



Verdala
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

AGM 2022 Report

Our Vision

*To be the International
School of Choice, celebrating
diversity, empowering and
inspiring future generations*



Contents

Board Chair Report	3 - 5
Head of School Report	6 - 11
Financial Report	12 - 15
Facilities Masterplan	16 - 17
Statutes Review	18 - 19
Strategic Plan	20
Appendix: Student Nationalities	21

VIS Mission

At VIS, we strive to ensure that all of our students become knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors to our world



Board Chair Report

David Nyheim, VIS Board Chair

Overview

2021-2022 was and continues to be characterised by the impacts on Malta and VIS of the COVID-pandemic – and more recently now by the war in Ukraine. Throughout this period, the Board has functioned well and been cohesive. It has shared a common purpose and worked well with the VIS Leadership Team. Board ambitions were greater than in previous years – and several key initiatives were implemented fully and well.

In terms of key outcomes, several can be mentioned:

- The Board oversaw effective COVID management at VIS, which has kept the school open throughout the year, and maintained distance learning for students who require it.
- The Board progressed the Statutes review and carried the VIS community with it. Several governance processes have been updated and new ones introduced.
- The Board completed the salary review for teachers and support staff, which places VIS in a far better competitive position when it comes to attracting and retaining high-quality personnel.
- The Board developed the new VIS strategic plan in an inclusive and participatory way, this will be implemented 2022-2027.
- The Board has been mindful of the pressure on school staff and has worked with the Leadership Team to uphold staff morale through several actions.

Performance Against Goals 2021-2022

Board performance against goals set for 2021-2022 are given below.

Goal Area	Key Performance Indicators	Performance
1: Complete the next VIS Strategic Plan, including ensuring BOD engagement with members of the Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the next VIS Strategic Plan (2022-2027), which will strategically position VIS for the next five years as one of the leading schools of choice in the Mediterranean Ensure an inclusive and consultative process in the development of the strategic plan 	Reached
2: Maintain a strong Leadership Team and Board and put in place a transition plan for changes in the Leadership Team/Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the remuneration package for the HOS and Principals - and agree on its phasing in Retain the HOS for a renewed two-year contract Recruit potential Board members into school committees and task forces - and put in place a cohort of potential Board members 	Reached Reached Reached
3: Support the Leadership Team in continuing to manage the implications of COVID, ensuring operational continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-related protocols maintained & adapted as necessary, & communicated clearly to all stakeholders Distance learning policy delivered effectively, as necessary 	Reached Reached
4: Implement a salary review for all VIS staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement a salary review process for all VIS staff Identify approaches to ensure affordability of increased costs for VIS parents 	Reached Exceeded

<p>5: Ensure sustained and effective Master Plan implementation (including required stakeholder engagement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain momentum in the implementation of the Master Plan with an effective steer from the Facilities Task Force and oversight by the Board • Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan that proactively communicates and engages with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the Master Plan 	<p>Reached</p> <p>In Progress</p>
<p>6: Ensure all relevant policies and processes are developed or reviewed as necessary and approved in a timely manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Master Policy Chapter reviewed & revised by September, leading to a more comprehensive, coherent & user-friendly document • Statutes Review initiated through a clear & transparent process to satisfaction of stakeholders, with the first tranche of amendments agreed by 2022 AGM • Board Handbook updated by October to reflect revised Governance policy & any other relevant developments 	<p>Reached</p> <p>Reached</p> <p>Reached</p>
<p>7: Further optimize the management of school financial resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement with FCO additional measures to optimise the management of school financial resources • Put in place a corporate funding plan to enable future finance of school facilities, equipment, and a VIS Endowment Fund 	<p>Reached</p> <p>In Progress</p>

Head of School Report

Totty Aris

Community Well-being

2021-22 continued to be an academic year where students were restricted by COVID legislations for schools. This included keeping the students in cohort bubbles, all of our community in masks, daily temperature checks and regular handwashing and social distancing with no visitors/parents on campus. ASAs started up, however in reduced number due to the cohort bubbles. Field-trips started again slowly in Feb 2022.

Despite 11-18 year olds being vaccinated from September time followed by Elementary students in Jan/Feb the school was affected by the highly transmissible Omicron virus from Dec -Feb 2022 with many students & staff either catching the virus or forced into quarantine by contact tracing. In order to continue operating, the Secondary school moved to online learning for one week in January. Both in Elementary and Secondary this month was a struggle for staff and it is thanks to their tenacity and willingness to step in during the absence of their colleagues that we were able to continue operating with as little disruption as possible.

