



# Parents as partners and Frequently Asked Questions

Nadeen School has an open-door policy so if you have any questions, please pop and chat to your child's class teacher and learning support teacher or a member of the leadership team. We value parents as partners so please speak to your child's class and learning support teachers and attend the welcome evening, parent workshops, and all the oral reports. Please ask to meet your child's class teacher if you would like a meeting between the oral reports. Read the newsletters and blogs and attend school events as they are all an invaluable way of finding what is happening with your child's school learning.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To help you understand what is happening at Nadeen School, how your child is learning and why we do things a certain way, here are some FAQs that might be of interest to you.

### Are all the teachers qualified?

Absolutely! In addition to qualified class teachers, we also have 10+ qualified teachers that work in classes alongside the class teachers as learning support teachers and assistants. All of our assistants have either UK teaching assistant qualification or similar or are about to complete qualification if they are new to the role. Four of our assistants are qualified teachers and one is a degree level qualified Art Therapist. We are also recognised as a training school and often have assistants training to become teachers -these teachers-in training train alongside our current teachers and are mentored by our lead teachers and the UK university's examiners.

### How do we know you're keeping up with UK education expectations and following the most up to date ideas in education?

We are active members of organisations that recognise the best of UK education. We have gained **outstanding** ratings in our British Schools of the Middle East and British Schools Overseas accreditations. The latter is recognised by the UK government and we are one of only two schools in Bahrain recognised by the British government to be this level in Bahrain. We have also attained **outstanding** in our last two Bahrain government accreditations. In all of these accreditations, you have demonstrated high levels of academic excellence and accelerated progress to achieve these ratings. When analysing our end of year results against UK expectations we consistently are equal or above UK government expectations.

We had the highest reading score in Bahrain the international examination Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) that was undertaken by all Bahrain schools.

We have been awarded "Outstanding Pastoral Care Initiative" by the British International School Awards in London and was the only school globally to receive this award. We were also shortlisted for "Outstanding Creativity in Learning" at the same awards the following year pitted against over 200 elite international schools.

All of our staff are active learners and enthusiastically maintain their professional development and keep abreast of best practice in education. We are members of a comprehensive online UK based professional training site. Our teachers attend professional development workshops and courses both in Bahrain and abroad. They have worked on establishing professional learning groups in Bahrain and abroad. Our staff regularly lead training at workshops and other schools regularly visit Nadeen School to see best practice and learn from our teachers.

## **Where do Nadeen School pupils go to in Year 7?**

Over the past four years, all of the pupils that have undergone the whole admissions and examinations process at St Christopher's School and BSB attained places. These are the only two British schools we recommend on the island. We also recommend Bahrain School and Riffa Views that follow the American curriculum. Some parents chose to send their children to other schools.

Both of the British schools are selective and require a high level of academic excellence. On the first round of testing:

- **100%** of Nadeen School pupils scored in the average range or above in one or more subjects
- **81%** (average of both school results) scored in the high average range or above in one or more subjects
- **18%** (average of both school results) scored in the extremely high range in one or more subjects

Both schools expect an average or high average score in the testing in all subjects.

For those pupils that did not pass the first round of testing, both schools offer a second test for those pupils who are not quite ready. It is not surprising that some pupils are not quite ready at 10 years old, as Nadeen School is a non-selective school that has children with some learning difficulties or who have arrived relatively recently to the English curriculum. Both schools love Nadeen School pupils as our pupils are enthusiastic and independent learners and offer our pupils a second chance later in the year. For those pupils that underwent the full second round of testing, all of the pupils gained places.

## **What do you do to extend our high achieving pupils?'**

We teach a 'mastery curriculum', which means that we extend children's learning opportunities to broaden and deepen the curriculum. We offer many open-ended, rich challenges in the classroom, meaning that any child (not only a 'top group') can achieve high, or even very high. Children can apply their skills in other contexts, can teach it to others, can explain their reasoning and can solve problems relating to it. However, it is not only the highest attaining children who work on the strategies needed to develop mastery; these skills are built into many challenges throughout our curriculum and all children have the chance to excel. Not all will achieve it...YET...but all have the opportunity and are developing the learning behaviours.

