

PSP 2020

# Evaluation report

IB World Schools Department

## Programme Evaluation Report

**Head of School:** Donna Pearl

**School Name:** Zhangjiagang Liang Feng International School

**School Code:** 006335

**School Address:** No.528 Jiyang East Road, Zhangjiagang, Suzhou, Jiangsu, China, 215600

**IB Programme(s):** Diploma Programme

**Programme Coordinator:** Cathy Zhang

**Date:** Thursday 7 April 2022

### Evaluation Team

**Diploma Programme**

**Programme Leader:** Calvin Tse

## School and Programme Leadership

Dear Donna Pearl,

Thank you for completing the programme evaluation self-study process. The International Baccalaureate (IB) recognizes that this process requires considerable time and effort from the entire school community. We appreciate the effort that you have made and hope that the insights gained along the way will be valuable in further developing your programme(s).

Please review the feedback in this report carefully as it provides important guidance for the development of the programme(s) that will help your school achieve the optimum outcomes for students.

IB programme evaluation is built on the premise that IB programmes, when implemented with fidelity, ultimately lead to the achievement of the IB mission. The primary aim is to support schools in continuously developing their capacity to implement IB programmes in order to have a greater impact on student outcomes through the development of teacher and leader practice.

We hope that through this process school leadership will gain a deeper understanding of both the aspects of the programme that are being implemented effectively and the aspects that need further development. The process supports the school—as a learning community—to develop the capacity to work intentionally and strategically to develop its IB programme(s) and enable school leaders and teachers to better direct their efforts and resources.

## A. School Context

### School & Community Description

Zhangjiagang is a small city under the administration of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province with a total population of 1.67 million (Jiangsu China Daily, 2021). It is an industrial city with many small to medium-sized companies as well as multinational companies operating in the free trade zone.

Zhangjiagang's GDP is among the top 3 towns in China. Majority of the local residents are Han Chinese working either in companies or government agencies. Although they have their local dialect, majority of the people speak Mandarin especially the younger generation. In recent years, there has been an increase in expatriates residing in this area with more than a thousand currently residing in Zhangjiagang, either working in companies and teaching in schools and language centers. The fast development of the city makes it attractive to local and foreign migrants.

Every year, we take our high school students on field trips to visit museums and companies in the area. Among them are steel, telecommunication and manufacturing companies and the Zhangjiagang Cultural Museum. This would not have been possible without the support of parents and people in the community. During school events such as IB Week and IM Day, we invite experts from the local community in various fields including medicine, business, law, education or military service to give talks to our students. We also invite school alumni to share their experiences studying abroad or talk about their field of expertise.

LFIS has a total of 117 employees of which 85 are teaching staff. Majority of the teachers are Chinese nationals of which 80% can speak English at basic to proficient level. We have 16 foreign teachers from USA, UK, South Africa, Jamaica, Korea, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Philippines where English is their first or second language.

Majority of our students are from Mainland China with around 14 students from Taiwan and Macao, 31 Koreans and 12 are from Canada, USA, Australia, Germany and Brazil, mostly with biracial parents. Our students' English language proficiency level ranges from basic to intermediate and few students have reached advanced level.

In the High School Department, we have a total of 28 students from G10 - G12, 3 are Koreans and the rest are Chinese nationals coming from this city or nearby areas. In recent years, we have a higher success rate in retaining G9 students who progress to G10. Prior to that, most G10 students did not come from our middle school.

There is a total of 12 teachers in the High School Department, 3 are foreign nationals and 9 are Chinese. Eleven (11) are Diploma Program teachers and 1 Art teacher for G10 students. The average number of teachers remains the same but the percentage of foreign teachers against Chinese teachers has greatly changed since our last DP review where 80% were foreign teachers.

