

# The National Curriculum Framework



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## INTRODUCTION

The National Curriculum defines the learning experiences of children aged 4 – 18 in schools in the Maldives, and describes what they should know, understand, value and be able to do at each stage of their development. It is a framework that provides the structural basis of school education and makes explicit the vision that this curriculum sets out to achieve; the principles that guide its design; the shared values that Maldivian society deems important; and the key competencies that all children and young people are expected to acquire through schooling, upon which all learning is organised. The framework also describes how learning is structured across the stages of schooling and categorised into different key learning areas. It further identifies effective pedagogy to be adopted and the roles of all key players in creating positive learning experiences in schools.

The National Curriculum reflects contemporary thinking on what children and young people need to succeed in life, and how schools can best help them achieve this. Taking into account the views of a large number of stakeholder groups across the nation, over a period of time, and incorporating the recommendations of international research and educational theory on curriculum design and delivery, this framework offers a broad and balanced curriculum that provides rich experiences in learning with equal emphasis on developing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in order to cater to the holistic development of the child. The key competencies that students will achieve through this curriculum will provide them with the tools to deal effectively with the opportunities and challenges which they will encounter now, as young people, and in future, as adults.

There are three main features of this framework that make it different from previous overarching statements of the curriculum and syllabus documents.

The National Curriculum takes a broad view of curriculum as the entire planned learning experience offered in schools. As such, the framework details what we are trying to achieve, how learning would be organised and how its impact would be measured. It does not therefore simply stipulate what needs to be taught; but creates a vision of the kind of young people we want in our society, and the values that we uphold and would like to instil in the generations to come. It further specifies how learning would be

structured and what measures schools and other stakeholders within the system would need to take to effectively implement this curriculum.

The focus on eight key competencies that all children and young people must achieve is a major shift in the design of the curriculum. These key competencies will form the common core of achievement. The previously strong focus on subjects and time allocation has been diminished by emphasising the necessity of achieving the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes identified within each key competency. The National Curriculum shows the links between the key competencies and the key learning areas, encouraging learning at lower levels of schooling to be integrated and for strong links between disciplines to be developed at higher levels.

A third distinct feature of this framework is that it maps out the learning that students will experience across the stages of schooling. This would ensure that there are smooth transitions between stages, and encourage a developmental and integrated approach to curriculum planning, teaching and learning. By providing a map of the total span of a student's schooling, it provides continuity and consistency in a student's education. Although schooling is divided into six main stages, this approach ensures that at each stage, the focus remains the same: a vision to develop young people who are motivated to learn and explore; individuals who are confident and competent, while being productive and responsible contributors in the society.

Using the National Curriculum Framework as its basis, syllabus statements will be developed for each key learning area, incorporating within them, the cross cutting key competencies. In addition to this, curriculum support materials for schools and teachers will be developed and on-going professional development programmes must be provided for teachers and schools to lead to successful implementation.

The following figure (Figure 1) maps out the key elements of the National Curriculum.

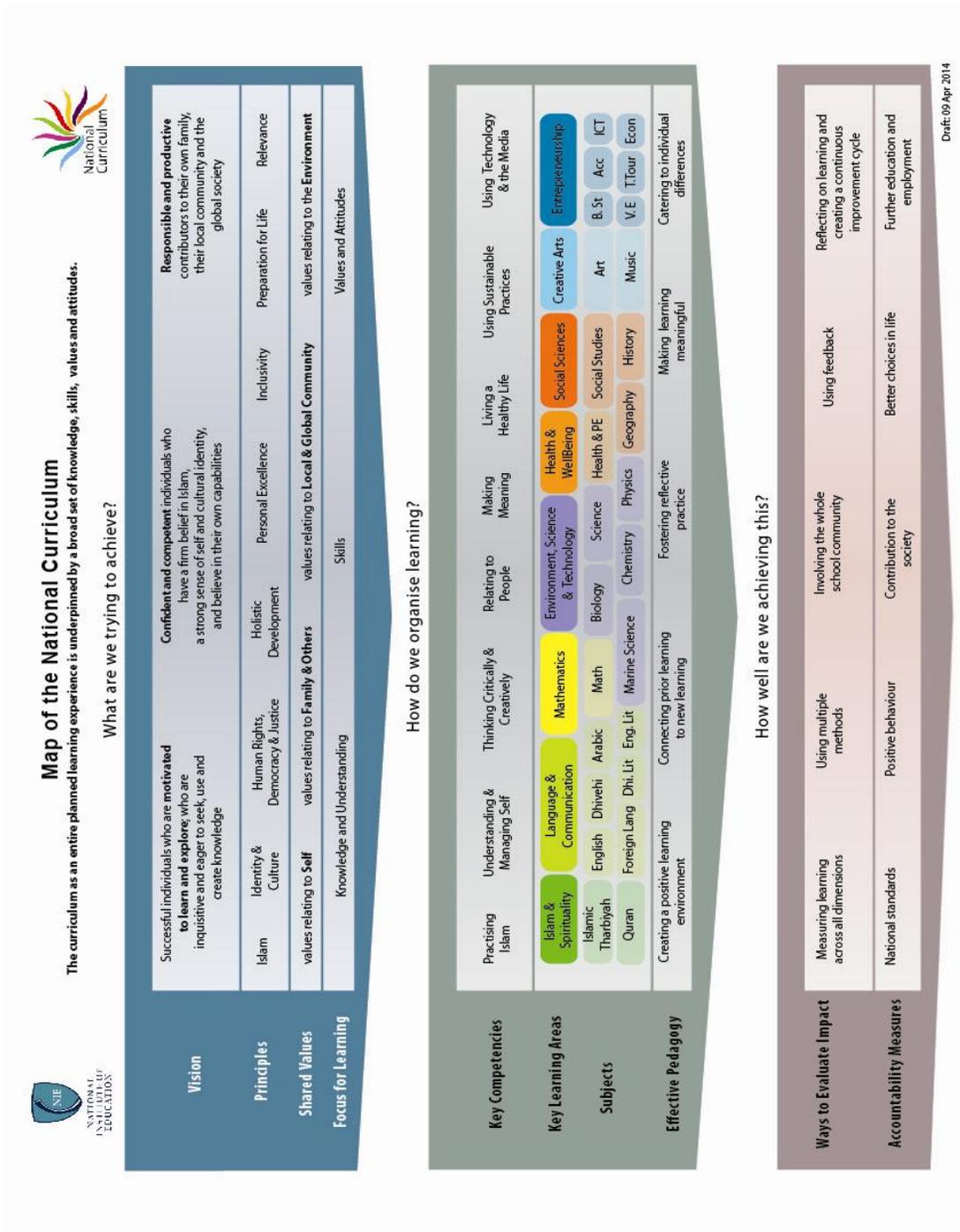


Figure 1: Map of the National Curriculum

## VISION

The National Curriculum envisions the development of:

- successful individuals who are motivated to learn and explore; who are inquisitive and eager to seek, use and create knowledge;
- confident and competent individuals who have a firm belief in Islam, a strong sense of self and cultural identity, and believe in their own capabilities; and
- responsible and productive contributors to their own family, their local community and the global society.

Figure 2 shows the different characteristics of young people who have achieved each of the three dimensions of this vision.

| <b>Motivated to learn and explore:</b>   | <b>Confident and competent:</b>   | <b>Responsible and productive:</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ identify own learning styles</li> <li>○ employ a variety of learning strategies</li> <li>○ expand own circle of knowledge and repertoire of skills</li> <li>○ are critical and creative thinkers</li> <li>○ are able to think, reason, question and evaluate</li> <li>○ are literate and numerate</li> <li>○ take pleasure in learning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adhere to the teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah</li> <li>○ take Islam as a complete way of life</li> <li>○ have a strong identity of self</li> <li>○ uphold national values and culture</li> <li>○ communicate successfully</li> <li>○ recognise own strengths</li> <li>○ are resilient</li> <li>○ take initiative</li> <li>○ distinguish right from wrong</li> <li>○ are equipped for life and work</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ contribute to the wellbeing of own family, local community and global society</li> <li>○ are resourceful and reliable</li> <li>○ make informed decisions</li> <li>○ respect others</li> <li>○ follow sustainable practices</li> <li>○ are enterprising and entrepreneurial</li> <li>○ contest violence and injustice</li> <li>○ are keen to make a difference</li> </ul> |

*Figure 2: Vision of the National Curriculum*

## PRINCIPLES

The National Curriculum places the student at the heart of the teaching and learning process. It asserts that all students must experience a curriculum that challenges, engages and inspires; a curriculum that is relevant to their needs as individuals and as members of the Maldivian society. The eight principles set out below lay the foundation for all curriculum decision making, both in terms of design and delivery. The first of these address the key concerns that are unique to the Maldivian context.

### **Principle 1: Islam**

The National Curriculum is underpinned by Islamic values, principles and practices. It recognises the place of Islam in the Maldivian community and supports the development of individuals who understand and practise the Muslim faith.

### **Principle 2: Identity and Culture**

The National Curriculum encourages an in-depth awareness of the unique Maldivian culture, and the appreciation of our heritage. It promotes the development of a strong national identity and an in-depth understanding of our nation: its history, its present and its future.

### **Principle 3: Human Rights, Democracy and Justice**

The National Curriculum upholds human rights, democracy and justice. It strives to provide opportunities for students to explore related values, understand their essence, and experience these concepts through their learning environment.

### **Principle 4: Holistic Development**

The National Curriculum promotes the holistic development of the child. It focuses on enhancing students' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development, and thereby the overall wellbeing of the individual.

**Principle 5: Personal Excellence**

The National Curriculum empowers all students to reach their maximum potential and attain personal excellence. It ensures that students are provided with learning experiences that are challenging at the appropriate level, require deep understanding, involve active participation, and sustain their motivation.

**Principle 6: Inclusivity**

The National Curriculum is nondiscriminatory and ensures that all students can learn and achieve. It ensures that the learning needs of all students are identified and recognised, personalising the learning to respond to individual needs, aptitudes and talents.

**Principle 7: Preparation for Life**

The National Curriculum fosters the development of skills in preparation for life. It encourages students to be self-reliant, responsible and independent; to be individuals who value work and persevere in their efforts to succeed.

**Principle 8: Relevance**

The National Curriculum offers learning that is purposeful, and encourages students to see the value of what they are learning. It ensures that learning is relevant to their present and future lives, by exploring significant contemporary and emerging issues such as technology, sustainability, enterprise and citizenship.

## SHARED VALUES

Values refer to deeply held ideas and beliefs that define what is acceptable in a society. Values are conveyed through thoughts and actions, which qualify our personal conduct and our interaction with others. They are priorities that help to distinguish what is right from wrong, and guide young people to live a meaningful life, in harmony with others. The values that the National Curriculum encourages students to hold are those that are deemed vital to grow as an individual, to thrive in our society and to live peaceably in a diverse world.

Students acquire values implicitly through what they hear, see, read and experience. They give importance to those beliefs inherent in the actions of their role models. For this reason, parents and educators – including teachers and school leaders – should reflect on their own values and how these are translated into the curricular content, the learning environment, and the mode of teaching.

