



# #earlyyearsup

At ICS, we are proud pioneers - fierce advocates of a discovery-based, inquiry-led, child-centred education - and we are determined to do things differently.

- The Candle of Curiosity
- The Early Years Classroom
- Hybridising Best Pedagogy
- The 100 Languages
- Keeping the Rigour
- Sharing Good Practice

# #earlyyearsup

## **The Candle of Curiosity**

In their earliest years of life, every child exhibits a candle of curiosity which burns brightly and hungrily, but, unfortunately, the older they get, this candle can flicker and fade. Through the pursuit of #earlyyearsup throughout and across each child's curriculum and learning journey at ICS, we hope to keep the candle of curiosity burning throughout the school.

## **The Early Years Classroom**

We believe that much of the best pedagogy and practice can be found within the walls of Early Years classrooms around the world. Before the pressures and demands of a knowledge-based curriculum begin to take hold, learning is typically, and first and foremost, a fun and autonomous journey. At ICS, we want to keep that fun and autonomy alive, right through to Year 13.

## **Hybridising Best Pedagogy**

We have explored some of the best Early Years pedagogies around the world, and are fortunate to be able to 'cherry pick' from each. For example, we seek inspiration from Ireland's 'Aistear' and from New Zealand's 'Te Whāriki'; from the work of Professor Ferre Laevers on the 'Leuven Scales' of wellbeing and involvement, and from the core principles underpinning the 'Forest Schools' movement in Northern Europe. And, perhaps most importantly of all, we are excited by the Reggio Emilia approach.

## **The 100 Languages**

Reggio Emilia is an approach to Early Years and Primary education which is rooted in the rights of the child, and demands an experiential learning journey shaped by human relationships. At its core are the '100 Languages of Learning' - what founder, Loris Malaguzzi, calls the "infinite ways that children can express, explore, and connect their thoughts, feelings and imaginings." In other words, every child learns differently, and our challenge, as teachers, is to find their 'learning language' and speak through that.

## **Keeping the Rigour**

This does not mean that we sacrifice the importance of academic attainment and progress. On the contrary, our curriculum retains all the rigour of the National Curriculum for England and Wales, and we keep a close and caring eye on each child to ensure they fulfil their potential and do not fall behind. At ICS, however, we believe that #earlyyearsup actually improves attainment, and that the more engaged each child is in a multimodal learning experience, the better they will actually do.

## **Sharing Good Practice**

As a school, we are on a learning journey, and our bold and talented teachers are treading that road together. Like our children, we have a lot yet to learn, but, doors open, we are all peer coaches and mentors to help spread #earlyyearsup down, up and across the whole school. Many schools would be fazed by the size of the challenge; but, at ICS, we love it. After all, if we expect our children to climb difficult mountains, retaining a 'growth mindset' throughout, then we should do so too.