Strength from Diversity: Inspiring students to become responsible global citizens
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OUR MISSION, AIMS AND VALUES

Strength from Diversity: Inspiring Students To Become Responsible Global Citizens

Our Mission, Aims and Values

We seek to encourage individuality; foster respect for difference and value learning from others within an international community school.

We strive to inspire and support all students in achieving their individual potential for a successful life as responsible global citizens.

Our Aims

• To promote excellence and enjoyment in teaching and learning
• To motivate through high expectations of personal initiative and individual achievement
• To challenge in academic, sporting and creative endeavour
• To provide an inclusive, balanced and culturally diverse curriculum which is centred on the attributes of the WIS learner profile
• To encourage the ethical, emotional and physical development of each individual
• To provide a safe, supportive and happy environment
• To commit to holistic education in providing a diverse range of meaningful opportunities beyond the classroom
• To develop lifelong learners who approach the world with confidence and curiosity

Our Values

Community: Collaboration, team work and unity of purpose
Compassion: Service and action at school, locally and globally
Consideration: Honesty, tolerance and respect for others
Commitment: Recognition of our place and responsibilities within the communities in which we live
Courage: To challenge ourselves as individuals and as a community
Creating an International Community School

I am extremely proud to be the Principal of West Island School. Our school has been established in the best traditions of the English Schools Foundation (ESF) to provide excellence in education of students from eleven to eighteen years of age who want an English medium education. We are housed in an exciting and innovative building from where we can see the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong’s biggest teaching hospital, the Cyber Port and the busy shipping lanes that demonstrate the key position of Hong Kong on the Pacific Rim’s super highway. We have an outstanding record of academic attainment and we welcome students of all races to join us on what we believe is a learning super highway connected to prestigious destinations all over the world.

West Island School’s distinction lies in the pursuit of high academic attainment through support, encouragement, praise and motivation. The quality of the relationship between students and teachers is outstanding as is the quality of teaching and learning. We believe in partnership between students, parents, teachers and support staff and view our cultural diversity (we have over 40 nationalities represented) as a means of enriching school life. Our school has a strong sense of deep links to the local community and engages in global action to aid others as a central mission; hence our motto “Inspiring students to become responsible global citizens”. Above all else, West Island School is a happy community-focused school where people are valued and can fulfil their potential both as teachers and learners. We believe fundamentally that the school has a duty to create students who embody the West Island School Learner Profile and we strive to develop these attributes in our students during their time here.

A particular strength of the school is our unique “Middle Years Diploma” spanning Years 7 – 11 which encapsulates learning as a journey. Concentration on inquiry based, trans disciplinary learning in Years 7 and 8, a specific personal project in Year 9 as well as a focus upon learning beyond the classroom are at the heart of this diploma. In Years 10 and 11 we continue to offer a breadth of opportunity with I/ GCSEs and BTEC qualifications.

In our upper school we move into two educational pathways: the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the International Diploma. Both embrace the notion of international mindedness and have at their heart a commitment to creativity, action and service (CAS) as well as project based work which will lead to extended essay skills, research or work skills or teaching of the Theory of Knowledge. In addition, we provide for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and other requirements for university admission.

All courses focus on the skill of becoming independent learners vital to the 21st century student and adult. We pride ourselves on using best educational practice with an increasing emphasis on embedding technology into the learning experience.

Breadth and balance matter to us. Schools are more than the sum of their lessons and at West Island School we offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities which enable students to display responsibility and leadership. These include the Upper School Council, Student Leaders, mentoring programmes, the Dynasty (House) system, debating, Model United Nations, local and international field trips, sporting activities of every type, music and drama, ICT clubs and work experience. A particular focus is upon developing genuine and meaningful service which impacts our community and challenges our students.

In short, life at West Island School is full of challenge and opportunity - both academic and personal.

Jane Foxcroft
Principal of West Island School
OUR HISTORY

In 1990 the government of Hong Kong responded favourably to the request of the English Schools Foundation (ESF) to set up a new ESF secondary school. It was felt that the pressure for secondary school places would come first on the island and the government allocated a site in Pokfulam. In September 1991 West Island School began, with six full-time and six part-time teachers and eighty four Year 7 students in temporary rented accommodation in the old British Military Hospital in Borrett Road.

Our current location, home since 1994, was designed by architect Patrick Lau who won various accolades for this exciting concept of education on an implausible site overlooking the sea and blending beautifully into its surroundings. Our parents, teachers and students all followed the growth of the new building with visits, advice and interest – the first time many of us had such an experience. From the beginning of West Island School, we wanted recognition of the partnership in education between students, parents and teachers as a school community. The PTA began three months before the school opened and the Student Council soon became an integral part of school management. West Island School celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2011 and today we continue to maintain these partnerships and our standards of excellence.

West Island School was the first ESF school to offer the Mandarin language to all students and the first to be divided into Chinese dynasties instead of houses. We want our students to benefit uniquely from spending time in the school and embracing the many different cultural experiences to which they are exposed. We hope that this will serve as a life-long reminder for them.

West Island School is a vibrant, living organisation and as such changes perpetually. We can always see better ways to go forward and we remain open to suggestions from all our partners so that together we can move towards our ideal international community school.
School Support Staff

The school office is open from 7.30 am to 4.30 pm each working day. The general office staff offer a warm welcome to visitors to the school as well as providing an efficient service to students, staff and parents. Two student receptionists, selected on a rotational basis, assist by receiving general enquiries and are supervised by the School Reception Leader. This practice encourages and creates good interaction between office staff and students. There is a strong support team of approximately 60 staff employed by West Island School as well as the PTA and catering personnel, all serving the school.

Student Council

When the school was founded in September 1991, the students played an important role in helping to determine the school’s aims, values and policies. The school badge was designed by one of the first West Island School students. The recent development of our Aims and Values was also formed with the student council’s input and approval.

The Student Council aims to allow students to continue to have full involvement in the life and work of the school. Each tutor group elects one representative who then serves for a school year. The council meet with staff regularly to discuss a wide variety of issues and topics relating to the day-to-day planning and smooth running of the school in lower, middle, upper and whole school forums. This important avenue of communication between staff, students and the PTA gives all students a chance to air their views, express concerns and make suggestions for improvements in any way that benefits the total population of West Island School.

In addition, upper school Dynasty Captains meet regularly to discuss student issues and creative ideas are given to the Leadership team of the school regularly.

West Island School Alumni Association

The West Island School Alumni Association (WISAA) was established in 2007 and comprises students and staff who have graduated or worked at West Island School since its inception. All alumni are encouraged to join the WISAA and participate in the events organized by the school. A group has also been established on Facebook to facilitate on-going connections and the sharing of news and events.

School Council

The West Island School Council is the governing body of West Island School and comprises community members, parents, staff, the Head Students, the CEO of ESF or her representative and the Principal. Details of the school councillors can be found on the school’s website.
The key roles of the council are to provide a strategic overview, act as a critical friend and ensure accountability, while working within the strategic framework set by the ESF’s Board of Governors. Included in the School Council’s remit are:

- Involvement in setting the school’s annual budget and its approval
- Helping to decide the priorities for developing the school when the school development plan is being drawn up
- Monitoring the school’s performance
- Approving staff appointments

The School Council meets a minimum of five times a year. Its two sub-committees – Finance and Fund-raising and Staffing and Recruitment – meet in addition to this.

