



# STRATEGIC CHANGES ENABLING GROWTH

When Beaconhouse Newlands Islamabad first launched the Diploma Programme (DP) in 2016, the school faced challenges with student recruitment to the programme. Today, the school has a cohort of more than 30 DP candidates, which was achieved through strategic changes that enabled growth.

## Changing perceptions

Beaconhouse Newlands had a vision to be a centre of excellence, and so, approached the International Baccalaureate (IB) with a view to offering the DP to its students. Achieving authorization was the school's primary focus, which led to the first hurdle to overcome: selling the programme to its learning community. The school had to work hard to shift the learning culture to suit the IB's student-centric approaches to learning and teaching but found that its first DP cohort struggled to adapt to the new ways of learning.

This led to the difficult decision for the head of school at the time to take a break from offering the DP for a year, following concerns from the student and parent community that the programme would impact aspirations.

## Removing barriers

In 2018, the school decided to re-launch the DP, after the teaching and leadership teams had time to plan and prepare to reintroduce the programme. The school appointed an experienced IB coordinator to help overcome some of the barriers that the initial cohort faced. Arham Kashif said: "One of our first priorities was to help the learning community understand that the IB empowers students to consider approaches to learning, and that education is not just about the grades achieved; the IB develops vital lifelong learning skills that will serve students long into their lives after school and university."

This shift in thinking allowed students at the school to understand that the DP is a two-year journey, viewing their success as much more than a set of grades. Rod Boswell, who was the head of the school when the DP was reintroduced, firmly believed that the success of the re-launch of the programme depended on bringing the learning community together to understand the unique attributes and purpose of an IB education. He maintains that the role of an IB coordinator is essential to the success of implementation so that the school's leaders can support teachers in delivering the DP.

## Beaconhouse Newlands Islamabad, Early Years – Grade 12

**First offered the Diploma Programme:**  
2016

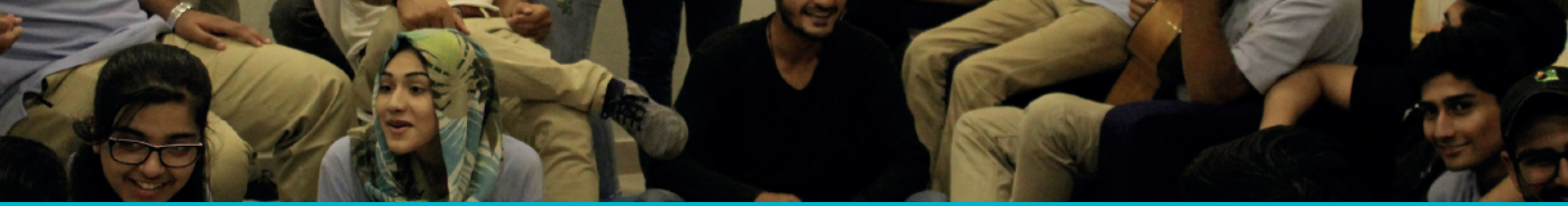
**Total number of students:**  
335

**DP coordinator:**  
Arham Kashif

**Head of school:**  
Dr. Leeanne Wooten

“  
[...] the IB develops vital lifelong learning skills that will serve students long into their lives after school and university.

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– ARHAM KASHIF,  
DP COORDINATOR,  
BEACONHOUSE  
NEWLANDS ISLAMABAD



The school's leadership team also spent an extensive amount of time demystifying the IB to its prospective parent and student community through hosting information sessions where students could learn more about IB courses and meet the teachers, so they could see the true benefits of studying the DP. The school also increased its online presence through an enhanced website and social media activity to showcase the defining aspects of the DP.

### **Collaboration is key**

The school relied heavily on its educators to drive the vision for growing participation in the DP. Rod said: "Every teacher played their part to combat negative attitudes towards the changes that the IB brought to student learning and assessment." To enable teachers to do this, the school increased opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn together, which, in turn, gave them the confidence they needed to trust the IB's approach.

Beaconhouse Newlands is now also authorized to offer the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and is currently seeking authorization for the Middle Years Programme (MYP) to make it a full continuum school. Ahram confirmed that the collaborative nature between teachers has been key to the success of the IB at the school, which "now sees DP teachers working alongside MYP and PYP teachers to enhance the student-centric education".

### **Defining success**

Since re-launching the DP, the school has witnessed a positive change in culture and mindset; now focusing on learning rather than achieving outcomes. This culture shift has impacted the way classroom observations are conducted, the analysis of student performance and everything in between. Rod said: "It has changed the way that our school community defines success. We are so proud to have removed the barriers to the lifelong benefits of an IB education. We now know that our learning community is confident in the promises we make about the impact an IB education can have on aspirations."

The re-launch attracted 11 candidates and established the school's reputation as one that works hard to support the needs of its students; this cohort all received full Diplomas and achieved a 33-point score average. In 2021, that figure has almost doubled to 20 students who are all looking forward to a bright future ahead thanks to an IB education.

**For more information about the DP, visit: [www.ibo.org/dp](https://www.ibo.org/dp)**