Our teachers work hard to provide appropriate stretch and challenge and to make sure that individual children's skills and talents are nurtured and pushed. In addition to this, we prioritise mastery skills in a personal development context, by offering leadership opportunities and programmes that are tailored around a particular child's strengths and talents (our holistic hooks).

Here are some examples of opportunities to demonstrate deep and meaningful learning:

- Rich maths tasks with opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving
- Open writing tasks allow for multi-level learning
- Guided reading with appropriately challenging texts
- The teaching of the 8Cs-our big questions leave room for individual passions and interests, promotion of higher-order thinking skills provides opportunities to excel
- Philosophical discussions
- Enquiry-based learning
- Supplying the technology, time, resources and permission to think freely and explore learning
- A rich and varied programme of extra-curricular clubs
- Inter-house competitions and events
- Sporting opportunities/tournaments/ fixtures, and Primary Sports League
- Music/drama/ public speaking performances
- Putting children forward for competitions (BSME, local/national)
- Giving opportunities for leadership e.g. Head-boy and Head-girl, House Captains, Mentors and School Council Representatives.
- Introducing entrepreneurial opportunities

## **How do I know what my child is learning at school?**

As mentioned in the introduction, the best way to know what is happening at school is to get involved with events, workshops and the welcome evening etc. Attend the two oral reports and make further appointments with the teachers, should you require them.

There is also a list of developmental expectations from the EYFS Development Matters curriculum and a list of Age-Related Expectations from the English National Curriculum (year 1 to year 6) on our website so please read those too.

Class teachers and learning support teachers will also let you know what your child is learning via class Dojo or Google Classroom (year 4 to 6) for each new block of learning. Learning is regularly updated on classroom display boards. We take our open-door policy very seriously and if you are unsure about anything or would like to know more, please ask.

## **How can I help my child at home?**

Class teachers and learning support teachers regularly update class Dojo and Google Classroom with ways you can help your child at home. These will be activities you can do at home, games to play, spelling patterns and number facts to learn and links to useful websites. Besides these suggestions, please read, read and read some more with your child. Please give your child lots of opportunities and time to play and chances to try different activities.

## **How do you know where my child is in relationship to UK expectations?**

We assess in a variety of different ways at Nadeen School. Our most effective and most frequently used method is the ongoing teacher assessment for all pupils. We use a UK online tracking program to plan our lessons, assess our pupils against given National Curriculum (NC) objectives and monitor the depth of understanding. In EYFS we use the objectives from the UK Development Matters curriculum. In year 1- year 6, your child's attainment against each NC objectives is recorded at the end of each 3-week block. This personal pupil profile, for every curriculum subject, follows your child through the school. All teachers throughout the school, including learning support teachers, can view a child's profile, identify where gaps are occurring or a child needs extending and can plan tailor-made activities for your child.

Secondly, we use UK based age-related testing (yr1 to yr6) in reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation and maths to assess your child's learning and further inform the teacher's ongoing assessment. These test also feed into your child's online profile. Writing is further assessed by using UK exemplars of age-related expectations.

## **Do you only assess pupil's in the National Curriculum subjects?**

We value the holistic approach at Nadeen School. We carry out standardised testing from year 1 to year 6 in spatial and non-verbal reasoning. Your child's learning behaviours are assessed and, where necessary, carefully monitored. At times we also administer more in-depth cognitive ability testing together with dyslexia and dyscalculia screening tests.

## **What opportunities are there to participate in sports and the Arts at Nadeen School?**

We recognise the need for young pupils in EYFS to have opportunities to develop physically. Except for the few extremely hot weeks each year, pupils in the nursery have the opportunity to be outside in the large playground for up to 90 minutes each day. In addition to this, the opportunity for physical development continues throughout the day inside the classroom and in their smaller outside play areas. They also have one lesson per week with our PE teachers.

Our Creative Curriculum blocks for year 1 -6 ensure there is an in-depth focus of these aspects of learning in all blocks through integrated planning. Additionally, the Arts are specifically taught each term in an Arts block.

