NOTE

We are delighted to share the 3rd edition of the BIS Abu Dhabi Times with you.

We have been overjoyed to welcome back many of our students into the building this term as well as continue our learning and school activities for those that have continued remotely with our Virtual School Experience.

Even though there have been many changes to the way schools can operate, it has been very heartening to be able to enjoy normal school activities once more. And simply being able to help students with their learning is appreciated – it is why teachers are teachers.

As you look through this term's magazine, you will see we had a busy start to our 2020-21 academic year with much to celebrate. Our outstanding students have again made us proud by receiving record breaking examination results, becoming novelists, winning poetry awards and by becoming UN Global Goals Speaking Competition champions.

Restrictions have not stopped us coming together as a community to enjoy activities such as the Nord Anglia Education Global Sports Competition and our own Virtual Triathlon. It has been fantastic to see all our participants sharing their experiences via our social media channels.

Kindness is one of our school values and this was displayed at our annual Kindness Day. Throughout the day the students made paper chains with kindness messages on them for their friends and these were used to decorate their homes and classrooms. Kindness messages were sent from students to teachers and vice versa, via Seesaw and email.

It has been fantastic to see the students and staff across the school celebrate two very important days in the UAE: Flag Day and National Day. Students were able to enjoy a variety of activities across the two days and celebrate the heritage of the country we all love and call home.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to wish all our families a safe and relaxing winter break, we cannot wait to welcome all our year groups across the school back in January.

Warm regards,

Patrick Horne *Principal*



WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING AT *BIS ABU DHABI*



- A PASSION FOR LANGUAGES
- WRITE A NOVEL CHALLENGE
- VIRTUAL GALLERY TOUR
- VISUAL ARTS

- NAE GLOBAL SPORTS COMPETITION
- 14 WORLD KINDNESS DAY
- 16 FLAG DAY

Success

Once again, our IB and IGCSE students achieved record results and we are immensely proud of their academic success. In a year where the students had to study remotely, show resilience and adapt to a challenging situation, it is incredible that these year groups have achieved the highest results in the school's history.

Our IB students achieved a pass rate of 98 per cent. The average score of 35 was significantly higher than the IB global average of 29.9 points, putting BIS Abu Dhabi at the top with other IB schools around the world. This has enabled students to obtain places in highly prestigious University courses.

25% of students from our school achieved 40 points and above. This is the level of attainment required to gain admission to the world's elite universities, such as Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard and Stanford.

The IGCSE results are equally as impressive. Our students achieved incredible results with 58% of all grades obtained at grade A or better. This significantly exceeds the UK average of 21%. Across all examinations, 96% were at grades A*-C compared to the UK average of 67%. Students of all interests and abilities have been able to demonstrate success across the whole range of subjects.

We are extremely proud of our students, not just for their exam results, but for what they achieved throughout their time here at BIS Abu Dhabi. Whilst completing the challenging IGCSEs and IB Diploma Programme, our students contributed to school life in so many ways and have grown into amazing young adults as a result.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all parents for their support for their children with their studies. This support, alongside the work of our wonderful teachers, is enabling our students to achieve results comparable with other leading schools around the world.

Our graduates may have left the school building, but they will always be part of the BIS Abu Dhabi family and we look forward to hearing of their great accomplishments in the future. We also wish our current IB students success on their path to achieving outstanding IB results that equal if not excel their IGCSE accomplishments.

I had an amazing
experience doing the IBDP at BIS
Abu Dhabi. While being challenging
and requiring continuous efforts, the
program prepared me well for the University
workload as I learned to be independent and
efficient with my time. I am thankful that I had the
opportunity to build so many experiences through
CAS that I can now put forth. I am also glad to
have had such a great set of teachers who were
all so invested in our progress, and of course
an amazing cohort!