**Parent Teacher Association**

The West Island School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is run by a committee of parents and teachers, including the school Principal, and is attended by the Deputy Head Students and middle school ambassadors, who meet on a monthly basis to discuss various matters pertaining to the school. The PTA also acts as a bridge between parents and the school and all parents are welcome to attend these meetings. There are frequently guest speakers at meetings who explain, for example, new procedures in the school and plans for special events.

The PTA publishes a quarterly newsletter, WISLIFE, during term-time, runs the uniform shop and the bookshop, and manages the provision of school buses for students. The PTA raises funds to finance various items of equipment for the school, which are not otherwise funded by ESF, as well as donating to several service projects. In addition to holding various events throughout the year, the PTA organises the annual fair, which is the main fundraiser for its activities. All parents are encouraged to participate in life at the school by joining the PTA each year.

**Uniform**

Students in Years 7 to 11 are expected to wear school uniform as it reflects our sense of West Island School as a community. School uniform is worn both while at school, when traveling to and from school and at events organised by the school.

In recognition of the upper school students’ senior status and of the fact that they will soon enter Tertiary Education or the world of work, they do not have to wear school uniform. It is expected that students wear clothes sensitive and appropriate to the cultural diversity of the school.

**Catering**

We have 4 outlets provided by our school caterers which offer a variety of menus focussing on healthy eating. Parents and visitors are also welcomed into our Café “WISACCINO” (an initiative of the Student Council) which is a more relaxed setting mainly for older students.
Pre 16 Learning (Years 7-11)

West Island School provides a broad and balanced curriculum characterised by a range of meaningful learning experiences in and beyond the classroom. Guided by the school’s vision and values, the pre 16 curriculum creates a focus for student learning based upon attributes of the West Island School Learner Profile, the importance of transferable skills, choice and personalisation, and a genuine commitment to creativity, action and service.

Learning in Year 7

The school has recently introduced its own diploma for students at pre 16 level. Starting with Year 7 students in August 2011, and with each subsequent year group, learning at pre 16 level will culminate in the award of the West Island School Middle Years Diploma (MYD), at the end of Year 11. This diploma has been designed by West Island School teachers for West Island School students.

Seven curriculum areas comprise the MYD. Students study a range of subjects which at some point cover all seven areas. Students also complete all five core components as shown in the centre of the wheel. Creativity, action and service (CAS), the personal project (PP), Physical Education and Sport, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Learning for Life are central to the learning philosophy of the MYD.

Learning in Years 8 and 9

The school provides access for students in Years 8 - 9 to learning in a broad range of curriculum areas. All students experience learning in the following curriculum areas: Creative Arts (Art, Drama and Music), English, Individuals and Societies (Humanities), Languages, Learning for Life, Mathematics, PE and Sport, Science and Technology.

In addition, as in Year 7, Year 8 - 9 students, at various times of the year, experience lessons in humanities, science, mathematics and creative arts using an inquiry framework which allows for the development of thinking skills and tools, multiple intelligences, learning styles and self-assessment. In Year 8 the school is also developing an interdisciplinary approach to inquiry in a number of curriculum areas.


Learning in Years 10 and 11

Learning in Years 10 and 11 further builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in Years 7 - 9 and prepares students for the challenges of either the International Baccalaureate Programme (IB) or the International Diploma Programme (ID). The pre 16 learning journey culminates at the end of Year 11 for the majority of students in external final examinations, and/or, internal assessments. These lead to the award of internationally recognised certificates from a range of external examination boards and/or awarding bodies such as Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), Edexcel and the British Technology Education Council (BTEC). At the age of 15 or 16 our students will complete Year 11 with up to nine GCSE qualifications (including two English and two Science).

Learning in Years 12 and 13

In Years 12 and 13 (upper school) students continue their education by choosing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma or the International Diploma. In the IB programme, students opt for 3 higher level and 3 standard level subjects. These subjects are chosen from the IB hexagon. Students also complete the IB core which consists of the extended essay, theory of knowledge and CAS. The IB is the most widely recognised international academic programme and provides our students with opportunities to access higher education worldwide. The International Diploma is based around a major and minor BTEC level 3 qualification. Students also follow work skills, work placement, extended project and CAS components. This programme offers students excellent opportunities to access applied learning pathways at colleges and universities.
The aim of all International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

At West Island School we embrace the IB Learner Profile for **all years** to aspire to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Inquirers</strong></th>
<th>They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledgeable</strong></td>
<td>They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinkers</strong></td>
<td>They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicators</strong></td>
<td>They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principled</strong></td>
<td>They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open-minded</strong></td>
<td>They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring</strong></td>
<td>They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk-takers</strong></td>
<td>They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balanced</strong></td>
<td>They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflective</strong></td>
<td>They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GUIDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

The guidance and achievement structure at West Island School endeavours to provide a safe, caring, stable and supportive environment which values every member of the school community. Within this environment the school aims to develop students’ self-esteem, self-respect and sense of responsibility towards themselves and others.

The form tutor plays a fundamental role in guiding each individual within their form group. The tutor is the first point of contact for teachers, students and parents. Through individual contact during registration time, extended tutor period and one to one tutoring, form tutors make a major contribution to a student’s social and academic development. Each student belongs to a tutor group of approximately 15 students and will remain with the group from Year 7 to Year 11. In Year 12 and 13 tutor groups are vertically mixed and are approximately 18 in number. In turn, each tutor group is assigned to one of six dynasties. In this way the student can identify with a smaller group (tutor group); a larger group (dynasty), which offers a sense of belonging and a focus for community work, sporting and other competitions; and the wider school community.

On a 3 – 4 weekly cycle, students meet with their tutor for an opportunity to talk about their learning and progress on a one to one basis.

The pre 16 phase of school comprises a Director of Learning and five Heads of Year for Year 7 - 11. The post 16 phase of school comprises a Director of Learning and two Heads of Year with responsibility for Years 12 - 13. These teams, known collectively as the Guidance and Achievement Teams, are responsible for monitoring and reporting on students’ academic progress, personal development and standards of behaviour. The school believes that students are most successful when parents and teachers work together. Parents are therefore most welcome to contact the school at any time via class teachers, form tutors, Directors of Learning or Heads of Year in the first instance.

Leadership

There are many opportunities for leadership at West Island School from Year 7 to Year 13. Students may become student ambassadors for their form group or dynasty representatives and opportunities in each phase are given for aiding the environment or taking part in charity events. In the upper school, students may choose to become mentors for younger students, ‘buddies’ for new students and apply to become a student leader or head student for the school. There are also the key roles of Dynasty Captains as well as leadership opportunities on the service, events and environment committees.

Rewards

West Island School believes in promoting all aspects of individual achievement. Each student has a Record of Achievement in which he or she can keep certificates received from school or outside agencies and which form part of his or her leaving reference. Students may gain dynasty points for single pieces of academic work or for acts of compassion, service work or the like. For outstanding and sustained achievement and effort, certificates are given for both academic and non-academic areas. The Principal regularly writes personally to students to record their successes; letters are kept on file. An annual awards ceremony is held to celebrate major achievement academically as well as to honour students who have given to the school or the community.
**CREATIVITY, ACTION, SERVICE**

**Rationale for Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)**

West Island School is committed to a full and broad CAS programme which involves both regular scheduled activities and an annual Horizons Week. We encourage students to grow to their full potential by undertaking new challenges and working collaboratively in a diverse range of activities that provide a balance to the academic curriculum.

