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# Evaluation report

IB World Schools Department



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## Programme Evaluation Report

**Head of School:** Beth Hughes, James Owen, Kelly Renea Ritchie, Maxwell Ituah

**School Name:** Westlake Academy

**School Code:** 002525

**School Address:** 2600 J.T. Ottinger Road Westlake, Texas 76262

**IB Programme(s):** Diploma Programme, Middle Years Programme, Primary Years Programme

**Programme Coordinators:** Alison Schneider, Brandon Llewellyn, Sarah Stack

**Date:** Tuesday 25 March 2025

**Student ages in which all students are engaged in PYP:** 5-6, 6-7, 7-8, 8-9, 9-10, 10-11

**MYP years offered at the school:** Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5

### Evaluation Team

#### Diploma Programme

**Evaluation Leader:** Josue Naranjo

**Programme Leader:** Andrea Vanegas Morales

#### Middle Years Programme

**Evaluation Leader:** Margaret Clavette

**Programme Leader:** Heather Lajoie

#### Primary Years Programme

**Evaluation Leader:** Julieta Carrillo

**Programme Leader:** Sagrario Argüelles

## School and Programme Leadership

Dear Beth Hughes, James Owen, Kelly Renea Ritchie, Maxwell Ituah,

Thank you for completing the programme evaluation self-study process. The International Baccalaureate (IB) recognizes that this process requires considerable time and effort from the entire school community. We appreciate the effort that you have made and hope that the insights gained along the way will be valuable in further developing your programme(s).

Please review the feedback in this report carefully as it provides important guidance for the development of the programme(s) that will help your school achieve the optimum outcomes for students.

IB programme evaluation is built on the premise that IB programmes, when implemented with fidelity, ultimately lead to the achievement of the IB mission. The primary aim is to support schools in continuously developing their capacity to implement IB programmes in order to have a greater impact on student outcomes through the development of teacher and leader practice.

We hope that through this process school leadership will gain a deeper understanding of both the aspects of the programme that are being implemented effectively and the aspects that need further development. The process supports the school—as a learning community—to develop the capacity to work intentionally and strategically to develop its IB programme(s) and enable school leaders and teachers to better direct their efforts and resources.

## A. School Context

### School & Community Description

Westlake Academy is a public charter school and the only municipally owned school in Texas. It operates under a shared services model with the Town of Westlake, in which the Town Council also serves as the school board, and the mayor acts as its president. Located along the Tarrant-Denton county border, northwest of DFW Airport, the school serves students in a charter-based educational framework. With a defined enrollment size, Westlake Academy emphasizes parent, teacher, and student engagement.

The Town of Westlake itself spans seven square miles and is home to a growing population, expected to reach 7,000 residents by 2040. With an average household income exceeding \$243,000 and home values starting at \$1.3 million, the town is recognized as a Gold Level Scenic City. Westlake is home to major corporate campuses, including Deloitte University, Fidelity Investments, and the headquarters of Charles Schwab, positioning it as a unique blend of small-town atmosphere and global opportunity.

As a K-12 public charter school, Westlake Academy receives only about 75% of the per-student funding provided to traditional independent school districts. To bridge this financial gap, the Westlake Academy Foundation leads fundraising efforts, including the annual Gala, which in 2024 raised \$258,000 to support student enrichment programs, guest speakers, and additional learning resources. For the 2024-2025 school year, the foundation aims to raise at least \$1.25 million, with 20% of that goal already met as of early September.

About 20% of the staff at the school come from outside the United States, representing countries such as Britain, Canada, Australia, Finland, Argentina, Mexico, and France. The student body - 67.53% identifying as White, 31.34% as Asian, 7.10% as Black or African American, 3.38% as American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1.01% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. English is the primary language spoken by 88.73% of students, while Spanish is spoken by 1.35%. Other languages, including Vietnamese, Korean, French, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Mandarin, Nepali, Portuguese, Telugu, and Thai, are represented in smaller percentages.