Amandine, IB highest



38% of all grades were at the maximum of grade 9 or grade A*

58% of all grades were at grade A or better

96% of all exams were at grade C or better

4 of our students achieved 'perfect' 9's/A*s

IB class of 2020:

98% IB pass rate in 2018/19

35 average IB diploma points

25% of students achieved 40 points and above

5.5 average subject grade

Our UN Global Goals Speaking Competition Champions

Tackling global issues is nothing new for many BIS Abu Dhabi students. Year 12 students Sara and Rumesa, and Year 11 students Taabeer and Aisyah have continued their great work towards making a difference in the world by taking part in the UAE wide UN Global Goals speaking contest that took place in October. They spoke about different issues that impact the world and the changes they would like to see to help combat them. Below, see what Sara and Tabeer had to say about the experience.







is the biggest



Sara (Finalist and Bronze winner) – Year 12

Ever since I was little, I never understood why we fought in wars. I did not know why chaos was the route we chose to solve our problems. I still ask the same question to this day and that is why I choose to talk about peace whenever I get the opportunity to.

After taking part in the competition, I have learnt more about the Sustainable Development Goal itself. The thorough research I put into the speech taught even myself more about peace, justice and strong institutions. Also, as a child I was extremely shy and introverted; in fact, I still cannot ask for ketchup at a restaurant!

Public speaking is slowly helping me overcome my fear and this competition has brought me one step closer.

In terms of the future, I hope to continue using my voice as a source of change in my community. With the endless opportunities presenting to me here at BIS Abu Dhabi, I know I won't be short of chances to speak.

In the long-term, I make it my goal to reiterate the urgency of this specific goal on an international scale. Whether that be a TED talk or a UN debate, I want to make my voice heard.

Taabeer - Year 11

The UN goals competition was a unique opportunity to not only discuss a goal I the air am passionate about (climate action) but to also see it from a variety of different perspectives and gain insight from others.

existential threat facing Climate change is the biggest existential threat humanity right now. Besides facing humanity right more natural desasters, it now. Not only does it leads to increased poverty affect the planet, but its and inequality. intersections with other UN goals such as No Poverty, makes it such an important goal to address. I think the main thing that inspired me to talk about climate action was the way the 'typical narrative' around it is.

Continue using my voice as a source of change in my community, whether that be for a TED talk or a UN debate.

We tend to think of it in the context of polar bears and melting ice caps, but if we want real action, we need to discuss it from the angle of humans. The truth is, it will affect us too as more natural disasters are

happening because of the climate crisis, leading to increased poverty and inequality.

I think this shift to a human narrative made me feel that it was important to share my speech with others and help diversify the conversation beyond the typical talk of animals. This competition has helped foster my research and speech writing skills. With the aid of the internet we have so much information at the tip of our fingertips,

so to find the right statistics that carry the most punch in the context of a speech was quite challenging.

Through watching others' speeches, I learnt more about the topic of climate action and different people's experiences; from a diver who was shocked seeing vast amounts of plastic to ocean to someone who

in the ocean to someone who tried to cut down their school's carbon footprint.

The main thing I would like to see is real policy change regarding the climate crisis. I think the fact that such a large systemic issue is talked about on a very hyper-individualised scale does not allow for true progress. While we can all do our part by using fewer plastic bags, policies should be implemented in place to regulate the biggest carbon emitters: corporations.



A Passion for Languages

BIS Abu Dhabi is on the road to perfection – Education Perfection. We are of course referring to the annual Education Perfect Northern Championships 2020! Students from 283 schools around the world compete for points by learning and revising material from the wide range available on the Education Perfection e-learning platform.

As winners of this prestigious competition for the previous two years, to say that BIS Abu Dhabi students had a hard act to follow is an understatement. As the week-long competition got underway in November, the question on everyone's minds was definitely, 'can we maintain that winning streak?' As the school rallied together and the points started racking up, by the end of day 1 we were still in 1st place and whilst still performing admirably over the coming days, we were eventually overtaken.