The following table describes values under four categories. These are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, and are presented in alphabetical order under each category.

| <b>Values relating to self</b><br><br><i>The values identified in this category relate to understanding and respecting oneself, and to empower oneself to pursue excellence.</i>  | <b>Values relating to family and others</b><br><br><i>The values identified in this category relate to understanding and respecting others; to being sensitive to individual differences as well as the rights and responsibilities of others.</i>                                | <b>Values relating to local and global community</b><br><br><i>The values identified in this category relate to encouraging civic responsibility and contribution; to accept diversity within a democratic society and to champion social justice.</i>   | <b>Values relating to the environment</b><br><br><i>The values identified in this category relate to understanding and preserving the Maldivian culture and heritage; and to promote ideas of conservation and sustainable development.</i>  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Honesty and trustworthiness:</b> show sincerity, be honest and seek the truth.</li> <li>▪ <b>Individual uniqueness:</b> hold oneself with dignity and respect, acknowledging that each individual has a unique identity.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Care and compassion:</b> show care and compassion towards oneself and others.</li> <li>▪ <b>Cooperation:</b> strive to work and live cooperatively; to resolve differences in peaceful, non-violent and constructive ways.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Adaptability:</b> develop the flexibility and resilience to adapt to changing conditions.</li> <li>▪ <b>Contribution:</b> recognise that every individual has something positive to contribute to society, and observe ways of maximising</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Preserving diversity:</b> appreciate the richness of our native habitat and their fragility; recognise ways of balancing how to enjoy them today and conserve them for the future.</li> <li>▪ <b>Respecting cultural heritage:</b> understand</li> </ul> |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Initiative and enterprise:</i> develop the confidence to take initiative and be enterprising in responding to life's challenges.</li> <li>▪ <i>Integrity:</i> demonstrate principles of ethical and moral conduct, showing consistency between words and actions.</li> <li>▪ <i>Sense of duty:</i> show awareness and take personal responsibility for one's actions both in and outside school and in future life.</li> <li>▪ <i>Sense of spirituality:</i> build a strong sense of connection with Allah (SWT) and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).</li> <li>▪ <i>The pursuit of personal excellence:</i> demonstrate the determination to strive for excellence and take pride in work both within and outside school.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Family and home environment:</i> recognise own role in creating a secure and caring family and environment.</li> <li>▪ <i>Individual differences:</i> recognising that each individual is unique and has differing levels of ability and distinct viewpoints.</li> <li>▪ <i>Respect:</i> treat others with dignity, respect and consideration and value their achievements.</li> <li>▪ <i>Rights and responsibilities:</i> develop awareness of one's own and others' rights and the corresponding responsibilities.</li> </ul> | <p>one's contribution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Participation and citizenship:</i> understand own role and how to actively participate in a democratic society.</li> <li>▪ <i>Social justice:</i> respect human rights and stand up for the rights of others.</li> <li>▪ <i>Understanding and tolerance:</i> acquire the tolerance to live in harmony with others, and understand, accept, and respect the uniqueness of individuals within and across nations.</li> </ul> | <p>and respect the unique Maldivian culture and heritage, including our distinctive language, rich history and traditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Sustainability:</i> develop sustainable practices that promote and improve social, political, economical, cultural and environmental conditions of the Maldives and the world.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|--|

Table 1: Shared Values

## FOCUS FOR LEARNING

The National Curriculum promotes a holistic approach to education, placing equal emphasis on the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes. The emphasis is laid on building solid foundations of knowledge and skills in the early years of schooling, introducing to students a fundamental understanding of key concepts and processes across a breadth of key learning areas. As a student progresses through the various stages of schooling, the breadth of the curriculum would narrow to some extent, in order to provide adequate time and effort to making rigorous and in-depth study possible. Alongside the development of knowledge, understanding and skills, students would also be exposed to shared values and attitudes that they would be encouraged to adopt, uphold and practise.

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Students learn best when they are engaged in rich tasks. They attain a deep level of understanding when connections can be made to things that they can relate. Ideas and concepts get internalised better when relations are shown between principles and practices; when facts are linked between the past and the present; and when they need to actively engage with the learning area through thinking and application. Therefore, the learning experiences provided to students must consider how to set up knowledge-centred environments where they can be actively engaged in learning. In such environments, teachers consider what students already know about a given area of knowledge and how to help them to construct new understandings based on their prior knowledge. Teachers need to provide students with learning experiences in a hierarchical manner from knowledge to synthesis level where appropriate. They need to provide feedback throughout the learning process, guiding students to make sense of new information.

### **Skills**

In a rapidly changing world such as ours, it is difficult to assess what new knowledge will be needed for the future. Hence, in addition to knowledge, it is crucial that schools focus on developing skills in children and young people; skills that would essentially allow them to gain, organise and use information appropriately. The National Curriculum stresses the importance of the processes of learning; of developing the skills of investigation and problem solving; of applying reading skills that are

appropriate to the expected task; of the use of reasoning in writing; and developing skills necessary for effective learning.

Schools need to adopt an integrated approach that allows children to apply general skills across the curriculum. Opportunities must be provided for students to apply these skills in a variety of active learning experiences where they learn through various tasks that allow them to move from concrete to more abstract levels of learning.

### **Values**

The National Curriculum places great emphasis on encouraging children and young people to adopt deeply held values shared within our society. It identifies four main categories of shared values. Incorporating these into the policies, practices and ethos of the learning environment becomes a responsibility of the school. A high priority should also be given to encourage positive attitudes towards all key learning areas.

The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes promoted by the National Curriculum are further detailed in the section on key competencies.

## KEY COMPETENCIES



*Figure 3: Key Competencies*

The National Curriculum specifies eight key competencies which are essential for individuals to live, learn and contribute as active members of our nation and the world. These key competencies provide the basis for lifelong learning and employability in a progressive and challenging world. Each key competency is built on a combination of cognitive and practical skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, and other social and behavioural components.

These key competencies form the basis of the curriculum. They form the crucial foundation on which the key learning areas are built. The key competencies are therefore a cross cutting dimension in the curriculum, as all key learning areas will work towards achieving the eight key competencies.

Students are presented with various opportunities, throughout their school life, which challenge them to acquire and strengthen these eight interrelated key competencies. They are exposed to different aspects of these key competencies at different stages of their learning experience, with the aim of acquiring all eight key competencies by the end of schooling.

The eight key competencies that the National Curriculum promotes are:

1. Practising Islam
2. Understanding and Managing Self
3. Thinking Critically and Creatively
4. Relating to People
5. Making Meaning
6. Living a Healthy Life
7. Using Sustainable Practices
8. Using Technology and the Media

### **Practising Islam**

Nurturing students in the Islamic faith and enhancing their understanding of Islam as a complete way of life is imperative for them to function as practising Muslims. This key competency therefore focuses on the area of Islamic values which include beliefs, manners, rights, responsibilities, attitudes and moral literacy skills. Students are presented with authentic activities which help them understand how religious obligations are fulfilled and through these teachings, it is envisaged that a strong Muslim identity, based on the underpinnings of the Noble Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), will be built in students.

Young people who have a firm belief in Islam follow the Noble Qur'an and *Sunnah*. They realise that the purpose of life is to obey and worship Allah (SWT) and to achieve wellbeing in this world and the hereafter. These students adhere to the tenets of Islam and follow Islam in all aspects of their lives.

**Understanding and Managing Self**

This key competency encompasses the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to understand oneself, and to develop and maintain a realistic positive selfimage. It also develops motivation and goal setting skills. The ability to plan, implement plans and evaluate one's performance are all aspects of self management which are essential in developing an enterprising attitude in students.

Students who have these attributes are able to seek pathways to improved knowledge and competence so that they are able to apply lifelong learning autonomously. They identify what is important to them and direct their attention and efforts towards those things, by setting personal goals. They also develop an eagerness to pursue personal excellence in all aspects of life.

**Thinking Critically and Creatively**

As citizens of a globalised world with unprecedented breakthroughs in many aspects of life, students need to be adaptable to change and be equipped with thinking and creative abilities to face the challenges of the future. These include a broad spectrum of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions such as using a wide range of techniques to create ideas, working creatively with others, reasoning effectively, solving problems, and making judgements and decisions.

Students who are creative and critical thinkers use broad in-depth analysis of evidence to make decisions and communicate their beliefs clearly and accurately. They also use skills such as comparing, classifying, reasoning, hypothesising, analysing and synthesising which help them gain confidence in their ability to learn and make judgements. These individuals are innovative, flexible and apply what they learn to new or different situations and solve problems in innovative ways. Additionally, they reflect critically on learning experiences and processes.

**Relating to People**

This key competency covers both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. By mastering these skills, students can understand themselves better and are able to interact effectively with other members of

society and live harmoniously with people from diverse communities. They learn to interact with others and enjoy their company.

Students who have good social skills develop the ability to read and manage their own emotions and behaviour in response to those of others during social interactions. They develop interpersonal skills in face-to-face as well as virtual interactions. They also have the ability to work effectively in teams by being flexible and willing to accomplish a common goal. Similarly, they take shared responsibility for collaborative work and value the individual contribution made by others and understand that there is always something to learn from each other.

### **Making Meaning**

The ability to use language, symbols and texts is one of the most fundamental competencies individuals need to acquire in order to be active and contributing members of a society. This key competency enables students to use language effectively for various purposes such as communicating information, experiences, feelings and ideas. Other aspects of this competency include exploring and interpreting symbolic representations as well as visual texts. Students also acquire an awareness of the different social and cultural conventions used in various contexts.

Students who are competent in making meaning use a range of communication skills comfortably. They use language, interpret symbolic representations, visual texts and movements to make meaning in various contexts. Students also learn to read and produce a wide range of texts, including multi-media, transactional, mathematical, scientific, technological and literary texts using different media.

### **Living a Healthy Life**

Living a healthy life is crucial for an individual's success and for their wellbeing. The primary factors that contribute to living a healthy lifestyle are nutrition, physical activity, sleep, risk avoidance and stress management. It is important to create a school environment that is sensitive to not only the physical health of students, but also to their mental health and wellbeing, so that students become well informed, health literate individuals who are competent, confident and happy.

Through the experiences gained, students understand the relationship between their lifestyle choices and health. They are aware that regular physical activity, rest and proper diet, will help them live a quality life. They live life in a manner that reflects their values and attitudes while being considerate about the choices and decisions made in various aspects of life.

### **Using Sustainable Practices**

This key competency aims to raise awareness of the necessity to engage in sustainable practices and learn the skills of responsible conservation for the future. It encourages students to treat all life with respect and sensitivity, and to manage their resources well. The knowledge, skills and attitudes they develop through this key competency help students to satisfy their basic needs and have a quality life without jeopardising the life of future generations.

Students who understand the ecology of Allah's creation believe that everyone has a role to play in building a sustainable future. As a result, they use sustainable practices in all aspects of their lives. They also have a global understanding of the concepts of interdependence and shared responsibilities of global citizens in creating a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations.

### **Using Technology and the Media**

This key competency enhances the ability to use a variety of technologies as a tool for learning and communication. As technology is a powerful platform to capture and disseminate information across the world, students need to master the information literacy skills they need in order to become sensitive consumers and creative producers of information. Therefore, young people need opportunities to use and manage information effectively and question the authenticity, accuracy and reliability of information. They also need to be aware of the roles of the media in informing, influencing and entertaining society and also differentiate between reality and the world portrayed by the media.