From reception to year 6, pupils have two formal lessons with our PE teachers and one formal music lesson. PE and dance teachers are on duty during playtime to continue a focus on physical development. There is also a strong focus

during playtime on the Arts, with opportunities to rehearse and perform short drama sketches, join singing and dancing groups or have jamming sessions with drums, ukuleles etc. During the school week, there is also an opportunity for band practice and small group instrumental sessions.

After school clubs focus on sports and the Arts and each term there is an opportunity for children from year 3 upwards to join our free band, choir or competitive sports club. Private instrumental tuition is also available at the school. Other clubs also run from nursery to year 6 that focus on these areas.

Pupils from year 4 upwards compete in a competitive sports league against other private schools in Bahrain. We organise collaborative events for music and choir with other schools in Bahrain. Our children also perform at British Embassy events and hotels around the island.

### **How do you help my child transition between EYFS and Year 1?**

In the UK, children move between The Development Matters Curriculum in EYFS and National Curriculum from Year 1. The National Curriculum expectations for year 1 compared to the EYFS curriculum make this quite a considerable transition.

Before the transition, we carefully prepare children by:

- Children join in with KS1 and KS2 assemblies point way through the year as they become ready to prepare for the transition
- Children have an opportunity to spend time in year 1 with the current year 1 children and teachers towards the end of the year
- Giving the year 1 teachers the opportunity to spend time in the reception classes getting to know the children transitioning
- Holding regular transition meetings between teachers involved in both year groups
- Carefully tracking all aspects of a children's developmental progress

During Year 1 we support children by:

- Recognising that many children are not ready for the more formal structure of the National Curriculum and maintain continuous provision through the first term
- Ensuring that throughout the year there is still a sizeable focus on play-based learning
- Tracking some pupils through the EYFS Development Matter Curriculum, where necessary.

### **How do you decide which class my child will move in to for the following academic year?**

When planning the class list for next year, we look carefully at each individual child's needs, the mix within the cohort and the dynamics of the whole class.

When considering the child's needs we look at:

- **The child's friends in school**-this friendship group at school may not be the same as the child has out of school on playdates etc.
- **The child's learning needs**- it is important that the class has a range of not only academic levels but also a wide range of personality traits that compliment your child's learning. This ensures that you child will continue to develop academically, socially and emotionally.
- **The mix within the cohort and class's dynamics**: considering-gender ratio; academic levels; pastoral needs; ratio of existing pupils to new pupils; and the ratio of Arabic pupils to non-Arabic pupils.

### **Why do you need mix the classes each year?**

We do this for some/all of the following reasons:

- It builds multi-layered friendship groups across classes and really adds to our Small School-Big Family.
  - As you know our quirky little school is not purpose built and our classrooms are not a standardised size so we need to mix classes across a year group as they move through the school.
  - We sometimes have to move from a three form entry for a year group to a two form entry and vice versa.
- Parent Handbook rev: June 2021

- We live in a transient society and so in some year groups we have children leaving and new children starting and so classes need to be balanced for the reason explained above.
- It encourages a growth mindset and social and emotional resilience in pupils as they make new friends.

### **How are the PTA funds spent?**

The work the PTA does in fundraising is deeply appreciated by the school community. The funds raised help to enhance learning opportunities such as:

- outdoor learning areas e.g. the mud kitchen and treehouse
- purchasing resources that extend school resources e.g. robotics, engineering sets and more iPads
- subsidise out of school opportunities e.g. paying for buses for particular school trips such as invitations to prestigious National events.

When allocating PTA funds, we carefully budget to ensure all year groups in the school will benefit from the new learning opportunities.

### **How do ensure the teaching styles in Arabic is similar to the rest of the school?**

The Bahrain Ministry of Education Arabic and Islamic Studies curriculums follow a textbook-based model of learning. Our Arabic staff enhance the learning in all Arabic lessons, in line with teaching methodology throughout the rest of the school, with interactive opportunity to learn; the use of interesting resources; online programmes of study; and supplementary reading schemes.