Still, friendly competition aside, it was great to see the students broadening their horizons and covering material from Italian, to Indonesian, to Maori and not just subjects in the standard curriculum. When you look at our impressive statistics, BIS Abu Dhabi students performed exceptionally well by any measure – nearly 600,000 questions answered, almost 1,000 tireless hours of learning and a total of 151 Awards, including 1 Elite and 4 Emerald, which require thousands of points per individual to attain. All this, despite half of our school being online due to the present situation

and missing on the enthusiastic cheers of their peers. This really shows how resilient and enthusiastic about their languages BIS Abu Dhabi students are!!

Special mention must go to the point-scoring machine that is Year 8 student Elyssar, who scored a whopping 12,357 points, securing BIS Abu Dhabi's only Elite award this round and ranking her 16th ir the world! Congratulations!

With 267,288 points, BIS Abu Dhabi students rose again collectively to the challenge and did themselves proud by securing 2nd place.

With 52 languages available on the platform, BIS Abu Dhabi students participated in the following languages:

Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian Japanese, Latin, Malay, Maori, Russian and Spanish.

Well done to all BIS Abu Dhabi students who participated, we are proud of you, have loved seeing your enthusiasm, determination and passion for languages.

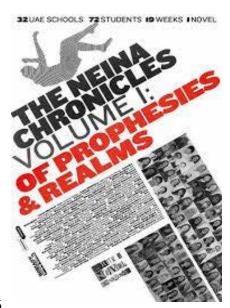
We hope to see many of you at the next competition in May

Write A Novel Challenge



Over the summer, Which School Advisor challenged young people across the UAE to write a world-class novel. The challenge was for the students to produce a single novel exceeding 50,000 words.

The format presented to them was challenging – each student had less than 24 hours to write around 1,000 words, before passing the next chapter on to a new writer, who had to absorb what had been written and deliver the next 1,000 words!



Three of our students took on the challenge; Solenn (Chapter 21), Sophie (Chapter 44) and Mahra (Chapter 54).

2019-2020 graduate Solenn commented: "I really enjoyed the Write a Novel Challenge, especially waiting for the chapters to come out every few days. I was lucky to have had a whole weekend to write my chapter (1000 words), so it wasn't too limiting, but it was challenging to try and fit everything I wanted to convey about the character, which I'd gathered from previous chapters, and 1000 words really isn't a lot! Taking part felt amazing, because I was like a cog in a machine, and I liked the idea of Neina being a character made up of a little bit of every writer. I am quite happy about the end result, even if I found some chapters to be less important than others. I would encourage other students to take part next year because it is a great experience in picking up stories, writing action, and building on a character you did not necessarily create. It was a fantastic experience!"

Year 12 student Mahra quoted: "Being able to take part in the Write a Novel Challenge was truly an honour. Having loved writing for as long as I can remember, this was a great opportunity to hone my skills and find a footing in my personal style as a writer. I enjoyed reading every chapter and loved how each writer embodied the plot and characters differently than the last-I never knew what to expect every time a new chapter was revealed. Truly, there is nothing greater than accomplishing a feat of this scale with other people, which made the experience even more special. Being able to lend my pen to play a role in this story, amongst other amazing writers, was nothing short of magical. I strongly encourage other budding writers to take on the challenge, there is no better way to establish yourself as a storyteller than to have the direction a story takes, completely in your hands."

To read the amazing final product, visit: https://tinyurl.com/yycqv5nm

Poetry Recital Competition

Congratulations to Year 12 student Inshirah, for winning the Emirates NBD Poetry For All competition 2020 in the age 14 - 18 category. The annual competition celebrates poetry performance and recital. Students learn poetry by heart and give an emotional response to the language and ideas of the poet. Inshirah recited the poem 'Caged Bird' by Maya Angelou.





Caged Bird by Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps on the back Of the wind and floats downstream Till the current ends and dips his wing In the orange sun rays And dares to claim the sky.