Our Student well-being is always at the forefront of everything we do and regular check-ins with these families and students is part of our support initiative. This became particularly pertinent at the on-set of the war in Ukraine. (We have 33 Russian students and 6 Ukrainian students, 2 Russian staff and 1 Ukrainian member of staff.) We have been mindful of our international context but also the



High School community garden

upset and concern created by this turmoil that has affected our staff and students and run sessions across the whole school that have focused on tolerance and respect. One of our VIS guiding principles is “We trust that a caring inclusive community will help build a sense of self-worth and a profound respect for others.” We acknowledge that beyond the School gates there are matters beyond our control, however we will continue to support all of our community as best we can.

We are very grateful to our Student Support Services team, all the Counsellors and our Director of Well-being who have supported all our students and staff with kindness and understanding throughout this challenging period.

Elementary School

We have a new team guiding us in Elementary as this year we implemented a new Leadership Model of a Elementary Principal, supported by two Assistant Principals who both work on the coordination of the IPC/EYP and the pastoral side of their part of Elementary.

The Elementary Goal was to “Utilise assessment for learning to “know thy impact” and improve growth and progress”. We have been looking at everything we do from the point of view of three essential questions:

- What will students learn?
- How will you know that they have learned?
- How will we use the feedback coming from students to teachers to improve learning?

Supporting Positive Behavior: Teachers were trained in strategies that allow them to identify, monitor and respond to student behavior. Information regarding the support provided under this structure was presented to parents during a Parent Information Meeting and included in the ES and EY Parent Handbook.

In the Early Years, Digital portfolios were launched with the use of Seesaw. Teachers are identifying and uploading evidence of learning that is associated with specific learning outcomes. Parents are able to view student work with the Seesaw Parent App.



Head of School reading to students (above);
Elementary students using IT in the classroom
(below)

In order to link the ES goal to our professional growth process, teachers engaged in a conversation with their line manager about the following questions after each walkthrough

- What were students learning?
- How did the lesson go and what were you doing to help students learn?
- If you had the opportunity to reteach the lesson, what (if anything) might you change?

The Milepost teams have reviewed current formative assessment practices and developed common assessments to be implemented in different content areas of the curriculum. In order to align curriculum and assessment practices, we have contracted Dr. Monica Medina-Olds, a literacy consultant to work with our Elementary staff over the next 3 years She started with an audit in the Elementary, which showed there was much to celebrate in terms of practice. She has also provided recommendations, including those related to collecting and utilising evidence of learning to improve student growth and progress and alignment of our curriculum.

Middle School

The Middle School goal this year has been to focus on the transition to MYP. Whilst this year the students and staff have continued with the IMYC curriculum, this will be discontinued from June 2022 and the MYP starts in September 2022. Our staff have all participated in the “implementation of the MYP” training, followed by subject specific courses. We have been focusing on the taught, written and assessed curriculum which involves utilising existing resources and introducing collaborative practices as staff work together in vertical and horizontal planning teams to draft this new curriculum.

The MYP also focuses on approaches to learning (ATT’s) skills which need to be incorporated into their unit planning. The final step will be to develop a community project as part of the MYP Service Learning expectation as we strengthen our links with the community.

Our students and parents will soon be getting their orientation and taster sessions and the MYP will be incorporated into the Grade 5 to 6 transition.

Our MYP Coordinator and Middle School Principal are working on the candidacy



Middle school students in Drama

process to ensure the school is ready for authorisation (to be completed by the end of year 1 of the MYP).

Staff have been very receptive and excited about this welcome change. Recruitment has also taken into consideration the need for experienced MYP teachers to join our faculty to support our current staff.

High School

In subject-specific departments, High School teachers have been discussing a series of guided questions relative to the High School annual goal:

- What do innovative assessments look like in your classroom/lessons?
- What new assessment strategy will you implement this academic year?
- How is technology incorporated into how students are assessed?
- How are students asked to be innovative in assessments?
- How are students taught/encouraged to manage their time in long-term projects?
- What role does reflection play in assessments?
- When/where are students encouraged to use creativity in assessments?
- What criteria based rubrics and/or standards are teachers using in assessments?
- How can I celebrate my students' assessment achievements with the school/wider community?

