Innovation Policy

Subject Area	Subject Lead	Date Reviewed
Innovation	Phil Long	September 2025

Rationale

Arcadia British School aspires to be a leader in innovation by fostering a culture of imagination, creativity, and future-focused learning across students, staff, and leadership. We believe innovation is essential for preparing our community to thrive in a rapidly changing world shaped by sustainability, digital transformation, and global citizenship. Our innovative approach builds authentic growth through collaboration, inquiry, and real-world engagement.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure Arcadia remains at the cutting edge of innovative practice across teaching, learning, leadership, and community.

- Cultivate an inclusive culture that encourages creativity, problem-solving, and responsible use of technology.

- Align innovation with national and international agendas, including UAE Centennial 2071, the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2031, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Provide a cycle of review and measurable impact, ensuring innovation contributes meaningfully to student learning and community growth.

The policy applies to all stakeholders: students, staff, parents, and partners.

Key Literature

Our approach to innovation draws on international and national best practice:

- **UAE Centennial 2071** and **AI Strategy 2031** – emphasising knowledge economies, sustainability, and AI-driven growth.

- **KHDA Frameworks for Innovation and Digital Learning**.

- **Apple Distinguished Schools (Innovation in Schools)** – recognising Arcadia's commitment to purposeful technology integration.

- **ISTE Standards for Students, Educators, and Leaders** – providing a framework for digital-age learning.

- **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – connecting learning to global challenges.

UAE Vision 2021 (Knowledge and Human Development Authority)

"The United Arab Emirates Vision 2021 has education as its foundation, both explicitly and implicitly. Vision 2021 includes aspirations for citizenship, a spirit of entrepreneurship, enhanced educational attainment, and a knowledge-based economy driven by innovation, research, science and technology. The realisation of these aspirations requires a world-class education system, responsive to national needs and aligned to international standards."

Innovation is at the core of the National Agenda in the UAE, aiming to make its schools the most innovative in the world. It sets out its approach with regard to 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership'. Based on this, we aspire to create an innovative ecosystem within our school that will innovate in these key areas:

- Curriculum design
- Teaching and learning strategies
- The use of learning technologies
- Classroom/school design
- Assessment
- Timetabling
- Partnerships beyond our school
- Staff recruitment, training, development and reward.

Innovation in Schools (Apple Education)

"Apple Distinguished Schools are centres of leadership and educational excellence that demonstrate Apple's vision for learning with technology — and we believe they are some of the most innovative schools in the world."

Arcadia School is an Apple Distinguished School and uses Apple learning technology to innovate and improve our teaching and learning. We have a one-to-one iPad program in the school and use MacBooks and iMacs as part of our teaching and learning resources. Arcadia received this recognition in 2018 and it is reassessed by Apple Education every 3 years, to make sure we are continuing to grow and innovate.

In their publication, Innovation in Schools, Apple identifies key elements when innovating which come under 3 categories: learning, teaching and environment. These are then subsequently broken into further areas to be developed.

1. Culture – Community

We believe innovation is a shared responsibility.

- Student Innovation Councils and Digital Leaders guide projects and give student voice a central role.

- Parents and community partners co-create opportunities and mentor projects.

- Annual Arcadia Innovation Conference positions the school as a regional hub.

2. Capacity – Tools & Environment

Arcadia provides the infrastructure and expertise for innovation.

- Dedicated STREAM and multimedia spaces, supported by advanced devices (iPads, MacBooks, VR/AR).

- Integration of AI tools, adaptive learning platforms, and digital safety programmes.

- Skilled technical support and innovation coaches ensure staff and students maximise resources.

Outcome: Arcadia has world-class environments where STREAM, AI, and design thinking thrive.

3. Teaching & Learning

Innovation in learning is driven through design, professional growth, and curriculum integration.

Instructional Design

- Lessons embed higher-order thinking, design thinking, and inquiry cycles.

- Emerging technologies (AI, AR, VR, robotics) are applied purposefully.

- Interdisciplinary projects connect to real-world issues, including the SDGs.

- All staff complete Apple Teacher and innovation CPD pathways.

- Innovation coaches and peer-led training build confidence and expertise.