Involvement in a broad range of CAS activities is an expectation of all students at West Island School in every year group. Students who challenge themselves to their own personal limits are better able to grow into principled, caring individuals who perceive their self-worth as more than just their academic qualifications. Students actively involved in CAS are more willing to undertake new challenges, be reasonable risk-takers and aspire to be the leaders of tomorrow, both within school and in the wider community.

As students progress from year 7 to year 13, it is expected that they demonstrate a greater willingness to plan and initiate their own CAS activities. Senior students, in particular, should be more willing to operate outside their ‘comfort zone’ and should take the lead in self-generating, long-term projects of global importance.

**Benefits of the CAS programme for students:**

- A greater appreciation of one’s own strengths and areas for growth as a result of engaging in extra-curricular activities and Horizons Week.
- Activities provide the opportunity for students to enjoy themselves and to learn outside of the classroom.
- The range of Creativity, Action, and Service experiences provides for new challenge and personal development.
- By active involvement in service, students learn to appreciate how small acts of kindness can make a large difference in another person’s life.
- Leadership is developed both within and outside of school and students can make a positive difference in the community by leading others. Through developing reflection skills, students realise greater meaning from their activities.
LEARNING FOR LIFE

‘Transforming Learning, Transforming Lives’ (RSA ‘Opening Minds’)
The Learning for Life curriculum for Years 7 to 11 prepares all students with skills for life in the 21st century: skills for learning; skills for managing people and situations well; and skills for living in the local and international communities. These life-skills are taught directly and specifically. It is an issues driven curriculum with learning in and out of the classroom thereby promoting the qualities of the West Island School Learner Profile and Student Skills Framework. It enables students to explore real-life issues through thoughtful action, leadership and service.

The West Island School Skills Framework
The Skills Framework represents a tool box designed to aid learners at West Island School to develop in the image of the Learner Profile. The framework exemplifies in a practical way the skills needed for lifelong learning in the 21st century. Students reflect formally upon skills development in Learning for Life lessons and as part of the school’s online reporting system.

The Learning for Life curriculum gives students the skills needed as they reach developmental milestones. Students also develop skills as learners. Self-awareness of themselves as learners is promoted by the use of e-portfolios and showcased in student-led conferences. Students are encouraged to become independent learners and to make effective use of supervised study time. Thinking and study skills are explicitly taught. In addition, the programme aims to engage students in activities, both as individuals and in teams, which promote community and global awareness. The Learning for Life Department builds links with subject areas to promote learning that extends across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.

The programme covers four themes:
• Looking After Ourselves
• Understanding Ourselves
• Ourselves and Others
• Ourselves in the Wider Community
"The limits of my language are the limits of my world" – Ludwig Wittgenstein

West Island School is a community of multi-lingual learners who are of various nationalities and cultural backgrounds. We have more than 40 first languages / mother tongues in the school and this contributes the diversity and dynamism of our international school which would no doubt have impressed Wittgenstein! Many students at West Island School pursue and maintain their first and second languages both within and outside of school. However, students undertake the majority of their study through the medium of academic English which we realise could be their second, third or additional language. While we admire and celebrate the linguistic prowess of these students, we are keen to ensure that they are able to access fully an English medium education.

In the lower school (Years 7-9; ages 11-13), we offer tuition and support at two levels:
• Through small discrete groups which consolidate academic language skills and provide support for subjects across the curriculum. Where required, EAL teachers may offer a specific bridging course of intensive academic language and study skills.
• Through in-class support. This might involve an educational assistant who works on language issues with particular students. In some cases, EAL specialist teachers may team-teach subjects alongside mainstream subject teachers and provide curricular support to the departments as needed.

Students are also encouraged to use the Drop-in Help Clubs available at designated lunchtimes each week, where EAL teachers are available to help with study skills and drafting or editing of homework.

In the middle school (Years 10-11; ages 14-16), students are supported in their choice of IGCSE/GCSE option subjects. The EAL team offer timetabled sessions (EAL Support Options) which explicitly work on the skills and academic language required to maximize student performance at public examinations while enriching and extending their vocabulary. This is a responsive, skills based curriculum that is closely tied to tasks and assessments that take place across the mainstream GCSE curriculum. Students are supported with homework and coursework tasks in order to build a strong foundation for GCSE examinations as well as their IB Diploma or International Diploma choices post-16. Students are also offered a range of online and self-access resources.
Students may also be encouraged to opt for the IGCSE ESL examination course that will offer them an additional, internationally recognized language qualification through the University of Cambridge examination.

**Post-16 Language Support:** The IB Diploma and the International Diploma present EAL students with significant demands on their language skills and their time. The IB Diploma expects students to take 6 subjects from the various subject disciplines on the hexagon, in addition to completing an Extended Essay and a Theory of Knowledge course. In anticipation of the complex skills base that is required to access the Diploma to a high degree, EAL students are offered the IB Support Program (IBSP). IBSP takes place during some of the students’ free lessons and, or, at designated lunchtime slots. These sessions are taught by qualified, language specialists who are IB trained. Students are advised to avail of the support being offered during this time to improve their performance and enhance their experience of the IB Diploma. The IBSP is an IB approved model of support for EAL students.

EAL students can also avail of IB Self-Taught languages in their mother tongue in order to acquire a bilingual diploma in English and heritage language. Support for this program is offered through teachers within the department but students are required to find their own academic tutor in their heritage language. So far, our students have successfully acquired bilingual diplomas in Hebrew, Danish, Finnish and Japanese.
The role of the Individual Needs Faculty is to identify and support individuals within West Island School in order to allow better access to the curriculum, whilst further developing skills in literacy, numeracy, social and organisation. For students with greater needs, this provision extends to life skills, communication, physical development through Riding for the Disabled (RDA) and access to the community.

Advocating for the students is considered to be a vital part of the role of the Individual Needs staff. Partnership with parents and collaboration with staff at all levels are important factors in ensuring that students’ learning needs are catered for adequately. The Individual Needs team consists of five Special Educational Needs teachers, educational assistants and a speech and language therapist.

The faculty operates across two floors to encourage inclusion and to better provide for the diverse needs of the students. The two programmes, Strategies for School (S4S) and Core Literacy Skills (CLS), operate on one floor and the Learning Support programme (LSC) on another floor. To further enhance the provision, support for home learning assignments, projects and coursework is made available for students to access. In addition to running these programmes, the Individual Needs Faculty also offers school-wide support for academics through individual peer tutoring and Home Learning Club.

In addition to providing programmes, the faculty works very much in a consultancy role by offering workshops, working collaboratively with different faculties and providing individual sessions with teachers. Work focuses on best practice for teaching and learning in an effort to further develop and support ‘inclusive education’.

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**Continuum of Provision**

- **Individual Needs (IN)**
  - Strategies for School (S4S) D700
    - Class monitoring and differentiation by subject teachers. Support for in-class lessons where appropriate.
    - Discrete lessons to develop core literacy skills to better access the curriculum. Skills aligned to the mainstream.
  - Learning Support Centre (LSC) D500
    - Participation in most subjects with in-class support and monitoring by the faculty.
    - Discrete lessons in English, Maths, Science & Humanities and access to subjects on individual needs basis. Programmes include parallel, modified, alternative.
EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

At West Island School, part of our mission and aims is to promote excellence in teaching and learning and to challenge students in academic, sporting and creative endeavours. We recognise that every student has individual strengths and we aim to cultivate those strengths as much as possible. Clearly, by whatever measures are used, our school succeeds in achieving world class results at both I/GCSE and IB levels. However, we do not rest on our laurels and are constantly working towards improvement. West Island School provides numerous opportunities to extend and enrich the experiences of students in school. To this end, we have a ‘Gifted’ Co-ordinator dedicated to working with the faculties to identify such opportunities.