But a BIRD that stalks down his narrow cage Can seldom see through his bars of rage His wings are clipped and his feet are tied So he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings with a fearful trill Of things unknown but longed for still And his tune is heard on the distant hill For the caged bird sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
And the trade winds soft through
The sighing trees
And the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright
Lawn and he names the sky his own.

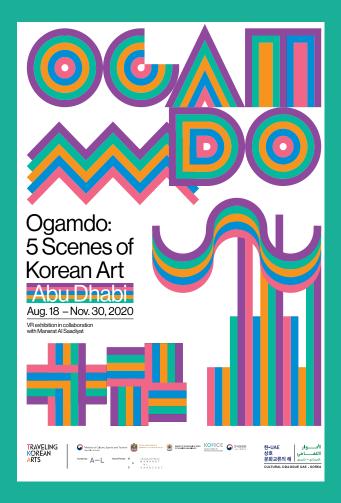
But a caged BIRD stands on the grave of dreams His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream His wings are clipped and his feet are tied So he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings with a fearful trill Of things unknown but longed for still And his tune is heard on the distant hill For the caged bird sings of freedom.



Virtual Gallery Tour Manarat Al Saadiyat

The virtual learning experience in Visual Arts expanded this term to include virtual tours of the exhibitions at some of the galleries across the city. In collaboration with the Korean Cultural Center in the UAE and the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, Manarat Al Saadiyat visited our Year 11 and Year 12 students by delivering a virtual reality tour of their exhibition with 40 artworks from 14 Korean artists. The exhibition, titled "OGAMDO: Five scenes of Korean Art" was a great opportunity for our students to examine the fresh aesthetics of various landscapes of contemporary Korean art and to have a look at the 'here' and 'now' of the 21st century's 'Korean-ness' presented in Korean contemporary art.









Visual Arts - Finding Creative Potential in Adapting to Change

Visual Arts encourages students to be flexible, open-minded and ready to adapt to new experiences. Being imaginative and creative when finding solutions to problems, is part of everyday practice. Whilst a blended learning approach to a practical subject, can certainly pose some logistical challenges, our students and teachers are well experienced in thinking about how to overcome them, by the very nature of the subject.

Whilst nurturing the characteristics and attributes that enable our students to cope with change positively, the Visual Arts also creates a platform for students to process change cognitively, an outlet to express themselves, their feelings and their opinions.







In our current climate, perhaps there is even more of a case for doing practical activities away from the screen that can provide a positive space for people to clear their minds, meditate on being in the moment, the practical task at hand and making something beautiful and/or meaningful to them.

