Shacklewell Primary School is a hidden gem in Hackney, east London that prides itself on being a vibrant, forward-thinking school. One that is unafraid to take on new challenges and embraces change to make the best possible learning environment for all pupils.

Shacklewell is a two-form entry school caring for children from 2-11 years old. They are one of three schools that make up the New Wave Federation. The school is typically diverse for an inner city school, with many different cultures and religions represented and shares a strong bond with their local community, which contributes immensely to the success of the school.

We see the IPC as fundamental to our approach and our philosophy, and flexible enough to be integrated into our new learning approaches such as our incredible journey into digital learning – a role we are happy to take on and one in which we have received international recognition and acclaim. – Nicole Reid, Headteacher.

Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and it’s clear the children have high expectations of themselves as well. As we walked around the school, children proudly showed us their work and spoke about their roles as leaders within the school.

Nicole says,”no two days are the same, it’s always different, and that’s what is compelling about the school. Children come in wanting to learn, grasping every opportunity to do their very best for us and that is very exciting for me.”

Shacklewell consistently performs at a higher level compared to other schools in their borough and is committed to serving its community, recognising the multi-cultural, multi faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom. In addition to embedding British Values through the use of the IPC, the school works with UNICEF, has an active school council to promote democracy and often invite staff and other visitors from different faiths to share their language and culture with students.

We sat down with Nicole to chat more about the IPC and the impact that it’s had at Shacklewell.

“We chose the IPC because it was the curriculum that shared our philosophy and beliefs.”
What drew you to the IPC?

We chose the IPC because of our philosophy and beliefs. We wanted something that would provide our pupils with more excitement and energy and the IPC has a real 'buzz' to it. IPC topics have strong links between foundation subjects and also depth within each subject.

Part of its appeal is the way knowledge, skills and understanding are clearly identified and central to the way pupils assess themselves through the IPC rubrics. We also have assured content and coverage for the English National Curriculum, breadth and depth.

How does the IPC help you achieve the requirements of the National Curriculum?

The IPC is very conscious of meeting National Curriculum requirements for every cohort. Each topic is matched against the National Curriculum to ensure thorough coverage and content. The sample route plans help guide us in choosing the topics to ensure we are getting the proper coverage – it’s been very clear from the beginning. But it also gives us the freedom to take that learning to a new dimension that is even more exciting for the children.

What impact has the IPC had in your school?

It has had an enormous beneficial impact on learning. Topics begin with a huge celebration called the Entry Point and they continue through challenging subject blocks, which we make clear to pupils, and progress to an equally impressive Exit Point. The IPC has proven to be a perfect platform for our pupils to express their skills in using digital technology as well.

Due to its design, the IPC allows our pupils to really have a 'window into the world'. Without the IPC’s approach to internationalism I doubt whether our pupils would have such a deep understanding and appreciation of the different places, cultures, environments and world issues as they do. I cannot imagine learning taking place without the IPC.

What has the impact been for children and parents?

Quite literally our pupils love IPC lessons! They know they are going to be doing exciting, challenging lessons and really stretch themselves.

The staff have totally embraced the IPC. We use the planning notes and learning outcomes to provide high quality lessons for all pupils. Our parents have reacted superbly – our half-term Homework Passport projects are based on the IPC and the work that's brought back constantly amazes us.
How do you make links with Maths and Literacy?

We naturally make links with our core subjects. Pupils explore the full range of literacy skills in both Reading and Writing. Science is integrated in the IPC so pupils use all aspects of non-fiction genres (NC requirements, observations, explanations, summaries). In our yearly planning schedule we make sure that as many English lessons as possible tie in closely with IPC topics.

This is also the case with Maths, where we explore all links between our Maths Masters programme and IPC. Core and foundation subjects are designed to be independent and interdependent of each other – a principle we have fully taken on from IPC.

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How does the IPC give you flexibility so that you maintain control of the learning?

We use it as a guide, we take a real ownership of the topics that we choose based on the community that we have. I like it because it doesn’t dictate how we deliver the curriculum, it gives us the ‘what’ and then the teachers decide how they are going to deliver a particular topic, and that really brings out the joy in it.
The International Primary Curriculum’s growing learning community includes schools in more than 80 countries around the world. Learning with the IPC means that children focus on a combination of academic, personal and international learning that is both exciting and challenging.

The aim of the IPC is to help every child enjoy learning a wide range of subjects and to develop an enquiring mind, the personal attributes that will help throughout teenage and adult years, and to develop a sense of their own nationality and culture, whilst developing a profound respect for the nationalities and cultures of others. Through the IPC approach to learning, children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to confidently face the world of tomorrow.

The IPC was introduced in 2000 and its continued development today ensures that children are learning a current and highly relevant curriculum based on the very latest research and understanding of how children learn.

The IPC is a part of Fieldwork Education which, has been helping schools all around the world develop children’s learning.
For more information about the International Primary Curriculum visit www.greatlearning.com/ipc

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