The PE Faculty manages a programme for our most talented sportsmen and women. The high level of sporting prowess in the school was demonstrated when, in 2011, West Island School won the Bauhinia Bowl, awarded by the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation to the school which demonstrates the best all-round performance over all sporting events.

There are also many external competitions and experiences on offer to West Island School students through different faculties:

The Mathematics Faculty prepares students for the ASMA and SEAMC competitions; West Island School won the SEAMC competition in 2011 beating many other schools from around South East Asia.

The English Faculty runs the debating club and the Model United Nations (attended by 40 schools from Hong Kong and hosted at West Island School) which prepares students for making public presentations, hones their research skills and awareness of current issues.

The Creative Arts Faculty offers students the opportunity to work alongside professional artists, actors and musicians.

The Modern Languages Faculty runs the Chinese debating club whose members succeeded in winning the inter ESF debating competition in 2011.

There are a host of other enrichment and extension opportunities for the students in all areas of the curriculum. West Island School continues to explore avenues to improve our provision and will offer more options to take part in international competitions and conferences during upcoming academic years.

Model United Nations at West Island School
LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

West Island School empowers students to learn using 21st Century methods. Our students are primed to compete in a global society which requires that they be technologically astute and reflective individuals.

As such West Island School students benefit from learning in a technologically rich environment and, wherever appropriate, from a technologically enhanced curriculum.

We believe that one to one learning is the key to achieving this vision as it allows teachers and students to engage more fully together in the learning process. The school runs a comprehensive one to one laptop programme with students in Years 7, 8 and 9 using a school specified model and students in later years using their own laptop to support their learning. The school has invested in superb wireless and technical infrastructure to support students’ use of technology. Wide use is made of Wisdom, the school’s Moodle virtual learning environment, and Google Apps for education.

In this dynamic environment, a learning technology coordinator and team of Learning Technology coaches are tasked with providing multiple support strategies to departments and professional development to staff to ensure that current and future technologies have a positive long term impact on our students’ learning.
“No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance.” Confucius

A major challenge for the information age school is to educate students for living and learning in an information rich environment. A substantial body of research has emerged in the last fifteen years that demonstrates an important and positive relationship between the presence of a good school library and increased student achievement. Effective libraries, like ours at West Island School, enable students to explore content deeply, pursue their own academic interests, and engage in inquiry.

The West Island School Library supports student learning and inquiry by providing access to information resources, and by fostering the knowledge and critical skills required to become ‘Information Literate’ in order to discover and use these resources effectively. Explicit and systematic information literacy lessons are taught by the teacher librarian.

Reading to support the curriculum, as well as reading for pleasure are encouraged by the West Island School Library. Literacy is promoted by providing a broad range of fiction and non-fiction materials, both contemporary and classic, and through a rolling programme of new stock acquisitions which recognizes the needs of both the reluctant and the vociferous reader by providing a wide choice of genre.

Gone are the days when libraries were thought of as a collection of dusty old books. Today they are alive and vibrant places with a variety of effective and efficient methods of data collection, with the world at students’ fingertips.
CAREERS AND UNIVERSITY

West Island School has a Head of Careers, a full time Higher Education Counsellor and administrative support responsible for careers guidance. Every care is taken to ensure that students make a sensible decision with the help of higher education counselling and parental involvement.

Careers education is delivered through the Learning for Life Programme, beginning in Year 9 when students make their first I/GCSE option choices. In Year 10 students discuss career opportunities and the world of work and receive guidance in the selection of IB or ID career related options at the end of their I/GCSE courses in Year 11. There is also the opportunity for students to participate in the optional PSAT tests in preparation for applications to US universities in Year 13. In Year 12 there is a University Applications Information Evening for students and their parents. Students are also given the opportunity to participate in school-based question and answer sessions with outside speakers. Students in Year 12 and 13 intending to study university courses related to the professions are also encouraged to undertake work experience during their holidays.

The vast majority of West Island School students go on to some form of tertiary education. Students can utilise the well-equipped Careers Rooms which has a library of up-to-date university prospectuses and other resources. In addition, University representatives regularly visit our school to make presentations and answer questions regarding entry requirements for British, U.S., Australian, Canadian and Hong Kong universities. In addition, West Island School organises and hosts the annual ESF International Diploma Fair.
CREATIVE ARTS

Creativity – What it means for our West Island School learners

At West Island School we are building a dynamic community that cares for its people and fosters and celebrates knowledge and creativity. A vital community is one that embraces a sense of discovery, creativity and imagination at the same time as basic human values of compassion and respect. Our future depends on valuing the status of knowledge and a curiosity about new ideas. Ideas come from all around the world and from a variety of sources. Diversity brings with it many new approaches and perspectives to producing new ideas.

‘Creativity is related to culture. Cultural conditions can kindle or kill creativity. We do not have creative ideas in a vacuum. Individual creativity is stimulated by the work, ideas and achievements of other people. We stand on the shoulders of others to see further. This is true in all fields, in business, science, sport, music, design, fashion, whatever.’ (Ken Robinson, Out of Our Minds - Learning to be Creative, 2001)

Within our education community, the Creative Arts faculty and Circle in the Water aim to develop a creative culture by emphasizing active engagement and reflection within the following subject and performance strands:

- Drama, Performing Arts and Theatre (MYD, GCSE, IB and BTEC)
- Film (GCSE, IB)
- Music (MYD, IGCSE, IB)
- Visual Art and Design (MYD, GCSE, IB and BTEC)

These subjects and our performance company Circle in the Water provide opportunities for students to acquire arts knowledge, practices and dispositions that can be used to develop self-awareness, aesthetic awareness and the ability to solve problems, make decisions and communicate effectively.

Students use their creativity, imagination and senses to express ideas across a range of social, cultural, historical, political, technological and economic contexts through arts subjects. They enhance their aesthetic understandings of arts elements and languages. They create their own arts works and present and respond to their own and others’ arts works, considering specific audiences and specific purposes. They recognise that the Creative Arts provide career opportunities and develop skills that will help them to lead fulfilling recreational and working lives. Employers worldwide value people who can be critical, analytical and think in ways which are new; they call this innovative and creative thinking. Employers seek people who can work and think independently, who can research, develop, analyse, make change and communicate ideas. In a world of technological, economic, political and social change these are essential skills.

Students have ways of working to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. They enhance their understanding of arts practice through active engagement, both individually and collaboratively with arts elements, techniques, skills and processes, working creatively and imaginatively, to take risks and focus on how the arts reinforce and challenge their own experiences and those of other artists. They develop their ability to critically analyse and reflect on the creative process that has occurred within one or across many arts disciplines. Students select and use a range of tools and technologies, including information and communication technologies (ICTs). They routinely demonstrate an autonomous and purposeful use of ICTs to inquire, create and present arts works, and to communicate their own arts practice and that of others. Students demonstrate evidence of their learning over time in relation to the following assessable elements: knowledge and understanding; creating; presenting; responding; reflecting.
Ways of working

*Students are able to:*

- make decisions about arts elements, languages and cultural protocols in relation to specific style, function, audience and purpose of arts works
- create and shape arts works by manipulating arts elements to express meaning in different contexts
- modify and refine genre-specific arts works, using interpretive and technical skills
- present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols
- identify risks and devise and apply safe practices
- respond by deconstructing arts works in relation to social, cultural, historical, spiritual, political, technological and economic contexts, using arts elements and languages
- reflect on learning, apply new understandings and justify future applications.