Our first year of the IBCP has provided us with 3 students who have engaged in in-depth discussions with guest-speakers from across the world of business. They have been working together with IBDP Business students (combining the BTEC Entrepreneurship & Enterprise with IBDP Business Management) in partnership with the Junior Achievement Young Enterprise (JAYE) where they develop their own business initiative. The CP students have also had hands-on experience applying cultural norms learned in Language Development Mandarin course. Current Grade 10's are already showing growing interest in this additional vocational course as an alternative to the IB Diploma.



IBDP students working in Science; IBCP student building a Chinese New Year decoration

Our Annual Community Survey (Nov 2021) has highlighted the improved satisfaction of our High School students and parents with the change in model of how we offer Guidance Counselling. As we now have a team of two, one member of staff for Social-emotional counselling (Ms Angela) and one for college counselling (Ms Curry).

IT Integration

In Feb 2021 the school invested in a Director of IT Integration lead-role. This has ensured that the IT department has moved from being purely tech support to a department that is embracing the needs of a 21st century EdTech institution. A lot of much needed behind-the-scenes work has been taking place upgrading our internal practices and procedures. This has included:

- Upgraded internet bandwidth
- IT infrastructure audit
 - Currently focused on upgrading from manual maintenance processes of around 250 individual devices to a modern Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution involving Azure AD/Intune. The impact of this will be considerable.
- Ensuring that our asset inventory system (GLPI) is used properly and is completely up to date, giving us a better understanding of the resources we have.
- Trialling of a new ticketing system (within GLPI) which will replace our antiquated and deprecated Spiceworks solution which only works on-campus.
- Began disaster recovery planning within the IT team
 - Currently implementing the first stage of a proper off-site backup process for our core systems
- Established a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with external partner on core network infrastructure.
- Development of a clear IT budget structure which permits long-term planning of all aspects of IT.
- Rolling out the use of iPads in the EYC which facilitated the integration of Seesaw into the programme. Delays in further rollout due to Apple's worldwide supply chain issues.
- Start of process of upgrading teacher laptops as oldest devices are now old. This opens up the potential to supply laptops to TAs & LSEs.
- Implementation of addition to office phone system that will permit integration with mobile phones, thus enabling clear separation of work/personal communications.
- Termination of the iSAMS project, to be replaced with the introduction of SchoolsBuddy, another component of the Faria suite (which includes ManageBac and OpenApply). Anticipated roll out date for August 2022.

- Building of Medical Centre solution which enables centralised record-keeping.
- Providing core support for the COVID contact tracing process.

In addition, the IT team has worked closely with EdTech “specialist” staff and the Leadership team to develop the IT Infrastructure strand of the strategic plan as we ensure we remain a 21st century facility that continues to efficiently and ably support 21st century innovative learning.

Marketing & Communications

The School continues to reach out to our community with regular posts celebrating our events, school activities and recruitment on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram profiles. Our digital school magazine, The Fort, is published three times a year. We have started exploring options for a new website as part of the next strategic plan.

Parent Information Meetings have been run via Zoom due to COVID restrictions, covering a variety of topics from “Understanding the IGCSE, Map testing to positive behaviour management”. Whilst the traditional, large-scale events remained impossible, we were able to run in-person Parent BBQ dinners for each year group, which gave our parents and staff a much needed opportunity to socialise. We look forward to more of these opportunities once COVID restrictions ease.



The Fort magazine, Issue 4: November 2019

Thank you from Head of School

Thank you to all of our community for their continued support throughout this academic year. Our parents have been tremendously understanding when adaptation was required due to COVID rules. Our students have built their resilience and continued to try and understand, reflect and learn during what continues to be a challenging time for young people to grow up.

Thank you to the wonderful VIS staff, we are very fortunate to have such a diverse staff who work with creativity and dedication. Our educators and our support staff all help provide a safe and thriving learning environment for all our students.

Financial Report

Ben Brown, Finance Chair

Financial Goal 2021-2022:

Offering quality education and upgrading facilities whilst retaining and recruiting quality VIS staff

In 2021-2022 the Finance Committee and HR Task Force carried out a salary review for all staff based on a benchmarking exercise to retain and recruit quality teachers within the international market (international school benchmarking) and Support Staff (local benchmarking). The new salaries will be implemented in Sep 2022.