## B. Programme strengths

### Purpose: Sharing an important mission

- Purpose (0101)
  - **Purpose 1:** The governing body and school leaders articulate a purpose for learning that aligns with the IB's philosophy and mission. (0101-01)
    - Strategic decisions regarding the culture and daily life of the school community are guided by the IB mission. During the period under review, the school underwent a process to reflect upon and update the mission and vision statements, which now inform all their decisions and meetings. Each programme has the autonomy to design their individual plans within the overall framework. The school leadership team meets weekly with a shared agenda, and there are additional quarterly meetings with a larger group. They emphasize student-centered decision-making and maintaining fidelity to IB principles during leadership changes.
    - The governing board and the pedagogical leadership team show a strong commitment to the IB philosophy and mission. The board is extensively involved in data analysis (graduation rates, IB results), and this data informs their support of programme delivery. The governing board expresses significant trust in the pedagogical leadership team and provides ongoing support to their mission.
  - **Purpose 2:** The school's pedagogical leadership team embraces educational approaches that encourage students to become active, compassionate lifelong learners. (0101-02)
    - The school's commitment to the IB mission and philosophy is exemplified by its leadership in the IB local, state, national and global community. The school benefits from the talent of active IBEN members in its learning community.
  - **Purpose 3:** The school community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile. (0101-03)
    - The concepts of community, diversity, inclusion and compassion (essential to nurturing inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people) permeate and frame the work of all members in the school community. School alumni continue their commitment to the school through an alumni association, and Westlake Academy

graduates return to the school to share their further learning and participate in school sports and cultural events.

- Developing international-mindedness and the attributes of an IB learner are visible and actionable in and beyond the classroom, through international trips, celebration of diverse holidays, exploration of world religions, and an annual international week. In addition, cultural groups visit the school to share their traditions.

## Environments: Providing essential structures, systems and resources

- Leadership and governance (0201)
  - **Leadership 1:** The school regularly reviews and follows all IB rules, regulations and guidelines to support programme implementation and ongoing development. (0201-01)
    - The school benefits from leadership and governance that demonstrates a commitment to providing high-quality learning environments. The governing body acknowledges and celebrates the positive impact the school has on its wider community. The board further recognizes the school's significant role in attracting families and contributing to the town's growth.
    - The school has demonstrated long-term sustainability of the programmes. The Westlake Town Hall and the Westlake Academy Foundation fund resources to support high-quality learning environments. The prestige of the school attracts students from outside the town, ensuring diversity and engagement for long-term programme development.
  - **Leadership 5:** The school funds and allocates resources that sustain and further develop its IB programme(s). (0201-05)
    - The governing body and school leadership practice responsible resource planning for the sustainable development of the programme, including both the regular school budget and grant opportunities through the school's foundation and parent group. The chair of the governing board takes an active role in advocating for additional funding with the state.
- Student support (0202)
  - **Student support 1:** The school provides relevant human, natural, built and virtual resources to implement its IB programme(s). (0202-01)

- The school benefits from the expertise of its teachers and administrative staff. Additionally, the communications director and innovation director support the school's growth and enhance student engagement. The PYP librarian and STEM specialist play a vital role in enriching the programme of inquiry, fostering student development as inquirers and lifelong learners.
- **Student support 2:** The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support. (0202-02)
  - Students benefit from a variety of learning supports, including strong teacher relationships, interventionists, small group instruction, accommodations, and tutoring. Students are clearly "seen" by teachers and administrators, with close monitoring of their academic and social-emotional needs.
- **Student support 3:** The school fosters the social, emotional, and physical well-being of its students and teachers. (0202-03)
  - The school emphasizes inclusivity, student-led activities, and a supportive faculty. It provides structured events and initiatives to celebrate student achievements, including Senior Sunrise, Senior Team Lead events, and the IB Continuum Exhibition. Westlake Academy also offers individualized support and collaborates with senior parents on events that recognize student efforts.
  - The school provides extensive support for students and families making transitions into the school, including onboarding activities and a buddy system for both students and their families.
- Teacher support (0203)
  - **Teacher support 2:** The school ensures that leadership and teachers participate in appropriate and timely professional learning to inform their practice. (0203-02)
    - The school allocates funds for IB professional learning, prioritized by programme needs. Teachers are able to request additional training opportunities through grants funded by the school's foundation and parent group.
  - **Teacher support 3:** The school provides time and other resources for teachers to collaborate effectively in the implementation of IB programme(s). (0203-03)
    - Teacher relationships and informal collaboration are essential to programme implementation. Teachers

support one another and frequently check in on each other's professional and social-emotional well-being.