**Dance**

Dance promotes fitness, a healthy lifestyle, team work and creativity. It actively engages students in the process of dance in order to develop as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds. Dance develops students’ skills, knowledge and understanding of a range of dance styles through the interrelated processes of performing, creating and appreciating dances. Dance students develop their physical, technical and expressive skills through which students are able to communicate choreographic intention and develop their individual qualities as performers. They also develop skills, knowledge and understanding of choreography through which they are able to communicate ideas, thoughts and meaning drawn from a range of dance styles. The study of dance develops a critical appreciation of dance in its physical, artistic, aesthetic and cultural contexts. (AQA GCSE Specification)

**Drama and Theatre**

Drama and Theatre involves manipulating dramatic elements and conventions to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, through dramatic action based on real or imagined events. Roles, characters and relationships are interpreted to define motivation and purpose, using specific vocal and physical techniques. Drama elements are manipulated to create tension and status, and are used to express ideas and dramatic action and texts are created and interpreted through specific styles, including realism and non-realism.

**Film**

Film involves constructing meaning, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, by manipulating media and film languages and technologies to shape representations. Still and moving images, sounds and words are used to construct and reconstruct meaning in media texts and film. Media techniques and practices are used to market, promote, deliver and exhibit media texts. Representations of different beliefs and ideas in media texts and film are influenced by regulations and by contexts of audiences, producers and institutions.

**Music**

Music involves singing, playing instruments, listening, appraising, moving, improvising and
composing by manipulating the music elements to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, through sound. Students are provided with opportunities to develop an ability to rehearse, rework, and refine musical ideas and performances; they develop an awareness of the aesthetic domain and its relation to music and the ability to critically reflect on their own and others’ musical performances. They develop music literacy and musicianship skills and gain a sense of personal satisfaction and enjoyment through experiencing music as a social activity. They develop the skills and understandings needed to express themselves effectively when performing, improvising and composing and acquire an understanding of music from various cultural, social and historical contexts.

Visual Arts and Design

Art and Design and Visual Arts involve manipulating visual arts elements, concepts, processes and forms to express ideas, considering specific audiences and purposes, through images and objects. Ideas are researched to inform visual responses that consider social and cultural issues. Design and visual documentation are used to develop images and objects from visual, verbal and tactile stimuli and different media are used in isolation and in combination to make arts works. Students explore art and related issues and concepts to create their own personal art. They choose to work using materials and techniques appropriate to their intentions to produce a series of outcomes that are presented in exhibitions. Along with the finished works students show their research, ideas, progress, references and critical and evaluative writing, which are recorded in their research work books.

Circle in the Water - Creativity, Action and Service

*Circle in the Water* is the name of West Island School’s performance and production division. Events and activities led by staff, visiting specialists and/or students encourage everyone to share their dynamic energy and special arts talents with each other. In keeping with the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate our Creativity, Action and Service programme offers students a range of theatre and musical productions, dance, music, film and art exhibitions, activities and performance events within the school, Hong Kong and international communities.

**Music**

- Sinfonia Orchestra
- Sinfonietta Orchestra
- WIS Choir
- Cantare Chamber Choir
- Jazz Band
- Chinese Music tuition
- Bauhinia Ensemble
- Clarinet Ensemble
- Rock School bands

**Drama**

- *Circle in the Water* Theatre Company
- Wired Dance Company
- Drama Club

**Film**

- Film Club
- WIS TV

**Visual Arts**

- Student exhibitions

Through these activities West Island School students will develop greater awareness and concern for others, engagement with the world of ideas as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other people. *Circle in the Water* believes in a rigorous, enriched academic and creative learning environment which values people, relationships, collaboration and compassion.
Design, Technology & ICT

Design & Technology is a unique subject that offers a wide range of experiences, methods of working and challenging situations for students of all ages and abilities.

Design & Technology is a practical subject, which always involves students in designing and making products that have a function. Its practical nature involves students in developing their own personal abilities and knowledge across a wide range of skills, equipment and materials which include engineering, textiles, graphic media, construction materials (wood, metal, and plastics) and food.

At West Island School we aim to involve all students in creatively applying knowledge, skills and experiences in designing, making and evaluating appropriate and high level outcomes that satisfy perceived needs. We aim to foster a sense of achievement, pride and satisfaction for all in their enjoyment of Design & Technology activities.

The Design & Technology Curriculum aims to develop in students a technological capability by providing them with the opportunity to solve problems by designing and making products. The department believes that Design & Technology activities should be challenging and stimulating for pupils in order to foster enjoyment, inquiry, excitement and satisfaction from the practical learning experiences they encounter. Students will also draw upon knowledge and skills from other curriculum areas – particularly Science, Art, Mathematics and English.

The appropriate skills and knowledge in Design & Technology enables students to identify and respond to design opportunities with increasing competence and independence, exercising the intellectual skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in a wide range of contexts. We also aim for our students to:

- Develop and acquire a wide range of communication skills – in particular presentation techniques.
- Foster the development of practical skills, independence, self-determination and the ability to work as a team where necessary.
- Develop and acquire a range of practical skills, which will enable them to cut, shape, join, and combine a range of materials safely and appropriately.
This faculty has high expectations and is committed to encouraging the production of excellent standards of work from all our students, preparing them to be discriminating and informed participants in tomorrow’s rapidly changing technologies by combining practical skills with an understanding of design, industrial practices and new technologies. The faculty has developed several curriculum pathways which are as follows:

**Years 10 & 11**
- BTEC Level 2 Hospitality
- BTEC Level 2 Engineering
- GCSE Graphic Design
- GCSE Resistant Materials
- GCSE Textiles
- GCSE Food Technology

**Years 12 & 13**
- BTEC Level 3 Engineering (Subsidiary and Diploma Level)
- IB Design Technology (CAD CAM or Human Factors - Higher or Standard Level)
- IB Design Technology (Textiles or Food - Standard Level only)
Everyday ICT affects a new part of our lives. Over the last ten years it has become an integral part of our existence. Knowledge and practical use of ICT is now widely accepted as common place and fundamental to the core of education alongside such subjects as Mathematics and Science.

ICT has three main strands which students have to master.

The first, using ICT as a tool to enhance students’ work much like a pen and paper are traditionally used. Web 2 applications have changed the way in which students can collaborate, research, produce, reflect upon, and evaluate their work. New exciting and powerful applications which empower students to take control of their learning are becoming available at an unprecedented rate. The challenge for teachers is to keep up with these innovations and make sure that the students are exposed to them in such a way that they can make intelligent decisions on when, whether and what to use them for.

The second is the more traditional side of ICT: using Word Processors to document work; using Graphic Design software for artwork; using Databases and Spread sheets; creating websites with Web Authoring software; creating multimedia presentations; and understanding abstract programming concepts. These are all skill based using software applications and are taught in context.