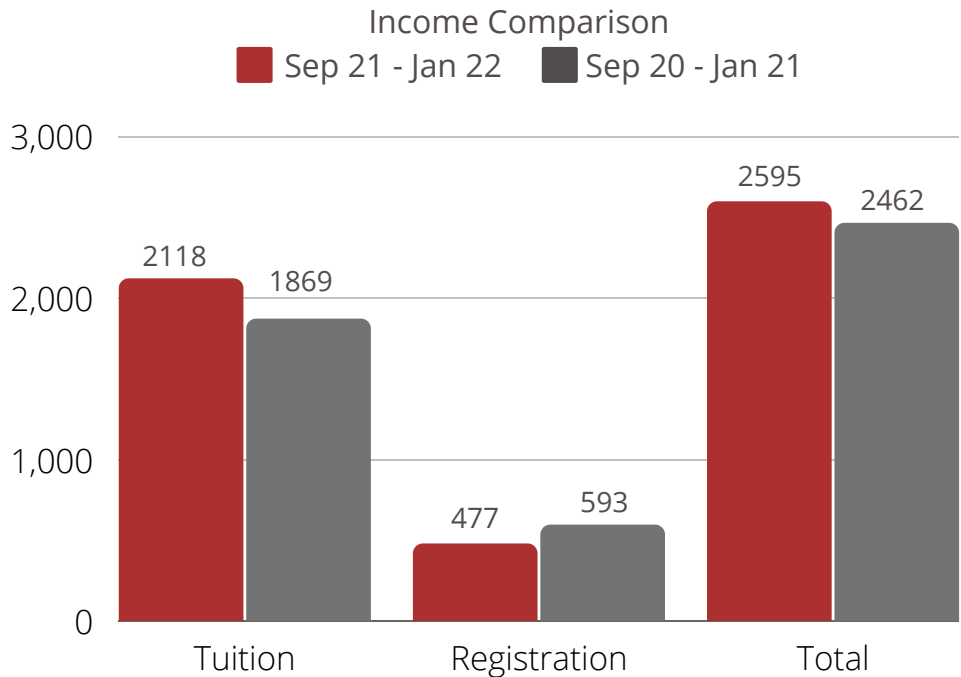


VIS staff team building event (left); Exterior photo of the Administration building (right)

Total Income

Between September 2021 - January 2022, total income marginally increased due to higher fee revenue on Sep 20 - Jan 2021. The current student paying population is 506.

Income for the period Sep 2021 - Jan 2022 €2,604,999



Tuition Income

Tuition income is up €249,000 on Sep 2020 - Jan 2021

Breakdown of tuition income

Elementary	€974,675
Middle School	€510,004
High School	€622,193
LSA Paying Fees	€49,088
Admin Fee	€12,864
Discounts	- €50,381

Registration Income

95 registrations were received including 60% at elementary level

Number of students registered (Sep 21 - Jan 22)

Elementary	57
Middle School	21
High School	17

Registration income (Sep 21 - Jan 22) & other income

Registration	€477,000
Boarding	€1,700
Suspense Account	€13,000
Other	€7,500

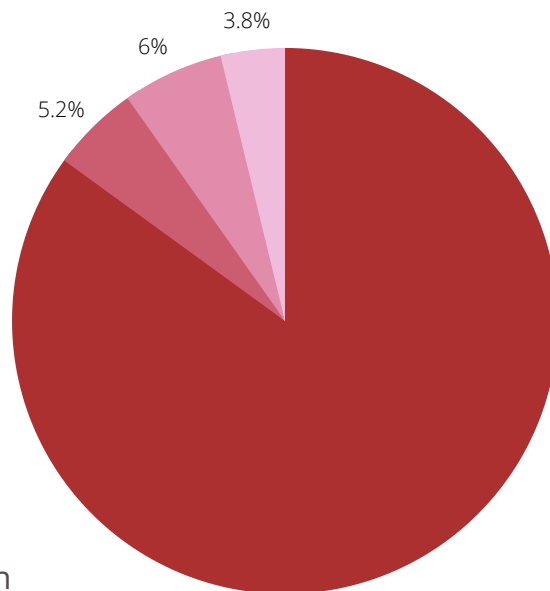
Costs

Costs for the period Sep 2021 - Jan 2022 €2.111 million

(compared to the previous year, we saw a decrease of €48,000 from €2.156 million)

Breakdown of costs

- HR Costs
- Teaching Related
- Day to Day
- Site Up Keep



Staff Remuneration €1.722 million

(this is an increase of €60,000 on the previous period)