## B. Programme strengths

### Purpose: Sharing an important mission

- Purpose (0101)
  - **Purpose 1:** The governing body and school leaders articulate a purpose for learning that aligns with the IB's philosophy and mission. (0101-01)
    - The IB mission serves as an important driver for the school in all aspects of implementing the IB programme(s)
    - The school demonstrates their commitment to a holistic approach to education through the academic programme and the activities offered promoting learning opportunities outside the school.
    - The school mission and vision are being updated to closely align with the IB mission and philosophy.
  - **Purpose 2:** The school's pedagogical leadership team embraces educational approaches that encourage students to become active, compassionate life-long learners. (0101-02)
    - The commitment to international mindedness is deep, demonstrated by staff involvement in various initiatives such as hosting the IB week and International Mindedness Day and celebrating the local and global festivals.
    - The school leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the school's purpose, and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.
  - **Purpose 3:** The school community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile. (0101-03)
    - Developing international mindedness and the attributes of an IB learner are visible and actionable in and beyond the classroom. Posters and banners can be found in the classrooms and along the hallways.

### Environments: Providing essential structures, systems and resources

- Leadership and governance (0201)
  - **Leadership 3:** The school organizes time for learning and teaching that provides a broad, balanced and connected curriculum and serves the changing needs of its community. (0201-03)
    - The school is committed to reviewing and adding to subject choices to meet students' changing needs and preferences.

- **Leadership 4:** The school implements and reviews systems and processes to improve the operation and sustainability of its IB programme(s). (0201-04)
  - The school has established a website, designed a promotional brochure, and launched the Wechat platform to ensure effective communication related to programme development among all stakeholders in the school community. The school has its marketing team participating in various promotional events such as school fairs.
- **Leadership 5:** The school funds and allocates resources that sustain and further develop its IB programme(s). (0201-05)
  - School leaders support and leverage ongoing efforts to provide inclusive education within the broader IB community.
- Student support (0202)
  - **Student support 2:** The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support. (0202-02)
    - The school has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school’s purpose for learning and is characterized by respect for diversity, fairness and trust.

## Culture: Creating positive school cultures

- Culture through policy implementation (0301)
  - **Culture 1:** The school secures access to an IB education for the broadest possible range of students. (0301-01)
    - The roles and responsibilities of stakeholder groups in the school community, which include governing body, leadership and staff, are clearly defined and articulated in policy, supporting a culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.
    - The school’s commitment to access for students of all backgrounds and abilities is evident through policy implementation and established support systems and protocols.
  - **Culture 6:** The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews its IB mandated policies to ensure they are cohesive and reflect IB philosophy. (0301-06)
    - School policies and procedures are published and communicated to all members of the school community through meetings and media platforms.

## Learning: Ensuring effective education

- Designing a coherent curriculum (0401)
  - **Coherent curriculum 1:** The school plans and implements a coherent curriculum that organizes learning and teaching within and across the years of its IB programme(s). (0401-01)
    - The curriculum promotes the development of international mindedness and the attributes as stated in the IB learner profile.
    - The curriculum is rigorous whilst supporting students' academic, social, physical and emotional needs. It fosters the development of the attributes of the IB learner profile.
  - **Coherent curriculum 3:** The school develops, regularly reviews and shares its curriculum in ways that explicitly engage the school community.
    - There is a system for the regular and planned review of the curriculum, considering changing students' needs and school context.
- Approaches to teaching (0403)
  - **Approaches to teaching 5:** Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals. (0403-05)
    - The classroom environment and teaching strategies enable every student to pursue and meet their learning goals.
- Approaches to assessment (0404)
  - **Approaches to assessment 2:** The school uses assessment methods that are varied and fit-for-purpose for the curriculum and stated learning outcomes and objectives. (0404-02)
    - The school uses a variety of assessment methods and tools to triangulate data from different sources.

## C. Requirements

Based on the review of the programme documentation, observations of the team during the visit and in conversations with members of the school community, all requirements are in place.



## D. Development of IB Standards

<b>Purpose:</b> Sharing an important mission	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Purpose (0101)</b> Schools implement IB programmes to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.	<b>DP:</b> Shows notable development	<b>DP:</b> Shows notable development	

<b>Environments:</b> Providing essential structures, systems and resources	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Leadership and governance (0201)</b> The leadership and governance of IB World Schools create and sustain high-quality learning environments.	<b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development	<b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development	
<b>Student support (0202)</b> Learning environments in IB World Schools support student success.	<b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> The school puts in place systems and processes to support students with learning needs and demonstrates a commitment to fostering the social, emotional and physical well-being of the school community members, as confirmed by the leadership team, teachers, and students.
<b>Teacher support (0203)</b> Learning environments in IB World Schools support and empower teachers.	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development	<b>DP:</b> See areas for consideration in regards to this IB Standard.