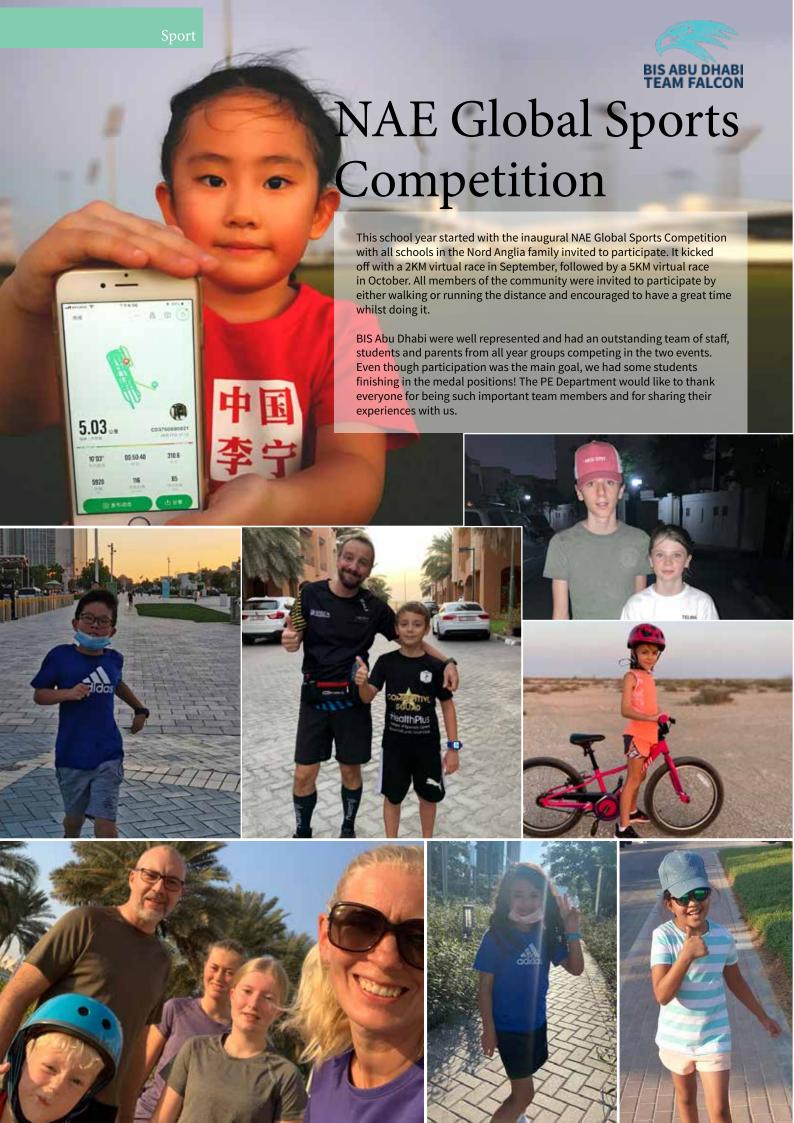
With the winter break just around the corner, hand made gifts are always the most treasured!



It has been impressive to see our GCSE and IB Visual Arts students adjust so resiliently to online learning and in some cases, embrace digital technologies and graphic design tools to replace traditional 2D art making practices to express their ideas and create expressive practical outcomes.

The Visual Arts team would like to thank our parent community for all they are doing to continue to support our students working in school or at home, making sure they have the basic practical art material needed for their child's creativity to flourish and encouraging them to engage in practical Art making activities, so beneficial for our holistic well-being.



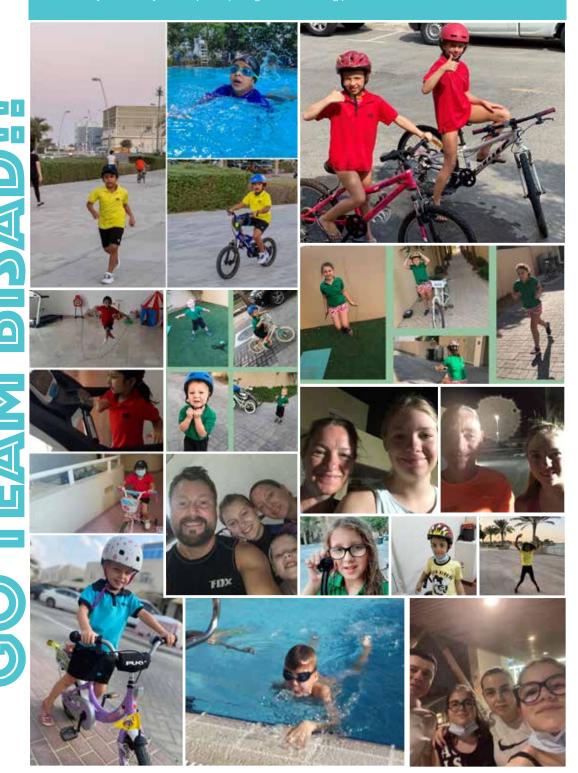


Fifth Annual Triathlon

We hosted our fifth annual Triathlon during the month of November 2020. This year the Triathlon was virtual, therefore we had the bonus of athletes from Nursery up to Year 13 being able to participate.

