

Evaluation report

IB World Schools Department

Programme Evaluation Report

Head of School: Gary Etchemendy

School Name: Valley Inquiry Charter School

School Code: 003597

School Address: 5774 Hazelgreen Rd. NE, Salem, OR 97305

IB Programme(s): Primary Years Programme

Programme Coordinator: Melissa Colby

Date: Thursday 2 May 2024

Student ages in which all students are engaged in PYP: 5-6, 6-7, 7-8, 8-9, 9-10, 10-11

Evaluation Team

Primary Years Programme

Evaluation Leader: Linda Johnson

Programme Leader: Maike Silver

School and Programme Leadership

Dear Gary Etchemendy,

Thank you for completing the programme evaluation self-study process. The International Baccalaureate (IB) recognizes that this process requires considerable time and effort from the entire school community. We appreciate the effort that you have made and hope that the insights gained along the way will be valuable in further developing your programme(s).

Please review the feedback in this report carefully as it provides important guidance for the development of the programme(s) that will help your school achieve the optimum outcomes for students.

IB programme evaluation is built on the premise that IB programmes, when implemented with fidelity, ultimately lead to the achievement of the IB mission. The primary aim is to support schools in continuously developing their capacity to implement IB programmes in order to have a greater impact on student outcomes through the development of teacher and leader practice.

We hope that through this process school leadership will gain a deeper understanding of both the aspects of the programme that are being implemented effectively and the aspects that need further development. The process supports the school—as a learning community—to develop the capacity to work intentionally and strategically to develop its IB programme(s) and enable school leaders and teachers to better direct their efforts and resources.

A. School Context

School & Community Description

Valley Inquiry Charter School is located on the outskirts of Salem, Oregon. Students come from all parts of the district and represent a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, as the school is open to all students within the Salem-Keizer Public School District through a lottery entrance system. Surrounded by farmland, the school's property backs up to EZ Orchards, which has a farm market and fall harvest festival.

Though the current charter states that it serves students grades K-8, an amendment allows it to serve only students in grades K-5. The school currently has one class per grade level. The student body is made up of 52% White, 28% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 2% Black/African American, 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 15% Two or More. 8% of students speak a language other than English at home. Those languages include Spanish, Russian, Chinese/Cantonese, Korean and Portuguese.

The school's staff is 72% White, 28% Hispanic.

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B. Programme strengths

Purpose: Sharing an important mission

- Purpose (0101)
 - **Purpose 1:** The governing body and school leaders articulate a purpose for learning that aligns with the IB's philosophy and mission. (0101-01)
 - The governing board and school leaders show a strong commitment to the IB philosophy and mission.
 - **Purpose 3:** The school community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile. (0101-03)
 - Caring, respectful and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents demonstrates the commitment of the school community to the IB learner profile. Students, teachers, administrators, and board members shared examples of how the IB Learner Profile is an integral part of the daily life at the school. The language of the Learner Profile is visible within the learning environment.

Environments: Providing essential structures, systems and resources

- Leadership and governance (0201)
 - **Leadership 5:** The school funds and allocates resources that sustain and further develop its IB programme(s). (0201-05)
 - The governing body and school leadership practise responsible resource allocation for the implementation of the PYP. Both teachers and leadership shared examples of how resources are sourced based on need.
- Student support (0202)
 - **Student support 2:** The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support. (0202-02)
 - Data is reviewed regularly during Academic Coalition meetings to determine student needs and provide them with support including intervention and special education services.
 - **Student support 3:** The school fosters the social, emotional, and physical well-being of its students and teachers. (0202-03)

- The school prioritizes and allocates resources that support student well-being.
- Teacher support (0203)
 - **Teacher support 2:** The school ensures that leadership and teachers participate in appropriate and timely professional learning to inform their practice. (0203-02)
 - The school provides professional development linked to a staff performance structure with goals for school improvement and student learning. This was evident by sending the majority of staff members to a recent Agency, Action, & Engagement workshop. Attendees were expected to share their knowledge with other staff members and learned protocols were implemented in various grade levels.
 - **Teacher support 3:** The school provides time and other resources for teachers to collaborate effectively in the implementation of IB programme(s). (0203-03)
 - The PYP Coordinator prioritizes the needs of learning and teaching within IB programmes in organizing collaborative professional learning time and suggesting resources.