## Culture: Creating positive school cultures

- Culture through policy implementation (0301)
  - **Culture 3:** The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an academic integrity policy that creates cultures of ethical academic practice. (0301-03)
    - The school has published a school-wide academic integrity pledge that supports all students in all subject groups. The pledge is posted in different areas of the school in English, French and Spanish, and is published in the student handbook. The posters are used to support students, as reminders of how to appropriately apply academic honesty and to explicitly teach academic honesty to students in the classroom.

## Learning: Ensuring effective education

- Designing a coherent curriculum (0401)
  - **Coherent curriculum 1:** The school plans and implements a coherent curriculum that organizes learning and teaching within and across the years of its IB programme(s). (0401-01)
    - Classroom learning experiences, as observed and documented in the written curriculum, intentionally address and promote the development of international-mindedness and IB learner profile attributes.
- Students as lifelong learners (0402)
  - **Lifelong learners 1:** Students actively develop thinking, research, communication, social and self-management skills. (0402-01)
    - Students are actively involved in their own learning, as demonstrated by classroom observations of independent inquiry, self-reflection, and peer evaluation. Students demonstrate awareness of the impact that assessment rubrics play on monitoring their learning. Students across the continuum describe opportunities for them to engage in independent inquiry beyond the classroom.
  - **Lifelong learners 3:** Students identify and foster healthy relationships, an understanding of shared responsibility, and the ability to collaborate effectively. (0402-03)

- Students have agency to effect change in the school through Student Council and student-led clubs, in addition to the Exhibition and the Personal Project.
- Approaches to teaching (0403)
  - **Approaches to teaching 1:** Teachers use inquiry, action and reflection to develop natural curiosity in students. (0403-01)
    - Learning both inside and beyond the classroom is conceptual, contextual and highly interactive. Learning engagements, teaching strategies and subject matter all confirm this to be a consistent teaching approach in the continuum. Students frequently collaborate on classroom activities, both in seated groups and in environments around the school.
  - **Approaches to teaching 4:** Teachers promote effective relationships and purposeful collaboration to create a positive and dynamic learning community. (0403-04)
    - Teachers and students are learning partners, with teachers serving as consultants and guides during collaborative work. Mutual respect among students and between students and teachers are highly evident in classroom interactions. Parents and students take pride in Westlake's supportive environment.
  - **Approaches to teaching 5:** Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals. (0403-05)
    - The classroom environment and teaching strategies enable every student to pursue and meet their learning goals, with clear differentiation based on students' needs. Students with learning differences are fully embraced by their peers in the classroom.
- Approaches to assessment (0404)
  - **Approaches to assessment 2:** The school uses assessment methods that are varied and fit-for-purpose for the curriculum and stated learning outcomes and objectives. (0404-02)
    - Assessment tasks are highly varied across all programmes, including tests, presentations, videos, performances, and exit tickets. Teachers actively use ongoing assessment, incorporating both teacher-to-student feedback and peer-to-peer feedback.

## C. Requirements

Based on the review of the programme documentation, observations of the team during the visit and in conversations with members of the school community, the following requirements were found to not be in place.

### Primary Years Programme

Target	Findings	Evidence to be provided by the School
Environments Teacher support (0203) Teacher support 2 Teacher support 2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Preliminary review and conversations with members of the school community do not confirm that the school complies with IB-mandated PD requirements, as outlined in IB documentation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Certificate of attendance or official proof of registration to a role specific IB training for the four new PYP teachers.</li></ul>

The IB provides a wide array of resources on the programme resource centre to support schools in meeting requirements. The school's IBWS Manager can assist the school in identifying resources, understanding the expectations and actions needed to meet requirements.

