



High  
Performance  
Learning

*Happy children make better learners.*

# How High Performance Learning has created consistency at Al Yasmina



YASMINA  
BRITISH ACADEMY

*“My vision is a simple one; to ensure that every child in our Academy is happy, highly motivated, and fully supported to maximise their potential, both academically and in all other areas of school life, through outstanding learning and teaching.”*

**- Keith Miller - Principal**



## **Why choose HPL?**

Al Yasmina British Academy, a private international school in Abu Dhabi, stands out as a vibrant and progressive learning community committed to academic excellence. The school has consistently achieved remarkable I/GCSE and A Level results, which reflects its dedicated teaching staff and innovative curriculum.

Following the appointment of Keith Miller as School Principal in 2022, he sought ways to continue building on the school's success and to help achieve his vision of outstanding teaching and learning, enhancing what the school was already achieving.

As Al Yasmina sought to enhance its educational practices, school leaders recognised the need for a unifying framework.

*“We needed something that unified our teaching and learning. HPL has done just this and it was the next step for us in terms of where we wanted to see us moving forward.”* said Hannah Riddell, Primary Assistant Principal and HPL Lead.

To create a unified educational philosophy that motivates both teachers and students to reach their highest potential, Al Yasmina chose to embark on a transformative journey of integrating High Performance Learning into its educational framework.

## **Approaching Implementation**

When starting out with HPL, the initial focus was to help educators understand the philosophy and shift their mindsets about teaching and learning. Assistant Principals and HPL leads Hannah Riddell and Zaheera Haujee organised collaborative showcases that created a culture of best practice sharing and allowed teachers to see evidence of HPL in action.



Hannah Riddell, Primary Assistant Principal and HPL Lead said: *“The showcases and marketplaces brought the whole school together and everybody was working together under the same umbrella. It was great to have a marketplace with some of the secondary science team gathered around an early years market store looking at good practice. I think that’s how HPL really supported our goals”*

These showcases not only highlighted successful practices but also encouraged dialogue among educators, creating a sense of community and shared purpose. This strategy ultimately helped standardise the HPL approach, making it easier for everyone to understand and implement across their subject.

With Al Yasmina being a large school situated across 2 sites, consistency was recognised as being pivotal to successfully implementing HPL.

The emphasis on collaboration extended beyond individual classrooms. By encouraging inter-departmental cooperation, Al Yasmina created a culture where teachers from different subjects could learn from one another, share resources, and collectively enhance their understanding and knowledge.

Zaheera Haujee, Secondary Assistant Principal and HPL Lead explained, *“If we weave it into everything that we do, it becomes part of the fabric that is Al Yasmina.”*



Integrating the HPL philosophy into the school's curriculum involved changing mindsets and encouraging willingness to adopt the new approach.

At first, teachers saw HPL as an add-on, that it was something separate from the national curriculum, rather than an aid to support the curriculum. By utilising the showcases, educators began to understand how HPL could actually enhance student outcomes.

*“It's brought the focus back to pedagogy because, actually, learning is exactly that, whatever age a child is, whatever subject you're teaching. HPL isn't going to detract from the curriculum coverage. If anything, it's going to aid it and make students better in terms of their self-efficacy and continuous improvement, so they're not reliant on the teacher as much”* Zaheera explained.

## Impact of HPL

The HPL philosophy has provided Al Yasmina with the coherent, unified approach they were previously lacking.

*"I think for us, it's been that cohesive narrative across all areas: pastoral, curriculum, teaching and learning. So everything's singing from that same hymn sheet of "high performance, everyone can" noted Zaheera.*



The results of this are that it has empowered teachers and students alike to thrive. The focus on confidence and wellbeing has seen students achieve more than they previously would have felt possible.

Claire Fox, Secondary Assistant Principal and HPL Lead mentioned, *"My daughter didn't like to get anything wrong. Now it doesn't matter to her. She will attempt anything and everything, and that's been a complete 180 for her. She will go in and try everything, which she wouldn't have done before we started the journey. So that's testament to it."*

### **For Secondary Students:**

Students are learning to approach what used to be difficult subjects in a new way that makes it easier for them. They're able to take on subjects they need to achieve in order to progress to the next stage of their education, when they previously would have faced a barrier there.