Non Salary Costs

Professional Development	€30,000
Staff Recruitment & Re-Allocation	€41,000

Projected Financials August 2022

Income

Projected

Total Income	€5.1 million
Tuition	€4.6 million
Registration	€487,000
Other	€45,000

Budget

Total Income	€5.1 million
Tuition	€4.5 million
Registration	€565,000

Expenditure

Projected

Total Expenditure	€5.1 million
Staff	€4 million
Teaching Resources	€220,000
Educational Programmes	€150,000

Budget

Total Expenditure	€5.1 million
Staff	€4 million
Teaching Resources	€230,000
Educational Programmes	€150,000

Surplus

Projected

Total Profit	€25,000
Depreciation	€75,000

Budget

Total Profit	€33,000
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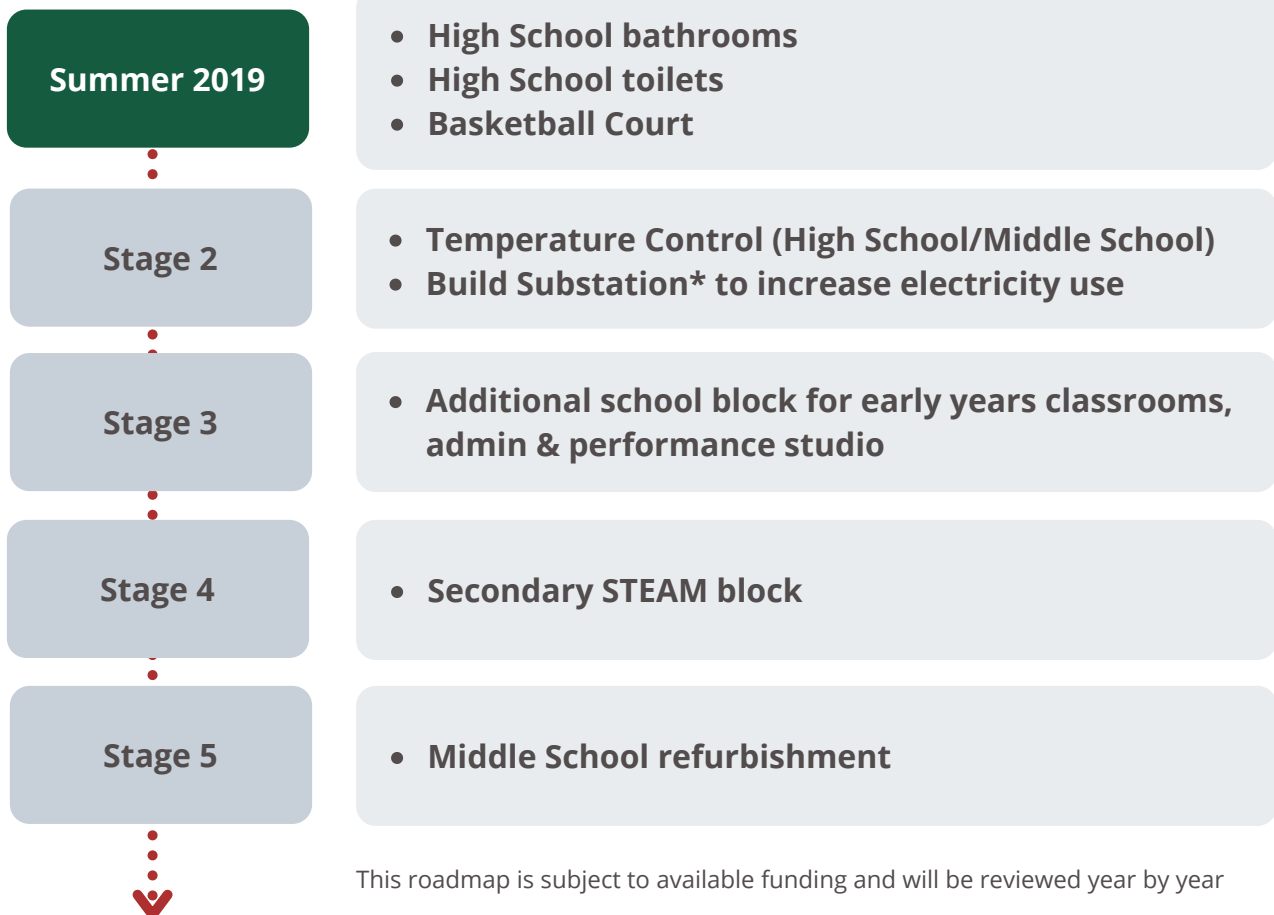
Please visit the [VIS Portal](#) for the full Auditor's Report (2020-2021)

