Inclusion at TBS

For a number of years TBS has been including students with a wide range of learning styles ranging from Specific Learning Difficulties such as Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, to Autistic Spectrum Disorders and recently, Cerebral Palsy. Central to our philosophy is the belief that every student should have access to high quality learning opportunities - simply put, this is Inclusion.

A significant barrier to Inclusion is often our understanding of the different challenges the students face in their daily lives. Often the student will be as other students; they want to play, are curious, enthusiastic and most importantly perhaps, they want access to the same opportunities other students have. At TBS we aim to remove the barriers to those opportunities.

One family of a lovely boy with Cerebral Palsy (CP) with ataxia who has recently joined us, says that he, “...is quite aware of his disability, but if you meet him you will soon realize he doesn’t let it stop him.”

Although, he sometimes has a hard time with his balance and his pencil grip is not so strong, as a consequence of his CP, he continues to participate fully in all activities. Occasionally, he needs a little encouragement to participate as he may be a little anxious, unless its football of course, pretty much like any other kid.

Another child who has been with us for a while is on the Autistic Spectrum. He is high functioning, which means that he is verbal as well as being intellectually able. You may have seen him on the playground running and playing, sometimes on his own but often with other children; he is very imaginative! Much of his behaviour, as with the child with CP, is similar to his friends, however at times he may be anxious so may cover his ears and close his eyes. This is typical behaviour for children with Autism. Follow this link to a recent video clip to get an idea of how people with Autism can feel: Autism Speaks.

There are many websites now available to us to find out about the different challenges that students can face, the ones mentioned above can be just a starting point.

TBS also has it own fabulous resources; the teaching staff, the support staff, as well as the numerous materials in the Learning Support Department, that are available to the school community should they wish to know more.

“The inclusion of children who require learning support enhances the education of all children”
Taken from http://www.nextfrontierinclusion.org/

In order to provide fully for all students first requires a philosophical shift, as in International Schools Inclusion continues to be rare. Followed by a logistical one as the practicality of ensuring that all
children are accessing fully is not always easy. This is done firstly, by carefully managing our student intake to ensure that a balance is maintained and that resources are not stretched.

Secondly, at TBS we have a well trained teaching staff, the majority of them being trained in the UK with its long and established record of providing high quality Inclusive education. Supporting and underpinning the wonderful work that they do is the Learning Support Department. This well staffed and resourced unit works closely with the teaching staff to create an inclusive environment that allows all students to develop and progress.

‘Inclusion as Process’

For thirty years Inclusion has been at the forefront of educational philosophy in the UK as well as other westernised countries, but it has only relatively recently been adopted in International Schools. As societies have adapted and evolved in their attitudes and treatments of disabilities and learning difficulties it stands to reason that the institutions that mirror them should also adapt and evolve. However, this has been a far slower process in International Schools as government driven, statutory requirements to provide for all children do not exist, nor the support to ensure that provision is of an appropriate quality.

Happily, the philosophical culture is changing and in a select number of International Schools logistical changes are being made in order to meet the moral obligation to provide high quality learning opportunities for every child.

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At TBS this process is very much in evidence where we strive to provide excellent learning opportunities for all our students ranging from those with English as an Additional Language, Specific Learning Difficulties, Autism and Developmental Delay as well as those with physical barriers such as Cerebral Palsy.