



# Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Policy

## Aims of this Policy

To outline

- the method and principles of education employed at Alamiyah School
- the broad curriculum goals
- the early years and elementary curriculum
- minimum qualifications that teaching staff are expected to hold

## Approach

The Curriculum we present at Alamiyah Primary is balanced and relevant to pupil's learning and development. It is rich and consists of a number of stimulating learning opportunities and activities designed to meet the requirements of the Montessori curriculum and the seven areas of learning covered by the National Independent School Standards. The Alamiyah Curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school. The curriculum provides learning opportunities, responsibilities and experiences to benefit pupils throughout their lives.

The curriculum is based on a 'cosmic education' which recognises the whole of humanity as one family irrespective of any differences<sup>1</sup>. This understanding promotes respect and love of all people and an ability to help and serve humanity whilst focusing on commonality and universal values through the prism of the Muslim faith. The Universe is viewed as one interconnected whole, connected to life and human life specifically. This promotes an environmentally conscious approach which protects the Earth and its resources by giving back to the Earth rather than taking from it. The promotion of partisan political views by teachers in the teaching of any subject in the school is strictly not allowed<sup>2</sup>

## Broad Curriculum Goals

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<sup>1</sup> age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, belief, religion, gender, sexual reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity

<sup>2</sup> Where political issues do arise, for example during a history lesson or when discussing the news, they are presented in a balanced manner with opposing views being discussed. The expression of extremist views by staff or children, whether political or religious, is viewed as a matter for concern. In the event of any pupil offering (or reported as offering) extremist views, the matter should be reported to Ms Hanan Musa, the Prevent Officer. See Policy on British Values.



- Our aim is to motivate and encourage curiosity within our pupils to enable them to become independent and inspired learners,
- We encourage our pupils to be positive and mindful and teach them to respect of other cultures and people regardless of their differences.
- We encourage our pupils to develop an appreciation of the local area and the community.
- We educate our pupils with skills for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life in Contemporary Britain with British Values being fully embedded in the Montessori Curriculum.
- We inspire and support our pupils in reaching their full potential

## **Integrated Curriculum Approach**

Dr Montessori originated the idea of cross curriculum themes. Many of these themes are reflected in the current National Curriculum. Montessori Education, therefore, is particularly suited to achieving these aims whilst also preparing a child for his or her next school. At Alamiyah Primary we follow an 'Integrated Curriculum' approach and where possible try to link topics across all subjects. For instance the topic of time is traditionally taught within the Mathematics curriculum but can also be delivered within the context of History. The Alamiyah curriculum lays a solid and rigorous foundation for further study whilst challenging pupils in their learning. We continually review our curriculum areas and goals to ensure that the curriculum continues to be stimulating, relevant and engaging for all learners.

## **Planes of Development or Age Bands**

The planes of development or age bands for the Primary School are taken from Maria Montessori and roughly equate to 0-6 years and 6-12 years which can be sub divided into 0-3 years, 3-6 years, 6-9 years and 9-12 years. These age bands are called planes of development since Maria Montessori found distinct differences in the type of learning and needs within each age group. At Alamiyah, 3-6 years olds and 6-9 year olds are catered for which is equivalent to nursery - year 4. However, these age bands are not fixed, if there are mature and able children who would benefit from the 6-9 class then then the band can extend to cater for 5-9 year olds. Six year olds will transition during their sixth year from the Children's House of 3-6 years to the Elementary Class of 6-9 years.

## **Curriculum and Lesson Planning**



At Alamiyah, we believe that the cycle of assessment, curriculum development, planning, observation and evaluation are the keys to excellence in teaching and learning. Curricula at Alamiyah is planned in three stages, long, medium and short term. Long term plans cover the programmes of study within a plane of development or age band, these are reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and stimulating. Medium term plans are devised annually and show a **termly overview for a year**, showing what will be taught every term for each curriculum area. The lesson plans or activity plans for each lesson are prepared a half term in advance and form our short term **weekly and daily** planning. Lesson Plans will contain details including, Pre-requisite knowledge before engaging in the lesson, Learning Objectives, how the lesson will be differentiated, how to include pupils with an EHC Plan, resources used, and the success criteria for the lesson for assessment purposes.

## **Inclusion and Differentiation**

The Montessori approach incorporates differentiation into lesson planning and assessment since each child is individually planned for and assessed on a daily and weekly basis so that the needs of the individual child are met. Whole group lessons and small group lessons are differentiated according to the needs of the individual pupils in the group. Details of how group lessons are differentiated are contained in each detailed lesson plan (see an example in the appendices).