## D. Development of IB Standards

<b>Purpose:</b> Sharing an important mission	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Purpose (0101)</b> Schools implement IB programmes to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	

<b>Environments:</b> Providing essential structures, systems and resources	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Leadership and governance (0201)</b> The leadership and governance of IB World Schools create and sustain high-quality learning environments.	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	
<b>Student support (0202)</b> Learning environments in IB World Schools support student success.	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	

<b>Teacher support (0203)</b> Learning environments in IB World Schools support and empower teachers.	<b>DP:</b> Shows notable development  <b>MYP:</b> Shows notable development  <b>PYP:</b> Shows notable development	<b>DP:</b> Shows notable development  <b>MYP:</b> Shows notable development  <b>PYP:</b> Requires development	<b>PYP:</b> At the time of the visit, four PYP teachers did not have IB training. The school mentioned that teachers will be trained during the upcoming summer.
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<b>Culture:</b> Creating positive school cultures	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Culture through policy implementation (0301)</b> Schools develop, implement, communicate and review effective policies that help to create a school culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development  <b>MYP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development  <b>PYP:</b> Offers opportunity for further development	<b>DP:</b> Parents and students do not play an active role in policy revision and communication.  <b>MYP:</b> Parents and students do not play an active role in policy revision and communication.  <b>PYP:</b> Parents and students do not play an active role in policy revision and communication.

<b>Learning:</b> Ensuring effective education	<b>School Self-Assessment</b>	<b>IB Evaluation Team</b>	<b>Comments on School Development of IB Standards</b>
<b>Designing a coherent curriculum (0401)</b> Learning in IB World Schools is based on a coherent curriculum.	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	<b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements  <b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements	

<p><b>Students as lifelong learners (0402)</b> Learning in IB schools aims to develop students ready for further education and life beyond the classroom.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p>	
<p><b>Approaches to teaching (0403)</b> IB programmes encourage approaches to teaching that create learning experiences that are shown to be meaningful to the school community.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p>	
<p><b>Approaches to assessment (0404)</b> Learning, teaching, and assessment effectively inform and influence one another.</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p>	<p><b>DP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>MYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p> <p><b>PYP:</b> Shows development beyond requirements</p>	

## **E. Feedback on the planning and analysis and reflection of programme development**

### **Programme development strengths**

#### **Planning**

- The area of focus is aligned with recommendations from the prior evaluation report and with the school's desire to identify how ATLs are explicitly taught and practiced throughout the continuum. The school focused on closing the skill gaps to support the transition from one programme to the next.
- The school has considered examples from other schools to inform their process, in addition to addressing state curriculum requirements.
- The school set an appropriately challenging goal that motivated the school community. The school viewed the development plan as an ongoing professional development activity. It provided them the opportunity to reflect on their own practice.
- The process was effectively organized and facilitated by the programme coordinators to obtain maximum collaboration from the school community. Teachers were provided agency in choosing their own work groups.

#### **Evidencing and analysing**

- The school showed perseverance over time in implementing their programme development plan.
- The school undertook a range of activities, notably allowing teachers to choose ATL committees (across programmes and subjects) and focusing on vertical alignment, to achieve the outcome.
- In establishing the process, the school considered skills lost during the pandemic and looked at what needed to be improved in relation to student learning upon the return to in-person learning.
- Data was collected via student surveys in MYP and DP, reflection within MYP projects, feedback from MYP and DP advisory sessions, and in-class reflections in PYP classrooms. In addition, evidence of ATL implementation was embedded in PYP units in Toddle.

#### **Reflection**

- The school is still reflecting on the ongoing development of the PDP.
- The school would like to consider additional PDPs, with at least one whole-school continuum goal. Additional PDPs might be more subject- or programme-based and led by other staff members.

#### **Areas for consideration**

As the school engages in further efforts to develop the programme, it may wish to consider:

## **Planning**

- refining the area of focus that the school wants to explore.
- identifying research studies to inform their process.
- including students and parents in the planning process.

## **Evidencing and analysing**

- multiple ways to gather data, both quantitative and qualitative as appropriate. Evidence could include interviews, surveys, and observations of students engaged in learning.
- mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness and functionality of the approach being developed.
- using interim milestones to assess and adapt efforts.

## **Reflection**

- ensuring that students, parents, and staff have the opportunity to share in reflection process
- using an established protocol for the reflection process
- including measurable indicators with milestones and people responsible for various aspects of the plan.
- considering progress reports to the wider community at milestones, as a way to celebrate the progress of the PDP.

## **F. Opportunities for future or further programme development**

### **The school identified the following areas as priorities for programme development**

#### **Priorities:**

- Develop a mentorship training program that empowers highly effective teachers to partner with colleagues who are new to the profession, new to the school, and new to IB
- Provide further opportunities for meaningful student action arising from classroom learning experiences and taking advantage of school relationships in the wider community.
- Enhance collaboration across the curriculum, including routines for instruction walkthroughs, sharing best practices, and exploring connections between programme unit planners
- Reinforce curriculum and instruction delivery considering the natural links across programmes through the Approaches to teaching and approaches to learning.