- Teachers showcase best practice internally and at regional/global conferences.

Curriculum Design

- STREAM learning embedded across subjects and year groups.

- Performance pathways challenge more able learners.

- Competitions, projects, and partnerships extend learning beyond the classroom.

Student Skills

- Digital passports track progress in digital literacy, AI literacy, and ethical online behaviour.

- Students develop entrepreneurial mindsets, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

- Graduates leave Arcadia as confident, responsible global citizens.

Equity & Inclusion

Innovation at Arcadia is for every learner. We are committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of background, learning needs, or ability, can access and benefit from innovative opportunities.

- **Accessibility:** All digital platforms, tools, and learning environments are designed to be inclusive, following accessibility best practices and ensuring equitable participation for students with SEND and EAL needs.

- **Personalised Pathways:** Learners are supported through adaptive technologies, differentiated teaching strategies, and flexible approaches that allow each child to engage with innovation at their own pace and level of challenge.

- **Representation:** Innovation projects are intentionally diverse, highlighting a range of voices, cultures, and perspectives. Students are encouraged to bring their own experiences into projects, ensuring authentic and meaningful outcomes.

- **Leadership & Participation:** Students with SEND and EAL are given opportunities to take on roles such as *Innovation Ambassadors* or *Digital Leaders*, ensuring inclusive representation in leadership positions.

- **Equity in Outcomes:** Monitoring and evaluation systems track not only participation but also impact, ensuring that innovation contributes to closing gaps in achievement and opportunity across the school community.

Outcome: Every student at Arcadia feels empowered to innovate, create, and lead, with the confidence that their voice and abilities are valued in shaping the future.

Learning

- Teamwork
- Communication and Creation
- Personalization of Learning
- Critical Thinking
- Real-World Engagement

Teaching

- Instructional Design
- Professional Learning

Learning Environment

- Learning Spaces
- Infrastructure Design

International Standard for Education Technology (ISTE) Standards

"The ISTE Standards are a framework for innovation in education. These standards help educators and education leaders worldwide prepare learners to thrive in work and life."

Arcadia has used the ISTE standards to form its innovation policy and guidelines. The ISTE standards focus on three key areas for innovation:

- Students
- Educators
- Educational Leadership

These are then broken down into five to seven key areas for innovative practice. These areas in turn are broken down into further goals to assess the innovation in a school.
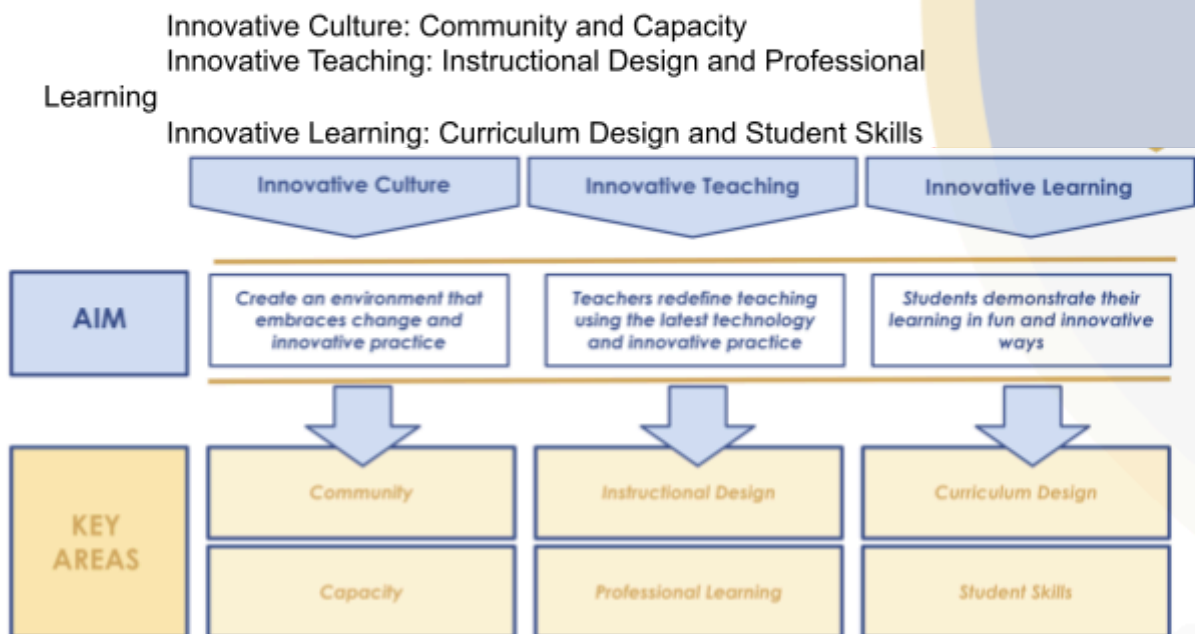
Our Approach