Pupils with an EHC plan will have needs that may require modifications to be made to the lesson or resources in order to meet their needs. The environment and lessons will therefore be adapted to meet the needs of the pupil where necessary. If visual cues are needed or use of Makaton or other tools to assist with inclusive access to the teaching and learning process then these will be incorporated into the lesson planning. If the pupil requires 1-1 assistance, this will be provided if funding is available and if funding is not available, Alamiyah will endeavour to cover this need with the use of trainee teachers and volunteers who will be trained in house.

## **Continual Professional Development**

### **Teacher Training**

Alamiyah is committed to teacher training and has been training teachers in the Montessori Method and our educational approach since its inception. In June 2017, MAEL, the Montessori Assessment and Education Ltd registered Alamiyah as an official training centre the Alamiyah



Montessori Teacher Education Centre (AMTEC). The centre will run teacher training courses Early Years and Primary Montessori Training Diplomas.

### Qualifications of Teaching Staff

At Alamiyah, we recognise that excellence in teaching and learning relies on the skills and knowledge of the teacher. Therefore the Principal and Headteacher both have a PGCE qualification and appropriate Montessori training. We further ensure that 75% of all other staff have appropriate qualifications for their roles.

Current teachers have a combination of either traditional PGCE qualifications, internationally recognised Montessori Diplomas and or Bachelors Degrees in their specialist subject areas. We also provide teachers with both externally led and in-house training led by subject leads who have expertise in their respective fields. The emphasis on training and relevant qualifications ensure that our curriculum is delivered in a way that is consistent with our aims of promoting a rigorous and high quality balanced education.

### Required Staff Qualifications

| Role                          | Qualification Required   | CPD  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Principal                     | PGCE (or equivalent) and/or Montessori Early Years/Primary Diploma, Maths and English GCSE grade A*A-C ( or equivalent or higher level equivalent) | PGCE / MA Education<br>Mont EY / Primary Diploma |
| Headteacher                   | Montessori Early Years/Primary Diploma, Maths and English GCSE grade A*A-C (or equivalent)   | PGCE / MA Education                              |
| Deputy Headteacher            | Montessori Early Years or Montessori Primary Diploma, Maths and English GCSE grade A*A-C (or equivalent)   | PGCE Upper Primary                               |
| Room Leader Early Years       | Montessori Early Years Diploma = NVQ Level 4<br>Maths and English GCSE grade A*A-C (or equivalent)   | EY Degree, EYPS,<br>PGCE Lower Primary           |
| Early Years Teacher           | NVQ Level 3 Childcare, Learning and Development<br>Maths and English GCSE grade A*A-C (or equivalent)  | Montessori Early Years Diploma = NVQ Level 4     |
| Early Years Assistant         | NVQ Level 2 Childcare, Learning and Development  | Montessori Early Years Diploma = NVQ Level 4     |
| Primary Class Support Teacher | NVQ Level 2 Teacher Assistant /Maths and English GCSE grade A*A-C (or equivalent)  | Montessori Primary Diploma                       |



|                   |          |   |                                  |         |
|-------------------|----------|---|----------------------------------|---------|
| Primary Assistant | Class    | NVQ Level 2 Teacher Assistant / Maths and English<br>GCSE grade A*A-C (or equivalent)         | Montessori Diploma               | Primary |
| Specialist Arabic | Teachers | Relevant Graduate Degree in Specialist Subject Area and / or Relevant Teaching Qualification. | Montessori Years/Primary Diploma | Early   |

## Early Years Teaching and Learning

At Alamiyah School we believe that the nurturing and development of children which takes place in the first 6 years of life directly impacts their future. We have a unique early years provision which combines the Montessori method with a Prophetic approach for children aged 3-6 years. The Montessori approach ensures that all children are learning and developing according to their own interests and abilities during the early years and throughout their time at the school.

### The Early Years Environment

Both the indoor and outdoor learning environments at Alamiyah School are set up to cover all the areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as well as the Montessori curriculum areas. The materials provide a sequenced framework that enables children to progress through the curriculum as they learn and develop. The environment is both enticing and stimulating, inviting the children to explore and satisfy their natural curiosity. Much of the learning that takes at Alamiyah is through the children's independent exploration of the environment and the Montessori materials which are designed to help children internalise new concepts.

### Indirect Teaching in the Early Years

The staff at Alamiyah School are trained to recognise the valuable learning experiences in children's spontaneous play. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said "play with your child till 7". We now know that it is in the various forms of play that the child develops a love and enthusiasm for learning that allows them to flourish in any field of their choosing. Play is facilitated through the provision of a vast range of materials both indoors and outdoors. A full range of Montessori materials are available for pupils to explore independently. Children are able to explore the materials of their choice. Staff observe child's play in order to ascertain their interests and the best next steps for the child.

