



AL AIN ACADEMY
ALDAR ACADEMIES

Curriculum Policy

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Introduction

This policy outlines the curriculum offering at Al Ain Academy. It covers the following Key Stages:

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): FS1 and FS2

Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2

Key Stage 2: Years 3-6

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Key Stage 3: Years 7-8

Key Stage 4 (GCSE): Years 9-11

Key Stage 5 (A-level): Years 12-13

Subjects

Early Years Foundation Stage

Students follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, published in September 2021 by the UK Department for Education (DfE). This Framework specifies the requirement for learning and development in the Early Years and provides specific areas of learning to be covered within the curriculum. There are seventeen statutory Early Learning Goals, across the 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning. Our aim is for students to achieve these Early Learning Goals by the end of FS2. If a student achieves the Early Learning Goals in Communication and Language, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Literacy and Maths, they have achieved a Good Level of Development.

Early Years practitioners use a blend of two non-statutory guidance documents, Development Matters 2020 and Birth to 5 Matters, to assess students' level of development and to inform planning. This blend of guidance documents is aligned with the statutory Early Learning Goals, to enable students to make progress and achieve a Good Level of Development at the end of EYFS curriculum.

Prime areas:

- Communication and Language Development
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

FS Specialist Subjects:

- Arabic
- Music
- PE
- Swimming

Al Ain Academy is currently on the journey of becoming a Curiosity Approach accredited setting. The Curiosity Approach is a unique teaching approach that aims to give students their freedom back by igniting natural curiosity and imagination. Adults take a step back and allow students to be in the driving seat. It enables students to develop independent thinking and become lifelong learners. The Curiosity Approach focuses on removing over-stimulating plastic resources from the setting and replacing it with awe inspiring, open-ended resources. This challenges the students' imagination – their creativity comes alive when limits are removed. Throughout the day, the students are solving problems, testing ideas, working together, and putting thought into their play experience. Nature is such a wonderful element, and by incorporating that into daily learning, it inspires awe and curiosity.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Students in Key Stages 1 and 2 follow the English National Curriculum including the following subjects: English (consisting of phonics, guided reading, and literacy lessons), mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music, physical education (including swimming), computing and French in Key Stage 2. In addition to these subjects, students also receive Moral Education and PSHE/SMC provision (See PSHE and SMC policy).

In Key Stage 1, students are delivered discrete phonics lessons, and these are streamed based on their abilities and needs. At the end of Year 1, students undergo the Year 1 phonics screening check. This is used to inform the teaching of phonics in Year 2 and how teachers build on students' understanding of decoding, segmenting and blending. The phonics screening test is repeated in Year 2 to re-assess students' levels of reading, particularly for those who did not previously pass the phonics screening check in Year 1.

Core subjects (English, mathematics and science) are taught discretely; however, opportunities to make cross-curricular links are carefully designed to support students' learning and allows students to further embed and apply the skills taught. Teachers work as a team in each year group to ensure topics are aligned directly with the English National Curriculum and planning is tailored to build upon students' skills, prior learning, and their interests. Schemes including White Rose Maths, Twinkl Phonics, and Talk for Writing are used to support teachers, drawing on best practice from schemes used in UK which are DfE approved. A thematic approach to teaching is often taken for the foundation subjects and this will link with other areas of learning too, with a particular focus on reading and writing skills.

Lesson objectives are derived from the English National Curriculum and these are tracked and monitored by teachers, Heads of Years, and subject leads. Regular assessment of these objectives informs planning.

Specialist teachers deliver music, physical education, and swimming to students.

Key Stage 3

Students follow an adapted National Curriculum in England framework, set out in the December 2014 statutory guidance provided by the DfE. The school maintains a broad range of subjects so that students develop a wide range of learning skills, broaden their perspective and benefit from multiple opportunities to enrich their time at school. KS3 students take English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Computing, Drama, Geography, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Music, and Physical Education.

Lesson objectives are derived from the various subject attainment targets set out in the DfE's Key Stages 3 and 4 Framework Document published in 2014. These are tracked and monitored by teachers, Heads of Years, and subject leads. Regular assessment of these objectives informs planning.

Key Stage 3 lessons are almost always delivered by qualified subject specialists, with a very small number delivered by teachers for whom the subject is a second specialism (working as part of a specialist faculty).

Key Stage 4

Students begin to narrow their subject choices down through the school's guided options process. They take English, Mathematics and Physical Education as core subjects, and can opt for five additional GCSE or iGCSE subjects as per the option blocks:

A	B	C	D	E
Biology Physics	Business Economics French	Chemistry Drama History Physical Education EAL Support	Art Biology ICT	Accounting Chemistry Geography Music

All GCSEs and iGCSEs follow either Pearson Edexcel or AQA, for which the school is an approved examination centre. Most students pursue 7 or 8 GCSEs although some pursue more, either through accelerated courses or additional, externally-studied courses.

