

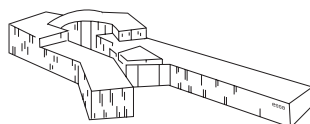
Ikram Alchane, Jordan Turner and Sarah Towers are teachers at Essa Academy.

## Three teachers, one opinion – Essa Academy is a great school for teachers who want to do a great job

### A learning curve

It is fair to say that Essa Academy, where she teaches Arabic on the One World programme, is a very different school to any in which Ikram Alchane has previously taught. "Coming from schools which used the conventional National Curriculum and where I was constantly surrounded by books, paperwork and files, I was both daunted and fascinated by what I found at Essa," she says. "In fact, everything about it was new to me, including Apple technology, so it was a relief to find that my colleagues were all extremely supportive and understanding in my early days. Although it was all a big learning curve for me, their reassurance proved right and now I am very enthusiastic about how Essa is educating its students."

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## Promoting confidence and maturity

Also very new to Ikram was the open-plan and minimalistic layout of the Academy buildings and at first she felt this could be distracting. However, she can now appreciate the advantages of the design: "This is a good way to promote positive behaviour, and as the lessons themselves are presented more as coaching sessions, students learn very early to self-regulate. It really helps to instil maturity and confidence and I believe the overall approach at Essa to be a very valuable complement to traditional teaching methods."

## Vibrant, friendly and enthusiastic

As far as Jordan Turner is concerned he could not have a more ideal first job, having qualified last year as a science teacher. "While I was on placement at Essa Academy I was very taken with the school's ethos and hoped very much to be offered a permanent position, which is what happened. Since I started here my good opinion of the school has only increased; it is the most vibrant, friendly and enthusiastic setting I have experienced and exactly the type of place I wanted to teach in."

## Ambition to inspire

Jordan's ambition is to inspire his students in his own speciality of science: "For me, this job is all about the students," he explains. "I want to help them achieve and to make a real difference. One thing which most impresses me about Essa Academy is the huge level of support for the teaching staff and this has helped me greatly to develop in my role. The weekly staff training sessions not only make it easy to get to know my colleagues well but to learn more about their own areas of expertise, and I have myself been able to make a contribution through my knowledge and experience in the field of Learning Technologies."



## Career development

For these reasons and more, Jordan is convinced that Essa Academy is exactly the right school for him. "Just as Essa is giving students opportunities and life skills they would not find elsewhere, it is also dedicated to the career development of its teaching staff. This is without doubt an excellent setting for a new teacher and one I am proud to be a part of."

## Exciting opportunities

Sarah Towers is amongst the longest-serving members of the staff, having taught at Essa since its inception as an Academy and for five years before that, in its previous incarnation. The change was, she says, an exciting opportunity for her to capitalise on her science and IT background. "It was fantastic to move into the modern, purpose-built environment with excellent resources and facilities. The much bigger open teaching spaces offer a lot more flexibility, so that a group of up to sixty students can work together with a number of teachers on different projects at the same time; I believe this really helps to keep their interest and to stimulate them, and we are very fortunate that we have a fabulous set of students whose enthusiasm for learning keeps us on our toes!"

## Passion for teaching

The friendly atmosphere is, says Sarah, one of the best aspects of Essa Academy, with staff passionate about their work and supportive of one another as well as the students. "There is a real sense of community and it is a caring environment where everyone is keen to work closely together and there's always someone to make you smile if you need it. I have worked in education for a long time but Essa Academy is definitely keeping my enthusiasm for teaching fresh and very enjoyable."

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