### Direct Teaching in the Early Years



Alamiyah School recognises the importance of direct teaching for pupils who attend the school. Each day, new lessons and materials are presented to the children by teachers, either in individual lessons or through small group lessons. Each child is planned for individually using observations as the basis for each pupil's next step. These next steps are then directly introduced to pupils. At Alamiyah we recognise that there must be a balance between direct teaching, indirect teaching and play and facilitate this through our planning. We also include children's observed interests and parental feedback of interests into both direct and indirect teaching and learning through the play equipment, toys, activities and books that we include in the indoor and outdoor environment and through teacher led circle times.

### **Children's Interests**

The Montessori method of teaching is based upon following each child's natural path of development. Teachers must closely observe pupils to see what stage of development they are at and what activities can help them to develop further. Teachers should pay special attention to pupil's interests and plan group lessons to further their interest. Teachers should pay attention to parent's feedback on interests from the daily or weekly conversations and feedback contained in each pupil's Parent Log and on My Montessori Child to inform the planning cycle.

### **Planned Themes and Circle Times**

Careful observations will be the starting point for planning suitable weekly themes that will allow children to further their interests. At the start of each year staff will make a note of seasonal themes and festivals. These will be integrated into the yearly planning, however staff recognise the importance of following the interests of the child and therefore these themes are flexible and will be changed to suit the needs of the current children. Themes will be designed in such a way that they reflect the diverse cultures and traditions of the local community.

### **Montessori Children's House Curriculum**

The Montessori Children's House classroom is divided into seven main areas with the other areas being covered through circle times and outdoor play. The curriculum spans the Nursery and Lower Primary which is equivalent to Reception and Year One. Children are given free access to all of the areas listed below:



## **1. Practical Life**

The practical life curriculum is the starting point for all children entering our Montessori School and lays the foundation for all other learning to come. The activities encompass both direct and indirect aims, which together support the child in becoming both physically and mentally independent and responsible. Through the practical life curriculum, the child develops concentration, coordination, muscle control and one to one correspondence. The child is also indirectly exposed to mathematical and language concepts. Activities such as pouring beans provide the child with the direct aims of independence of pouring without spilling, but also allows them to develop muscle control, concentration, hand eye coordination and indirectly introduces addition and subtraction as well as preparing the child's eyes for scanning from left to right which is a necessary skill for reading.

## **2. Sensorial**

Montessori recognised that the development of the senses plays an important role in the overall development of the child. She refers to the period between 3-6 years as a time to refine the senses and thus, she developed a unique curriculum, which caters for this need. Through the sensorial curriculum the child will, become more aware of the subtle differences in his surroundings, be able to acquire clear conscious information, start to develop organisational skills and learn to classify objects within his environment. Each one is a fundamental prerequisite for learning in all other areas.

## **3. Mathematics**

The Montessori mathematics curriculum provides children with concrete materials, which allow them to acquire precise mathematical knowledge. Through the use of these concrete materials, the child develops a firm foundation of the decimal system and the four operations. As the child masters basic mathematical skills he is naturally drawn to abstraction which will enable him to perform mental arithmetic with ease and joy.

## **4. Language**

The Montessori environment is set up as a language arts laboratory in which the child is able to acquire clear and concise language in all aspects and areas of the classroom. Due to this rich environment, all children in our Montessori environment develop an interest in written language



and are then supported through the rigorous curriculum, which systematically supports them along the path of reading and writing.

## **5. Arabic and Quran**

At Alamiyah School we recognise the importance of young children having exposure to classical Arabic since this is the age at which they acquire language with ease. We endeavour to provide the children with exposure to Arabic language in a living form through a skilled, native Arabic teacher who only speaks to the children in classical Arabic. In order to enhance the children's spoken Arabic, our curriculum prioritises the acquisition of conversational language and vocabulary. As the children progress in their understanding of the Arabic language they are presented to the written form following the steps of our Montessori based Arabic curriculum.

## **6. Arts and Crafts**

It is through art that a child can observe the world, exploring shape, form, texture and balance. To participate in artwork is to appreciate the sheer complexity and beauty of creation, thus witnessing the Artistry and Perfection of the true Artist. Our School has a dedicated art area where the children have many opportunities to use a wide variety of materials and experiment with different art forms.

## **7. Cultural**

The Cultural curriculum encompasses the Humanities and Science, including Geography, History, Zoology, Biology and Botany. Through the activities, children gain an in depth understanding of the world around them as well as developing the awareness that they are part of a unified universe and connected to each and everything around them. Through this the children develop love and a sense of respect for all that surrounds them.

### **Seerah**

At the heart of the curriculum is the understanding that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) presented us with the best model of living. We strive to bring alive his example and practice in all aspects of the running of the School. Children are also presented with the life of prophets through various stories and activities providing hands on experience of Seerah. This provides the children with the opportunity to absorb his character and teaching, both indirectly and directly.