Students who are confident users of technology employ digital technologies and communication tools successfully to search for, manage, evaluate and use information effectively and safely. They recognise

which information is needed at any given time and for which purpose, how and where to locate it, evaluate the reliability and relevance of information and use it productively. Students connect, create, and share information and experiences locally and globally using technology. It enables them to master content and extend their investigations, to become more self directed, and to assume greater control over their own learning. Additionally, students adapt to the changing nature of technologies and media and use technology safely and responsibly.

Further details on the key competencies and how to address them in the classroom, can be found in the publication *turning the Key Competencies into Reality: a practical guide for teachers*, NIE.

## ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

The National Curriculum recognises four main phases of schooling: foundation, primary, lower secondary and higher secondary. Each phase targets a specific age group and thereby developmental level. The objectives of schooling differ from phase to phase, and the learning offered at each one ensures that a variety of positive learning experiences are offered to the students so as to foster their holistic development and promote optimum learning. At each phase, the learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve are specified. At primary, lower secondary and higher secondary levels, these learning outcomes are further divided into key stages. The aim of having the key stages is to enable students' progress to be rigorously monitored and to allow achievable future targets to be set.

| Age<br>(at start) | Grade | Key Stage  | Phase            |
|-------------------|-------|------------|------------------|
| 17                | 12    | KS5        | Higher Secondary |
| 16                | 11    |            |                  |
| 15                | 10    | KS4        | Lower Secondary  |
| 14                | 9     |            |                  |
| 13                | 8     | KS3        |                  |
| 12                | 7     |            |                  |
| 11                | 6     | KS2        |                  |
| 10                | 5     |            |                  |
| 9                 | 4     |            |                  |
| 8                 | 3     | KS1        |                  |
| 7                 | 2     |            |                  |
| 6                 | 1     |            |                  |
| 5                 | UKG   | Foundation | Foundation       |
| 4                 | LKG   |            |                  |

Table 2: Phases and Key Stages

Table 2, shows how the 14 years of schooling covered in the National Curriculum are divided into four distinct phases and six key stages.

### **Foundation Phase**

Foundation is a phase of education for children between 4-6 years of age. The aim of the foundation phase is to ensure that young children have access to holistic, play based experiences that support their development and learning. Learning at this phase should be fun for children and should motivate them to learn and explore. The early years of learning should, especially, protect and promote children's wellbeing, and should provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

The focus of learning at this phase is on experience and play, and does not take the form of separate subjects. Instead, an integrated approach to learning and development is adopted. Most of the learning in this phase relates to skills rather than knowledge, and learning activities should be planned in a way that children are engaged in experiencing all the key learning areas.

For a smooth transition from this phase to the next, building students' confidence and self esteem should be given priority. Likewise, literacy and numeracy should be emphasised, but this does not mean that children should be pressured to read and write.

In addition, teachers should observe and record student achievements in various forms. Over time, a portfolio with annotated samples, teacher notes and photographs and the child's efforts need to be produced as evidence of learning.

### **Primary Phase**

The primary phase of school education begins at key stage 1 (grades 1 – 3), and continues till the end of key stage 2 (grades 4 – 6). These six years of primary education are compulsory for all. The purpose of primary education is to create a love for learning and to provide a foundation of skills for a lifetime of learning.

During this phase, opportunities have to be provided for students to enjoy learning, to explore and discover new things as well as to try different ways of presenting information and creating knowledge. Learning should be geared to ensure that children take risks, learn from mistakes, and progress. Students should also be encouraged to take responsibility and become independent learners. In order for students to gain these experiences, they need to be exposed to a wide range of activities that develop their essential knowledge, skills and values.

### **Lower Secondary Phase**

Lower secondary education is a four year phase, divided into two key stages (key stage 3 and 4). During this phase, students continue to develop a range of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable them to become enterprising, productive, creative and law abiding members of the society who have a firm grounding in moral and Islamic values. This phase of schooling allows students to explore possible career pathways, and prepares students for higher education, for employment and for life.

Key stage 3 acts as a bridging stage between the primary and secondary phases, with students being offered a balance of subjects from all key learning areas. When they progress to key stage 4, students have a range of electives to choose from, and it is expected that the foundation laid for the different key learning areas in previous key stages, will assist students to make the right choices and allow them to understand where their skills and interests lie.

### **Higher Secondary Phase**

The higher secondary phase is the two year period students spend at key stage 5. These last two years of school education provide a platform for exploring an in-depth understanding of specialised areas that would prepare students for higher education and employment.

## KEY LEARNING AREAS

The National Curriculum identifies eight key learning areas which define the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values that all young people need to acquire in order to be successful, confident, competent, responsible and productive individuals.

All eight key learning areas are essential for a broad and balanced education that promotes students' holistic development. The National Curriculum is therefore, organised in such a way that all students undertake learning in all eight areas during the two foundation years as well as during the six years of primary education (Grades 1-6) and the first 2 years (Grades 7 & 8) of lower secondary education. By the end of Key Stage 3 it is expected that students would have a strong foundation in all key learning areas, and be ready to focus on some areas in more depth. However, even at this stage, it is recommended that students select their subjects from a range of key learning areas, rather than limiting themselves to a limited few.

The eight key learning areas comprise of the following:

**In *Islam and Spirituality***, students learn about the teachings of the Noble Qur'an and Sunnah, develop a firm belief in Allah and practice Islamic principles.

**In *Language and Communication***, students learn how to communicate effectively and confidently in both Dhivehi and English. Opportunities to learn other languages are also made available.

**In *Mathematics*** students learn the process of enquiry, discovery and verification and to apply mathematical ideas, rules and procedures to particular situations and problems.

**In *Environment, Science and Technology***, students learn about the physical environment, and about how science and technology impact our lives, and how students can use these to be innovative.

**In *Health and Wellbeing***, students explore concepts of a healthy lifestyle, including how to be emotionally, physically and socially well-adjusted individuals.

**In *Social Sciences*** students learn to value their roots, explore the past and understand their contexts, and learn about interrelationships between people across time, environments and cultures in order to develop civic efficacy.

**In *Creative Arts***, students learn how to foster their creativity, imagination and the use of senses to communicate, express ideas, experiences and feelings.

**In *Entrepreneurship***, students gain the knowledge and skills required to take the initiative to become innovators of new ideas and to become competent in business-related fields.

The underlying principles of each key learning area and how they contribute to the development of the key competencies are outlined below. (NB. Details regarding the expected learning outcomes for each Key Stage in each key learning area are provided in the relevant syllabus statements for each subject.)

### **Islam and Spirituality**

#### *What is Islam & Spirituality about?*

This key learning area involves the main tenets of 'Faith' (Eman) and 'Practice of Eman' (Islam) necessary to lead a life as a Muslim. It also includes the knowledge, attitudes, attributes, skills and moral values necessary to sustain and adhere firmly to the Islamic belief. Islam and Spirituality also teaches all the practical aspects that is legally incumbent upon the believer to practice daily to remain a true believer such as ways of praying, ways of communication, and the moral and spiritual values that should be upheld. Further, students study Quran and Sunnah, gain knowledge about Quran and Sunnah and do research on Quran and Sunnah. In addition, students also study Islamic history and civilization to gain insight and lesson from the unfolding of history.

#### *Why study Islam & Spirituality?*

Islam and Spirituality strengthens the student's belief and enable them to lead life safely upon that conviction. Since Islam is the only true religion in the sight of Allah, it is necessary to teach the students the tenets, doctrines, principles, beliefs and ways of Islam. Further, Islam and Spirituality allows the students to function as civilized people adorned with Islamic traits working toward achieving the present and the hereafter in light of the Islamic knowledge, doctrines and tenants.

### *How is Islam & Spirituality structured?*

Islam and Spirituality will be taught to all the students in the school system from pre-school to higher secondary education. In pre-school stage, Islam and Spirituality will be taught along with all the other knowledge areas in the curriculum. In the Pre-school stage emphasis will be laid mostly on building the foundation for a true Islamic belief and creating a love for the religion in the minds and hearts of the students.

From Foundation Stage to Higher Secondary sector, Islam and Spirituality will be taught as Islamic Discipline while Quranic knowledge prescribed in Islam and Spirituality will be taught from Pre-school to Lower Secondary as 'Quran'. In Higher Secondary this subject will be taught as Quran and Sunnah.

The learning area is organized in six strands:

**Quranic Knowledge:** The focus of this strand is to teach Quran and its knowledge in its true sense. Students will be taught the necessary skills to recite Quran. Further, some chapters (*Surats*) of Quran will be taught to the students together with its meanings. In addition, the different topics of Quranic knowledge will also be taught to the students. As such students realize that the accusations laid against Quran by its enemies are false and baseless. This in turn will make the students appreciate the true purpose about the revelation of Quran and will come to believe and live according to the teachings of Quran.

**Hadith(sayings) of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW):** This strand explores the lessons learned from the *Sunnah*. Further, the students will be taught to research the *Sunnah* (exemplary conduct) of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and establish the importance and legal status that *Sunnah* occupies in Islam. This will then expose the fallacy of the accusations levied against *Sunnah* and the lack of any verifiable proof that can be established scientifically in such arguments.

**Articles of *Iman*:** The students will also be taught the Articles of *Iman* in conjunction with the purpose of creating and establishing humans in order to develop the Islamic personality of the students and true faith in the hearts of the students. The strand also focuses on factors that can prevent the built up of such a faith in the hearts of the students in addition to the benefits such a faith can bring to the individuals and the community.

**Islamic Jurisprudence:** Through this strand students will be taught the basics of conducting Islamic life with the purpose of keeping all activities of life under the guidance of God in accordance with the rulings of Quran, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the rulings of the learned people. Students will also be taught the expansion of the subject in the different periods of Islamic rule.

**Islamic History, Culture and Civilization:** This strand is about Islamic History, Culture and Civilization beginning from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) tracing the development in different periods of Islamic rule with focus on the obstacles to the calling and how they were met and overcome. Students will research Muslim citizenship and civilization and derive valuable lessons from such a study.

**Islamic discipline:** This strand explores Islamic discipline. Students will learn to conduct their daily actions and activities according to Islamic conduct and maintain their life sincerely, faithfully, and truthfully under the Islamic principles. As such the students will learn to love being on the true path and advocate for the truth and justice and deny fallacy and evil. The purpose of teaching Islam and spirituality is to enable the students to live in accordance to the doctrines of Islam.

*How does Islam & Spirituality contribute to the development of the key competencies?*

Practising Islam

Islam and Spirituality encompasses the teachings of Islam according to the Noble Quran and Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (SAW). Additionally, teaching experiences in Islamic Tharbiya focuses of character building and it promotes the Islamic code of personal practice. As a result, students understand how Muslims should conduct their lives and they would be conscious of their responsibility to Allah.

Understanding and Managing Self

Through Islam and Spirituality, students learn the importance of doing things on time, the importance of personal hygiene, self-evaluation and abstaining from evil acts and purifying oneself. These aspects will be achieved through lessons on discipline, prayers, and purity.

### Relating to People

Respecting others, anger management or self-control, treating others kindly, participating in sorrow and triumphs of others are personal and social skills that are emphasised in Islam. Apart from this, taking part in discussions and seeking others opinions, being patient in adverse conditions rising from the actions of others, seeking to fight injustice and obtaining the rights of the victims and many other such topics are covered in Islam and Spirituality.

### Making Meaning

This learning area helps students to understand the meanings of religious advice that are given to them, remind the students continuously of the importance of good deeds, encourage them to practice and do good deeds in abundance, and use language appropriate to the task and situation.