Finally, we examine the social, moral, ethical, political and economic effects of ICT on our daily lives. Issues such as copyright, data privacy, malware, social networking, safe surfing and chat rooms are all pertinent aspects of being a balanced user of ICT.

At West Island School we deliver these strands through a high speed, reliable and accessible network infrastructure which supports a wide range of learning tools. Our aim is for students to like and enjoy using ICT in an environment that is robust and complimentary to methods of teaching and learning used throughout the school.

Our Curriculum

Year 7

On arrival each student acquires a laptop specified by the school with all the necessary software needed for our curriculum. This is followed by a 4 day induction in ICT to ensure that all students start with the same level of expertise in terms of their use of ICT. During this induction students learn about the school network and our standard ways of working, the use of e-portfolios to organise students’ work, enabling self-reflection and assessment for learning and finally to introduce techniques for collaborative working in an online environment. This culminates in a showcase for all Year 7 parents at the end of the induction.

ICT is taught alongside Design Technology in Year 7. The initial focus is on using Learning Technologies to enhance students work in other subjects. This is followed by inquiry based units in Word Processing and practical units with Spread sheets.
Year 8
ICT is taught alongside Design Technology in Year 8 where the focus is on Photographic Manipulation and Computer Graphics, Computer Control and Web Authoring. In addition further units are being delivered across the curriculum in Modern Languages, English and Science. Students use audio software to create radio style adverts in French, Spanish or Chinese. In English, students make animation and/or film to produce their own adaption of a scene from a play or novel. In Science, students use map layering software to define the geological structure of the local land topography.

Year 9
In Year 9 ICT students work through a variety of tasks to develop their ICT and Computer Science skills to prepare them for the projects they will do in Years 10 and 11. While students are expected to work collaboratively on some projects they are also expected to develop a high degree of independence in researching and developing their projects. It is during Year 9 that students learn about Object Oriented Programming using a visual programming environment in which they make their own video game; using Solidworks to prototype 3D working models; creating Relational Databases; creating online surveys; and how to effectively present the results.

Year 10 and Year 11
All students follow a Diploma course in Applied ICT developed by the International Education Awards in association with Cambridge Examinations.

Students have a free choice in producing an ICT project. They are encouraged to explore their own interests and to work on projects that are original and of practical use to others. As such, students must have a real world client for the project. Students will present their projects to their peers and, where practical, to experts in the field from outside school. There is no examination. All assessment is coursework based and can be presented in a medium of the student’s choice.

Upper School
Computer Science is offered as a group 4 subject as part of our International Baccalaureate programme. It is offered at both Standard and Higher Level. The course is split into 9 topics, as follows:

The Common Core
1. System Fundamentals
2. Computer Organisation
3. Networks
4. Computational Thinking, Problem Solving and Programming
5. Options – Students take one of the following
6. Group 4 Project

The Higher Level Topics
7. Abstract Data Structures
8. Resource Management
9. Computer Control
The English Faculty is an energetic and active part of the school, offering a range of extra-curricular activities and organizing whole school initiatives as well as offering support and guidance in the language in which every student is educated here at West Island School. We have a strong belief in the ability to listen, to enjoy and respond to reading, to write accurately and adventurously and to speak with confidence. We actively encourage use of our excellent library and there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of Shakespeare across all years and abilities. Students in English are well motivated, engaged and prepared to take risks - key skills for life!

Students are continually assessed in reading, writing and speaking and listening – the three Attainment Targets - and there is a strong emphasis on the planning, drafting, re-drafting and editing processes.

In Years 9, 10 and 11 students are placed in mixed ability groups, slightly smaller in numbers of students than those of previous years. They then study for courses in IGCSE English and English Literature. These are fully accredited and internationally recognised qualifications at a level slightly more demanding than the UK based GCSE.

In the upper school, Years 12 and 13, we offer extensive and demanding courses as part of the International Baccalaureate. From 2012 onwards we are offering courses in Literature, Language and Literature and Literature in Performance. These courses assess a range of ideas and approaches from oral assessments to coursework essays to the ability to critically assess a piece of performance art. There is a focus on reading and enjoying the in-depth and stimulating range and breadth of the texts that have been chosen for study, combined with an independent approach to learning. They are a perfect starting point to university level study.
INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES

The Individuals and Societies Faculty encompasses a range of academic subjects that explore the human experience. We seek to investigate the world through a variety of lenses, such as philosophical analysis and critical theory. The aim of the lower school programme is to equip students with the skills necessary to become global citizens and succeed in the examination years. A programme of study has been created that is refreshing, challenging, engaging and fun.

In Year 7 students rotate between Geography, History and Philosophy/Religious Studies (PRS) orientated courses. Term three culminates with the Individuals and Societies week during which skills acquired throughout the year are used to create an exhibition of learning that is displayed to parents and the student body. During Years 8 and 9 students study Geography, History and PRS as discrete subjects. They can also be taken as an option for GCSE in Years 10 and 11, alongside Business Studies and Economics. At IB level students will have the opportunity to focus on Business Studies, Economics, Environmental Systems, Geography, History, Philosophy or Psychology within group 3 of the IB Hexagon. The faculty also offers applied learning options in Business as part of the International Diploma.

Business Studies

GCSE Business Studies

GCSE Business Studies is a popular choice in Years 10 and 11. The syllabus is stimulating to the investigative mind. A reasonable mathematical ability is required, a will to succeed, enjoyment of independent coursework and a willingness to contribute to discussion will all aid the GCSE Business Studies student.

IB Diploma Business and Management

The IB Diploma ‘Business and Management’ course will prepare students and expose them to various business skills to meet the needs of a career in the corporate world. It is a varied and exciting course often revolving around decision-making about real business problems based on case study material. It includes an introduction to organisations and their decision-making processes, the external environment and its economic influence, marketing, human resource management, accounting and finance, and operations management. It is a broad foundation for any business related university degree course.

Students will gain an understanding of business from different cultural perspectives, develop critical thinking and understand the concepts of global economy, business ethics and social responsibilities of stakeholders.

BTEC

Students following the International Diploma can opt to take the BTEC 3 National Diploma or Subsidiary Diploma in Business Studies. This is a great applied course with excellent higher education pathways.
Economics

Economics is a dynamic subject which concerns itself with Economic problems around the world and what the possible solutions to these are. Students with a keen interest in current events are the ones most likely to find the subject particularly interesting. Students with good Mathematics skills will benefit from these while studying Economics. The main areas of study are:

- How the market works,
- The private firm as producer and employer,
- Role of government in an economy or economies,
- Developed and Developing Economies,
- International aspects of interdependence and trade.

Assessment is by examinations at the end of the course.

IB Economics

Students who tend to enjoy economics have the following characteristics. They must be very interested in current world events. They need to be able to analyse and interpret numerical data, and so good arithmetic ability and being able to think logically are important. Students studying Higher Level Economics should be taking Standard or Higher Level Mathematics for IB. They will be curious about how problems are solved with limited resources and how the world of Politics affects Economics.

Geography

Students need to understand the world around them, in both a local and global sense. We all make a mark on where we live, and where we live leaves its stamp on us. One of the more important issues students learn about in Geography is their effects on the environment and how to minimise negative effects. Students also learn about and compare different places and societies around the world. This helps them to understand the inequalities that exist and hopefully enables them to become responsible citizens of the world.

Students learn to use geographical skills to find out about:

- Different places
- Patterns in natural and human environments and what causes them
- How environments change, and ways in which sustainability can be maintained.