Taking the three key organisations (detailed above) guidelines and standards, we have created our own philosophy and outlook on what innovation will look like for Arcadia students, educators, leadership and the whole school community. This will be broken down into 3 strands: Culture, Teaching and Learning. This is further broken into 2 key areas for each strand: community, capacity, instructional design, professional learning, curriculum design and student skills.

Vision

Maximise every student's experience through an innovative design of learning to prepare them for the future.

3 Strands and 6 Key Areas

Innovative Culture: Community and Capacity
Innovative Teaching: Instructional Design and Professional Learning
Innovative Learning: Curriculum Design and Student Skills

	Innovative Culture	Innovative Teaching	Innovative Learning
AIM	Create an environment that embraces change and innovative practice	Teachers redefine teaching using the latest technology and innovative practice	Students demonstrate their learning in fun and innovative ways
KEY AREAS	Community	Instructional Design	Curriculum Design
	Capacity	Professional Learning	Student Skills

Community

The entire school and wider community are engaged and participating in our innovative approach

2022
➔ Establish a vision and innovation approach with staff and introduce it to parents.
➔ Create a clear structure with roles and responsibilities for Student Digital Leaders.
➔ Establish an 'innovation' team for age phases/subjects.

2023
➔ Build strong connections with key external partners including parents.
➔ Raise the Student Digital Leader's profile and have them working throughout Arcadia.
➔ Begin to map potential innovation projects.

2024
➔ Host the first 'innovation' conference at Arcadia.
➔ Students Digital Leaders take part in the conference and participate in similar events.
➔ Teachers have projects linked to the real world embedded throughout the year.

"Arcadia's students, teachers and community are driving the innovative approach that has been adopted. Arcadia is a hub for innovation in the region, hosting an annual 'innovation' conference for educators across the Middle East. It regularly is nominated for innovative education awards. Its students engage in learning that has a real-life outcome and significance to the local and global community.

Capacity

Arcadia has the tools, resources and environment for innovation to occur

2022
➔ The Mobile Device Management system is established and running correctly.
➔ Create the 'Collaboration' area in Primary.
➔ Create a system to track and monitor priorities for IT support.

2023
➔ Begin to create a Media centre (PLG*) and STREAM spaces along with resourcing these areas.
➔ Introduce MacBooks into our student ecosystem.
➔ Establish a system for technical support to manage key priorities.

2024
➔ Dedicated spaces are fully resourced and are mapped into the curriculum for full use and coverage all year round.
➔ Introduce innovation 'coaches' to the teaching team.
➔ Clear roles and processes are embedded for support.
➔ An Additional Assistant teacher to support the full-time programme

2025
- ➔ Updated and Dedicated spaces are fully resourced and are mapped into the curriculum for full use and coverage all year round.
- ➔ Reintroduce innovation 'coaches' to the teaching team.
- ➔ Participation in national competitions, including Lego league, Formula Ethara, and BSME App designs

"Arcadia has a world-class infrastructure to allow innovation to happen. It has dedicated spaces for STREAM and multimedia learning to occur with well-resourced programs. When you enter Arcadia, you can see the digital approach from reception to the classrooms and throughout the school. With the highly skilled support established, teachers can concentrate on teaching."