### **Movement and Exercise**



Movement and exercise are essential to develop and refine fine and especially gross motor skills, coordination and confidence. Movement keeps our children active, alert and healthy, but also positively benefits the cognitive, social and emotional development of the child.

### **Music and Rhythm**

Children between the ages of 0-6 years have sensitivity towards developing the auditory sense; they naturally show an interest and inclination to activities, which involve rhythm and beat. During this stage, it is important for children to not only develop an understanding of pitch, rhythm and beat, but to refine it to the best of their individual potential. Like art, music is a form of communication and can serve the purpose of a means to expression. At Alamiyah School children are provided with a rich auditory experience through the many songs and rhymes sung daily, musical activities to develop rhythm and beat, as well as the opportunity to learn to play the drum. Songs are sung in both English and Arabic and are often used to deliver an aspect of the Seerah.



## **An Overview of the Elementary Curriculum**

The main curriculum areas are listed below:

1. Mathematics
2. English Language
3. MFL – Arabic
4. Science
5. History
6. Geography
7. Physical Education
8. Arts, Crafts and Design
9. Music, Dance and Drama
10. Technology and Design
11. Advanced Life Skills
12. Outdoor Life Skills
13. SMSC – Cosmic Education

The Curriculum at Alamiyah is delivered in 4 main ways.

1. The Montessori Learning Environment – Morning or Afternoon Work cycle
2. Whole Class Lessons – Afternoon Lessons
3. The 5 Great Lessons – A Framework for the Elementary Curriculum
4. Out of School Learning – Going Out Trips

The morning work cycle provides time for an assembly and an additional three hours of individual small group lessons and learning time. The morning work cycle is where the children access the Montessori Learning Environment which includes activities from all subjects in the curriculum. Pupils then have time for lunch and outdoor play before coming in for afternoon whole group lessons.

In the afternoons children engage in: lessons that are taught by specialist teachers, lessons that the whole class can engage in together and lessons that require out of class learning like Outdoor Skills and Physical Education.

Another major component in our curriculum delivery is the incorporation of the Great Lessons and



Cosmic Education as anchors for the entire curriculum. Finally Dr. Montessori's vision for this age included an element of the elementary program called 'Going Out'. The Going Out program allows children to get hands on learning experiences. Children are also led to greater social autonomy as well as building a connection with the world outside the classroom, through Going Out trips.

The Montessori middle primary class for 6-9 yrs balances the child's developing imagination and powers of abstraction with concrete, hands-on materials. In middle primary, we continue to nurture self-management and self-direction, each activity is presented in a structured sequence to lead children towards independent discovery and understanding. Similar to Alamiyah Pre-school, the middle primary class is also a multi-age class with children from 6 to 9 years old. These children then progress to a mixed age upper primary class of 9-12 year olds. Our pupils remain in the same classroom with the same group of children and teachers for three years to build strong and sincere relationships which in turn shape the entire school community from the early years through the primary.

The Montessori Elementary classroom is an interactive environment designed to help children become self-directed independent learners. Children are taught individually and in groups, they work on their own and participate in collaborative team activities. Within the classroom pupils are given lessons and are free to practice and refine the skills of each lesson at their own pace. They are guided to manage their time and to meet the responsibility of working on a broad curriculum. Children cannot choose only to work on the subjects they find most interesting. The teacher encourages children to find connections in the work and helps them to see interest throughout.

### **Montessori Elementary Curriculum**

*"This then is the first duty of an educator, to stir up life but leave it free to develop." Dr. Maria Montessori*

As the children pass from Children's House to the Elementary Classroom there are profound changes to their bodies and to their minds. The child wants to explore the world through imagination and experience, to learn what is right and wrong and to evaluate meaningful roles in society. An elementary child has a thirst to know how things have come to be, the history of the universe, the world, humans, and why they behave the way they do. For this age, Dr. Montessori said, "We are to give the child the cosmos".

Cosmic education is integral to the methodology of the Elementary 6-12 classroom. It relies on first giving a vision of the structure of an idea in its totality such as 'life on Earth' or 'written language'



and then giving many connected lessons that create knowledge and experience of the parts of the whole. This education is more meaningful to the elementary child because of how it builds upon itself. Story and idea, narrative and concept, intellectual curiosity and academic skills are woven into a comprehensive fabric that by its very nature will stay with the child long after handwriting and memorization skills are mastered. And those skills, far from seeming pedestrian or dull will be valued because they are understood in their context. The long term goals for pupils immersed in this practice include informed and mature self-direction, enlightened curiosity, emotional well-being based on an understanding of how the world has come to its present state, confidence in an ability to contribute to the world positively and the initiative to do so. The middle and upper Elementary curriculum is built around the Five Great Lessons given at the beginning of each year:

- The Story of the Universe explores the formation of the stars, the sun and the earth.
- The Coming of Life introduces the children to the idea that life has not always existed on our planet, and that its coming signalled a new balance on the earth.
- The Coming of Humans emphasizes the coming of humanity to the earth as thinking, loving, working form of life.
- The Story of Communication in Signs presents language as a part of history, investigates the various milestones that served to create the Roman alphabet.
- The Story of Numerals introduces the child to the history connected with our numerals.