Countries

Students study a range of economically developed countries around the world and others that are less developed, but with a focus on the Asian region.
Themes
Students study the following themes:

- Weather and climate - the difference between them, and how and why they differ from place to place
- Ecosystems - the different conditions that allow different types of plants and animals to live in harmony together, and how people can upset that balance
- Economic activity (for example, hi tech industry and tourism) - how and why the locations of activities change, and the effects of these changes
- Development - how places develop and how this affects the people who live there
- Environmental issues - the ways in which environments may be damaged or improved, and how people can help to maintain sustainability
- Resource issues - how people use and manage natural resources such as oil and water, and how this affects the environment
- Tectonic processes - how and why earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur, and how they affect landscapes and people
- Geomorphological processes - the effects of water and ice on landscapes, as well as the causes and effects of hazards such as floods, typhoons and landslides.

IB Geography
The course follows a thematic people-environment approach. A range of themes, places and environments at different scales and in different contexts, including China and countries in various states of development, will be studied. The trend towards global interdependence is highlighted with its economic, social, environmental and political dimensions and implications. As citizens of their local community, nation and world, students will be asked to consider the values and attitudes of decision makers and explore their own in a variety of contemporary issues in Geography.
IB Environmental Systems and Societies

This course is a holistic approach to understanding and managing the impact of humans on natural ecosystems. Topics include population, resource use, ecosystems, conservation and biodiversity, pollution management and global warming.

Pupils are encouraged to understand environmental processes at a variety of scales, from local to global. Recognition of cultural diversity, technology and international collaboration in tackling environmental issues is the key to understanding how humans can remain sustainable on the planet.

History

History is taught in the lower school to students in mixed ability groups. Within History we aim to develop the students’ understanding of the world in which they live. It is hoped that by studying the past, students will be able to understand present day issues from a more objective standpoint. It is also hoped that students will develop a tolerant understanding of different global societies, peoples and cultures.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 students will have the opportunity to study a range of topics at a local, regional and international level. Students also begin to develop the historical skills of chronology, source analysis and empathy.

At GCSE, students follow a broadly twentieth century modern world history course. In this we combine elements of Asian, European, African and American history.

The IB course is designed to build on students’ historical understanding. Again we cover a range of subjects and regions including particular focus on the development of Russia over the past 100 years, the Cold War and the rise of dictatorships in both Europe and Latin America.

Philosophy

Philosophy is an exciting new addition to the subjects in IB and allows students to explore some of the big questions in the world from a philosophical perspective. Students will study key questions from a number of different philosophical traditions. The first is “What is a human being?” We explore this from a biological, psychological and philosophical background culminating with an exploration of whether we actually exist at all! We look at Ethics and apply ethical theories to situations such as euthanasia and the environment. Students also explore Philosophy of Religion which aims for students to consider arguments for the existence of God and the way in which religion affects believers’ lives.

As a subject we aim for students to become philosophers themselves and begin to attempt to find answers to those questions which seem impossible to answer at all.
Psychology

Psychology is a dynamic and engaging part of the Individuals and Societies hexagon of the IB Diploma. There are two choices when considering studying Psychology, the first being Psychology at Standard level where students are required to sit two exam papers and cover one option (Clinical Psychology) on Paper 2. The second choice is Higher level where students are required to attend additional lessons and will cover more course content. It is compulsory, for example, that they study both options (Clinical and Health Psychology) and sit an additional third paper on qualitative methods. There is also an internal assessment where students will put their theoretical methodological knowledge into practice; the collection and analysis of data, a skill that is essential at university level. Students will also have work experience as part of the course, where they will volunteer one or two hours of their time to work in an external organisation to see the therapeutic side of Psychology.

The syllabus disregards the traditional approach to Psychology and takes on a more realistic holistic approach. For example, the biological approach focuses on what behaviour all humans possess and the “new” sociocultural component incorporates the biological, cognitive and social factors that create uniqueness and individuality amongst the human race. In addition to the core approaches, there are two further applications of Psychology; the first is Clinical Psychology which is the diagnosis explaining and treating psychological problems, such as the diagnosis and treatment of anorexia and phobias. The second is Health Psychology which is concerned with how different factors can influence an individual’s health, e.g. lifestyle and social context can determine health and illness, e.g. causes and treatment addition and stress (Higher level only).

Religious Studies

To be able to understand their own beliefs and values, students need to learn about and respond to the beliefs and values of others. In Religious Studies students learn about the main religions of the world as well as studying those with smaller followings. The subject aims to help them respect the beliefs and practices of others, as well as discover more about their own.

Students are assessed based on the non-statutory guidance for Religious Studies from the UK. These levels help students to develop their skills to learn about religion as well as to learn from it.

Much of what we teach in Religious Studies is not measurable and assessable in the conventional sense. As a result we spend time assessing a student’s skills in the subjects, such as description, understanding and discussing while exploring the vast range of beliefs and values in the world and in the classroom.

Students in Years 7 to 9 will consider some of the deeper questions about life such as, ‘What’s our purpose in life?’, ‘What happens to us when we die?’, ‘How do we know what is right and wrong?’, ‘What makes someone ‘good’?’ and ‘Why do people suffer?’ They find out about the ways religions answer these questions, and relate this to their own experiences and ideas.

Religious Studies is taught to all students in Years 7 to 9. Students will develop their knowledge, understanding and evaluation of a variety of religious beliefs and practices. They will develop their skills through application to and exploration of a wide variety of topics, ensuring that each student has a chance to explore these from their own background as well as those of others.

Students will apply their skills to a range of ultimate questions including an introduction to the philosophy of religion and ethics.
All students in Years 7 to 11 take Mathematics at West Island School. In the majority of cases this leads to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) qualification with either EdExcel or Cambridge International exam boards. (edexcel.org.uk, cie.org.uk). The IGCSE is offered at two different entry levels, Foundation/Core and Higher/Extended. Foundation/Core allows students to attain up to Grade C and Higher/Extended up to Grade A*.

The scheme of work followed by students in Years 7 to 9 has been developed by the Mathematics faculty and follows the West Island School Middle Years Diploma (MYD) framework. In Year 7, students are taught in mixed-ability groups, with tasks being differentiated according to attainment and ability. At the end of Year 7, students are placed in one of four ability bands in Year 8. These bands evolve during Year 9 and during Year 10 students are grouped in relation to their tier of IGCSE entry.

In each maths class, differentiated tasks are set which are appropriate to ability; the aim being to provide support and consolidation whilst making sure that all students are appropriately challenged. Inquiry-based learning is an important part of the Mathematics curriculum.

For all ages and abilities, we aim to ensure that a wide range of teaching and learning techniques are employed. Students work individually or in groups and are encouraged to ask questions and take an active role in lessons. They are encouraged to employ investigative strategies to solve problems, which, as far as possible, reflect contexts in the real-world. Above all, we would like students to see mathematics as an enjoyable subject, as well as an essential and powerful tool.

In the upper school, students studying the IB Diploma Programme have one of three options: Mathematical Studies SL, Mathematics SL and Mathematics HL. Students taking the International Diploma may take one of these as an IB Certificate.
MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Language provision at West Island School reflects the nature of our community and aims to equip students with the skills and competences needed to adapt to and participate in both local and international environments.

