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International Accreditation Teams Visit QA Early Education Center

Qatar Academy welcomed representatives from the Council of International Schools and New England Association of Schools and Colleges for the accreditation visit of its Early Education Centers. Aside from touring the Center's two facilities located in QA Primary School and HBKU Student Center and observing classes, CIS Regional Accreditation Officer/International Advisor Monica Greeley and NEASC Commission on American and International Schools Abroad Director Peter Mott also met with key administration staff, teachers and parents of students enrolled in EEC.

Accreditation for early childhood education help raise the quality of programs aimed at young children. In Qatar, the visit brings to the fore Qatar Academy's visionary role in implementing early education in the country. "The community of the Early Education Center is very pleased and proud to support CIS and NEASC in the implementation of an accreditation process for early years," Principal Karen Nicholls remarked. "It enabled us to research what was important for very young children to learn and ways to support that learning. Through the self-study we were able to identify areas for improvement and also recognize the positive work that was being done in our center. We are very proud of the way the center began in 2011 and has developed over time. Continued research to develop learning environments and teaching with intention will enable us to grow and develop, and to offer a program for children that is rich and engaging. The accreditation process ensures that we maintain the highest possible standards in achieving this goal".

Since its inception, the administration and teachers of EEC have collectively endeavored to understand and deliver best practices for children under 3 years. "In developing the center we have spent time considering two important elements," Nicholls says. "The first being 'Our Image of the Child'. This is important because it shapes the type of learning engagements we offer to young children. For instance, we believe that children are curious so we develop activities that allow the child to explore, discover, become researchers and interact with their environments through exploration. The other important development in the EEC was that of environments. We wanted classrooms to reflect elements of home, to make home-school connections; contain artifacts from Qatar to give children a sense of who they are and to provide attractive and interesting places for them to come and explore every day. These are the two things we are most excited about (the visit)".

"These elements have required thoughtful processes and procedures to be in place to begin with," Assistant Principal Jo Ellis adds. Still, in preparation for the visit, "Teachers have grown their knowledge and understanding and developed the center into a high quality learning environment. This final step in the accreditation of the EEC signifies and celebrates the end result of three years where the community has worked hard to contribute to planning, preparing and resourcing a center that promotes excellent early childhood education and care; a community made of people who have understood that quality early childhood education and care can make a difference to children's lifelong learning".

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