The Great Lessons are connected stories that span the enormous historical frames of time and space. From this story framework emanate the details of the disciplines: science, mathematics, social studies and language. The story provides an overview, stimulates the imagination and provides holistic lessons. The children then study the subjects in detail: biology, chemistry, geology, geography, physics, history, art and music. Because of the unifying thread of the Great Lessons, no subject is studied in isolation from the others.

The Elementary 6 - 12 years class is the first part of the education for children aged 6 – 12. At about 6 years old we as parents, teachers and friends see the young child change physically, mentally, emotionally and socially into a self-sufficient person. It is like a metamorphosis such as the caterpillar changing into a butterfly. The period 6 – 12 years is a period of stability before puberty. For practical learning the age range is split into two classes, 6-9 years and 9-12 years.



Dr. Montessori was not unique in her observation, she highlighted rather special things about the development of the child in this period. As ever she stressed the holistic nature of the development of the child, bringing out three notable characteristics of this period:

- The need for wider horizons, to go out and explore the world
- The move from concrete to abstract thinking
- The development of a sense of morality closely allied with the intense interest in the social group.

### **Development of Abstraction Abilities**

As in Children’s House there is a rich selection of purpose designed Montessori Activities available to guide the children in their development. The transition from a sensorial, physical approach by a child to understanding abstract concepts is the basis of much of the Montessori Material available in the classroom. The Montessori material scaffolds the learning of the child as they move from physically holding an object to being able to deal with the concept in an abstract manner. Concrete representations allow the child to build a mental schema enabling the child to confidently move to abstraction.

An example of where this occurs is in the teaching of mathematics. There are many mathematical and geometric materials that have been especially developed but to use just three to demonstrate this point we show below the developmental sequence of golden beads – the stamp game – the pegboard. The child will have already started using the “golden beads” in Children’s House. The child can physically see and touch the different quantities. This is followed by the “stamp game” where number tiles replace the physical beads. This teaches the child to see figures standing in for the physical object. The child will at this stage start to record on paper the results. Subsequently, when the child is ready (having most likely being absorbed for many hours with or without his or her peers with the other material) the “pegboard” is introduced. Here, different colours represent units, tens, hundreds etc. At this point the child will also be recording the method on paper with a view to progressing to mathematical calculations that do not rely on manipulatives.

### **Social Development**

The social development of the child in the 6-12 years stage is probably the most prominent we can observe. Suddenly from being quite self-centred the child becomes almost obsessed with the group. Friends become of great importance and the rules of the group become the centre of her



life. Socially the child is identifying her role in groups within her society and learning the rules for this. By 6 years the child has finished developing her personality and is now ready to learn about being a member of a group. This is a basic social skill, which will be necessary for adult life.

At Alamiyah, pupils have opportunities to work together to learn and to build meaningful relationships with adults and peers. The emphasis on reflection, mindfulness, meditation, care of self, care of others provides pupils with an environment that is harmonious thereby fostering positive social interactions. Pupils learn how to resolve and respect differences between themselves through the use of the peace table. This is an important way in which children can start to develop the social skills needed to maintain relationships when faced with differences. This is another way in which the British Values of individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance are actively promoted.

Our Cosmic Education curriculum allows pupils to explore who they are and to understand their immense potential, thereby raising their self esteem and confidence. Pupils are therefore enabled to reach out to others to build a community based on the values of love, mercy, compassion and peace. The values explored within Cosmic Education coupled with our Outdoor Educational Program provides pupils with the opportunity to collaborate with others by working in groups to care for their immediate and local environment guided by the principles of balance, natural order, harmony and respect for themselves, others and their surroundings. The sacredness of life coupled with the understanding that each individual has an effect on the future destiny of the planet due to its profound interconnectedness, aims to inspire pupils to work for the greater good of the planet. The School plans to become a WWF Green Ambassador School to further encourage citizenship and active participation within the wider community to solve environmental issues that affect us on a global level. In this way we hope to nurture model citizens of our global community with a genuine concern for humanity and the world around us and the integrity to act upon the knowledge they have.