We offer the opportunity to study both an Asian and European language or to strengthen skills in one language. Currently our linguistic menu includes Chinese as a first language, Chinese as a foreign language, Chinese as a second language and French and Spanish (foreign language).

Our foreign language courses emphasise the use of the language for practical communication. Students develop their abilities in all four skill areas – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – through pair work, role play, games and a wealth of other activities and assignments. In accordance with the West Island School Learner Profile, students are also encouraged to show initiative and drive their own progress in the language by working more independently and at their own pace using the faculty’s own websites as well as a host of excellent online materials. The skills of senior students (Year 10 to Year 13) are further enhanced and reinforced by regular contact with our language assistants. Through conversations with these native speakers, students are offered insights into the culture of the target-language countries as well as an immersion language experience. In Years 10 and 11 students may study either one or two languages at IGCSE. They then continue with either one or, if their university course requires, two languages at IB level.

Our first language Chinese course emphasises literature, genre and register and aims to develop learners who will study the IB Bilingual Diploma (A1 Chinese) in Years 12 and 13.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORT

The Faculty of Physical Education and Sport aims to nurture a positive attitude towards exercise and health. Students are encouraged and given every opportunity to find their niche in sport and recreation. It is hoped students will begin a lifelong commitment to a healthy, active lifestyle incorporating sport and physical exercise.

While being physically active is naturally important, the educational potential of the subject is wider than merely the development of physical skills. Ideals such as commitment, integrity, enthusiasm and fairness are promoted in order to help inculcate a positive ethos towards the subject. Collectively it is envisaged that students will become increasingly independent in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding while demonstrating a concern for the safety of oneself and others.

Central to this is the presentation of physical activity as a positive experience that is accessible, stimulating and enjoyable for everyone so that the full educational potential may be realised.

Lessons at West Island School are active and the students are challenged through the setting of suitable tasks within the framework of a curriculum designed to facilitate progression through each year. While developing competency and improving skill acquisition, the thinking capability of the students is challenged. Opportunities to plan tactics, strategies and sequences, perform and refine skills, and ultimately evaluate their own work and the work of others, are provided throughout the curriculum.

The aims of Physical Education at West Island School include:

- Encourage physical activity
- Promote fitness and well-being
- Develop movement skills and knowledge
- Social development
- Promote positive self-image and self-realisation
- Individual excellence

Curriculum

The Physical Education programme promotes mental, physical, emotional and social development through guided sports activities. The students work in an educational environment which promotes an enjoyment of lifelong sport, which provides opportunities for students of all skill levels to improve their skills, ability and understanding in the sport or activity being studied. Students are also encouraged to try out a variety of roles, such as leader and official.

This is achieved through the provision of:

- Competitive and non-competitive activities
- Contact and non-contact sports
- Group, pair and individual activities
In Years 7 to 9 the students participate in eleven sports covering skills, games play, rules and tactics: swimming, football, netball, hockey, badminton, athletics, gymnastics, water polo, volleyball, tag rugby, basketball and striking and fielding.

In Years 10 to 11 a more whole game approach is adopted in practical sessions. Sports covered are swimming, football, netball, hockey, badminton, athletics, trampolining, water polo, volleyball, tag rugby, basketball, cricket, rounders, dance and ultimate frisbee.

The upper school PE programme aims to educate students about the benefits of an active and physical lifestyle that will hopefully continue to develop after students have graduated from West Island School. The programme provides students with the opportunity to participate in, and further develop their knowledge in five sports of their choice. In addition, all students will take part in athletics, cross country and swimming.

In the middle school, the faculty offers GCSE PE. In the upper school, students can opt for Sport and Exercise Science in either the IB or ID (BTEC) programmes.

**Inter Dynasty Sport**

Inter dynasty sport is an important link between the curriculum and inter school sport and offers an opportunity for ALL West Island School students to contribute towards their dynasty through participation as well as developing personal performance.

A wide variety of sports tournaments including Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Biathlon and many team games are offered at inter dynasty level.

**Sports Activities and Representative Teams**

West Island School coordinates an extensive co-curricular sports programme throughout the school year. This leads to the organization and coaching of almost one hundred teams that represent West Island School in competitions in Hong Kong and occasionally overseas.

West Island School has also developed strong links with several clubs and organizations to further develop elite athletes and provide additional opportunities.

**Independent Exercise and Training**

Health, fitness and performance cannot be met through curriculum time alone therefore students should set personal goals that require them to take ownership of their fitness and performance. At West Island School we encourage all students to independently use the school’s facilities, surrounding environment and community to participate in regular independent exercise and training.
The study of Science aims to provide students with both a body of knowledge and an understanding of the scientific approach to problem solving. The ability to formulate hypotheses, design and carry out experiments to test them, and evaluate results constitutes the framework within which specific content is presented. We strive to inspire interest and curiosity about all aspects of science, in order to equip all the pupils for an increasingly scientific and technology rich world.

**Skills which are developed**

Among other skills, students are expected to:

- use laboratory equipment safely and efficiently
- make sensible estimates and take accurate measurements
- make scientifically supported arguments.

Students are also encouraged to relate the content of the classroom and laboratory to the realities of life as they develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

An awareness of the increasingly international context of scientific activity, its impact and limitations as well as the constant evolution of scientific knowledge and understanding is also promoted. Students are encouraged to consider science as a constantly evolving cooperative venture between individuals and among members of the international community, influenced by social, economic, technological, political, ethical and cultural surroundings.

**Biology**

The explosive expansion of molecular technology into economic potential cannot be taken lightly. There are unprecedented opportunities for using recently developed techniques in beneficial ways, but there are also more looming threats to the natural world than in the past. A thorough understanding of the principles of biology is essential if we are to counter the threats and make the most of the opportunities. It is therefore crucial that a biology programme promotes this understanding.
Chemistry

The subject is presented as a central science which examines, describes and explains interactions between matter and energy. Chemical principles lie behind the physical environment in which we live, and some understanding of Chemistry is essential preparation for studies in the Life Sciences. The study of Chemistry thus serves two roles: preparation for courses in other sciences as well as preparation for a career or higher academic studies.

Physics

The Physics course aims to continue and extend students’ appreciation of the subject developed from earlier studies. This course is structured around the fundamental forces and the energy transfers they produce. Modern day Physics is by nature an international subject, in which scientists from around the world collaborate using internationally agreed terms and conventions. Historical aspects of the subject, often western-orientated, are de-emphasised. Modern centres of cutting-edge Physics, such as CERN, pool the collective expertise of Physicists from all continents.

Learning is process-driven, with practical investigations, conforming to the IB coursework requirements, being used to formulate, test and evaluate hypotheses. Applications and possible career paths will be emphasised, while opportunities for independent learning will be identified and built into the programme of study. To complement the required IB assessment of practical coursework and external examinations, internal assessment using past examination questions is used for each of the syllabus topics upon completion.

BTEC Science level 2

As an alternative to the traditional IGCSE science courses taken by our Year 10 and 11 students, we currently offer a BTEC Applied Science course. This is typically equivalent to 2 Science GCSE grades, and is based around a continual coursework assessment programme. The Applied Science nature of the course allows students to approach all areas of the subject in a context of Science in the workplace, at home or some aspect of the world we live in. The new syllabus has a Forensic Science option as well as opportunities to study Environmental Science and the Chemistry of household reactions such as baking a cake. Most lessons are based around practical work, and research plays a big part in applying the science ideas covered to the world around us.
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