



Growing together and growing with a difference

Priyamvada Das, Head of Inclusion

My journey at BIS started because of its inclusive philosophy. My elder son, who had several learning challenges, was struggling in his previous school and a friend, who was a part of the BIS family, gave me great advice. To join BIS. Eight years later, I look back on this as a truly transformative decision. My son and I both joined BIS in 2012, and in my dual role of parent and teacher, I have seen the inclusion story of BIS grow and unfurl. I cannot find a better metaphor than that of a growing tree to describe this story, however clichéd it may seem. Our founders, in their far-sighted vision, had inclusion embedded in the roots of the tree. These foundational values have held us firmly rooted in the belief that every child matters and can reach his or her potential. Also, that academic excellence depends on a diverse body of students, families and faculty. Our ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts stem from these beliefs. So while the vision has served as our roots, we remain cognizant of the need to innovate and re-imagine schooling to be able to walk the talk.

In 2016 the BIS SRC Team and Leadership, under the guidance of the Ummeed Child Development Centre, led a survey (based on the Index for Inclusion) to show us how to embed Inclusive practices into our curricular and co-curricular offerings. The school drafted a formal inclusion policy in 2016, derived from this survey, which allowed us to anchor our inclusive principles and grow bigger and stronger.

Just like any other tree, this too needed the requisite conducive environment to prosper. This came in the form of an Inclusion Committee to provide guidance, a revised admission policy to ensure diversity in our admits and an expanded Student Resource Team to provide support to students and teachers. All of which allowed us to embrace diversity and realise the potential of every learner.

A tree with strong roots laughs at storms
Malay Proverb



Though the tree grows so high, the falling leaves return to it's roots- Malay Proverb



Over the last few years, the dedicated team of special educators and counsellors have worked to create a personalised learning environment for students with special needs, either academic or socio-emotional. Individualised plans - called growth plans -- are created collaboratively between the school and the parents of the child. The joint efforts allow us to provide additional support and monitor the child through the year.

Though a tree grows so high, the falling leaves return to the root
Malay Proverb

With all this, our one big wish was that our tree would provide a safe space that welcomed, valued and respected differences, as well as connect us with people who were unlike ourselves. In this safe, inclusive space, everyone benefits.



When students who have learning and other challenges are included in the regular classroom, all students develop social, communication and problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to get along with others in diverse communities.

The tree grew as we learnt and provided more nutrients. Research revealed that early identification and support were critical in addressing delays and risks. We conducted baseline assessments with our youngest few, to allow early identification and intervention, and to call for a more concerted investment of time and space. Additional support involving a range of interventions – home programs, concerted one-on-one and classroom support in the school by a specialist and equipping teachers in class pedagogy -- helped learners to thrive. With the new infrastructural developments, a dedicated space was provided as an SRC centre in Gilbert and a multi sensorial room for 1-1 interactions in BIS Junior. Peer support groups and mentor groups added to this endeavour. We also have a BIS parent support group where families with the same concerns meet, providing mutually needed information and emotional support.

The Inclusion initiatives at BIS have grown in many ways but the tree is still young and has more branches to grow. Having a model where every child can be integrated within a classroom with a universal design for learning is something towards which we aspire. We are determined to keep on learning and moving in this direction.