The moral development of the child in the 6-12 years stage is closely associated with their social development. This is the time when the child starts to differentiate between right and wrong. The limits of right and wrong are obviously strongly influenced by social pressure. Therefore, a time when the child is becoming interested in what his/her friends think is linked to the development of moral awareness. Not only is the child attracted to join a group, but he/she is also attracted to the rules and activities created by the group. At this time the human tendency for order tends to focus on the rules of the group.



Alamiyah School is centred around values which give rise to a democratic classroom ethos where shared class rules of conduct are agreed and drawn up by each class. In this way pupils are able to develop a sense of their own community, with agreed roles and responsibilities taken by all members. This process upholds the British Values of the Rule of Law and Democracy.

On a practical level the implication of this “new sociability “ is that lessons are presented to pupils in small groups who may then work together if they chose. Pupils, when motivated usually ask for more challenges as they become competent and will begin on small group projects to expand their knowledge when their interest has been inspired. The children may come together as a whole community at certain times of the day, but tend to spend much of the regular school day exploring their world on their own and in small groups. In this way they develop the skills of an independent researcher (such as the ability to direct their own learning) and experience collaborating on joint projects with their peers (younger, older or same-age), while broadening their knowledge of the Universe and deepening their appreciation of the inter-connectedness of everything in it.

Our teachers, continually support and follow the children’s interests and facilitate cooperation with others, concentration, independence and love of learning. Also, during these years the child develops their language further by developing their writing skills such as spelling, punctuation, and structured writing. They are also provided with exposure to an array of rich language to use for all future learning and communication.

Every child has an **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**. These are developed with the child and shared with their parents. They are monitored and updated regularly. As they get older children are supported to write their own ILPs and monitor their own progress through tracking.

In a mixed age classroom the older children are encouraged, and sometimes directed to support the younger children with their work, or teach them how to use a material. Children are actively encouraged to ask each other for help: their learning is consolidated when they show another child how to do something they know.

### **Characteristics of a Montessori Community include:**

**Freedom:** to choose one’s own work both inside and outside; to explore and study a topic that appeals to their imagination. Freedom needs to be balanced by responsibility. Children who choose work spontaneously are responsible for their choices of work.



**Limits:** the work should be constructive and productive. They must understand that work choice needs to include individual work targets (e.g. to improve poor spelling, reading, x tables etc.) as well as work demanded culturally.

**Clear Expectations:** This includes work habits and behaviour. At Alamiyah positive discipline is employed to develop inner discipline in the child, so that they begin to set their own expectations in line with those of the group or community which they then hold themselves accountable to. Children are reminded of the expectations of the class with positive language. Any pupil who displays behaviour which is not part of the acceptable code of conduct will be given the time they need to reflect on their behaviour and self correct by taking responsibility for their actions. They will then be guided towards making better choices. If a pupil continues to make choices which cause disharmony and disruption then the root causes and solutions must be explored to seek a positive outcome in the long term.

**Group Work:** We allow the children to choose who they will work with. This makes the formation of society possible. If given this choice they learn the cooperative skills. At some point they learn that they have to give up their personal preference for the good of the group. Responsibility is shared. Children work on one piece of material, taking turns, sharing responsibility for its completion. The skills of cooperation, communication, collaboration and compromise are practised.

**Hard Work:** We convey the expectation that we are asking the child to meet a standard of work worthy of her ability. They need to know that they can be successful on their own. Success motivates the child to continue. Children who can't cope with this freedom are supported to choose.

**Talk:** a constant hum of conversation; it isn't quiet!

**Care of the Environment:** ultimately it is the adult's responsibility, but the children, as part of the community, make their contribution to it. We have a system about what needs to be done, and who is going to do it (Service to the Classroom Chart). Eventually no chart will be necessary because all children will be aware of what needs doing. There are usually three stages: 1. teacher supervises and orchestrates. 2. Less teacher involvement. 3. Children undertake it on their own.

## THE 5 GREAT LESSONS

The 5 Great Lessons provide an overview of the entire Montessori curriculum for the elementary age group. These lessons are delivered in the early days of the 6 – 9 mixed age class, called the 'Middle Primary', to set the scene and big picture.



Psychologically they are given in dramatic story form, using rich language and personification of the elements. The presentation and story portray a sense of mystery and arouse awe, admiration and interest. They could be given to the whole class, but can be delivered to small groups. Older children, hearing the story repeated, pick up on details that interest them. A great lesson is often announced early so that children have the opportunity to organise their time and work in order to attend, and especially to prepare their minds.

These lessons are presented to the children at various times in the school year. The stories are presented in a way that appeals to the children's imagination and that entuses and inspires them to want to know more. After a Great Lesson is presented, children will then pursue aspects of the story that appeal to them, either individually or in small groups. There are no particular follow-ups. The teacher has to observe the emerging interests of the children. Having observed those interests the teacher will plan essential key lessons and provide books, resources and visits to facilitate the children's explorations. The teacher aims to become what Maria Montessori described as 'a story teller of truth'.