<b>Culture:</b> Creating positive school cultures	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Culture through policy implementation (0301)</b> Schools develop, implement, communicate and review effective policies that help to create a school culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.	<b>DP:</b> Shows notable development	<b>DP:</b> Shows notable development	

<b>Learning:</b> Ensuring effective education	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<p><b>Designing a coherent curriculum (0401)</b>  Learning in IB World Schools is based on a coherent curriculum.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	
<p><b>Students as lifelong learners (0402)</b>  Learning in IB schools aims to develop students ready for further education and life beyond the classroom.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	
<p><b>Approaches to teaching (0403)</b>  IB programmes encourage approaches to teaching that create learning experiences that are shown to be meaningful to the school community.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	
<p><b>Approaches to assessment (0404)</b>  Learning, teaching, and assessment effectively inform and influence one another.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development</p>	

## E. Feedback on the planning and analysis and reflection of programme development

### Programme development strengths

#### Planning

- The area of focus is aligned with the school's strategic plan, which fosters international mindedness and its actions.
- The school has identified sought examples from other schools to inform their process.
- The focus of programme development was decided and developed collaboratively by all staff involved in the programme.

#### Evidencing and analysing

- The school demonstrated that the process resulted in a positive improvement in the student experience.

#### Reflection

- The school was able to make some improvements as a result of the programme development process.
- School leaders used the lessons learned from this effort to improve planning for the development of other areas of the IB programme in the school.
- The process showed clearly how programme development planning is an integral part of learning and teaching at the school.

### Areas for consideration

#### Planning

- Clarify the rationale and choice of area of focus for the programme development plan.
- Gather early feedback on the area of focus and its alignment to the student experience so as to revise and modify the plan for greater impact.
- The school may wish to use a wider variety of research and examples of shared practice to develop the plan.

#### Evidencing and analysing

- The school may wish to consider multiple ways to gather data and evidence, including interviews, focus groups, and observation of students engaged in learning.
- For future programme development plans, the school could consider mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness and functionality of the structure being developed.
- using interim milestones to assess and adapt efforts

#### Reflection

- The impact of the plan could be strengthened by clearly outlined next steps.

- The school may wish to consider ways to increase the involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders of the school community.
- The school may wish to consider including in the plan a review cycle for ongoing monitoring and adjustment and consider update presentations to the wider community at milestones.
- The development team may wish to explore further changes that could be made as a result of their programme development effort.

## F. Opportunities for future or further programme development

### The school identified the following areas as priorities for programme development

#### Priorities:

- The transition from the previous to the current management (2017) proved to be a challenge as they had limited knowledge about the IB DP. As LFIS is not a continuum school, the different departments in the school tended to work individually of one another and very little alignment was being practised, especially at the beginning of the period under review (0101 - Purpose).
- The small size of the team limits opportunities for collaboration as there are not enough teachers within a subject group for effective collaboration. As a team, we have not yet found an effective strategy for inter-subject collaboration, but this has been included in the action to plan and will be worked on (0401 - Coherent Curriculum)
- Although teachers strive to provide social and emotional support to students, due to the limitations in physical space and facilities in the school, students have little opportunity to engage in physical activities or exercise. This may have a negative effect on their physical wellbeing. Although parents are supportive and make it a point to participate in school-held events whenever invited, they are often not sufficiently involved in their child's day-to-day learning, for example their habits and progress. The school has a small library that mainly caters for other departments with bigger student populations, and the current librarian does not yet have the proper qualifications. However, she is in the process of getting herself properly qualified. The school library has a sufficient collection of resources to support the IB DP, but it is not extensive. However, the school is in the process of subscribing to an online library to provide access to a bigger collection of academic resources (0201 - Student Support).
- Still more effective communication and collaboration are needed between the school and parents in order to better address the learning needs and challenges of students. Although students are given feedback on their work by teachers they are not always able to use it effectively and the problems persist. Many of the students have limited foundational skills and understandings, and not always easily grasp concepts (0404 - Approaches to Assessment).
- There were limitations in funding, but this is justifiable by the small number of students in the high school. Restrictions imposed by the local education authority made it a challenge to take students out of the city for field trips, which limit their learning experiences. International education is a highly competitive market, and increasing student count proved to be a challenge as Zhangjiagang is a small city with a limited reach. (0201 - Leadership and Governance)
- There is limited budget for subscribing to more helpful online IB resources like InThinking and other IB-recognised PD and resource websites. The school used to be