Instructional Design
Lessons have an innovative design that engages students and higher-order thinking skills
2022
- ➔ Establish the teacher's definitions of innovative teaching.
- ➔ Study the world's most innovative schools and their approach to instructional design.
- ➔ Create an innovative lesson descriptor with the Advanced Skills team.
2023
- ➔ Create example video lessons of innovative practice to go with the new descriptor.
- ➔ Create affiliations with other schools renowned for innovative practice.
- ➔ Create a program to get the best out of core software.
2024
- ➔ STREAM and digital projects are mapped into the curriculum.
- ➔ Ongoing research on the best practices in innovative teaching and learning.
- ➔ Teachers are taken through a clear program to improve their skills with core software.

"Teachers engage their students in fun, exciting and innovative ways. They use new technology such as augmented reality, virtual reality and artificial intelligence to inspire their class. The use of STREAM learning is embedded across many subjects along with creative digital tasks. Teachers expertly use Arcadias core software in their day-to-day teaching. They select the best software and tools for particular outcomes so effective learning can take place."

Professional Learning
Teachers have a range of opportunities to learn independently and collaboratively
2022
- ➔ Continuation of Apple Teacher program.
- ➔ Establish drop-in tech sessions for less confident teachers.
- ➔ Map through the year what CPD will need to happen with key staff and groupings.
2023
- ➔ Offer a wide range of qualifications and CPD opportunities to staff.
- ➔ Establish the Innovation satellite website with CPD videos.
- ➔ Network established of Innovation Leads in Dubai and beyond.
2024

- → More skilled and qualified teachers are used in teams to offer CPD and support.
- → STREAM and multimedia training are offered to raise confidence in those areas.
- → Innovation coaches were introduced to help integration and upskill.

"All teachers at Arcadia are very confident with using technology effectively due to the robust professional learning opportunities they have. All teachers are Apple Teachers and many have completed extra qualifications to bolster their skill set. Teachers receive professional learning from internal and external experts in a variety of ways: face-to-face and online workshops, informal how-to videos and co-teaching with their peers and innovation coaches."

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum provides students with opportunities for innovative learning with a focus on the real world

2022
- → Continue to work with the STREAM team to create future strategies.
- → Research external opportunities for our students around STREAM/digital-based competitions.

- → Map where digital projects will go into the topic curriculum.

2023
- → Begin to map how STREAM learning will weave into our curriculum.
- → Build strong connections with key external partners including parents for real-world projects.
- → Enter the first external robotics competitions (FLL).

2024
- → STREAM and digital projects are mapped into the curriculum.
- → Teachers have projects linked to the real world embedded throughout the year.
- → Performance pathways embedded for the more able.

2025
- → STREAM Week is an embedded event taking place over a week, and co planned by STREAM lead, Math, Science and APEX lead.
- → Teachers have projects linked to the real world embedded throughout the year.
- → Performance pathways embedded for the more able.

"Arcadia has a well-planned curriculum with digital and STREAM learning threaded to enhance many subject areas and topics. Students engage in projects from key partners and affiliates that have a real-life significance and context such as the UAE sustainability goals. Students at Arcadia have the opportunity to compete in STREAM-based competitions in the UAE and internationally."

Student Skills

Students have key digital skills and knowledge that will prepare them for the next stage of their life

2022
➔ Map where digital projects will sit in the topic curriculum.
➔ Create the skills needed for the Digital Skill passport in collaboration with teachers.
➔ Map into the curriculum a digital safety program based on the National Online Safety

2023
➔ Oversee the digital projects, collecting evidence and adapting it.
➔ Introduce Student Digital Passports into Primary.
➔ Begin the process of becoming a National Online Safety Certified School.

2024
➔ Digital learning projects linked to the Arcadia Learning Skills.
➔ Student Digital Skill passport introduced from FS - Year 9.
➔ Embed and adapt the digital safety program as a National Online Safety Certified School.

2025
➔ Ensure all students participate in at least one innovation linked project each year.
➔ Launch TECH Sparks- the innovation arm for student voice
➔ Student leaders to run digital sessions to in safety to students and parents.

"Students leave Arcadia in Year 13 with highly advanced digital skills. Students can demonstrate their learning in a variety of creative ways such as movie creation and digital publishing. They can use technology to collaborate and solve problems. Students understand their role as global citizens, using technology safely and responsibly when communicating with the wider world. They use their devices to be more efficient and make themselves more independent thinkers and learners."

Policy Implemented: August 2018
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and Innovation
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