### Living a Healthy Life

The teaching of Islam and Spirituality enable students to understand the importance of sleep, rest, eating the right amount of food that is legal (*Halal*), keeping their homes and surroundings clean and healthy, protecting and preserving the body and the environment around oneself and avoiding from practices, habits and things that are harmful to oneself.

### Thinking Critically and Creatively

The experiences gained through this learning area encourage students to ponder about past nations, civilizations and compare and contrast between the present status and past status of Muslims, and seek to find the underlying reality of the present situation. Further, students will also be taught to understand the different viewpoints of a situation before making a decision.

### Using Sustainable Practices

Students are taught the importance of saving and economising in using the resources, showing kindness towards all living things on Earth, striving towards being a productive and useful person, and realising the balance and harmony that exist between things on Earth by the will of Allah (SWT).

### Using Technology and Media

Students learn the use of modern methods of technology in seeking out and providing information, understand the challenges and obstacles faced by Muslims in today's world, and strive towards achieving the positive benefits found in other cultures as taught in Islam.

### **Language and Communication**

#### *What is Language and Communication about?*

Language and communication is the learning area of the curriculum which provides students with the opportunity to learn languages, learn about language and learn through different languages in order to communicate effectively for both academic and functional purposes. This learning area set forth a great emphasis on developing students' potential to use their first language, Dhivehi through foundation stage to Key Stage 5. Students are also exposed to English language starting from Foundation Stage to Key stage 5. Additionally, students get access to Modern Foreign Language(s) beginning from Key Stage 1.

#### *Why study Language and Communication?*

Language is a fundamental factor that contributes to students' intellectual, social and emotional development and plays a key role in all the learning areas. Through the use of language students are able to learn about the role of language in their own lives and in their own and other cultures. The experiences provided in this learning area assist students to use language effectively and help them to thrive in school and in society.

The purpose of teaching Dhivehi language at school is to consolidate and expand students' literacy skills, to enable them to express their thoughts and feelings, to make informed decisions about personal and social issues, inculcate a love for the language and literature and to instil a spirit of maintaining their heritage.

The aim of teaching English Language is to enable students to use the language effectively for academic, professional and social purposes, with fluency, accuracy and confidence. Students learn how to improve their use of English in a variety of situations, understanding how to read texts and other source materials, and how to extract information, initiate conversations and respond to questions both orally

and in writing. Students study various literary texts in order to get a more holistic understanding of themselves as people, and the wider society around them.

Additionally, it is recognised that students need to be proficient in multiple languages in order to communicate in a variety of contexts and appreciate the cultures of speakers of other languages. Therefore, Modern Foreign Language(s) enable students to achieve greater fluency, accuracy and confidence in the language(s) as it is spoken and written, thereby improving their communication skills.

#### *How is Language and Communication structured?*

Language and communication comprises three strands: oral, reading, and writing skills. The three strands are divided into three sub strands which are the communicative purpose, language skills and strategies, and language structures and features.

**Communicative purpose:** The communicative purpose strand focuses on developing students' capacity to interact effectively with peers and adults to present materials orally, and to listen attentively, respectfully and with purpose. They are also given opportunities to comprehend and improve fluency in reading and to create various kinds of texts for different audiences.

**Skills & Strategies:** The language skills and strategies strand gives emphasis on increasing students' awareness of the processes, skills and techniques that can be used to be more successful in their oral interactions and extend students' repertoire of strategies and techniques that can be used before, during, and after reading and viewing in order to comprehend and extend their understandings of texts. Similarly, students' capacity to use appropriate techniques before, during and after producing texts is emphasized through this strand.

**Language structures & features:** The language structures and features strand create awareness of the forms of language suitable for different audiences and as well as the capacity to control syntax. Students also develop awareness of different types of text, grammatical patterns, text structure, spelling, punctuation, and the expectations associated with particular forms of texts.

*How does Language and Communication contribute to the development of the key competencies?*

Practising Islam/Understanding and managing self/Living a healthy life/Using sustainable practices  
Language and communication as a learning area offers learners with different experiences and opportunities to build these competencies through oral, reading and writing skills.

#### Relating to people

Effective communication skills are crucial for successful relationships, both personally and professionally. Hence, language and communication offers learners' the opportunity to read other people's feelings and to act accordingly. Students learn the conventions of communication, how to respect others' feelings and follow the social norms in the community. The ability to understand others' feelings and using nonverbal communication is a powerful tool that helps learners to connect with others, express what they mean, navigate challenging situations, and build better relationships.

#### Making meaning

Making meaning is fundamental for children to access and get the best out of education and life. The skills and strategies developed in this learning area help learners to understand communication carried through various media and in different contexts. Students make sense of things and create new meaning and use language as a resource for meaning. They understand the relationship between talking, listening, reading and writing when making meaning through language for different purposes, on a range of topics.

#### Thinking critically and creatively

Students are provided opportunities to carefully look through texts and get greater opportunity for comparison and evaluation of work done by themselves and others. Apart from this, collaborating in groups and getting them to come up with creative solutions to problems, provide opportunities to use a critical thinking approach that can offer different viewpoints and attitudes. Literature also develops critical and creative thinking skills by allowing learners to respond to literature with a critical temperament. These experiences help students to develop critical and creative thinking skills which enable them to be independent lifelong learners.

### Using technology and media

Through this learning area students have access to a range of media and technologies which help them to come across a variety of texts. At the same students develop the skills of selecting reliable and relevant information sources, process the information and use an appropriate format for presenting and sharing the information. As a result, they can take more responsibility for their learning and use the information they need through new and traditional technologies. Students also broaden their understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques used by them and the impact of these techniques.

## Mathematics

### *What is Mathematics about?*

Mathematics deals with the study of patterns and relationships which exist around us. It is also defined as the science of quantity, measurement and spatial relations, which deals with quantitative facts, relationships as well as with problems involving space and form. This learning area is divided into many branches such as arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and trigonometry.

### *Why study Mathematics?*

Mathematics as a key learning area, help to foster students' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable them to function and excel in all aspects of life. The practical experiences gained through Mathematics help to develop students' problem solving, reasoning, creative, logical and critical thinking skills. The concepts and principles taught in Mathematics also encourage students to explore and take sensible decisions in daily life activities. It would also help to appreciate the aesthetics of Allah's creation. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that students have a solid understanding of mathematics.

### *How is Mathematics structured?*

This learning area is structured and organized under five main strands throughout all key stages. They are numbers, measurements, spatial sense & geometry, chance and data. From key stages 3 (lower secondary) onwards students will have an in-depth study of these strands and sub strands. In key stage

5 (higher secondary) students can choose a specific area of mathematics under three different branches, namely pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics.

**Numbers:** Students learn number concepts, four basic operations involving fractions, decimals, percentages, negative numbers and rate & ratio. Students also explore, estimate and manipulate numbers to carry out day to day activities.

**Measurement:** In this strand students learn mensuration, time, speed and velocity. This strand would equip the students to estimate measure and calculate perimeter, area or volume of various objects accurately.

**Shape and space:** Under this strand students master in 3D & 2D shapes, position and angles. Geometry and trigonometry comes under this strand. The concepts developed through this strand enable students to visualize spatial aspects of various objects and perceive them better.

**Chance and Data:** This strand is about statistics, handling data and probability. Students would be able to represent and interpret different data collected in a more meaningful manner.

**Patterning and Algebra:** Under patterning and algebra students learn sequences, number properties, algebra and problem solving & puzzles. Students' confidence is built by helping them to develop a feel for numbers, their properties, and the relationships. Algebra is one of the very important topics that students learn in their entire schooling, which broadens their thinking skills.

*How does Mathematics contribute to the development of Key Competencies?*

Practising Islam

Learning experiences in Mathematics build and extend students' understanding of the importance of using resources in a sustainable manner. Students realise that all the resources on earth is there for human use, but at the same time they realise that these resources are in limited proportions, thus they understand the importance of using the resources wisely. Students also learn to appreciate Allah's creation through topics such as patterns and sequences found in nature.

### Understanding and managing self

Mathematics requires students to engage in a number of hands-on activities that highly demand them to monitor their progress and work independently towards completing different tasks. Through these learning experiences students identify their strengths and identify areas that need improvement in light of self-reflection and teacher lead discussions.

### Relating to people

There are a number of learning experiences in Mathematics which require students to work together to achieve a common goal and solve problems in real life scenarios. As a result, students develop the skills of effective communication, cooperation skills and realise the importance of team work.

### Making meaning

Mathematics is regarded as a language of signs, symbols and operations. In Mathematics students are required to collect data, sort and present information in various forms and these learning experiences develop their ability to communicate as well as understand information in various forms. Students also get plenty of opportunities for developing mathematical language needed to express their thinking using appropriate vocabulary.

### Living a healthy life

Students use practical examples to relate the number concepts to different aspects of a balanced life including the amount of food consumption, exercise and many more. Their understanding of mathematics is strengthened through cross curricular and thematic units that provide diverse opportunities to apply mathematics in daily life activities related to personal well-being.

### Thinking critically and creatively

The learning area nurtures students' problem solving skills by integrating real life scenarios in various concepts and topics of mathematics. Students' skills in solving a wide range of problems related to data handling, and meaningful application through cross curricular themes also help to enhance their critical and creative thinking skills.

### Using sustainable practices

Mathematical understanding broadens the way students see the world around them. It helps them to realise the interdependence of various resources available. Concepts such as estimation, measurement, percentage, analysing data and interpreting statistics are some areas that provide opportunities to apply Mathematics in a diverse range of real world contexts. As a result, students develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

### Using technology and media

Learning experiences in Mathematics embed technology as a means to strengthen students' understanding of mathematical concepts. The use of technology in various stages of schools differ in their complexity. For instance, in the primary level technology is used in the form of games or a computer is used to investigate patterns and number sequence. During the secondary years, students develop numerical simulations, computer programming, computer graphics and computer games.

## **Environment, Science and Technology**

### *What is Environment, Science and Technology about?*

This key learning area is a universal discipline which explores the natural world and its phenomena through systematic and organised inquiry. Science systematically questions, investigates, predicts and explains events in the universe. It uses logical procedures based on experimentation to gather evidence and develop explanations which become established body of processes, principles and facts. Scientific knowledge and skills help students to understand the natural world, especially our local environment. Through science, students are given opportunities to explore environmental issues which are important to the Maldivian community and the wider world. The use of scientific knowledge has paved the way for technological advancement in every aspect of life. Thus, technology is also an essential part of science.

### *Why study Environment, Science and Technology?*

This key learning area enables students to stimulate their natural curiosity and openness to new ideas; value the systems and processes that support life on our planet; think in terms of systems, and understand interdependencies and consequences of actions.

By studying science, students:

- question, reflect and become critical thinkers
- contribute to local, national and global communities by being informed decision makers on sensitive, moral, ethical and environmental issues
- appreciate scientific knowledge and processes
- become active members in the society and contribute to sustainable development

### *How is Environment, Science and Technology organised?*

The Environment, Science and Technology curriculum is organised around five strands.

**Life and living:** This strand looks into the biology of humans and that of other living things. It explores the impact of environment on life and the effects of human intervention on the environment. As a result, students develop an understanding of the diversity of life and the interdependence of life.