subscribed to IBDP Advantages but the subscription has not been renewed since 2017 (0202 - Teacher support).

- Students lack intrinsic motivation and may have limited foundational skills and understandings (0403 - Approaches to Teaching)
- There is a limitation to databases accessible here in China so this can be a challenge when it comes to providing sufficient resources to students. With respect to access, some students may need help that our school is not able to provide but parents may not see their condition as worrying or needing more specialised help, and may choose not to do anything about it (0301 - Culture).
- The type of students who are enrolled in the school are not generally intrinsically motivated, and who have less than stellar academic records prior to joining the school. Although all official IB assessments and assignments completed by students reflect proper citation and acknowledgment of others' works, this is often neglected in class work and activities. Restrictions imposed by the local authorities and during the pandemic limits opportunities for students to go on field trips to engage in community service (0402 - Lifelong Learners)

### **The Evaluation team has identified the following areas of the programme(s) for the school to consider for future or further development**

Future or further development:

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 1:

- The school may consider demonstrating long-term sustainability of the programme, through for example, consistent student enrollment, campus expansion and development.

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 5:

- The school may consider allocating adequate library resources, including online subscriptions and databases, and an IB-trained librarian, to support the extended essay core component.

Environments / Teacher support (0203) / Teacher support 3:

- The school may consider modifying the structure of the school day and using a collaboration and reflection protocol to promote effective use of planning time and opportunities to share practices.

Learning / Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) / Coherent curriculum 2:

- The school may consider establishing a planning protocol to facilitate knowledge sharing and reflection when planning and designing units that meet programme requirements and are in accordance with programme documentation.

Learning / Students as lifelong learners (0402) / Lifelong learners 1:

- The school could benefit from further encouraging students to be actively involved in their own learning through independent inquiry, self-reflection, and peer evaluation.

Learning / Students as lifelong learners (0402) / Lifelong learners 4:

- The school may consider supporting students to further develop the skills of making informed, reasoned and ethical judgements and taking principled action.

Learning / Approaches to teaching (0403) / Approaches to teaching 1:

- The school may consider designing learning engagements and promoting inquiry-based teaching strategies to demonstrate the focus on developing students as inquirers and thinkers.

Learning / Approaches to assessment (0404) / Approaches to assessment 4:

- The school may consider encouraging students to use feedback to improve their learning. The skills of self and peer assessment are encouraged.

## G. Conclusions of the Evaluation team

During the school leaders' call, the school leadership team has demonstrated a strong commitment to the IB philosophy and provided students with a holistic and high-quality education.

During the period under review, the school has faced significant challenges due to the pandemic. However, the school has demonstrated initiative and, out of the challenges related to online learning, a hybrid model with both onsite and online learning and continues to implement the programme successfully.

The school has identified international mindedness as the area of focus for programme development. The students have developed critical thinking skills and engaged in reflective learning through their commitment to these initiatives.

The school has approached the self-study process to reflect critically on its practices, inform change and improvement, and bring greater depth to the programme. The strengths and the challenges being recognised will guide the school to concentrate the efforts and resources to further enhance the programme development.



## H. Conclusion of the IB on the school status as an IB World School

The programme(s) shows close alignment with the IB Programme standards and practices (2020). The school's status as an IB World School is confirmed.

We trust that the information found in this report will support the school's continued development of its IB programme(s). Your IB World School manager, Steven Wishart ([steven.wishart@ibo.org](mailto:steven.wishart@ibo.org)), will be in touch with you to follow up on this report and to support your school's ongoing efforts.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Kearney'.

Adrian Kearney  
Director, IB World Schools