### **The Evaluation team has identified the following areas of the programme(s) for the school to consider for future or further development**

Future or further development:

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 2:

- The leadership team may benefit from strategically planning ongoing leadership meetings that bring together the head of school, principals, assistant principals, and programme coordinators. This collaborative approach can help leverage combined talent and expertise to enhance programme implementation.

Environments / Leadership and governance (0201) / Leadership 4:

- The school could benefit from establishing clear systems to ensure the continuity of programme implementation, even in the event of leadership transitions, retirements, or staff changes
- The school may benefit from creating a strategic plan to align the three programmes and establishing systems to promote continuity and consistency, taking advantage of institutional knowledge and talent.

Environments / Student support (0202) / Student support 4:

- The school may consider implementing additional mechanisms to promote balance and well-being for Diploma Programme students

by strategically integrating physical activities and mindfulness practices throughout the programme.

- The school would benefit from adding a counselor position to reduce the student-to-counselor ratio and enhance support and guidance for students

Environments / Student support (0202) / Student support 5:

- The school could benefit from creating more opportunities for a broader range of students to participate in extracurricular experiences, including travel, ensuring that these opportunities are accessible to more students.

Culture / Culture through policy implementation (0301) / Culture 6:

- Although the school has a robust policy review structure, the review committees may consider coming together to discuss and ensure that policies are aligned and consistent.
- The school may benefit from actively involving students and parents in the policy revision and communication process as a shared responsibility among all members of the school community.

Learning / Designing a coherent curriculum (0401) / Coherent curriculum 2:

- The school may benefit from incorporating additional scheduled time for PYP, MYP, and DP teachers to collaborate and explicitly address transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary connections.

Learning / Students as lifelong learners (0402) / Lifelong learners 5:

- The school could enhance student engagement and motivation in CAS by strengthening collaboration with local organizations to create more opportunities for students to share and celebrate their creativity, activity, and service.

Learning / Approaches to assessment (0404) / Approaches to assessment 3:

- The school would benefit from analyzing DP assessment results through the lens of Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills, both within individual disciplines and across curricular areas.

## **G. Conclusions of the Evaluation team**

During the period under review, Westlake Academy has demonstrated a deliberate and purposeful implementation of the continuum, maintaining its commitment despite leadership changes and the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The current leadership and governing body recognize the positive impact the school has on the wider community, aligning efforts and resources to continue providing high-quality educational experiences. The school's current programme development plan is too broad and the feedback may help the school to have future plans that are more specific in their focus.

As the school progresses, they acknowledge the need to align strategic planning, policies, and the integration of transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches across the continuum, while also addressing the requirements for professional development in the Primary Years Programme.

Westlake Academy's culture of collaboration and strong sense of community enable them to embrace the values of an IB education, maintaining their ongoing commitment to programme growth and reflection.

## **H. Conclusion of the IB on the school status as an IB World School**

### **Diploma Programme**

The school's implementation of the programme shows close alignment with the IB Programme standards and practices.

### **Middle Years Programme**

The school's implementation of the programme shows close alignment with the IB Programme standards and practices.

### **Primary Years Programme**

The school's implementation of the programme shows general alignment with the IB Programme standards and practices. However, further evidence is required to demonstrate that all requirements are in place and that the school's implementation of the programme is fully aligned with the IB Programme standards and practices.

### **Evidence to be provided by the School**

**Deadline for Submission: Monday 1 September 2025**

#### **Primary Years Programme**

- Environments / Teacher support (0203) / Teacher support 2 / Teacher support 2.1:
  - Certificate of attendance or official proof of registration to a role specific IB training for the four new PYP teachers.

We trust that the information found in this report will support the school's continued development of its IB programme(s). Your IB World School manager, Iris Lazarus ([iris.lazarus@ibo.org](mailto:iris.lazarus@ibo.org)), will be in touch with you to follow up on this report and to support your school's ongoing efforts.

Yours Sincerely,



Adrian Kearney  
Director, IB World Schools