



ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING

Message from the Head of School / CEO

Dear AIS Family,

As we all know, Coronavirus, or COVID 19, has been a cause for serious concern, globally. While no confirmed cases have been reported in East Africa, prevention and precaution would definitely be the need of the hour.

I exhort everyone to exercise caution when reading and forwarding social media messages, as perpetuating fake news is not going to help anyone. Please verify information before hitting the 'forward' button.

As a school, we:

1. Have placed alcohol-based hand sanitizers all over the campus
2. Have made hand washing, at regular intervals, a part of the daily routine
3. Are talking to the students about personal hygiene and eating immunity-building foods
4. Are closely monitoring students who are unwell, and sending them home to avoid a drop in immunity among other students
5. Replaced hand towels with disposable paper towels
6. Running awareness campaign through the School Nurse who has visited every class

We urge that you keep talking to your child about the same.

On a lighter note, we continue doing what we do best, inspiring and empowering. The beginning of Term 2 saw several important happenings – assessments, EC Favourites Week, Year 6 overnight trip, MYP Wales trip, Evacuation Drill, ISSA Matches, and most importantly... Talent Hunt 2020. Our students not only produced some outstanding performances, but AIS Administration and Performing Arts Department has really taken this event a notch higher, setting expectations higher for next year. Everyone, including other schools (and also schools who didn't participate) are looking forward for next year's Talent Hunt at AIS. The remainder term will see our famed Sports Gala, Badminton tournaments, Swimming gala, Year 9 Community Project, student-led conferences and most importantly three IB programme visits over this month and next – PYP verification, DP authorisation and MYP authorisation, respectively.

We are now also Cambridge Authorised School. Please find us on IBO and Cambridge websites.

AIS as a Cambridge School:

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/why-choose-us/find-a-cambridge-school/>

AIS as an IB World School:

<https://www.ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/>

As announced earlier, I am extremely excited to share with you that the new Secondary Department block construction work is expected to begin this month, as our KCCA authorisation is in final stages. It's really onward and upward for the AIS Family!



Wish you all a wonderful weekend! Stay safe!

-Ameena Lalani - HoS/CEO

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ADMIN UPDATES

Evacuation Drill



Every term, we aim to improve our preparedness, as well as response time, in case of an emergency. In the recently held Evacuation Drill, our response time was a whole minute lower than the last drill, at 8 minutes and 28 seconds. This term, we only informed teachers and staff members about the Evacuation Drill, so that we could check the actual preparedness of students.

We are happy that our students responded quickly and were able to file out, without any panic. We exhort you to continue speaking with your child about the importance of drills and their timely response and attentiveness.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Book Week

We love books, so we needed a whole week to celebrate them! January 20 – 24 was our Book Week.

Dr. Seuss says it best, *“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”*

Through the week, we had different reading/book activities: students brought their favourite books to read in class, parents came and read stories in their mother tongue, MYP students came and read with EC students, each class chose a book and made a presentation about it and we ended the week by coming to school dressed as our favourite book characters!

Reading helps your child to develop literacy skills, gain knowledge about the world around them and builds their imagination. We are always reading here, at AIS, and we encourage you to make it a habit at home as well. Please take the time to read along with your child the library book that is sent home each week!



Favourites Week



Do you remember your favourite toy from when you were a child? How about your favourite snack that someone used to always make for you to take to school? My favourite was definitely my grandma’s chocolate chip cookies! Well, February 10 – 14 was our chance to celebrate all of our favourite things and we hope that our students keep these good memories for a lifetime!

On Monday, students brought their favourite toys to play with and show their friends. The Department looked like a big toy store and all our students were happy to get a chance to play with new toys. We played our favourite games during Circle Time, on Tuesday. On Wednesday,

we got to come to school in our pyjamas! We watched our favourite movie (Frozen 2, of course!) with all the ECD classes and got a special treat, popcorn. We brought our favourite snacks (thanks mom and dad) to share with our classmates, on Thursday. Our tummies were definitely full and happy on that day. We ended Favourites Week by wearing our favourite clothes and putting on an ECD fashion show.