Our Arabic staff are regularly observed in line with our observation and appraisal cycle and they attend all of our relevant professional development workshops. The staff regularly observe best practice in other classes so there is a continuity in teaching and learning between the English Curriculum and Arabic Curriculum.

### **How do you ensure progress in Arabic?**

The Arabic department closely follows the same assessment policy as the rest of the school. The also use our online tracking programme, Classroom Monitor, that closely monitors attainment and progress of all Arabic pupils as they move through the school.

The Ministry of Education carries out regular inspections of the Arabic department and to be outstanding in the Bahrain government inspections, the Arabic department was rigorously observed, examine results were analysed and books carefully scrutinised.

During the Bahrain Education and Training Authority inspection (Mar 2019), the Arabic department was frequently observed and the department added considerably to our **outstanding** rating.

### **What happens what a teacher is absent?**

Within the school, we have key leaders who are available to cover classes during teacher absences. We also have an external registry of qualified teachers that we call on to cover absences. At times of high absences, teachers from within the school will cover particular lessons too. Our assistants who hold a higher teaching assistant qualification or are qualified teachers, will cover for short periods. When a training teacher is nearing the end of their post-graduate degree and had the appropriate feedback from the UK university examiner, they too may cover for absences for short periods. All of this is in line with the best current UK practice.

### **How do you know that there is consistency in teaching?**

All teachers and learning support teachers plan together in year groups. The leadership team including the head teacher, deputy head teachers and subject leaders, are regularly involved in these lesson planning meetings and visit in the classrooms to see these planned lessons in action. We frequently speak to the children about their learning, look at the pupils' work and analyse assessment and tracking data across year groups. Each term, in-depth discussions take place between year group class teachers, learning support teachers and the leadership team. All aspects of a child's academic and personal progress are discussed at these meetings. All staff are encouraged to observe each other to see the best current practice.

### **Why do pupils from year 3 upwards require Chromebooks?**

We use Chromebook in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 because we believe that by doing so we are equipping children with skills that they will need in order to be successful in the digital age. We looked at many studies regarding one-to-one devices in schools and have come to the conclusion that these devices are very useful tools, that complement our holistic approach to education well, blending traditional pedagogy with more modern approaches.

### **How do you monitor internet safety?**

We use a proxy server that all our school bandwidth goes through. The proxy server then filters for all unwanted content.

On the Chromebooks, on top of the school network security, there are safety restrictions in place locally on each pupil's account. Therefore, the children are safe even if a pupil is connected to a different network.

Throughout the school, internet safety is taught and reinforced frequently. Children know how to search safely and stay safe online. We hold regular workshops for parents to ensure they are fully up to date with measures they should follow to keep their children safe online.

### **What should we expect in terms of homework for our children?**

We consider home learning very important at Nadeen School and we hold the Welcome Evening and many workshops to ensure there is a strong partnership between the school and home in order to support your child's learning. Teachers will not set homework every day as we believe homework should be meaningful and manageable to ensure it has maximum effect on learning.

Things a child/parent should do every day:

- read to your child and let them read (or tell a story) to you. Year 6 children are not too old to be read to at bedtime!
- Involve your child in cooking, shopping, setting the table-these are all great ways to extend a child's language and make maths more meaningful even for the older child
- Have lots of conversations with your child about a variety of topics, extending their language with each one
- watch something meaningful whether that be an age-appropriate documentary or news report and discuss what they hear/see
- give them time to play

Things a child/parent should do several times a week:

- do a fun activity, hobby, or try something new
- practice different spelling requirements (these will vary according to the age of your child-please ask your child's class teacher for more advice)
- practising and learning number bonds, multiplication and division facts (again these will vary according to the age of your child-please ask your child's class teacher for more advice)
- playing interactive games like 'play live' on Education City
- practising weighing / measuring when cooking
- play a board game / card game
- build fine motor skills by doing sewing, knitting, model making or playing with small lego and construction sets
- get involved in imaginary play

Things a child/parent should do over a one to two-week period:

- complete teacher set activities on Education City, Dojo or Google Education (depending on their age)

- research something about their current class topic
- write a story independently
- draw a detailed picture
- get involved in an outdoor problem solving activities, such as den building
- practising using money, working out change, etc when you go shopping.