**Earth and Beyond:** This strand looks into understanding patterns in nature and natural cycles. It includes a detailed study of various parts of the solar system and the universe. In addition to this, it looks into the relationships of earth's systems and their effects on living things. Thus, students gain an understanding of the uniqueness of the planet earth, and the importance of protecting and preserving resources of earth and its environment.

**Matter and material:** This strand looks into the composition and properties of matter. It explores a wide range of materials and substances which people use, the changes matter undergo and the energy involved. The knowledge about the properties of matter helps students to understand how to use and manage various materials and how the use of materials influences the environment.

**Energy and change:** This strand explores various forms of energy, the concepts of force, work, power and considers how these are applied and managed to meet various needs. Students develop understanding of the social implications of energy use including the effects of using natural resources, and the Law of conservation of energy. By understanding these concepts students are able realise the

common problems related to energy consumption and the possible solutions to overcome some of these challenges.

**Working scientifically:** This is a process strand which outlines the inquiry and investigation skills students develop through their study of science. This strand would be integrated in all the content strands.

From the Foundation Stage till the end of Key Stage 3, students will study the five strands mentioned above. Students in Key Stage 4 and key Stage 5, have the option to choose one or more disciplines of science from a range of subjects offered in the schools such as marine biology, chemistry, physics or biology. These content areas will provide a basis for specialisations, in a wider range of programmes, for example, biochemistry, education for sustainability, agriculture, horticulture, human biology, environmental science.

*How does Environment, Science and Technology contribute to the development of key competencies?*

Practising Islam

Science is the study of nature and thus it calls to appreciate the beauty of Allah's creation, understanding the complexity and inter-relation between various systems.

Understanding and managing self

In science, students plan and carry out investigations which require them to manage themselves in a systematic and organized manner. Students have to be honest, direct and reflective when reporting their findings from various investigations. In addition, students need to manage time effectively, analyze risk factors while doing the investigations, consider the necessary safety precautions, show respect and care for the environment.

Thinking critically and creatively

Science allows students to express issues in a critical and creative way. Students are expected to explore their surroundings, ask questions, use high order thinking to analyse and solve issues. In addition,

science allows students to design and invent new things based on their prior knowledge and use their creative thinking. It asks students to understand abstract concepts which require high level of cognition.

#### Relating to people

In science, students have to work in groups and contribute to group discussions to solve some of the problems/issues. This calls for understanding and respecting each other's opinions, having the ability to put forth their own argument or case, having the ability to give constructive feedback and social skills that are necessary to work in a group.

#### Making meaning

Science consists of signs, symbols and equations. Students have to understand and use these to understand scientific texts and to be scientifically literate. Students are also required to share the findings or result of their experiments in various forms according to the situations.

#### Living a healthy life

In science, students acquire knowledge, skills and values related to aspects such as nutrition, healthy life styles, diseases and bodyfunctions. Students gain insight into past and present trends in living a healthy life. In addition, students would acquire the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions regarding a healthy life.

#### Using sustainable practices

In science, students explore how human activities impact the environment. Students will also identify ways to take care of the environment. In addition, students will be given opportunities to understand issues from both developmental as well as environmental perspectives and will be encouraged to develop stewardship towards the environment.

#### Using technology and media

In science, students relates with the technological advancement in various fields and how science has contributed to these advancements. In addition, students use technology in their learning and identify

best sources to gather information; question the authenticity of the information gathered and also analyses, synthesises and evaluates the information.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

### *What is Health & Wellbeing about?*

Health and wellbeing is the learning area that provides students with knowledge, skills, capacities, values and enthusiasm to maintain healthy lifestyles, solve problems and make decisions that are directly related to personal health and wellbeing. This learning area is based on a broad notion of health that encompasses all aspects of an individual's wellbeing inclusive of social, mental, and physical.

### *Why study Health & Wellbeing?*

The wide range of experiences offered through this learning area promotes the overall health of students. It enhances the potential for lifelong participation in physical activity and creates the awareness of nutritional needs and food choices for optimal health across the life span, provides experiences to improve the capacity to manage challenging circumstances and develop caring and respectful relationships. Additionally, students understand how their actions and decisions affect their health, fitness and personal wellbeing. As a result, students become well-informed, health literate individuals who are competent, confident and joyful.

### *How is Health & Wellbeing structured?*

This learning area is built around three dimensions of health which focuses on what is important for students to know, understand, and be able to do in order to maintain a balanced life. The three strands of the learning area are as follows.

**Physical wellbeing:** This strand focuses on factors that contribute to the effective functioning of the body and its systems. These include nutritional needs of the body, participation in physical activity, preventive health care, and physical safety, sexual and reproductive health.

**Social wellbeing:** This strand is about how people behave in relationships with others. It includes social skills that are necessary to build strong relationships and live in harmony. These include creating a sense of self-awareness, caring, empathy, compassion and feelings of belonging.

**Mental and emotional wellbeing:** This strand focuses on factors that influence mental and emotional wellbeing of a person and how to have a balanced life. These include the ability to use cognitive and emotional capabilities to understand and manage emotions and how to respond to the demands of everyday life in a constructive manner. There is also emphasis on discovering one's own capabilities and living a productive life amid the challenges of the modern world.

*How does Health & Wellbeing contribute to the development of the key competencies?*

#### Practising Islam

The knowledge, skills and attitudes learned through health and wellbeing enable students to make healthy food choices, conserve resources and understand the consequences of using substances such as alcohol. At the same time, health and wellbeing as a learning area encourages students to exercise in order to be strong and fit, which is strongly emphasised in Islam.

#### Understanding and managing self

This learning area enables students to manage themselves, develop self-awareness, set goals and define strategies to achieve and maintain personal health goals. As a result, students gain the ability to practice health enhancing behaviours to avoid and reduce health risks.

#### Thinking critically and creatively

Through this learning area students use their critical and creative thinking skills to decide which health products are most suitable to their needs before they make a choice. Students also use critical thinking skills to analyse, organise, compare, synthesise, evaluate and identify valid health information. They also evaluate the impact of culture, media and technology on personal health decisions and practices.

### Relating to people

This learning area contributes to the development of healthy relationships. It encourages students to respect others' feelings and work collaboratively to achieve their goals. The skills developed through this learning area include effective communication skills, the ability to analyse conflict and to use healthy communication and resolution strategies to resolve conflict. Moreover, students understand how personal behaviour can impact the health of self and others.

### Making meaning

Experiences provided through this learning area help students to analyse and understand community and environmental health issues based on valid and reliable information and become health literate and self-directed learners. They demonstrate the ability to access and evaluate health information, products, and services and develop the ability to convey information, beliefs, opinions and feelings by using verbal and non-verbal skills.

### Living a healthy life

The experiences gained through this learning area help learners to live a balanced life by making healthy food choices, participating in regular physical activity, considering one's own and others safety, gaining an awareness of diseases and preventing health risks.

### Using sustainable practices

This learning area promotes lifelong healthy and balanced living which is one of the important elements of sustainable development. As a result students protect and promote the health of themselves, their families and communities.

### Using technology and the media

This learning area supports the use of technology to gain an understanding of various issues that are related to students' health and wellbeing. They are given opportunities to explore information in a number of forms to make informed choices about issues related to their health and wellbeing.

## Social Sciences

### *What is Social Sciences about?*

The Social Sciences learning area is drawn from related but varied disciplines such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology, as well as some elements of natural science. It explores the past, present and the future of Maldives and the interconnections with the wider world.

### *Why study Social Sciences?*

As a learning area, Social Sciences allow students to value their roots, explore their past and understand their contexts, appreciate the interrelationships between people across time, environments and cultures while developing civic efficacy. Through Social Sciences students comprehend how societies work, and develop the knowledge and skills which help them to make informed and reasoned decisions that are required of responsible and active citizens of a democratic society. The learning area helps students to appreciate diversity and develop respect for oneself and others while learning to be compassionate and tolerant.

### *How is Social Sciences structured?*

From the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3, learning in Social Sciences is organised under six strands. In Key Stage 4, Social Sciences as a subject focus specifically on the Maldivian context, and have a strong focus on civic education. Alongside Social Sciences, students have the opportunity to explore History and Geography as independent learning areas. In key stage 5, students can choose from a range of subjects such as Sociology, History, Geography, Government and Politics, psychology and Law.

The six strands of Social Sciences are as follows:

**Culture and identity:** This strand helps students to understand multiple perspectives of cultures that are derived from different systems of beliefs, knowledge, values and tradition. It helps the students to learn and adapt to dynamic and ever-changing culture.

**People, places and Environment:** The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions assists learners to understand the relationship that exist between the people and environment as they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world.

**The Economic World:** This strand provides an understanding about the ways people participate in economic activities and about the consumptions, production, and distribution of goods and services. It helps the students to understand how to manage their needs that often exceed the limited resources and the role of interdependency of the world economy and the role of technology in economic decision-making.

**Time, Continuity and Change:** Students learn about events, experiences, and actions and the changing ways in which these have been interpreted over time. This helps them to understand what life was like in the past and how things change and develop so that they can imagine a possible future.

**Active citizenship:** This strand enhances the students to understand the historical development of the structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in an individuals' society as well as in other parts of the world. Through this strand students study the dynamic relationships among individual rights and responsibilities, the needs of social groups, and concepts of a just society.

**Investigation, communication and participation:** This strand helps students to investigate the ways people interact with each other and with their environments in order to make informed decisions and implement relevant social action. Students investigate aspects of time, place, culture, resources and systems to understand and act on important issues in their communities.

*How does Social Sciences contribute to the development of the Key Competencies?*

Practising Islam

The experiences gained through this learning area help students to develop an understanding of common and differing values that form a basis for tolerance, compassion, cooperation and appropriate human behaviour. Students also identify different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups

throughout the world and analyse their varying perspectives on historic events and contemporary issues to make informed and reasoned decisions.

#### Understanding and managing self

This learning area gives the opportunity to examine various forms of human behaviours, rights and responsibilities that enhance understanding of the relationships among social norms and emerging personal identities. Students also analyse their personal strengths and responsibilities in meeting the demands of life and identify ways to improve themselves.

#### Relating to people

Students participate in social activities that have real value in the world. They also participate in group processes to learn about the world and work cooperatively to contribute to their society to make a positive difference. Through these experiences students value and care for people through treating others with respect, and working cooperatively. They also acquire the knowledge of social norms of their own culture and cultures around the world and modify individual patterns of behaviours which facilitate peaceful co-existence, relationships with others, cooperation, commitment, and the resolution of conflicts.

#### Making meaning

Students use language, symbols and texts, together with a range of oral and visual resources which provides rich information to support learning of social sciences. Students also recognise and use visual and sensory images, facial expression, gestures and voice modulation to understand values, beliefs, traditions, and customs of diverse cultures of their own community and communities around the world.

#### Thinking critically and creatively

Students use creativity in investigating and solving societal issues. They also use reasoning and evaluation in order to make informed decisions and implement relevant social actions. These

experiences enable students to accept a variety of possible answers to the same problem and use different methodologies to inquire social issues.

#### Living a healthy life

The learning experiences provided in social sciences require students to make choices based on a criteria, carry out the initiatives necessary to develop one's choice, and take responsibility for one's decisions in social, personal and physical domains.

#### Using sustainable practices

Students select the most appropriate combination of economic, social and environmental activities for today and the future. They choose between different courses of individual and social actions by reflecting on their potential consequences and manage resources well. In addition, they reflect on ways to manage needs that often exceeds limited resources.