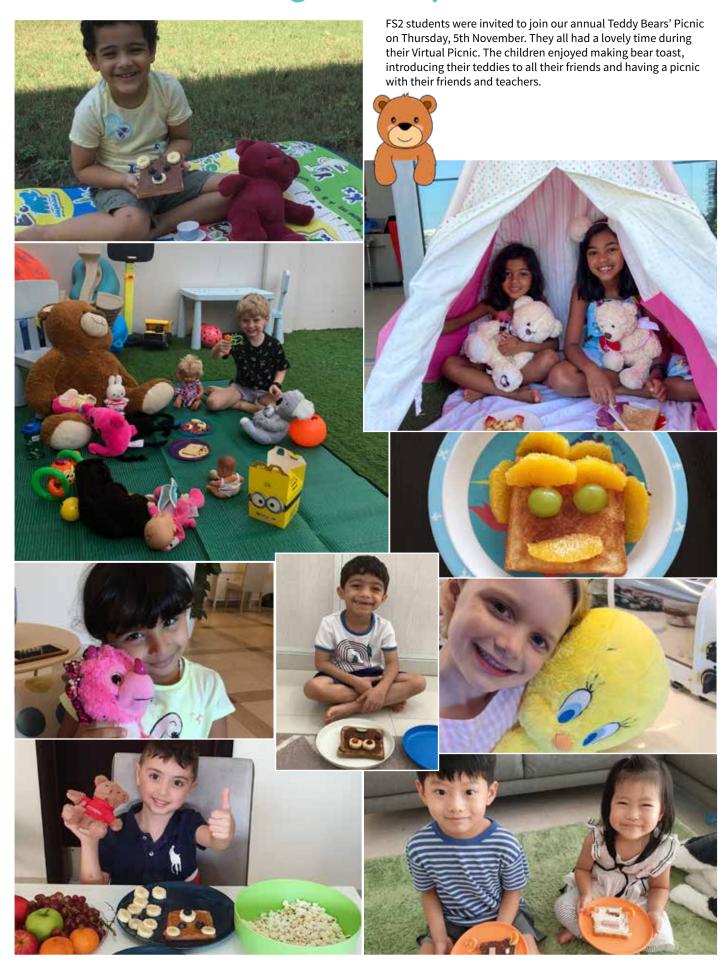
A triathlon is an athletic event that usually consists of swimming, cycling and running. As not all members of our community have access to a pool, alternative cardio options such as roller skating, doing burpees or star jumps were offered. Many students, parents and staff participated over the month and House points were awarded to all students that took part.

Thank you to everyone for participating and for sharing photos of the fun event.





Foundation Stage Teddy Bears' Picnic





11th annual House Day

On the 18th November, House Day returned to BIS Abu Dhabi for our annual main House celebrations.

Despite things being a bit different this year, we were able to bring the excitement of House spirit to school.

Within their classes, students took part in a range of activities to compete in and bring as many points as possible to their House!

Activities included art, STEAM, puzzle work, problem solving, online collaborative teamwork and many, many more exciting surprises throughout the day.

We had music along the corridors, amazing decorations and a mask design competition that could see the schools' first ever reusable masks being sold within our community symbolizing our Houses.

The theme of our House Day was 'Nothing Can Stop Us' and our students definitely proved they were unstoppable; competition was fierce and lots of fun was had.

This year's winners were Willow, who completed a double after winning House Day last year in 2019. This year's win came with a staggering 10.815 House Points. Oak came second, with 9,613 points, followed by Ash in third with 5,942 points and Elm in fourth with

Despite the difficulties and restrictions of working virtually and within our own bubbles, every student gave 110% and were part of a House Day that was one to remember.

Well done to all the students and staff involved.







World Kindness Day

On Kindness Day students from Nursery to Year 13 arrived at school to the sounds of uplifting music and the school was awash with yellow as everyone including our Virtual Learners wore yellow clothes.