It is so important to have fun at school and give our students a chance to express themselves; this is what Favourites Week is all about. Thank you for your participation and support in making this week a fun and successful one for our Department.



Sarah Bowman - HoD Early Childhood

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Coffee with Curriculum Coordinators



The CCC session for January 2020 was a success. Parents engaged with the newly-revised school policies, while still getting a taste of how learning happens in our classrooms. The fun of cutting, sorting, discussing and pasting was not lost to the parents in attendance. A major concern coming up from the session was the new homework policy that prioritized online/interactive homework (Study Ladder) over paper-based homework. We've received mixed feedback on the homework with most parents appreciating the interactive delivery and how much the students enjoy learning online. AIS is committed to keeping up with the times and embracing virtual learning. The current health crisis from Covid-19 has many IB World Schools shut down in affected regions, and learning/assessments continue online with the IB providing new guidelines. We encourage parents to keep an open-mind and embrace virtual learning, since the 'digital future' is already here.

Y6 Parent Information Meeting



The Y6 journey is novel to most of our parents, since most of us had very different experiences that culminated our primary education. This is why we organise the Year 6 Parent Information Meeting every January to demystify the last year of primary education at AIS. Among the areas of interest covered were the Exhibition, mentorship program, next steps after graduation (MYP) but the most popular of all was the overnight trip. Parents and students alike were curious about this 2-day, 1-night engagement at a campsite out in Mukono. Experiential learning through excursions and trips was a recurring theme even during the MYP presentation, led by select MYP students.

Here's what the students had to say:

When it was time to leave, we got on the bus and as we drove off we started to miss our parents but we soon got over it as we listened to music on the bus

– **Natalie. M (Y6 Maples)**

When we finish that, we go for the ropes course 2 which is way higher than rope course 1! But the steps are too shaky so I fall of and they have to hoist me down from the challenge!

– **Liam. O (Y6 Maples)**

I was a risk taker because I faced my fears. My most exciting part was breakfast, lunch and dinner!

– **Pauline. K (Y6 Cedars)**

I enjoyed sleeping in the tent and playing until 11:00pm! Next time they should extend the trip to four days instead of two.

– **Shreeya (Y6 Cedars)**

I would recommend this to my siblings because it is a great learning experience in becoming an IB learner.

– **Iqrah. J (Y6 Cedars)**

After eating lunch, we had the amazing race. We got into groups and we battled it out hard. My team won in our section!

– **Aaron. M (Y6 Acacia)**

Level one was embarrassing especially for me because, I cried most of the way because I am petrified of heights. The overnight trip was an experience and now I can't wait for what Y6 still has for us.

– **Atia. T (Y6 Acacia)**

Meanwhile with Atia, she was crying though eventually she made it. Surprisingly she was crazy enough to go for level 2. People fell off; other's cried and got stuck. Oh, me? I was chilling eating Doritos!

– **Georgina (Y6 Acacia)**

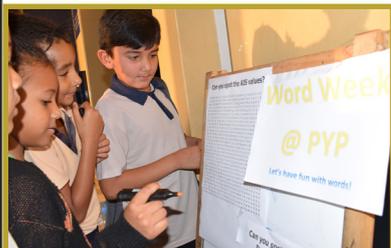


Year 3 Class Assembly

The Year 3 Assembly explored the students' talents and interests, based on what they had learnt so far in their Units of Inquiry. There was a big turn up of parents. The Role Models skit engaged parents by tasking them to identify the learner profile attribute of each role model that spoke e.g. Barak Obama, Messi, and Mahatma Gandhi, among others. This was of great excitement to the parents, and they learnt a lot too about our IB Learner Profile. It was then followed by a poem about 'Physical Features' in the environment which was clearly expressed through their audibility and expressions, this was connected to our Geography and Human Connection Unit. The excitement was all summed up with the famous Baby Shark dance by all the Year 3 students. Thumbs up to the students and teachers for a great display of learning!



Words Our Way –Word Week 2020



"Good words are worth much, and cost little."

