

# Learning through exploration



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**S**INCE it was established in 2009, Nilai International School (NIS) has been growing a reputation as a leading private primary and secondary education provider, preparing students for the internationally recognised IGCSE examinations.

"With NIS, students will be exposed to an international curriculum as well as different teaching methods and learning styles.

"There will be cultural advantages as they will be socialising with students from all over the world, not just Malaysians," says Phillip Andrew Reid, head of NIS' mathematics and science department.

## Using ICT tools

The school boasts great teaching facilities – there are interactive whiteboards in every classroom and teachers use data projectors, laptops and tablets to different degrees in conducting lessons.

Though some parents are concerned that their children are spending too much time on the computer, Reid says that utilising high-tech IT equipment for teaching and learning is the norm.

"At NIS, students are taught how to utilise such equipment in a learning environment. We show them how to find correct and useful information on the Internet efficiently and responsibly," he says.

Using IT in teaching and learning is important in modern schools because classrooms are no longer teacher-centric. IT facilitates exploration and discussions by the students.

"IT also helps teachers continually surprise students. The Internet is a wonderful discovery tool for students. In the real world, students would be expected to know how to use IT equipment to solve problems, so this is what we are teaching them," says Reid.

## Thinking on their feet

The students benefit through NIS' philosophy of "Learning through Exploration", where they are taught to look for the answers.

By giving them open-ended tasks, students learn to apply their knowledge and this allows them to think on their feet and apply theory to unique problems.

"In my experience teaching science and maths to secondary students at NIS, I pose questions or scenarios where there can be more than one solution to challenge students.

"For instance, students are subjected to algebraic puzzles to get them to investigate happy numbers, prime numbers and to look for patterns," Reid says.

"Another was when I asked students to design a bottle storage system for a specific pace and many came up with interesting and differing designs and concepts. I also got my students to prepare a tender for the building of a pyramid.

"They had to calculate the number of bricks, transportation costs and various other factors," explains Reid, who has nearly four decades of teaching experience.

Comparing the teaching and learning methods of the IGCSEs to the national system, Reid says that instead of testing memory, which is basically what many traditional curricula do, international examinations such as the IGCSEs attempt to test understanding and application of knowledge.

"Some students find it difficult when they have not seen the question before but NIS' teaching methods help develop their thinking processes and allow them to follow the problem-solving process rather than regurgitating memorised facts and figures," he says.

## Choosing a curriculum

Classes at NIS are also much smaller compared to national- or vernacular-type schools.

The average number of students in each class at NIS is between 15 and 20. This allows for closer interaction between teachers and students. Teachers can closely monitor the progress of each student as students cannot hide or remain anonymous.



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When choosing a school and curriculum, international qualifications such as those offered by NIS are a good option to consider, especially for those intending to further their studies overseas.

Parents should also consider their finances and whether or not they can sustain a child's education in an international school.

## Quality campus and dedicated teachers

NIS' high quality and competitive fees make it a good choice.

"It is a great campus with fantastic facilities, but most important, there is a dedicated and qualified group of teachers," says Reid.

NIS offers the internationally recognised Cambridge International curriculum from Early Years (four to five years old) up to O-Levels.

■ For more information, call 06-850 2188 or visit [www.nis.edu.my](http://www.nis.edu.my)