Throughout the day the students made paper chains with kindness messages on them for their friends and these were used to decorate their classrooms. Kindness messages were sent from students to teachers and vice versa, via Seesaw and email. There was an abundance of rainbows which the students painted and proudly displayed in their classrooms.

Students who were learning online accessed a range of virtual activities and reflection tools from home and were able to send in their kindness stories to form tutors.

The conversations that were overheard in the playground, were of kind words

Kindness is defined as "the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate."



It was lovely to see students and staff across the school celebrating the UAE Flag Day on 3rd November.

The students all watched a presentation made by one of our Year 6 students, Salma, and learned some interesting facts about Flag Day. These included;

- It is a national occasion where people of the UAE remember the efforts of the founders of their State, Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rashid.
- The flag was designed in 1971 by 19-year-old, Abdullah Mohammed Al Maainah and was adopted as the national flag on the 2nd December 1971 and had the theme of unity of the Arab nations.
- Each colour of the flag has a different meaning. Red refers to bravery, strength, and courage. Green refers to goodness and agriculture, abundant throughout the country. White refers to peace. Black refers to courage and power.

Classes then went on to make their own UAE flags.

At 11am the students stood in their classes and watched the raising of the UAE flag and enthusiastically sang the national anthem.











































UAE National Day





This term we celebrated National Day, marking the formal nationalisation of the UAE by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and with this year's vision: 'Seeds of the Union'.

Celebrations started early with students wearing costumes and clothing in the colours of the UAE flag. Students saluted the flag, learned more about the founder of the union, created mental maps on the 'Ghaf tree' (the national tree of the UAE) and thought about solutions of the coral problem in the Emirates. Other artistic activities included writing and decorating of greeting cards incorporating a variety of Emirati cultural aspects and painting ice in the colours of the UAE flag.

We thank our students and their families for their active participation in all the activities during this joyous day!









BIS Abu Dhabi Graduate

Rhea Variava



What made BIS Abu Dhabi special for you?

The community at BIS Abu Dhabi is what made my years there special. It enabled me to learn and develop exponentially, both inside and outside the classroom. My time at school and the commitment of my teachers there has played an instrumental role in shaping me as a person and preparing me for life. I was able to get involved with all aspects of school life and people from varying academic stages through my role as House leader. I especially enjoyed leading Willow House on Sports and House days and interacting with other students on International day every year.



Which school club, activity, trip or project inspired you the most?

The Tanzania trip was by far the most inspirational. We were tasked with building goat sheds and teacher-accommodation; I had never held a saw before, so building houses and sheds seemed mighty ambitious; but my team and I fell to work with the hearty good-will which in spite of all obstacles was sure to succeed at last. My experience in Aruba taught me that simple, genuine goodness is the best capital to be found in life. It lasts when notability and money fail and is the only wealth we can take out of this world with us.

What is the most important lesson you learned at BIS Abu Dhabi?

Although rapidly evolving, my understanding of life is aided by a solid education, courtesy of my teachers and all the staff at BIS Abu Dhabi. My experiences at school taught me to be curious, which in turn instilled a love for learning; I think that is the most valuable asset to have.

What ambitions did BIS Abu Dhabi inspire in you?

BIS Abu Dhabi inspired me to challenge myself. I started viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and developed an affinity for learning. It inspired me to learn and I soon discovered that learning begets learning; the more I learn, the more I realise I do not know; so everyday becomes a new challenge.



Which university and degree did you choose, and why?

I read law at Queen Mary, University of London which I chose because of its offering of a vibrant campus-life while being in the heart of London and the global legal market. Corporate law always appealed to me because of its requirement to pre-empt and understand others' arguments and minds, consequently forcing me to stretch my own.

How did the IB help your experience at university?