-George Herbert

For the first time in AIS history, our language week focussed on the wonder of words. The Primary Department engaged in an array of themed activities from building class dictionaries, responding to teacher questions in more than one



language, puzzles day and the most exciting of them all was the Spelling Bee. Students were involved in showing their mastery of spelling in not just English, but Kiswahili and French as well. Winners from the spelling bee competition in all yearbands were awarded with befitting dictionaries and vocabulary resources.

Assessments

Assessments season for Term 2 went on without a hitch. For the first time, Years 4 to 6 attempted their ISA exams online. Another milestone in digitising teaching and learning processes at AIS. The reports will be coming up later in the term during the student-led conferences. Our new improved assessment policy highlights the 'what's and the 'why's of assessment at AIS. Here is a breakdown of assessments within the Primary Department:

Assessments at Primary

What	When	How	Why
Formative assessment	Every 4 th week of the term	Online MAP assessments for Math, Language and Reading. *Science for the upper year levels only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting purposes To plan for future instruction To identify learning needs
	Weekly	Student self-assessment against learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective practice Tracking and Monitoring
Summative assessment	Annually	International Schools Assessment (ISA). Paper-based/Online assessment in Math, Reading and Writing for the upper year levels only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting purposes Benchmark against like schools who take ISA. Inform big policy decisions on teaching and learning.
	End of unit summative	Project/performance-based authentic assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment against essential elements of the curriculum.
	Mid-year/End Year	Internal paper-based assessments across all taught disciplines for all year levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting and recording purposes

Shallon Baguma - HoD Primary

Coffee with Curriculum Coordinator (CCC)



We looked at a few of the core, but often unacknowledged, elements of the MYP Curriculum together: Service Learning and the MYP Community and Personal Projects. Service Learning involves students using their understanding of their context to take responsible action. This action step serves both to the benefit of the beneficiaries, as well as providing a learning opportunity for the learners themselves. The Community and Personal Projects are capstone projects in Years 9 and 11, which solidifies their learning in a meaningful way, and culminates in action extending outside of the school walls.

We are always looking for more opportunities, for more creative and meaningful engagement between our students' learning and the world outside, and parent networking and recommendation is the key to seeing this happen. If you have any recommendations for where or who we can connect with, to extend our students action and learning outside the school walls, please contact Mr. Kyle. Recommendations are always welcome.



Diploma Programme (DP)

Our IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) verification visit is soon upon us. We are planning on beginning the IBDP in August 2020. The programme itself is the post-secondary curriculum offered by the IB, and spans two years. At AIS, the DP Programme will run parallel with the Cambridge A Levels, giving students the option for which post-secondary programme to do. In contrast to our MYP, the DP will require the students to study six subjects, rather than eight. This is also different from the Cambridge A Levels, whereby students could take as low as four subjects.

The DP will also require students to engage in the DP Core. The DP Core has the following: This Core involves Creativity, Action and Service (CAS), requires students to participate in service projects, sport, or other extracurricular activities to counterbalance their academics.

- Theory of Knowledge (TOK) philosophy class is a class that revolves around the questions of how we know what we know from all of the various disciplinary perspectives.
- Extended Essay (EE) which requires the students to write their own 4,000 word thesis.

Students in the MYP are worked with and counseled to determine which programme they enter in to for their post-secondary work.

International Trekking Trip

Snowy mountains, slate quarries, some studying... but lots of fun! That was the week for the six students who traveled to North Wales in the UK, accompanied by the Secondary Head, Ms Zoe Calder. During the week, these six students worked alongside the students of our gracious hosts, St. David's College in Llandudno, to gain perspective on what their day is like. Over the weekend, the students were able to scale snowy Welsh mountains, go trampolining, zip line in the old Welsh slate quarries and enjoy some great Welsh food.

The students will now have some time of reflection, which will be a display on the Secondary floor to share some of their experiences with you. Summing up the experience, Ms. Zoe said, "It has been an absolute pleasure taking the team to Wales. All of the students were very polite and this did not go unnoticed. Each student drove right into the task given to them, and made the most of each experience. Thank you to all the students and parents for helping the trip run so well. Well done, Team. I am very proud of you all!"