#### Using technology and media

Students will be given opportunities to identify, locate and access appropriate information about Social Sciences and transform it into knowledge. They select information from various sources and transmit through different media, and use appropriate technology as an essential element of communication and to learn about social sciences.

### **Creative Arts**

#### *What is Creative Arts about?*

Creative arts comprises of Drama, Music and Movement and Visual arts. They are means of expression that recognise different cultures, and value the unique culture of the Maldives. These art forms are often used in interrelated ways, but each has its own distinct language, both verbal and non-verbal. Through creative arts students express and communicate ideas, feelings and experiences using images, sounds and movements.

### *Why study Creative Arts?*

Creative Arts play a significant role in nurturing creativity and in the broad-based education aimed at developing the “whole” child. It also contributes to develop, share and pass on values, ideas and understandings of ourselves, our history, our culture and our world to future generations. Creative Arts help students to value the forms and practices of both traditional and contemporary Maldivian performing, musical and visual arts. It promotes students’ personal and cultural identity and prepares them for lifelong involvement in the appreciation of the arts. Specialist studies in the Creative Arts enable students to progress and contribute to a variety of careers in the creative industries.

Arts education builds students’ artistic skills, knowledge and understanding. It also helps sharpen students’ perception of the world and give them new ways of looking at things. Through the development of artistic literacy, creation, presentation, interpreting, viewing, and listening students, are able to participate in, interpret, value, and enjoy the arts throughout their lives.

### *How is Creative Arts organised?*

Creative Arts in the National Curriculum is structured under three strands of Drama, Music and Movement and Visual arts. Each of these disciplines recognise its own body of knowledge and means of inquiry. However, they share a number of overlapping concepts and skills related to creativity and expression, analysing and interpreting observations and experiences and the communication of ideas, thoughts and feelings.

From the Foundation Stage till the end of Key Stage 3, students study all three disciplines. From Key Stage 4, students are provided with the basis for specialist teaching and learning programmes in Art & Design, Music or Drama. Specialist studies are believed to give a solid foundation of arts that would help students in their pursuit of careers in the creative industries or further studies in art related courses.

- **Drama:** Drama provides students with opportunities to look at contemporary drama practices of making, performing and appreciating drama. These drama practices enable students to be active, experiential, and reflective, and students develop knowledge, understanding and skills that pertain to each of these practices.

- **Music and movement:** Music and movement enables students to develop their skills in performing, composing, notating and analysing music. Students are provided with opportunities to express their thoughts through performing vocally and instrumentally.
- **Visual Arts:** Visual arts provide students with opportunities for creating and responding to arts. It includes drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpting, design, crafts, photography, and electronic arts. Visual arts helps students develop their creativity, as well as the ability to communicate with others through visual images. By expressing themselves visually, students sharpen their power of observation and imagination and learn to appreciate art works from different historical periods and styles.

*How does Creative Arts contribute to the development of the key competencies?*

All the aspects of Creative Arts help in the development of the eight key competencies in the National Curriculum.

Practising Islam

Through Creative Arts, students appreciate and value the aesthetics of Allah’s creation, gain deeper awareness of themselves and the world around them. Similarly, students develop an understanding of Islamic culture through the study of Arabic calligraphy, Islamic architecture, symbols and designs.

Understanding and managing self

Students plan and manage their time and take responsibility in choosing materials when they produce a piece of artwork or a performance and provide reasons for their selections and explain the meaning of their artwork. Through reflection on their artistic strengths and weaknesses students become independent learners and this enhances their self-esteem.

Thinking critically and creatively

Creative Arts enrich students’ cognitive skills and stimulate creative action and response by engaging students with connecting, thinking, imagination, senses and feelings. Students use various sensory modes, traditional and electronic media and tools and individual and group experiences to solve

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problems that result in multiple solutions. They analyse and interpret their own and others' work using aesthetic criteria. They also investigate and research about work from different historical periods and formulate and propose solutions supported by reason and evidence.

#### Relating to people

Through the learning area, students develop their ability to learn and contribute productively as individuals and as a group. Creative activities that require working together as a team include creating group murals, planning dramatic scenes, developing choreography, and performing music in ensembles. By working together in these arts related activities students develop skills such as cooperation, leadership, discipline, and effective communication. They also learn to value others' contribution by respecting individual differences and ideas.

#### Making meaning

Creative arts encompass forms of communication extending beyond reading, writing, listening and speaking. Communicating in the creative arts means learning to translate ideas through dance, music and movement and visual arts. Students participate in the communication process as receivers: observing, analysing, evaluating, critiquing and interacting. They also learn to interpret information, ideas, express feelings and experiences using images, movements, sounds, signs and symbols in order to make sense of their world.

#### Living a healthy life

Participating in the arts develops students' social, physical and emotional wellbeing. Engagement in art related activities develop confidence, self-image and contribute to the full development of a person. Additionally, while handling materials and instruments, students practise safety procedures which contribute to this key competency.

#### Using sustainable practices

Students practice moderation in choosing the materials needed for their work and develop a sense of belonging by sharing the materials. Through art making they learn to use resources (both natural and synthetic) wisely and economically.

#### Using technology and media

Students understand and apply both traditional and contemporary art materials, techniques, and processes in creating original artworks and performances. They use a variety of technologies including computer software and hardware appropriately to produce artworks, to compose and arrange music and organise theoretical productions. As a result, students learn about ethical issues related to various technologies and demonstrate the ability to use electronic equipment, computers, and networks to access information related to the arts.

### **Entrepreneurship**

#### *What is Entrepreneurship?*

Entrepreneurship involves the ability to handle uncertainty, respond positively to change, create and implement new ideas and new ways of doing things. Creativity and innovation are at the heart of entrepreneurship and are essential attributes students need in order to create opportunity to succeed in life.

#### *Why teach Entrepreneurship?*

Through this key learning area, students are exposed to challenging educational activities that develop entrepreneurial thinking and a can do attitude. Apart from this, students have access to a wide range of learning tools that enhance the capacity to see the world in new ways. Students also develop the mental habit of developing and testing multiple ideas as well as practical skills that help them to engage in industrial or commercial occupations and become productive members of the community.

### *How is Entrepreneurship organised?*

Entrepreneurship education at foundation and primary level aims to nurture the transferable skills and personal qualities of students. As entrepreneurship comprises skills, attitudes and behaviours that can be stimulated from the very beginning, it is taught in an integrated manner. Throughout the foundation stage and the primary education entrepreneurship is taught in relation to the context of each key learning area. Hence, this contributes to enhance student's ability to become independent learners and be innovative in future.

At Key stage 3, entrepreneurial concepts taught aims to raise students' self-awareness by providing them with a more general perspective of opportunities available to them in the future. This is done by providing a foretaste of different disciplines of study areas which include business related subjects and the vocational and skill building modules.

At Key stage 4 and 5, there is provision for students to become specialised by focusing on the subjects offered under the key learning area Entrepreneurship. At this level emphasis is given on raising awareness on self-employment and various options for future careers. Furthermore the entrepreneurial concepts, skills and attitudes will be taught through strategies which employ learning by doing and actively contributing to their own learning.

### *How does the learning area contribute to the development of key competencies?*

#### Practising Islam

Entrepreneurship comprises of strengthening personal qualities, such as identifying entrepreneurial opportunities and making efficient use of resources. In doing so it requires adhering to Islamic values related to personal qualities such as being honest, respecting valuables of others etc.

#### Understanding and managing self

This key learning area requires students to develop the insight needed to discover and create entrepreneurial opportunities and skills necessary for various fields of work. Thus, students are encouraged to be self-disciplined and take greater control of their own learning.

### Thinking critically and creatively

Entrepreneurship is about identifying students' abilities and encouraging them to become innovative. Through entrepreneurship students are exposed to learning experiences that require them to generate new ideas, carry out new ventures and learn how to overcome the challenges they face. Therefore, students get ample opportunities to develop critical and creative thinking skills.

### Relating to people

Entrepreneurship requires students to work in partnership with others in order to accomplish set tasks and goals. As a result, they develop the ability to take different roles while working to achieve common goals. This enhances students' ability to respect different perspectives, take leadership roles, understand others' feelings and motivate people to work collaboratively.

### Making meaning

Entrepreneurship requires students to understand different scenarios, and develop strategic plans to implement and test ideas and interpret the outcomes. Students also develop effective communication skills and innovative ways to present their ideas and suggestions which are essential components of this key competency.

### Living a healthy life & using sustainable practices

Through this key learning area, students also get the opportunity to locate and use relevant resources effectively while they carry out their projects. Additionally, they develop entrepreneurial skills such as prioritising resources and critical evaluation of new ventures. At the same time being an entrepreneur the students gain an insight of how to deal with key investments such as time, knowledge, energy, and capital appropriately in order to contribute to the well-being of the community.

### Using technology and media

Entrepreneurship requires students to use appropriate technology and media to help them achieve their goals more quickly. Students also use appropriate technology to seek opportunities, design and market new products.

The following table shows how the different key learning areas are addressed at each key stage of learning.

*Table 3: Organisation of Learning*



Organisation of learning across the key stages



| Foundation   |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|--|-----------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| F  | LKG, UMG     | Language & Communication | Mathematics | Health & Wellbeing | Social Science | Environment, Science & Technology | Creative Arts           | Entrepreneurship                                 | Optional subject                            |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| <b>Primary</b>   |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Core subjects  |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Key stage 1  | Gr. 1, 2 & 3 | Islam & Spirituality     | Quran       | Dhiv               | Eng            | Math                              | Health & P.E            | Social Studies                                   | Science                                     | Creative Arts                              | ICT       | Entrepreneurship       | Optional subject |                  |
| Key stage 2  | Gr. 4, 5 & 6 | Islam & Spirituality     | Quran       | Dhiv               | Eng            | Math                              | Health & P.E            | Social Studies                                   | Science                                     | Creative Arts                              | ICT       | Entrepreneurship       | Optional subject |                  |
| <b>Lower Secondary</b>   |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Core subjects  |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Key stage 3  | Gr. 7 & 8    | Islam & Spirituality     | Quran       | Dhiv               | Eng            | Math                              | Health & P.E            | Social Studies (Hist, Geo, Civics & Citizenship) | Science (Physics, E.S, Chemistry & Biology) | Creative Arts (Drama, Music & Visual Arts) | ICT       | Entrepreneurship       | Optional subject |                  |
| <b>Key stage 4</b>   |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Core subjects  |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Key stage 4  | Gr. 9 & 10   | Islam & Spirituality     | Quran       | Dhiv               | Eng            | Math                              | Health & P.E            | Social Studies                                   | Science                                     | Business St (Accounts, Econ, Business, St) | Art       | Music                  | Optional subject |                  |
| <b>Higher Secondary</b>  |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Core subjects  |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| Key stage 5  | Gr. 11 & 12  | Islam & Spirituality     | Quran       | Dhiv               | Lang           | Mathematics with Statistics       | Mathematics & Mechanics | History  | Geography                                   | Physics                                    | Chemistry | Principles of Accounts | Business St      | Optional subject |
| <b>Electives (Choose any 3 subjects)</b>   |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History</li> <li>Geography</li> <li>Physics</li> <li>Chemistry</li> <li>Biology</li> <li>Marine Sci</li> <li>Economics &amp; Business St</li> <li>Business St</li> <li>Principles of Accounts</li> <li>Economics &amp; Business St</li> <li>Art</li> <li>Quran &amp; Sunnah</li> <li>English</li> <li>Eng Lit</li> <li>Dhiv, Lit</li> </ul> |              |                          |             |                    |                |                                   |                         |  |   |  |           |                        |                  |                  |

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## MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

There is little dispute in educational research with the contention that it is better to begin schooling in a child's mother tongue. From a linguistic perspective, this is necessary to develop literacy, oracy and the metalinguistic knowledge of the first language. From a broader educational, psychological and development perspective, focusing on the child's first language during the early years is critical to build thinking, communication and a strong sense of identity. It is also believed that a strong foundation in the first language will boost the acquisition of a second language in later stages. For these reasons, schools are recommended to use Dhivehi as the language of instruction during the foundation years.

