



Creating a school where everyone can thrive

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For me, inclusion is a safe space where everyone feels accepted, and has an equal opportunity to learn, to have fun, to succeed, to shine, to make a difference.

It was really when I joined the inclusion committee that I started looking at inclusion more seriously. We take it for granted that inclusion is the right thing to do, and that it is something everyone will want and try to adopt. Intuitively, we may have done the right things so far, but I feel that it's vital to convert processes into policy that will continue the work, regardless of the people driving it.

We started our journey by training teachers to understand different learning needs, as well as the emotional and behavioral issues that children go through and how we, as teachers, can address them. Our school SRC has been actively involved in scaffolding learning, and providing the necessary academic assistance to all children. We started coffee mornings with parents -- a support group for parents of children with special needs, which serves as a platform -- where parents can talk about their struggles, their victories and be there for each other. Parents share what is working, what is not. We sometimes invite professionals who can help decode and answer questions, as well as students who share their stories and give a first hand insight into what they really experience.

We have ensured that circle time, or just a protected time where students can talk about what's on their minds, is a regular feature in all grades. This is conducted during class teacher time, a completely non-academic space, where teachers can literally "chill" with their classes. This gives both students and teachers a safe space to build rapport, discuss issues, talk and have fun together.

Students across school have protected time with counsellors, where they explore emotional intelligence, resilience, discrimination, conformity, mental health and other topics that are not just relevant to their wellbeing, but also allow them to be more empathetic and responsible people.



One of our counsellors trained older students from the IBDP to form a student support group, which received a heart-warming response. Some younger students started an initiative called IKIGAI, where they tried to just be there for anyone at school who needed to talk to a friend. The idea was to make everyone at BIS feel accepted, and to make sure that they have a sense of belonging and the comfort of knowing that if they feel alone or low, they have a buddy at hand. We felt so hopeful and energised to see this dynamic shift from just an empathic concern to actual, meaningful action.

We also started BISCOTTI, which stands for BIS Community of Talented Teachers Incorporated, and allows all of us -- teachers and office staff -- to let our hair down, unwind and de-stress.

There's a lot happening at BIS, from reassessing our methods for effective teaching and learning to working on a system where everyone involved feels a sense of belonging and can thrive. But we still know that, no matter how inclusive we are, we can always do more, we can always do better.