#### **The 5 Great Lessons are:**

1. **God with no Hands** – a dramatic cosmic story, which presents the coming into being of the universe and the earth from a formless void. The change came about through obedience to the laws. At the conclusion of this tale we have the earth which is composed of rocks, water and air, solids liquids and gases, spinning round and round itself and the sun continuing to obey these laws. This great lesson opens up all the work in the Montessori Elementary, as everything that exists is part of the universe and has a part to play in relation to the totality.
2. **The Story of the Coming of Life** – the scene has been set so we refer to it and we take a look at the point where there seems to be a problem. To solve the problem something else was created and this was life – the blob of jelly. It could eat, grow and create others like itself. Using the timeline of life we follow the evolutionary path giving a general overview. At the end of this story we have the appearance of a very special creature. The creature with the larger brain, the power to think and imagine and the huge amounts of love. This story opens up for the children the work in **biology, history and geography**.
3. **The Story of the Coming of Human Beings** – that is taken up from the point at the end of the coming of life where humans have arrived, and after the impressionistic presentation of the black strip (the length of time) it opens up the area of **cultural history, both pre-history and recorded history**. This is the story of humans, different from other creatures because of their special gifts. The freedom to use their hands because of their upright posture etc.



4. **The Story of Communication Through Signs** – this story and the story of number draws the children’s attention to the inventions of humans who, because of their special gifts, created what was not there before. The human tendency to communicate has led to the development of languages, both written and spoken. We put the children in touch with the language of their society and allow them to explore its history and usage in that society. The children’s exploration is a reasoned exploration, our story is impressionistic. We encourage the children to explore how humans developed a means of communication not using their voices. We want the children to come to realise that this invention was out of necessity. They use the materials that they found around them in their daily lives.
  
5. **The Story of Number** – another invention by humans. We usually do this story after The Story of Communication Through Signs. It gives children an opportunity to explore the history of mathematics, and the people who invented it. It is an impressionistic story, emphasising that people used what they found around them in their environment.

The 5 Great Lessons are an essential prerequisite in the Montessori Elementary. The children need these 5 Lessons before they can continue to explore on their own. Each of the 5 Lessons is limited to what is essential in the story, to help the child follow up with the work him or herself. It is to also help the children understand a particular idea, therefore no unnecessary details are included. Nothing the child can find out by him or herself is given. The lessons are always focused on serving the child’s intelligence.

Each of the Great Lessons has a number of points of interest, and a number of possible follow-ups, each of which speaks in a different way to different children. One child may be fascinated by the acid that dissolved rocks before Life began, and is encouraged to study the phenomenon of acid rain. Two or three children may be enamoured by the dinosaur with two brains, and decide to do a research project on dinosaurs. In this way, children work individually or in small groups to explore some aspect of their world in greater depth, enflamed as it were by a point of interest.

The Great Lessons are thus the starting point of an exploration of the Universe, and give the child a vision of the interconnectedness of everything that exists. The next section of this document lists the topics we expect to cover over the academic cycle, by subject area.