The IB made all the difference. It taught me how to carry a heavy workload and live a balanced life simultaneously. It equipped me with the ability to analyse and assimilate large amounts of information quickly. Most importantly, it taught me to incorporate creativity, activity and service into my life and years beyond school.

What has been your proudest moment since graduating?

Securing internships at leading law firms and graduating university with top marks in my corporate insolvency class fulfilled my academic-inclination and competitive nature. I was also able to undertake pro-bono projects which taught me how to use my skills to aide those who do not have a voice.

What are you doing now?

I will undertake a legal licensing and Master's course in London, before joining Allen & Overy LLP as a corporate lawyer.

BIS Abu Dhabi Graduate

Malika Mathur



What made BIS Abu Dhabi special for you?

I was in BIS Abu Dhabi for 7 years, so it is almost like a second home to me. Being a Year 7 student, scared of the older IB students and this year graduating as one of those IB students really shows how I've grown in BIS Abu Dhabi. Some of my most cherished memories and best friends have been made here and I can honestly say the person who I am today has been shaped immensely by this school.

Which school club, activity, trip or project inspired you the most?

I would say the service trip to Tanzania definitely stands out. I was lucky to have the opportunity to go twice: in Year 10 and Year 12 and both times this trip really impacted how I think and view the world. Being removed from your comfort bubble and taken to a completely new culture and socioeconomic region, just seeing how people there live and what makes them happy in life gives you a wider perspective on how you live your own life. In fact, it inspired my interest in Development Economics, a field in which I am still exploring my interests.

What is the most important lesson you learned at BIS Abu Dhabi?

I think BIS Abu Dhabi is a cultural melting pot that teaches a very important lesson about being open-minded and tolerant towards others. Being surrounded by and learning about so many different nationalities, cultures and religions gives you a global perspective on life. You learn to be okay with people having completely different opinions to you. This has been

really profound to me after moving to the UK for university where you can see a clear difference between someone who's grown up in an international background vs someone who's grown up in their hometown through their mindset and opinions.

Which university and degree did you choose, and why?

I am studying BSc Economics at the University of Warwick. Economics as a subject is something that really interested me because I believe that it is a fundamental cog in the workings of the world and to comprehend and make an impact on our society, understanding this subject is crucial. I would also give a lot of credit to my Economics teacher who taught me this subject for four years and was the

one who initially got me interested in pursuing this subject for higher education. I really wanted to go to a campus university and the Department of Economics at Warwick is one of the leading departments in Europe so it was one of my top choices for university and I am very happy that I chose it!

How did the IB Diploma help your experience at university?

Doing the IB has definitely helped my university experience as it teaches you how to balance different tasks, develop an efficient time-management and installs a great work ethic within you. These are so important at university as apart from your degree and socializing, you also have to do things like cooking, cleaning, insurance and lots more 'adulting'. So, although IB was a very challenging journey, I would say it is completely worth it as you develop some key life skills throughout it.

What has been your proudest moment since graduating?

In terms of academics, I was very grateful to secure a scholarship from the University of Warwick where I was chosen out of 800 applicants as it has been really helpful especially with the COVID-19 situation. I was also selected to attend Blackrock's Insight day where I had the opportunity to participate in events such as an introduction to investing and working with clients which were very interesting. What I'm most proud of is that over the last month at university, I have been cooking healthily and not been surviving on pot noodles and frozen food like most university students, in fact, the other day I made gyozas from scratch!

What are your first impressions? What is studying like this time?

Although University is different this year due to the lockdowns, one of the perks of being in a campus university is that it does not impact us as much. The university is continuing with a blended approach of in-person and online learning and we are able to socialize within our 'kitchen bubbles'. The workload is quite a lot but being surrounded by such hardworking people really motivates you to do your best. The whole university experience has honestly been so much fun so far, I have made some really amazing friends and I am really excited to continue this journey.



Malika with family during her move to university.



We have been shortlisted for the

Initiative to support students' pathways to continued/university education

#ISAwards2021