Key Stage 5

Students select two, three or four A-levels or International A-levels (IALs) from a range of options, based on their university and careers discussions with staff. In addition, they may pursue the Extended Project Qualification:

A	B	C	D
Mathematics Geography Art	ICT English Literature	Chemistry Physics History	Biology Economics

All A-levels and IALs follow either Pearson Edexcel or AQA, for which the school is an approved examination centre. Most students pursue three A-levels or IALs, although some pursue four. A small number of students may only study two, in order to maximise their chances of obtaining the UAE requirement of two A-levels at Grade D or above, necessary for the thanaweeya equivalency certificate.

UAE National Agenda Subjects

In addition to the subjects above, all students at Al Ain Academy study the Ministry of Education-mandated subjects of Arabic, Islamic Studies, Social Studies and Moral, Social and Cultural Studies. The school is compliant with the time requirements outlined below, and in addition provides Arabic lessons to students in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Islamic Education												
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Arab Muslim students	3 lessons per week			2 lessons per week								
Number of minutes	120 minutes			80 minutes								
Non-Arab Muslims	2 Lessons per week											
Number of minutes	80 minutes											

Arabic												
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Arabic as First Language	6 lessons per week			5 lessons per week			4 lessons per week					
Number of minutes	240 minutes			200 minutes			160 minutes					
Arabic as Additional Language	4 lessons per week										Optional	
Number of minutes	160 minutes											

UAE Social Studies												
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Arab	1 lesson per Week						2 lessons per Week			-----		
Number of minutes	40 minutes						80 minutes					
Non-Arab	1 lesson per Week										-----	
Number of minutes	40 minutes											

Moral Education												
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Arab	1 lesson per Week = 40 minutes											
Non-Arab	1 lesson per Week = 40 minutes											

Academic Timetable

Both the Primary and Secondary Schools operate timetables designed to provide students with a suitable number of guided learning hours for all subjects. In the case of the UAE National Agenda Subjects, the school is 100% compliant. The school also ensures that, for all GCSE and A-level subjects, at least the exam board-specified recommended guided learning hours are achieved in-class.

Setting and Streaming

The school maintains mixed ability classes in almost all subject areas. However, at Key Stages 3 and 4 English and Mathematics are blocked together as sets due to the different pathways offered. Entry into Sixth Form, and onto particular A-level courses, is subject to minimum entry criteria being met, to ensure that students taking A-levels have a reasonable chance of passing those courses.

Assessment within the curriculum

Students are regularly assessed against relevant MOE and National Curriculum frameworks. Both the Primary and Secondary Schools have a clear assessment policy that informs assessment practices. Regular assessment for learning and in-class tests provide data to assess student attainment and progress, and are utilised to adapt planning so that gaps in student knowledge and skills can be addressed.

Teachers maintain a granular level of assessment data that informs teaching within their classrooms. Faculties also maintain trackers to aid with assessment and planning. Termly assessment data, baseline data, and a range of aptitudinal and attitudinal data is also kept within central trackers. These are all used for assessment, planning, interventions and school improvement. Teachers regularly discuss assessment with Heads of Faculty, Heads of Year, and the SLT.

Speaking and listening within the curriculum

Speaking and listening is central to Al Ain Academy's curriculum, and it is developed from EYFS through to Year 13, providing opportunities for students to develop these skills in all contexts. Staff model higher-level vocabulary to students and subject-specific vocabulary is carefully planned for and integrated into planning, ensuring students understand language in context. Teachers take opportunities to unpick the meaning of key and new vocabulary, expanding their language daily.

Inclusion

People of Determination (POD) students, previously identified as Special Educational Needs (SEN) students, include children experience learning difficulties or possess abilities and/or talents, which call for special educational provision to be made for them. This may include tailored curriculum pathways and Individual Education Plans. The Head of Inclusion oversees the identification of and provision for POD students and maintains details of their curriculum pathways on the school's Inclusion Registers. More information is available in the school's Inclusion (SENDA) Policy.

University and Careers Education

The school provides an extensive university and careers curriculum that is delivered as part of a wider pastoral programme and through events held at regular points in the school year. This includes a yearly Sixth Form Fair in the first term.

All secondary students are provided with access to the Unifrog online platform. Each year group from Year 7 to 13 conduct weekly activities during morning registration towards building an understanding of life after secondary school and this helps to build a better understanding of university requirements and career paths for the students. These activities are supported by tutors. Unifrog is an outstanding resource that helps

students choose career paths, there is a plethora of developmental courses available for students which promote extra-curricular courses and extra-curricular learning.