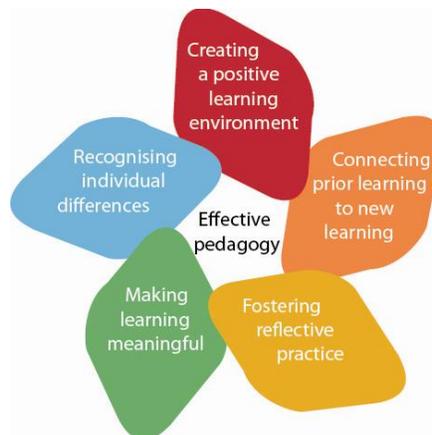
From Primary onwards, however, the medium of instruction in schools will be English (or Arabic, for specialist schools). Schools are nevertheless discouraged from following a full immersion model of education where the mother tongue use is discouraged within the school environment. Instead, schools are recommended to gradually adopt a full English medium instruction model, which would allow them to encourage the use of Dhivehi alongside English, particularly in Key Stage 1.

## EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY

The National Curriculum presents a holistic view of teaching and learning that indicates direction in which effective practice should move. The pedagogical dimensions in the curriculum support teachers to focus on specific skills, content knowledge and expertise with innovative support systems to help students master the multi-dimensional abilities required of them in today's diverse and complex world. These pedagogical dimensions are strategies which ensure that students experience success through structured support and recognition of their efforts to accomplish the intended learning outcomes. In this regard, it is important for teachers to acknowledge that individual differences exist and that all students do not learn in the same way. Thus, a diverse range of pedagogies must be used to meet student needs, enhance their learning experiences and engage them in active learning.

While planning teaching and learning, schools should be flexible and support the development of deep levels of thinking and application. They should also ensure that students receive constructive feedback that support further learning. At the same time, integration of technology into classroom instruction is imperative as technology has become a platform for teachers and students across the globe to communicate and share instructional materials.

The National Curriculum is based on five pedagogical dimensions, as depicted in the figure below:



*Figure: 4 Pedagogical Dimensions*

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Each of the five dimensions of pedagogy can be described in terms of a number of elements. It is important to note that all five dimensions are necessary for improved student outcomes.

### **Creating a positive learning environment**

Positive learning environments support the developmental needs of students not only academically but also socially and personally. A positive learning environment is inclusive, respectful and caring of all its members.

Schools with a positive learning environment maximize the learning of every student and help young people to build a sense of community and become full participating citizens of society. These are schools where children feel comfortable with themselves, safe amongst their peers and are engaged and motivated to learn and they are happy to be in school. In positive learning environments teachers have high expectations that their students will achieve good results. They explain clearly the quality of work students are expected to produce and give them some choice of learning activities. Apart from this, positive learning environments offer a variety of learning activities to cater for the range of learner needs and students are given the opportunity to take responsibility of their own learning. As a result, they are more likely to benefit from the lessons, and thus more likely to be self-motivated.

Additionally, these schools have standards for appropriate conduct which are developed collaboratively and apply to all persons and in all school-related activities. In these environments, all the members of the community contribute to the environment within schools.

### **Connecting prior learning to new learning**

When students come into a classroom, they enter with a wide range of experiences, ideas, knowledge and concepts that are already formed. The prior knowledge that students bring into classroom is one of the major factors influencing teaching and learning. It is therefore important that teachers are able to ascertain the level of prior knowledge and adjust their teaching accordingly.

When teachers link new information to the student's prior knowledge, they activate the student's interest and curiosity, and infuse instruction with a sense of purpose. Teachers who link classroom activities and instruction to prior knowledge build on their students' familiarity with a topic and enable them to connect the curriculum content to their own culture and experience.

### **Fostering reflective practice**

Reflective learning is central to understanding the experiential learning process. Reflection can lead to greater self-awareness, which in turn is a first step to positive change. Taking time to reflect can help students identify approaches that have worked well, and in that way reinforce good practice and reflect on why some approaches did not work. Such metacognitive strategies can enable students to transfer learning to other disciplines and domains.

As a result, they gain confidence and become more independent as learners. Independence leads to ownership as students realize that they can pursue their own intellectual needs and discover a world of information at their fingertips. Teachers should model metacognitive and self-explanation strategies on various tasks to help students build an integrated understanding of the process of reflection.

### **Making learning meaningful**

Relevance is a crucial factor in all kinds of learning. Students learn best when they feel that what they are studying is worth learning because it is meaningful and relevant to their lives. At the same time students must see the usefulness and potential application of this knowledge to their everyday lives. Effective teachers connect and make learning personally meaningful and relevant.

Apart from this, the content of the curriculum should be within the parameters of Islam. Students should also be exposed to local content as well as regional and international content which would be of relevance to them in their further education and career opportunities, thus making them part of the global village.

**Recognising individual differences**

The academic abilities, learning styles, personalities, interests, background knowledge, and level of motivation for learning of every student is different, therefore the methodologies employed in classrooms must be varied so that learning is challenging and interesting for the learners. All the students should be encouraged to try new things and explore every concept through a wide variety of experiences and learning activities.

Students learn more effectively when teachers offer multiple approaches to what they learn, how they learn and the methods used to present their understanding of concepts. As a result, teachers are able to reach more students and create an environment that triggers and promote motivation of learners. Ultimately students take greater responsibility and ownership for their learning and are able to identify their strengths that can be used in learning.

Further guidelines for schools on the five dimensions of pedagogy can be found in the publication *Pedagogy and Assessment: a practical guide for teachers*, NIE.

## ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

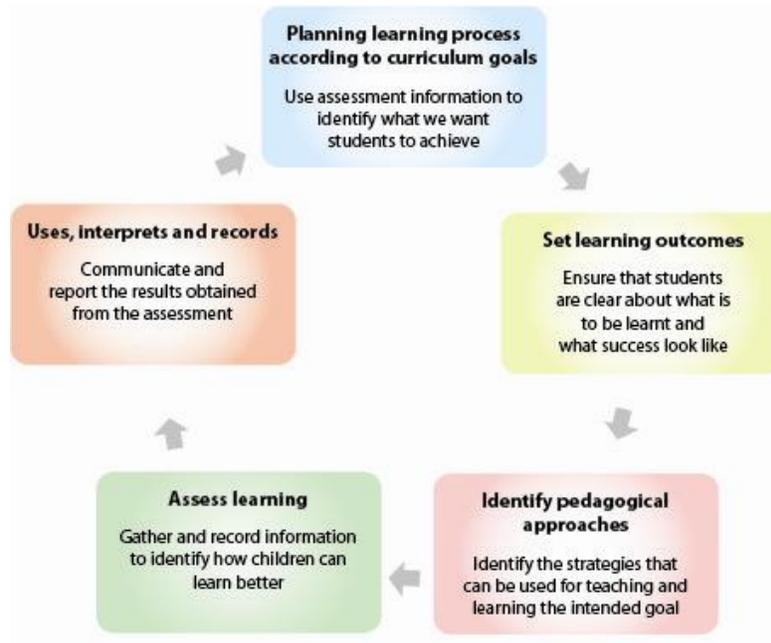
Assessment plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, providing opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of what they know, understand and can do. When assessment, instruction and the intended curriculum are aligned, it provides optimum conditions for learning, thus maximizing students' achievement.

Assessment results have important implications for teaching and learning and aims to provide multiple opportunities for students to practise and demonstrate their understanding of what is being learnt. Assessment in schools can be classified into diagnostic, formative and summative strands.

- Diagnostic assessments are used to provide educators with information about students' prior knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning styles and motivation to assist them to develop an effective learning programme that suits the educational needs of the learners.
- Formative assessment or assessment for learning is a process where students are assessed as the teacher proceeds with a lesson or unit to provide ongoing feedback to the teacher and students. Informal observation, checklist, listening to students' responses, class participation and self/peer assessment are ways used to assess students formatively.
- Summative assessment or assessment of learning is usually done at a certain point of the academic year or from certain components to judge the appropriateness of what is being taught. Some of the methods used in summative assessments are portfolios, chapter tests, final exams, reports, term papers, projects and national exams. Summative assessments can also be used to plan for future learning.

Assessment provides data and communicates progress and achievements of students to all the concerned parties, and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of students in specific areas of learning. Additionally, the process of assessment should be based on the students' age and stage of development. As emphasis is placed on providing integrated learning experiences in the early years, the assessment methods used should vary to meet the different developmental stages.

The following figure depicts the recommended cycle of assessment to be followed in schools.



*Figure 8 : Process of Assessment in Schools*

### Principles of Assessment

The following principles provide a guideline for improving the quality of assessment practices used in schools and are meant to ensure that students are provided with the best possible environment for achievement and success.

#### *Assessment measures learning across all dimensions*

Assessment should focus on the holistic development of the students. Therefore, equal importance should be placed on assessing knowledge, skills, values, key competencies and attitudes across Key Stages. Furthermore, assessment should reflect the wholeness and interconnectedness of learning; hence it goes far beyond testing.

*Assessment uses multiple methods*

The type of assessment techniques used should be related to the learning outcomes and the purpose of assessment. At the same time, educators should note that important decisions about learners should not be made only on the basis of a test score. A wide range of assessment techniques should be used to gain a broader picture of student learning. Furthermore, the type of assessment techniques used should be closely related to the learning outcomes and the purpose of assessment. Some of the techniques which could be used to assess students include observations, concept mapping, portfolio and conferencing.

*Assessment involves the whole school community*

A collaborative and partnership approach to student assessment and promotion must be emphasised. This can be ensured by involving stakeholders in policy formulation and in the implementation of assessment procedures. It is important that schools plan and design assessment strategies that align with the curriculum at a whole-school level and not merely by individual classroom teachers. This involves all the stakeholders agreeing on a set criterion for giving scores and assigning bench marks to maintain a set standard.

*Assessment uses feedback to adjust and improve learning*

Assessment should be used for learning and it should provide clear information about how students' level of understanding differs from their learning goals, and what they need to do to move towards those goals. Based on the information gathered from assessment the teacher has to modify the teaching in response to the students' needs. At the same time, students must be guided to set new learning goals for the future. If the assessment result is focused on clearly defined learning objectives, pupils are able to become involved in the learning process and take control of their own progress and achievement.

*Assessment reflects on learning and creates a continuous improvement cycle*

Assessment should be used to collect and gather evidence of educational effectiveness at various levels of schooling. Schools should track students' progress based on the assessments and rate their learning against the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are critical for success in their learning. This allows

schools to determine future goals and actions. Ultimately, this reflection returns the cycle to begin the system again.