Facilities Masterplan

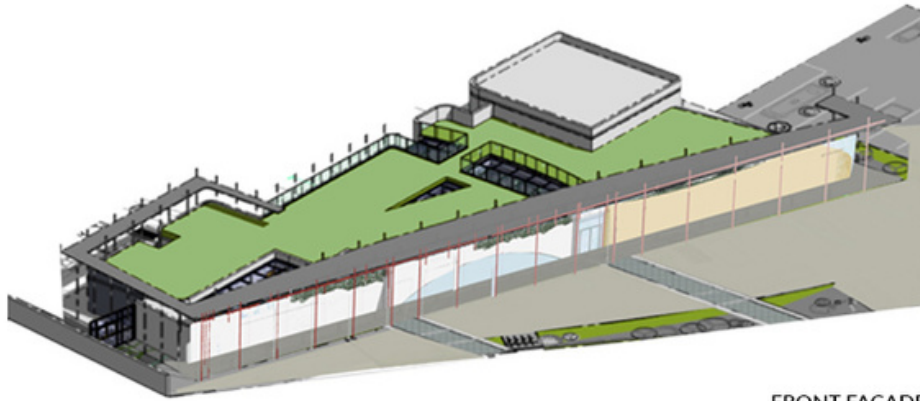
Goal:

We are committed to offering quality education through a Facilities School Improvement plan that builds & improves our Educational Environment.

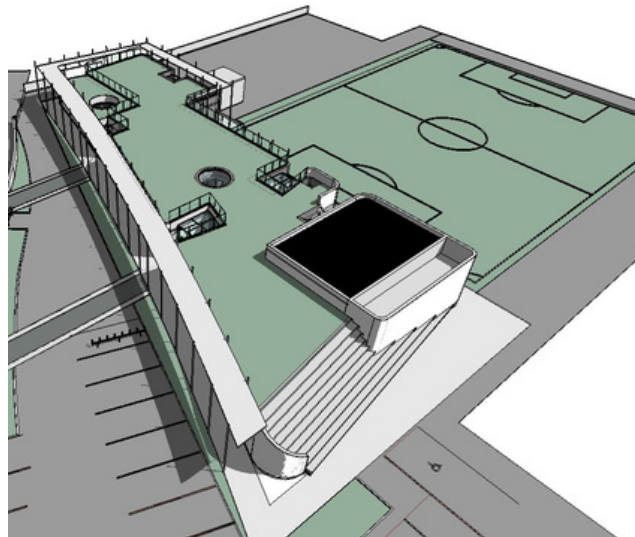
Facilities Roadmap



Site maps of Facilities School Improvement plan:



FRONT FACADE



Statute Review

The Statute is the legal document which underpins the School's governance and enables it to exist in Malta as a non-profit Foundation.

This year the Governance Committee was given the remit by the AGM 2021 and the Board of Directors to review the School's Statute. The Statute was written decades ago when the School was much smaller and technology was very different. It was widely understood that any changes to the wording of the Statute required approval from at least 75% of all Foundation Members who were resident in Malta. This made it un-amendable - despite containing typos, obvious errors and becoming increasingly outdated.

Following a process started in 2019, a motion was presented at the 2021 AGM to adjust the interpretation of Statute Clause 8: Amendments to the Statute. The AGM passed this motion, making it possible, for the first time, to amend the Statute, within clear and robust guidelines. Over the past year, the Governance Committee has worked closely with the School's lawyers to develop proposals to ensure the Statute is fit for the 21st century, in line with Maltese law, and that it reflects the School's values and good governance practices.

At the 2022 AGM the Board will present and seek agreement to proposals for ring-fencing & amending parts of the current Statute.

Following substantial consultation with the School's lawyers and the Malta Business Registry, the Board will propose:

- to ring-fence four parts of the Statute. These reflect the commitments made at the 2021 AGM to protect these elements from further change:
 1. Clause 4: the General Meeting and the Board of Directors as the Foundation's two main bodies
 2. Clause 6i a & b: a General Meeting to be held at least once a year

3. Clause 9iii: Board of Directors to be answerable to the General Meeting;
4. Clause 9vi a & b: one Board Director from Government of Malta and one from Government of the United States of America.