Culture: Creating positive school cultures

- Culture through policy implementation (0301)
 - **Culture 2:** The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential. (0301-02)
 - Through conversations with various stakeholders, including students, it became obvious that the implementation of the inclusion policy has created a safe and caring culture that encourages mutual respect, enthusiasm for learning, and access to an integrated, challenging curriculum.

Learning: Ensuring effective education

- Students as lifelong learners (0402)
 - **Lifelong learners 3:** Students identify and foster healthy relationships, an understanding of shared responsibility, and the ability to collaborate effectively. (0402-03)
 - The design of learning spaces and learning engagements reflects the strong emphasis and explicit focus the school has on developing a culture that

supports healthy relationships, shared responsibility and effective collaboration.

- **Lifelong learners 5:** Students exercise the flexibility, perseverance and confidence they need to bring about positive change in the wider community and beyond. (0402-05)
 - Student council members are invited to present their work at school board meetings.
 - Conversations with members of the school community confirm that the school provides opportunities for students to directly apply their learning by taking action. Student action is encouraged across the school community as evidenced through the promotion of an action bulletin board, action forms, incentives, and a newsletter.
- **Lifelong learners 6:** Students take ownership of their learning by setting challenging goals and pursuing personal inquiries. (0402-06)
 - The school has set aside time for students to ask questions and pursue personal inquiries and actions.
- Approaches to teaching (0403)
 - **Approaches to teaching 5:** Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals. (0403-05)
 - A wide range of differentiation techniques, media, and information technology is used to enrich the quality of the students' learning.

C. Requirements

Based on the review of the programme documentation, observations of the team during the visit and in conversations with members of the school community, all requirements are in place.

D. Development of IB Standards

Purpose: Sharing an important mission	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
Purpose (0101) Schools implement IB programmes to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	

Environments: Providing essential structures, systems and resources	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
Leadership and governance (0201) The leadership and governance of IB World Schools create and sustain high-quality learning environments.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Offers opportunity for further development	PYP: There have been multiple shifts in the principalship and coordinator role creating inconsistencies in the development of the programme. The school uses a shared governance structure that includes the entire teaching staff with a district principal who attends the school 2 days per week. The school could benefit from a more permanent role of the principal on campus to ensure sustainability.
Student support (0202) Learning environments in IB World Schools support student success.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	
Teacher support (0203)	PYP: Shows	PYP: Offers	PYP: The school

Learning environments in IB World Schools support and empower teachers.	development beyond requirements	opportunity for further development	should consider ways in which the coordinator and teachers regularly review current and relevant IB content.
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Culture: Creating positive school cultures	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
Culture through policy implementation (0301) Schools develop, implement, communicate and review effective policies that help to create a school culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.		PYP: Offers opportunity for further development	PYP: The school's self-study did not indicate an overall rating for this standard. The school's assessment policy could better reflect current IB philosophy and practices related to evidencing learning. All policies should outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and include dates of revision.

Learning: Ensuring effective education	School Self-Assessment	IB Evaluation Team	Comments on School Development of IB Standards
Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) Learning in IB World Schools is based on a coherent curriculum.	PYP: Offers opportunity for further development	PYP: Offers opportunity for further development	
Students as lifelong learners (0402) Learning in IB schools aims to develop students ready for further education and life beyond the classroom.	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	PYP: Shows development beyond requirements	

<p>Approaches to teaching (0403) IB programmes encourage approaches to teaching that create learning experiences that are shown to be meaningful to the school community.</p>	<p>PYP: Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p>PYP: Offers opportunity for further development</p>	
<p>Approaches to assessment (0404) Learning, teaching, and assessment effectively inform and influence one another.</p>		<p>PYP: Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p>PYP: The school's self-study did not include an overall rating of this standard. Portfolio agreements and how feedback is used to improve learning, teaching, and assessment is not consistent across the school.</p>

E. Feedback on the planning and analysis and reflection of programme development

Programme development strengths

Planning

- Stakeholder input was included in the planning process.
- The school sought examples from other nearby schools to inform their process.
- The school identified IB practices that supported the achievement of their goal.

Evidencing and analysing

- The school undertook a range of activities, notably shifting IB coordinator responsibilities, hiring MYP teachers, and reorganizing existing space to consider impact on students of all ages.
- The school identified survey data to use during the development process.
- The school postponed the plan, based on feedback.

Reflection

- School leaders plan to use the lessons learned from this effort to improve planning for the future development of this plan as well as other areas of the IB programme in the school.