Further guidelines for schools on assessment practices and sample tools can be found in the publication *Pedagogy and Assessment: a practical guide for teachers*, NIE.

#### REPORTING

Schools will report according to the design and format provided by the Ministry of Education. In reporting to various stakeholders especially parents, it is important that teachers identify students strengths and talents, areas to focus on future learning, identification of the necessary steps that can be taken to achieve progress, how parents and significant others can help students to achieve better results and progress.

### ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

The following general areas are identified as the accountability measures that need to be considered to evaluate the success of the curriculum.

#### *National Standards*

The overall academic performance of the students such as year-end results, results of diagnostic tests and performance on various national measures can be used to evaluate the success of students' learning. In addition, standards set in sports and other fields can also be evaluated.

#### *Positive Behaviour*

Students' general behaviour and attitude plays a key role in determining the success of the curriculum. Student's adhering to Islamic principles and showing generally positive behaviour in the society can be considered as essential components that determine the success of the curriculum

*Better choices*

The general choices that students take in life are a mark of their thinking and attitudes towards various aspects of life. This component encompasses to all areas of life, including the economic, social and health choices that students make.

*Contribution to society*

Identification of student roles and responsibilities in the society is a critical element that determines the success of the National Curriculum. This curriculum envisages students to participate in various activities that contribute to the welfare of the society such as voluntary participation in various community activities

*Further education and employment*

A clear indicator of the success of the curriculum is related to the number of students who shows a keen interest in further studies and those students who enjoy the occupations they are involved in.

## CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

Effective management of the curriculum requires schools to provide direction to curriculum delivery and manage the teaching process efficiently to support student learning. There should be well developed procedures such as curriculum management plans, professional development programmes that align with the curriculum and specifications for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum.

While implementing the curriculum, a strong emphasis should be placed on providing a holistic education which is concerned with the growth of students' intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potentials. Therefore, school leaders need to be familiar with the design and the underlying principles of the curriculum. They also need to establish a mechanism by which the vision, values and the key competencies can be addressed in the teaching and learning process to ensure that students who leave school attain good results, show positive behaviour, make better choices in life, contribute positively to society and are encouraged to take further studies or are well

prepared for employment. The following specifies areas to which key consideration needs to be given in order to manage the curriculum effectively.

### **Creating a suitable learning environment**

- Create school environments that meet the educational, social, emotional, physical and recreational needs of students.
- Provide physical facilities such as laboratories, libraries, toilets, safe drinking water, special rooms for various subjects, a canteen, adequate sport or play areas and a prayer room to promote effective learning and teaching.
- Establish proper physical facilities to accommodate students with special educational needs.
- Develop environmentally sustainable schools that support community involvement.

### **Selection of subjects**

- Guide students at Key Stages 4 and 5 in choosing subjects that would help them in future career tasks. This could be done through appropriate career guidance, identify students' interests, talents and strengths .
- Offer electives from all the Key Learning Areas and subjects and maintain continuity.
- Offer vocational subjects that match with the employment prospects in the island or in the region, and consider the availability of resources and expertise within the region.

### **Scheduling school hours**

- Give importance to the allocated percentage time for each subject or KLA.
- Allow flexibility in timetabling: some lessons can be lengthier than others depending on the objectives of the lesson. However this does not mean that certain subjects should be given precedence over others.
- Allow time for independent studies.

**Learning outside the classroom**

- Plan time to set tasks outside the classroom hours. E.g. field visits, involvement with community.
- Build networks with local and global schools and share information and participate in various activities.
- Build networks with NGOs and other organisations and use their assistance and expertise in the learning process.

**Teaching and Learning process**

- Address the core outcomes of each subject or KLA.
- In addition to teaching the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of each subject/KLA, teachers should aim to achieve the vision, values and build the key competencies identified in this document. This should be evident in the scheme of lessons, lesson plans, school activities and school ethos.
- Ensure that students are engaged in their learning and thus should employ various teaching and learning strategies that cater for students with various learning styles and abilities.
- Use teaching and learning materials that are relevant to the daily experiences of the students and also provide a global and diverse exposure.
- Use assessment to enhance student learning. Both assessment for learning and assessment of learning highlighted in the framework need to be used in assisting students' learning.

**Catering for students with special educational needs**

- Identify and respond to students with special educational needs.
- Where necessary, prepare annual Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) which address students' interests, abilities and unique needs, taking into consideration students' growth in knowledge, skills and motivation.
- Adapt the curriculum to meet students' needs.
- Use adaptive equipment and materials that can cater to students with special educational needs.
- As much as possible, mainstream students with special needs.
- Get assistance from other organisations and parents. Build a mechanism whereby schools have access to trained specialists.

- Support students in all dimensions, where necessary celebrate small achievements, and provide challenging and enriching tasks for gifted students.

**Co curricular activities**

- Activities should foster learning and address the vision, values and key competencies defined in the framework.
- Organise co curricular activities and develop guidelines to assist the functioning of these activities.
- Allow all students to choose at least one activity they wish to pursue and provide equal opportunities for students to excel and take ownership.
- Give equal priority to co curricular activities and academic learning.
- Provide an array of opportunities to explore talents and interests.
- Utilise the resources and expertise available in the community.

**Resources**

- Create a mechanism to access current teaching and learning materials and use these in a meaningful manner.
- Create mechanisms to pool resources.
- Share resources among schools or within a region.

**Continuous professional development**

- Offer continuous schoolbased professional development that addresses the schools' priorities and individual needs of the teachers.
- Create sufficient time to discuss and reflect on teaching and review teacher strengths and areas of improvement.
- Provide opportunities to gain experience through exchange programmes.
- Foster a positive culture of sharing by using various mediums to exchange information and recent teaching learning trends.
- Use expertise within and outside the school.

**Roles and responsibilities**

All the key players involved in the teaching and learning process must be accountable for the performance of the schools. Therefore, it is vital for individuals to have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The following are some of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders but they are not limited to those identified here.

*School Boards*

The School Boards provide stewardship and direction for implementing the national curriculum. The Board support and work constructively with the schools to create a positive climate in order to emphasise student success. School Boards need to reflect on the vision of the curriculum and strive to provide policy direction towards achieving the goals of education. Additionally, there should be strong professional relationships between the school and the board members.

School boards are expected to:

- formulate a strategic plan for the school which addresses the goals of the national curriculum and the expectations of the community.
- understand the educational goals in the national curriculum and provide wellbalanced learning opportunities to improve student achievement.
- Evaluate the curriculum implementation process at all stages.

*Principals*

School principals direct and manage the academic and nonacademic activities within a school environment through strategic deployment of resources available. Apart from budgeting, and maintenance of facilities, effective leadership requires deep involvement in the instructional issues that directly affect student achievement. Principals must position themselves as guides and models for teachers and they need to have the skills in building healthy relationships among staff. Principals are accountable for the overall leadership and management of the schools. The core accountabilities of principals are to:

- facilitate the development of a school wide plan to support effective curriculum delivery.

- guide teachers in effective alignment of the curriculum outcomes, instruction and the assessment procedures.
- manage and integrate resources available to the schools effectively.
- monitor the teaching and learning process and use data to identify and plan for changes in the educational programme.
- review and interpret assessment data, sets goals based on the information gathered, and plans for continuous improvement of achievement.
- ensure that student progress and achievements are reported to parents regularly.
- facilitate and participates in the professional development of the teachers.
- develop collaborations with parents, the community, and national and international organizations to make significant changes in the implementation of the curriculum.

### *Leading Teachers*

Leading teachers monitor the teaching and learning process in the school, improve student achievement and manage curriculum implementation. They develop the skills and knowledge of the teachers through professional development activities that demonstrate and model effective teaching strategies. Apart from this, leading teachers are responsible to coordinate and manage student activities in the schools for effective management of the curriculum. In carrying out this role, leading teachers are expected to:

- lead and manage curriculum planning and delivery.
- exemplify effective classroom practices and provide direction on teaching and learning strategies.
- conduct and facilitate professional development programmes based on the needs of the school.
- monitor the delivery of the written curriculum to ensure that the values, competencies and skills, identified in the curriculum are addressed, different pedagogical dimensions are used, and individual differences are considered in everyday teaching.
- lead and manage assessment and reporting policies.
- Contribute to the overall management of the schools.

### *Teachers*

The primary focus of the teachers is to plan and prepare instruction that enables them to achieve curriculum outcomes. Teachers are accountable for the effective delivery of the curriculum. The responsibilities expected of teachers are to:

- deliver the curriculum, using strategies most effective for the students.
- monitor student needs regarding attendance, behaviour, academics, co curricular activities, etc.
- assess student learning using a variety of assessment strategies and use the gathered information for further planning.
- reflect on their work through self and peer evaluation and participate in professional development activities based on their needs .
- communicate student strengths and weaknesses to parents, in a consistent, relevant and transparent manner.

### *Students*

Student effort and involvement in their academic and co curricular activities are vital for their achievement in education. They should try to take responsibility of their own education and understand that all learning and development requires an investment of time and effort. Students are expected to:

- involve in the learning and assessing process and know their own learning strengths and weaknesses and set attainment goals for future learning.
- show interest and attempts to excel in learning.
- demonstrate behaviour that is conducive to learning and behave courteously toward both their teachers and other students.

### *Parents*

Parents should establish high expectations that guide students throughout their years in school. This encourage students to do their best to meet those expectations. Apart from this, parents could try to work with their children as much as possible and maintain quiet areas in the home where students can learn under best possible conditions. It is also important to develop a positive relationship with the school that allow them to closely monitor their children’s progress. In this regard, parents are expected to:

- collaborate with the school and support the learning process.
- participate in their children's efforts to achieve the learning outcomes across the curriculum.
- accept a shared responsibility to work with the schools in the learning process.
- ensure that their children are adequately nourished, acquire adequate sleep and rest and is fully equipped for school.
- create a home environment that supports learning.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Fine motor skill**

Fine motor skills can be defined as the coordination of small muscle movements that occur in the finger, in coordination with the eyes. Examples of activities that include fine motor skills are grasping small objects, manipulating a computer mouse, writing etc.

**Holistic education**

Holistic education is concerned with the growth of students' intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic creative and spiritual potentials.

**Information Literacy**

Information Literacy is the ability to know what information is needed for a given task, where to locate information, identify the best source of information, evaluate the information critically and use that information effectively.

**Key Competency**

Key competency is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential for individuals' personal and social development in modern, societies.

**Key Learning Area**

Key learning is a pedagogical organiser that consist the diverse aspects of human intellectual knowledge, experience and achievement.

**Key stage**

Key stage is a used to describe a particular period of schooling that sets the educational knowledge expected of students at various ages.

**Pedagogy**

Pedagogy is the art of teaching and learning. This includes the strategies or styles used in teaching.

**Portfolio**

Portfolios are selective collections of student work that provide evidence of student achievement.

**Prior learning**

Prior learning is what students have already learned that can serve as a beginning step for learning something new.

**Scientific Literacy**

Scientific Literacy is the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes that are essential for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity.

**Special educational needs**

Special educational needs refer to learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for the learners to access education than the majority of children of the same age.

**Sustainable development**

Sustainable development is maintaining a balance between the human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for future generations.

**Vocational education**

Vocational education is a form of education which develops practical skills that help students to engage in industrial or commercial occupations.