All class teachers communicate with parents as a minimum at the start of every 3-week block, via Dojo or email, explaining the big question for the next block, the text to be studied in the English teaching sequence, the areas of maths to be covered and the phonics sounds being covered / spelling rules with some examples. This information can help parents to be part of children's learning journey through discussion and interest at home.

### **Why does my child need to go on to the learning support programme?**

As the only non-selective outstanding school on the island, we believe all children have a right to a quality education provision. Children within the school may have English as an additional language, gaps in their learning or have specific learning difficulties. As a school that values outstanding progress and attainment, and to ensure any gaps in a child's learning are filled and accelerated progress is made, we offer mandatory, additional support for any pupils who fall below UK age-related expectations.

### **What does the learning support programme look like?**

We identify and support a child's additional learning needs through rigorous formal and informal assessments. Individual support is targeted through a variety of in-class and out of class support and could include any of the following:

- 1:1 or small group support with learning support teacher;
- 1:1 or small group support with English as a second language teacher;
- 1:1 or small group support with a qualified academic assistant with specialized training;
- 1:1 or small group support with communication development support (EYFS and Year 1);
- in-class support to improve and scaffold the access to the class curriculum;
- 1:1 or small group support with literacy specialist;
- 1:1 or small group support with maths specialist;
- 1:1 or small group support with deputy head teacher;
- 1:1 or small group support with the head teacher;
- specialized testing e.g. Dyslexia or Dyscalculia screener;
- behaviour management intervention;
- introduction to and meetings with out-of-school specialists e.g. Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Specialists;
- establishment of Individual Educational Plan (IEP,) where necessary;
- music therapy and gross motor development sessions; and
- in-class support to improve and scaffold access to the class curriculum during Arabic lessons.

### **When does learning support happen?**

A child may receive different levels of support (level 1 - level 4) depending on their learning needs. This could vary between 2 and 10 sessions per week. The amount of sessions a child receives depends on the level of support they require.

The sessions take place at a variety of different times. We try to plan some sessions during Arabic lessons when the Arabic pupils are out of the classroom and no new learning can take place. We try to do in-class support for English and maths during those respective lessons. Sometimes, if a child requires 6+ lessons, additional learning support lessons will take place during other lessons too. Arabic support also takes place 2 to 3 times a week in Arabic lessons.

### **Is the support in-class or are children withdrawn?**

Most of the curriculum support takes place in class during English and maths lessons. English as an additional language lesson always takes place out of class until a child achieves a certain level of proficiency in English. If a child has very specific gaps, and those gaps are stopping them accessing current learning e.g. phonic knowledge, then the

child will be withdrawn from class to fill those gaps so learning can move forward. If required, we run very specific programmes out of class lessons e.g. for pupils with a specific learning difficulty or on an Individualised Education Plan (IEP).

### **How do you know what a child needs and how do you monitor progress?**

We carry out a rigorous process of assessment using both teacher judgement against specific UK National Curriculum objectives and external UK standardised tests in English and maths. These assessments are recorded in a UK tracking programme that carefully analyses a pupil's attainment and progresses against UK age-related expectations. This careful analysis ensures gaps in learning are quickly identified and the correct support allocated. This assessment progress takes place for every child in the school and is maintained for the entire time a child stays at Nadeen from nursery to Year 6. Class teachers and learning support teachers plan all learning support lessons together to ensure gaps in learning are filled whilst still keeping abreast of current learning objectives and expectations.

### **Will my child miss anything in the class if they are attending learning support?**

Wherever possible, the learning support enhances what is happening in class and helps to fill in the gaps in a child's learning. Where a learning support session happens out of class, the child will be following a similar objective to the lesson they have left. If a child misses a different type of lesson, the teachers do their utmost to ensure the child can access the missed lesson.