Year 8 and 11 students are offered additional guidance during their options process. All have access to a detailed options booklet, and each student is offered individual guidance meetings to discuss their attainment and progress in subjects, their ideas for university pathways and careers, and what that may mean for options. Parents are also fully included in the process through two options meetings held at the beginning and towards the end of the guided options process.

Al Ain Academy Sixth Form students are offered weekly meeting sessions with the Head of Sixth Form to support them with all their university applications and advise them on the next steps and processes. Students are guided through the university application process by use of the 'Reference Request Form' which enables the students to be proactive in shortlisting their university choices. Throughout the year sixth form students are given one dedicated lesson per week with the Head of Sixth Form to be proactive in working on their personal profiles and to update their reference request forms to ensure that staff provides them with outstanding teacher references.

The Sixth Form have also developed excellent relationships with many third-level institutions (NYUAD, UAEU, Trinity College Dublin, etc.) that visit the school regularly and give university information talks to our students. In addition to this Sixth Form students are brought on careers fair trips and the school also hosts a careers fair which is open to all of the secondary school and other secondary schools in Al Ain.

Values Education, MEP and PSHE Curriculum

Moral Education is a compulsory subject in the UAE for Year 2 and above where students have 40 minutes dedicated to the Moral Education which is based around four main pillars of learning: character and morality, individual and community, civic studies, and cultural studies. These schemes of learning are supported through the scheme of learning ([Curriculum – Moral Education](#)); however, these lessons extend beyond this scheme and are tailored to the students in the classroom.

In addition, the school goes beyond the minimum 'moral' education legal requirement of the UAE. Personal and health education are embedded within the school's vision, mission, ethos, and core values, and therefore this is integrated into all areas of the curriculum. Although moral education is only compulsory from Year 2 and above, PSHE is integrated from FS through to Year 13 with the core values being a prominent area of focus during circle time, tutor time, lessons, assemblies, and the school reward systems. Recently, the school was awarded the Kite Mark as a recognised 'school of character' by developing a set of specific values which underpin the learning and community. **Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience** are the three core values that we believe, as a community, are pivotal when developing the next generation of learners. By explicitly teaching students about these values, and working in partnership with our parents, the school is able to develop students socially, emotionally and intellectually.



RESPECT
SHOWING KINDNESS,
UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY



RESPONSIBILITY
TAKING OWNERSHIP OF
MY LEARNING AND MY CHOICES



RESILIENCE
NEVER GIVING UP.
SHOWING A TRUE DESIRE TO LEARN

Extra-Curricular Programme

Al Ain Academy encourages students to attend extra-curricular activities as these provide enrichment opportunities and activities based on children's interests. The school aims to provide an array of ECAs which help to support the development of a broader skillset across a range of subjects and activities, going beyond the curriculum. The extra-curricular activities are specifically designed with the children in mind, ensuring each activity challenges students in a safe and supportive environment, developing a range of skills including leadership, teamwork, commitment, and perseverance. Creative arts, music, sports, technology and drama underpin many of our ECAs and children regularly can showcase their learning through performances, sporting events, competitions and parental showcases.

In addition to ECAs, the school also provides further enrichment opportunities through external visitors and excursions. These are carefully planned to complement and enhance the learning taking place in the classroom and provide students with opportunities to develop skills beyond the classroom.

Twenty-First Century Skills

The school believes that skills that prepare students for adult life in a dynamic, complex world are essential ingredients in our curriculum. These skills are developed within subjects and enrichment activities. Units / schemes of work are in a perpetual state of review and design for the cohort in front of the teachers. Curriculum planning, including individual lessons and units are designed to promote curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to deepen their understanding and skills through challenge. Rather than adopt a lengthy, complicated list of twenty-first century skills (21C skills), the school adopted three that have grown in importance in the past two decades, and incorporate other skills that can be developed.



COLLABORATION
WORKING COLLECTIVELY TOWARDS
EXCELLENT OUTCOMES

Incorporates:

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Communication



CRITICAL THINKING
CHALLENGING MYSELF TO THINK
DEEPLY ABOUT WHAT I LEARN

Incorporates:

- Research
- Analysis
- Evaluation



DIGITAL LITERACY
USING TECHNOLOGY SAFELY
AND RESPONSIBLY

Incorporates:

- Computer skills
- Online safety

Home Learning

Home learning is provided for all students from FS and above. The school does not employ a home learning timetable. Its policy is that such work should be set at a time that maximises student learning, not at a predetermined time based on a timetable. However, teachers are asked to set reasonable but challenging work and to be mindful of other work set when allocating home learning tasks.