- a comprehensive first tranche of amendments. They fall into broadly three areas:
 1. *typos and outdated language*: amending these will professionalise the Statute and bring its language into the 21st century (e.g. Headmaster → Head of School).
 2. *legal requirements and best practice*: these constitute the majority of proposed amendments and additions. They will bring the Statute in line with current Maltese law and best practice for non-profit Foundations.
 3. *policy*: the top priority elements of the Statute we would like to change - including extending membership of the Foundation to all employees (currently only full-time professional staff are considered members, which we find discriminatory and not reflective of the School's inclusive approach and values); replacing proxy voting with extended electronic voting; and formalising the ability to hold meetings (AGM, Board meetings) - virtually.

Following a successful community vote on these proposals, the Governance Committee will consider whether any final amendments are needed. The process will again be carried out with openness, transparency and with clear communication throughout with the community. Any further proposals will be presented at the 2023 AGM. This will then conclude the two-year Statute Review.

VIS Educational Philosophy

At VIS, we aim to:

- Prepare our students to be ready for tomorrow's world by encouraging learning through inspirational education using 21st century learning methods
- Create a unique environment where each student can grow and discover their true potential
- Promote an enquiring mind with a thirst for knowledge
- Embrace diversity in our multicultural society

We trust that a caring inclusive community will help build a sense of self-worth and a profound respect for others.



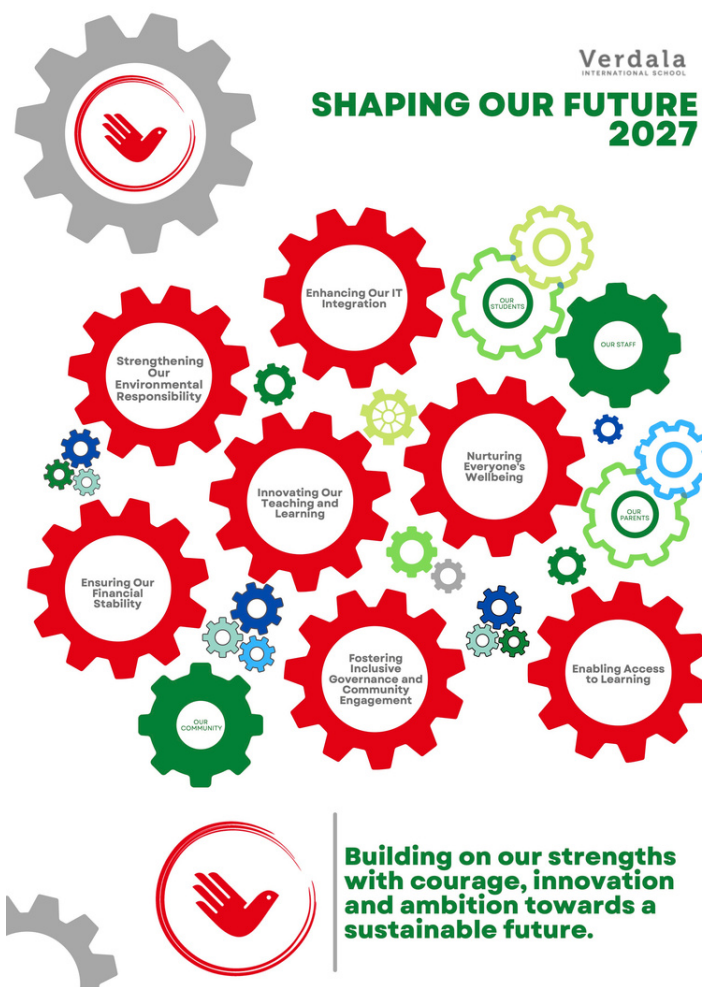
VIS teacher advising their student (above);
Drama students performing to an audience (below)

Strategic Plan 2022-2027

The Board and Leadership Team have worked collaboratively with focus groups from across the community to develop a future vision for the School.

In “Building on our strengths with courage, innovation and ambition towards a sustainable future” we are consolidating the efforts and successes of the past while forging an exciting path forwards. Students, staff, parents and Board sub-committees have helped to form the seven strands of this Strategic Plan, with clear objectives, actions and performance indicators.

