

International School

The Emirates International School - Meadows in Dubai



Evidencing the trajectory of one of Dubai's most successful schools

How BlueSky raises staff confidence and improves the quality of teaching and learning

About the school

Emirates International School - Meadows (EIS Meadows) is part of the Meadows and Springs Community in Dubai. It has over 1,600 students, aged 2 - 18, of 85 nationalities. The school teaches the four categories of the International Baccalaureate with outstanding results and students move on to some of the world's top universities, including Oxford and Stanford.

In the latest PISA results, the school raised its score to 60 points above the PISA average for reading - a ten-fold increase on the previous position. Like other schools in the region, EIS Meadows is aiming to meet the UAE national agenda target whereby all students will rank among the best in the world in reading, maths and science, as well as knowledge of Arabic.

How is BlueSky supporting EIS Meadows?

Traditionally a high-achieving school, EIS Meadows had previously introduced BlueSky to help document evidence of success more robustly. It has subsequently helped them to raise the standards further and achieve some specific targets for national inspections.

"BlueSky has consolidated everything. It captures all of the planning and feedback from our lesson observations which we can show to inspectors so they can compare when they do observations themselves, as well as managing professional development and performance management, and providing a space for staff to record their views and reflections.

"We needed a robust system to document evidence of ongoing success. It had to be easy to use and had to offer clear benefits to all the staff."

Andrew Williams, Head of High School
at Emirates International School - Meadows in Dubai.

“Gathering evidence, strengths and expertise in this way means we can set up short professional development sessions to address issues that arise.”

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“A key aspect has been sharing expertise within the school with other colleagues”, says Andrew Williams, Head of High School, formerly an Assistant Headteacher at an Ofsted rated outstanding school in Durham in the UK.

“We have staff who are experts in innovation with technology in teaching and we needed to be able to share their expertise in school as it was happening. So, if it had been spotted, for example, during a lesson observation, we wanted staff to know about it.”

“BlueSky enables us to do this very swiftly. When a great activity is seen by someone observing a colleague, we put the notes, lesson plan and samples of work on BlueSky and share it straight away with everyone relevant. A teacher can see the content of the lesson and the learning outcomes that were met, adapt them for their own use, and also discuss and analyse them further in their departmental meetings. If I’ve seen something in a lesson, I’ll share it with my middle leaders on a Sunday and that can be shared with their teams on Monday very quickly.* It makes us more responsive and flexible, and means we’re all learning from each other and always developing.”

Research activity is captured on BlueSky, helping staff to work collaboratively.

“Each term, our teachers work in triads on an action research project to develop their pedagogy. It is often linked to the school development plan but also links to an area staff are interested in. They are given time to meet and observe each other, all of which is recorded on BlueSky. For a lesson observation, for example, the teacher will upload their progress plan, data, resources, they can take a picture of the activity that is its focus, and the other members of the triad will include their insights. And thanks to BlueSky’s portability, it’s also something they can take with them when they move on.”

The school also uses BlueSky to support its work with developing student voice.

“As part of our work with students, groups from years 7 to 13 will come out of lessons once a week to talk with the pastoral leader or the head of year to discuss issues such as leadership roles, their English lessons or the start to the new academic year and it is all recorded on BlueSky. We note the actions proposed then look back during the next meeting to reflect on impact. We do the same with parents and staff, triangulating the feedback, giving us a fully-rounded picture of how everyone is experiencing school life but also recording any actions taken to address problems.”

What’s next?

“The school has trialled use of the BlueSky Projects module, which enables groups of staff to work together remotely. One way we are considering using it is to enable teachers who are working on their action research projects to compile a joint blog, detailing their reflections after each meeting. It has lots of possibilities.”

**Note: In UAE, the first day of the working week is Sunday*