Areas for consideration

As the school engages in further efforts to develop the programme, it may wish to consider:

Planning

- more clearly articulating the rationale to stakeholders.
- ensuring that the focus is on positively affecting the student experience.
- ensuring that the efforts are aligned with the school's strategic plan.

Evidencing and analysing

- leveraging existing school structures and processes.
- using interim milestones to assess and adapt efforts.
- ensuring that evidence is tied to student experience.

Reflection

- ensuring that time is set aside to engage in meaningful reflection.
- integrating key areas for follow-up and clearly outlining next steps.
- including measurable indicators with milestones and people responsible for various aspects of the plan.

- including in the plan a review cycle for ongoing monitoring/adjustment and update presentations to the community & school board.

F. Opportunities for future or further programme development

The school identified the following areas as priorities for programme development

Priorities:

- Update the planners to include the full process and requirements according to IB philosophy.
- Focus on conceptual understanding, because the teaching staff has different levels of expertise on conceptual learning.

The Evaluation team has identified the following areas of the programme(s) for the school to consider for future or further development

Future or further development:

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 4:

- There have been multiple shifts in the principalship and coordinator role. The school might consider reviewing its leadership structure, systems and processes.

Environments / Teacher support (0203) / Teacher support 1:

- The school should consider ways in which the coordinator and teachers regularly review current and relevant IB content.

Culture / Culture through policy implementation (0301) / Culture 5:

- The school may consider reviewing their assessment policy and compare it with the enhanced PYP documents regarding evidencing learning in order to align with current IB philosophy and practice.

Culture / Culture through policy implementation (0301) / Culture 6:

- The school might consider more clearly outlining, articulating, and communicating the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in all policies, supporting a culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.
- The school may consider adding dates to all policies to keep track of regular review practices.

Learning / Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) / Coherent curriculum 1:

- The school might review their practice of recreating their lines of inquiry every year in order to ensure that the key concepts and learner profile attributes remain balanced vertically and horizontally.

- The school may consider reviewing its central ideas to ensure they are significant & challenging and create opportunities for deep inquiry.

Learning / Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) / Coherent curriculum 2:

- The school may wish to consider reviewing its collaborative planning protocol to ensure all unit planners include: -student inquiries/questions -teacher and student reflections on knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills, attributes of the IB learner profile, learning goals and assessment -student-initiated action

Learning / Students as lifelong learners (0402) / Lifelong learners 1:

- The school might consider to consistently involve students in the development of the approaches to learning in accordance with the updated documentation found in the Program Resource Center.

Learning / Approaches to teaching (0403) / Approaches to teaching 2:

- Conversations with teachers and students focused on topics of study. The school may wish to deepen teacher understanding of instructional strategies that help students to make connections between topics and conceptual understanding.

Learning / Approaches to teaching (0403) / Approaches to teaching 3:

- The school might support teachers in conceptualizing local curriculum in order to make global connections that allow students to transfer their understandings to unfamiliar contexts.

Learning / Approaches to assessment (0404) / Approaches to assessment 1:

- The school is encouraged to review their portfolio agreements and how feedback is used to improve learning, teaching, and assessment.

G. Conclusions of the Evaluation team

Valley Inquiry Charter School is a small learning community with the vision to develop internationally-minded, lifelong learners. The school has a cohesive staff and uses a shared governance model where everyone collaborates on all aspects of programme implementation and development.

The school identified the need to support continuity in learning for their PYP students by expanding to offer the MYP at the school. The Programme Development Plan (PDP) focused on this effort. Ultimately, the school has postponed these efforts due to space restrictions and staffing concerns. Instead, the school has identified deepening teacher capabilities associated with developing conceptual understanding and updating the planners to include the full process and requirements according to IB philosophy as future Programme Development Plan options.

This past year the school has prioritized student action. The majority of teachers participated in an IB workshop that helped them emphasize the importance of action and to equip all teachers with the tools to promote and support student-initiated action.

Valley Inquiry Charter School maintains its dedication to the IB programme.

H. Conclusion of the IB on the school status as an IB World School

Primary Years Programme

The school's implementation of the programme shows close alignment with the IB Programme standards and practices.

We trust that the information found in this report will support the school's continued development of its IB programme(s). Your IB World School manager, Michael Clifton (michael.clifton@ibo.org), will be in touch with you to follow up on this report and to support your school's ongoing efforts.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Kearney".

Adrian Kearney
Director, IB World Schools