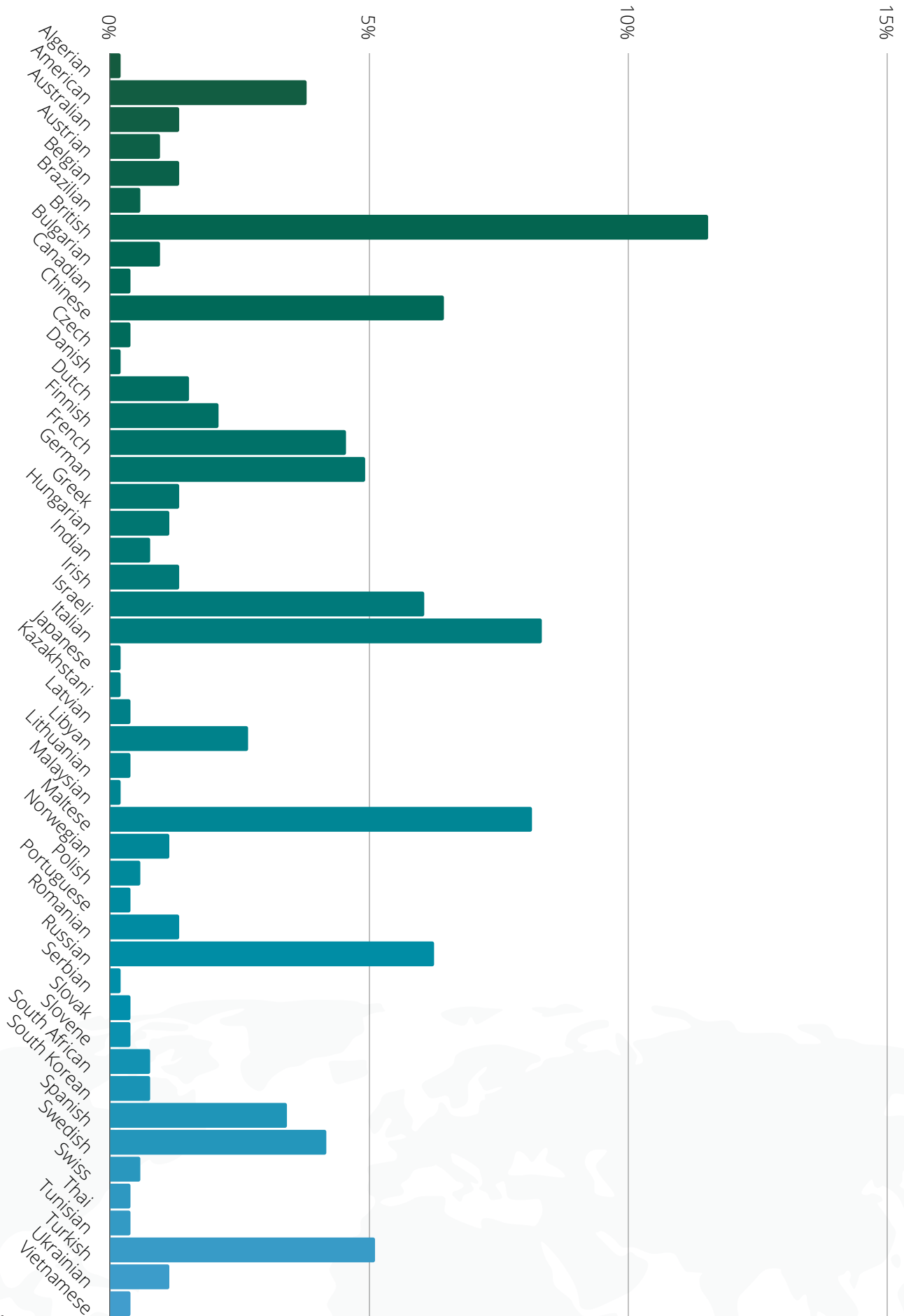
The Strategic Plan has been budgeted for and will be rolled out over the next five years (2022-27). By continuing to invest in our staff and school, innovate our teaching and learning, intensify our environmental focus, and engage our community, we can enhance what we offer and honour our vision to be the international school of choice, celebrating diversity, empowering and inspiring future generations.



Shaping our Future 2027
View the Strategic Plan objectives [here](#)

Appendix: Student Nationalities

2021-2022 student cohort data (54 nationalities; 529 students)





Verdala
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



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