*"In a classroom, they look at the best way to approach a difficult subject and what works for them. You can see they feel like they can actually achieve it because they can work out how they're going to approach the subject"* explains Claire.

### **For Primary Students:**

Even at a young age, children now have that desire to push themselves to the next level and can identify what support they need to do just that. The success with the younger children has been picked up through inspections, as HPL has encouraged students to describe where they are in their journey, how they're learning and what their next steps are.

*"In our nursery we have approximately 89% EAL learners and they're beginning to be able to express themselves in that way. It's quite a remarkable feat, really"* remarked Hannah Riddell.

The implementation of HPL at Al Yasmina has not only impacted students, but has significantly impacted educators by providing a commonality across all areas of the school, whilst also encouraging leadership development and enhancing professionalism within the school.

The introduction of voluntary drive team leaders has empowered these educators to lead their teams effectively, paving the way for many to transition into strong middle leadership roles. This approach not only supports the rollout of HPL but also identifies and nurtures future leaders within the school community.

HPL has been integrated into various educational frameworks, including lesson observations and teaching practices, reinforcing its central role in the school's development. Additionally, by instilling a sense of accountability among staff, educators have developed clear action plans that outline expectations and measurable outcomes.

This structured approach has not only enhanced professional standards but also encouraged collaboration and shared ownership of educational practices, ultimately leading to a more cohesive and focused teaching environment.

*“The rollout of HPL supports us in every area. It also helps us to see the next team of people that have got that capacity to lead. We’ve instilled a level of professionalism in our staff and have set up accountability within that,”* comments Hannah.



## Supporting student wellbeing

Each academic year begins with a learning walk centred on evaluating the confidence and happiness of both staff and students, ensuring that strong relationships are at the forefront of the educational experience.

This emphasis on connection helps create an environment where students feel valued and supported. The use of VAAs (values, attitudes and attributes) and recognition postcards further reinforces this sense of achievement, allowing students to understand the reasons behind their successes and instilling a sense of pride in their efforts.

*“We always refer them back to the VAAs and we award them with the postcards. We use that terminology so they understand why they are achieving and that gives them a sense of pride”* explains Claire.

By prioritising these elements, the school cultivates confident learners who are more engaged and motivated in their academic pursuits.

## Looking to the future

As Al Yasmina continues its journey with HPL, the focus remains on getting consistency across all subjects, especially as departments grow and new teachers join.

To facilitate this, the school plans to bring together its drive teams to collaborate on key priorities, ensuring that multiple teams work together toward a common purpose. This collaborative approach aims to integrate HPL into all aspects of school life, making it a foundational element of the educational experience.

With this ongoing commitment, HPL will soon permeate every part of the school, fostering a sense of familiarity among staff and further embedding the philosophy in daily practices.

*“I think it's that continual branching out. We will be in every corner of the school soon!”* adds Hannah.



Yasmina British Academy, a private international school is an exciting, diverse and progressive learning community that annually produces some of the very best I/GCSE and A Level results in the UAE. Our globally recognised and admired curriculum, dedicated and passionate practitioners and outstanding teaching and learning, sets us apart from other schools and makes Yasmina British Academy a very special place to be. We are extremely proud of our recent ADEK inspection, which rated Yasmina British Academy as 'Outstanding' in all six performance standards.



High Performance Learning (HPL) works with schools to embed the HPL philosophy where every student is seen as a potential high performer. Its unique teaching and learning framework systematically recalibrates the school and enables students to develop the cognitive skills, values, attitudes and attributes needed for high academic performance and lifetime success. HPL offers a range of programmes to enable schools at any starting point to begin their journey towards being an HPL school.

The HPL World Class School Award recognises the very best schools in the world and is designed for those at the forefront of educational thinking.



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