Assemblies and Homeroom

In our Assemblies and on a Wednesday during our homeroom time, the secondary students and teachers have been working together on a weekly curriculum that we are now using across the programme. This is to standardize our homeroom and pastoral responsibilities as teachers, while also attempting to provide some continuity to things such as ATL skill practice and the Learner Profile for the students. Soon, we will have some of the work displayed on the Secondary floor and we welcome you to come and have a look.



As you have read in Ms. Ameena’s note, we are so excited to announce that Acorns International School is now a registered Cambridge International School and thus authorized to offer the IGCSE and Cambridge AS and A Levels programmes.

Our teachers have full access to the School Support Hub of Cambridge Assessment International Education, where they obtain resources and guidance during their planning for lessons. With our competent staff, well-stocked library and equipped science laboratory, we can offer a wide range of subject combinations in the fields of science and humanities.

Our current Year 11 students have been registered and are in their final preparations for the May – June 2020 IGCSE exams at our centre, in addition to the Personal Project, which is an IB requirement for completion of the MYP cycle. The final preparations involve mock exams which will be administered from March 16 – 27, 2020. The Year 11 students have been issued provisional timetables for the May – June IGCSE examinations. During the same period, our Cambridge AS and A Levels students (Year 12) will be writing their end of Term 1 examinations. After the examinations, the Year 12 students will engage in a week of internships at institutions of their choice and write reflections upon their return to school.

Thank you parents for your continued support, as they prepare for the assessments.

100 DAYS AT AIS

All students were full of excitement and enthusiasm on Friday, February 14. This is the day when AIS celebrated 100 days of school. It was a fun day indeed – marked by 100 reflections, 100 words of compliment, 100 ways to solve problems in the world, 100 ways to bake a cake, 100 exercises, lots of arts and crafts activities and much more!



The Secondary Department celebrated 100 days of school by sharing and thinking of others. This year the students collected food for the Food Bank! The food was then delivered to families and individuals in need. Thank you to all the families and students who took the time to donate to the food bank, because together we can make a small difference within our community.



ISSA Table Tennis Tournament



On Saturday, February 29, 2020 a group of 6 of our students attended the International Schools Sports Association (ISSA) Table Tennis tournament at Hana International School. Participating schools included 7Hills, Vienna College Namugongo, British School of Kampala, Kabojja International School, Hana International School and Word of Life International School. Our students competed in 4 of the 6 age categories: Under 16 Boys, Under 14 Girls, Under 16 Girls and Under 20 Girls. Our amazing AIS students placed first in each of the 4 categories they competed in and brought 4 trophies back to school! We are so impressed by their hard work and effort and how much they have improved this academic year. These students are Aavardan Sunday (Year 11), Izyan Ali (Year 9), Faaziya Babwani (Year 8), Tanmayi Reddy (Year 8), Ismaa Naveed (Year 8) and Melissa Gwiza (Year 6). Excellent work team!!



Talent Hunt



On Saturday, February 29, 2020, AIS held its second annual Talent Hunt event. Participating schools included: Aga Khan, British School of Kampala, Kampala International School of Uganda (KISU), Oak International School, and Taibah International School. Students competed in the following categories: Dance, Voice, Instrument and Creative Arts. Each performance category had 4 subcategories based on age: Under 9, Under 11, Under 14 and Under 18. AIS participated in every event and submitted 16 items to the Talent Hunt. We were thrilled to have our students win first place in 9 of the 16 categories: Under 9 Voice, Under 18

Voice, Under 9 Dance, Under 11 Dance, Under 11 Instrumental, Under 18 Instrumental, Under 9 Creative Arts, Under 11 Creative Arts, Under 18 Creative Arts. We had one performance that won a trophy as 1st Runner up: Under 9 Instrumental. And we had 4 performances that won an award for being 2nd Runner's up: Under 14 Instrumental, Under 14 Dance, Under 18 Dance and Under 14 Creative Arts. We are so proud of all of the students that participated in this event, including our school Choir, which opened with a song. Thank you parents for coming out on Saturday to support our students, it was truly a memorable day. We thank you for being a part of it!