### **How long will my child be on the learning support programme?**

There is no set answer to this question. We treat each child at the school as an individual and children are on learning support for many varied reasons. We do want independent learners so we continually monitor a child's attainment and progress levels, and each term we decide if a child's learning support needs have changed.

Research shows that it takes up to 6 to 8 years for a pupil who joins with English as an additional language at a beginner's levels to become proficient. A child who has gaps in their learning or a specific learning difficulty will remain on the learning support programme until they are meeting UK Curriculum age-related expectations. It is the head teacher's decisions, together with tracking analysis and discussions with the classroom teacher and learning support teacher, to remove a pupil from the learning support programme. The parents will be fully involved with this discussion process.

### **How do you decide if a child needs an external educational psychology report?**

Our learning support programme is comprehensive and all teachers in the school have experience of teaching pupils with a variety of learning needs. Some pupils have more complexed learning needs and, for those pupils, a consultancy level of assessment is required. An Educational Psychologist report is usually the level of report we require.

New pupils to the school who show an unusual profile on their entrance assessments, or pupils within the school who show an unusual learning profile, will require an educational psychologist report. These detailed reports provide profiles of a child's strength in learning as well as areas of learning that require development. Parents will be fully involved in this process.

### **Do children learn in small groups or on a 1:1?**

For most pupils work in small groups as research shows that pupils learn best when they can discuss and demonstrate their learning with others. Our comprehensive tracking programme ensures that pupils with similar gaps in their learning are grouped. Pupils will also work 1:1 with the learning support teacher on specific needs, particularly those related to their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **Why is it better to have in-school learning support rather than have a tutor outside of school?**

Our comprehensive tracking programme ensures we know exactly the gaps in a child's learning. The class teachers and learning support teachers are constantly assessing every child through the day and feeding information into the

tracking programme. This assessment information is used to plan all aspects of your child's learning. It is not feasible for a tutor, who may only see a child once or twice a week, to assess a child's learning needs effectively and plan sessions appropriately. For the most, it is also more effective for children to work in small groups and learn from and with each other.

### **Why do we need to pay for learning support?**

Other schools in Bahrain, with much higher fees, do not offer the level of learning support we offer. Where other schools say they offer unpaid support, it is the same support that is offered to every child in Nadeen School. Our adult to pupil ratio throughout the school is high and besides fully qualified teachers, almost all of assistants are qualified- four of our assistants are qualified teachers. The level of in-class support and extension to learning is high.

In addition to this support for all pupils, we employ a further 11 members of staff to work alongside class teachers to support learning for those not accessing UK National Curriculum expectations. The school fees do not cover this level of staffing ratio. Our learning support department always runs at a loss, even with the extra learning support fees. By charging parents, and allowing parents and the school to help finance this programme, it ensures that we can admit pupils that do not meet other selective schools' expectations and make sure that the learning needs of other pupils are not affected.

### **What happens if I don't want my child to attend learning support?**

Our admissions policy states that: *"We will admit any child as long as we can meet the child's needs and, by meeting their needs, we do not affect the learning needs of others."*

A pupil's needs are fully tracked and analysed. If a child considerably falls below UK Development Matter (EYFS) developmental expectations or UK National Curriculum expectations (yr1 -6), either during the admissions process or during our regular assessment, they will be required to join the learning support programme.

Additionally, a child may require an Educational Psychologist report or similar, or support from external consultants e.g. speech therapy. Both admissions to the learning support programme or the need for external support or reports are mandatory and approval from the parents has been given during the applications process. A child's place at the school is dependent on all required support being in place.

### **Why do children in nursery and reception sometimes need learning support even though they are still going through a developmental phase?**

We follow the UK Developmental Matters Framework for all EYFS pupils. The curriculum follows through various developmental stages. When a child is assessed in a developmental stage well below their actual age, we monitor carefully, and the child's class teacher and the leadership team undertake various observations over time.

We particularly monitor differences between chronological age and developmental age in the prime areas of social and emotional development, language and communication, and physical development. Research consistently shows that early intervention is paramount in these aspects of development so support either by with our learning support team or with an external specialist is essential.

**Any other questions? Please come in to see us!**