## Summary of Curriculum Areas

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| <b>Integrated curriculum</b> | All subjects presented are part of an integrated curriculum. While teaching manuals with individual lesson plans are made for each subject area, the |
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|  | <p>lessons are presented in the approximate order they would be presented in the life of the child. So the early activities of all the areas are presented parallel to each other at the beginning of the course. This continues in an age appropriate sequence with all of the subject areas together. In this way pupils see the interrelationships among the areas and this helps prepare them for interweaving all the subject areas together.</p>  |
| <b>Geography (Including Physics and Chemistry)</b> | <p>Geography is explored through the use of stories, experiments, charts and children's activities. Geography study has two main sections: natural geography and human geography. Physical Geography includes: creation of the earth, composition of the earth, laws that elements must follow, movements of the earth and their consequences along with the work of air and water. Human geography includes how people have met their needs while living in different zones on the Earth, the interdependence of humans in society and economic geography.</p>   |
| <b>Science</b>                                     | <p>Science is explored through the use of stories, experiments, charts and pupil's activities. The study of science until age 9 includes two main areas: botany and zoology. Botany begins with The Story of Plants and then proceeds to look at the needs of plants, the function of leaves, roots, stems, flowers, fruits and seeds as well as their varieties and their classification. Zoology includes story material about animals, examination of body functions and classification. Botany and zoology are united in a study of ecology. Physics, Chemistry and Geology are learnt about informally through but studied in more detail at 9-12 years.</p>                           |
| <b>History</b>                                     | <p>Stories, time lines and charts aid in the presentation of both natural history and human history. Natural history includes geology and the changes in the Earth over time along with the coming of life on Earth. Human history includes the coming of human beings, the fundamental needs of humans, the hunting and gathering of food, the development of agriculture, the growth of urban ways of living, the development of civilizations, migrations, the growth of culture ... to the present day. Pupils move from telling time on a clock to a linear representation of time that enables them to grasp the length of time that it has taken for all of the above to happen.</p> |
| <b>Music, Dance and Drama</b>                      | <p>Areas covered in music include singing, listening, music theory and ear training, movement and rhythm, playing instruments, history and literature. Montessori music is designed to be a regular part of the children's everyday environment so it is a regular part of the integrated curriculum.</p>   |
| <b>Physical Education</b>                          | <p>Develops gross motor skills, builds agility, flexibility, strength, balance, control and coordination through group games, competitive and cooperative activities which become increasingly challenging whilst simultaneously building individual skills. Once skills have been learnt, they are linked in sequences to build more complex movements or skills. Through the PE curriculum, pupils will also learn how to evaluate and assess physical activities or sports and their personal performance in order to improve.</p>   |
| <b>Art, Crafts and Design</b>                      | <p>Fine Art, Textiles, Crafts and Design are explored through the study of line, form, colour, collage, print, textiles and sculpture. Pupils are taught the skills necessary to be able to use a variety of tools and media. Pupils are encouraged to be creative whilst exploring a variety of different methods used to create art, textiles and 3D sculpture. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate art through an exploration of traditional arts and crafts from around the world</p>   |



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|                             | and by looking at the works of famous artists  |
| <b>Advanced Life Skills</b> | Pupils learn important life skills enabling them to become more independent when caring for themselves, others and the environment. Pupils learn how to cook, clean, tidy, organise and work with materials such as fabric, thread and wood and do basic DIY. Grace and Courtesy is also covered in the Advanced Life Skills Course, including hosting guests and planning outings.  |
| <b>Outdoor Life Skills</b>  | Pupils are given the opportunity to work with nature by working outdoors on skills related to: horticulture, involving planting, designing gardens, caring for plants, trees and flowers; agriculture, involving rearing and caring for animals, growing and harvesting fruit and veg; forest schooling, involving working with nature, building dens, identifying bugs, fungi, birds, orienteering; recycling and sustainable living using permaculture principles.   |
| <b>Cosmic Education</b>     | Cosmic education is embedded within the whole school. Pupils learn about the core values of unity compassion, cooperation, love, peace through gratitude arising from an interconnected understanding of themselves, others, community, society, the Planet and the Universe.  |
| <b>Technology</b>           | Pupils will learn about technology and it's uses through the study of computing, electronics and product design. The study of technology in an integrated way allows pupils to explore a variety of technologies and how to design products and processes using them. The study of each area will cover the knowledge, understanding and skills required as pre-requisite knowledge before putting the technology to use in production.  |
| <b>Language</b>             | This area begins with a review of the development of language in the child and its importance in the development of intelligence. Vocabulary development, further extensions in reading and language exercises suited to the 'sensitivities' of the child of this age group lead to reading with understanding. Further content includes the story of language, the history of writing, word study, spelling, grammar boxes and related classification along with analysis of simple, compound and complex sentences. Writing proceeds from short stories to composition, the structure of paragraphs and composition, appreciation and development of style, along with a history and study of literature |
| <b>Maths Arithmetic</b>     | The introduction to mathematics includes the development of the Mathematical Mind, indirect preparation leading to abstraction in mathematics and the purpose and use of the mathematical material. The following items are covered: The story of numbers, continuation of the hierarchy of numbers, linear counting, long multiplication and long division, laws of operations, multiples, factors, divisibility, group division, fractions (and their related operations), squares and cubes of numbers, powers of numbers.  |
| <b>Maths Geometry</b>       | The development of the Mathematical Mind also includes Geometry. Arithmetic, Geometry and Algebra are intertwined in Mathematics in a way that provides more meaning and understanding than if one takes the branches of Mathematics separately. Particular contributions from Geometry include the concepts of equal, similar and equivalent; exploration with constructive   |



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|                              | triangles; a study of polygons along with circle/angles/lines in all their details   |
| <b>MFL – Arabic Language</b> | At Alamiyah learning a foreign language is through immersion in the language so instruction when teaching the language will take place in the foreign language itself. Children develop their oral language skills in children’s house and gain much needed exposure to the spoken language and engage in vocabulary building. They learn basic conversation and how to read and write simple sentences and basic grammar with the introduction of nouns, verbs and prepositions |

This policy was adopted at a meeting at Alamiyah School

Held on: .....

Signed on behalf of the Alamiyah School: .....

Date of Next Review: July 2019