



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection Report

Dubai Heights Academy

Dubai

United Arab Emirates

Date **6th - 8th February 2023**
Inspection number **20230206**

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding, where appropriate); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, over 50 lesson observations took place and most teachers were observed. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with senior staff, teachers, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over two and a half days.

The lead inspector was Nicola Walsh. The team member was Anna Stuart.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

This developing school offers first class facilities where all pupils feel valued and cared for. The curriculum is rich, varied and imaginative. Teachers make good use of the wide range of resources. There is a growing and ambitious sense of confidence amongst the whole school community: parents are very supportive of the school. Pupils are articulate and willing to express how they feel and enjoy learning. Amongst staff and pupils there is a happy welcoming tone, and no one is excluded from the wide range of activities that the school offers. Such that, this school demonstrates an exceptional commitment to promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including:

- Leaders and governors have a clear vision and are fully committed towards achieving excellence in all respects.
- Strong senior leadership team, led by a highly experienced principal and vice principal, who are highly reflective and have taken effective action to ensure sustainable improvements over time.
- The school promotes every aspect of a pupil's development through a broad range of extra-curricular provision.
- All pupils receive an outstanding level of care, guidance and support.
- Inspirational design features of the schools' accommodation and outdoor premises promotes learning beyond the classroom environment.
- Students' progress in English, mathematics and science across all phases, which is particularly strong for pupils with unique needs.
- The school benefits from an excellent administrative and support team.
- Robust systems are in place to support the development of teaching, assessment and learning
- Partnerships with parents are highly effective and there is a welcoming community ethos.
- Pupils enjoy many opportunities to hold positions of responsibility and take the initiative on whole school events.
- Strong relationships at all levels enable new pupils to settle quickly into established classes.
- Exemplary behaviour, high levels of empathy and respect towards others is evident across the school.

3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following development points:

- i. Further improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards in outcomes for pupils in writing, in all subjects.
- ii. Develop the use of assessment across the school to support teaching and learning even more.
- iii. Within the curriculum, embed opportunities for pupils to become more independent, self-reliant and curious learners.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Dubai heights Academy				
Address	Al Barsha 2, Dubai, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	+97143563333				
Website Address	www.dubaiheightsacademy.com				
Key Email Address	reception@dubaiheightsacademy.com				
Headteacher/Principal	Ms Alison Lamb				
Chair of board/ Proprietor	Mr. Mahabir Singhal				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	326	Boys	171	Girls	155
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	31	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	91	<i>17-18 years</i>	1	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	203	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

The school opened in 2017 with 40 pupils. Since then, the school has grown and now provides education for 325 pupils. A majority (56%) speak a language other than English at home and they represent over 58 different nationalities. The school continues to grow: a large minority of pupils (36%) join during this academic year. 78% of students have not yet completed 3 years at the school and 62% less than 2 years. Only 22% of students have been at the school for 3 or more years.

The school is fully inclusive and 28% of pupils on roll are pupils with special educational needs.

The school's staff are trained and well equipped to teach the curriculums offered. All staff who deliver the ENC have UK qualifications and Arabic staff meet ministry requirements. The school's principal has been in the role since 2019; the vice principal and head of secondary joined the school in January 2020. They led the school successfully through the COVID pandemic.

The *Which School Advisor* website recognised the school as 'Best School For Most Outstanding Response To Covid-19 by a school in the UAE'. It was also a finalist for *Top School Award for Best New School in the UAE 2015-2021*, *Best Mainstream School for Children of Determination 2021-2022* and *Best Architecture, Environment, Design and Sustainability in a UAE School 2021-2022*.

4.1 British nature of the school

The school's ethos and approach to education is recognisably British. It has a strong British 'feel' and appearance, whilst celebrating its own identity as an international school with a diverse population.

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum (ENC) the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the ASDAN programme adapted to meet local requirements.
- The school's leadership team are British.
- The school has a large majority of teachers with UK qualifications and experience of teaching in English national curriculum schools.
- A board of governors replicates the structure of a UK board of governors.
- The academic calendar replicates that of a British school
- Performance management and staff target setting follow a similar approach to many British schools.
- The school is fully inclusive.
- The school promotes British values through the school's curriculum, ethos, displays and events.
- The school is well resourced in materials and assessments that are in use in English curriculum schools.
- The school's rewards system reflects those used in English schools.
- The school is a member of British Schools in the Middle East (BSME).

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school.

The quality of education provided is good and meets the standard required for BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets the standard required for BSO.

The school provides a good quality of education through the delivery of the English national curriculum (ENC) and the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS), adapted to meet UAE ministry requirements. The school is fully inclusive and offers an additional ASDAN curriculum to meet the needs of pupils of determination in Key Stage (KS) 3. The ENC is delivered through a middle school approach to pupils in KS2 and 3.

The EYFS curriculum is based around the 7 areas of learning. Linked to the topic, teachers create rich and stimulating learning experiences, such as making 'bugs' from natural resources to develop pupils' expressive art and design, farm shop role plays to develop pupils' language skills, and insect exploration at the investigation station.

Pupils in EYFS and KS1 are taught in ability groups for phonics and mixed ability groups for all other ENC subject areas. Phonics progression is ensured through consistent, and well-established approaches following a UK DfE approved scheme. Visual prompts, displays and sound mats are evident in independent writing areas, supporting pupils to implement their phonics learning. Phonics intervention groups are continued into KS2 if there is a required need.

Pupils in year 1, build on their learning in EYFS. Through continuous provision, pupils are provided with opportunities to complete different challenges. These are linked to the weekly learning objectives and pupils are awarded a sticker for each completed challenge.

The KS3 curriculum is broad. Specialist teachers deliver ICT, French, music, art, design and technology, PE and swimming. Arabic language teachers deliver the ministry curriculum, which includes moral, social and cultural studies, Arabic and Islamic education. Arabic is taught from FS1, and in ability groups for pupils in year 2 to year 6. French is taught to pupils from year 1 to year 9. Pupils may bring their own device to support their learning in KS1. Pupils from year 3 onwards use school laptops. The school has many online learning apps that are used by all the pupils to broaden the curriculum and motivate learners at a variety of levels.

In response to a recent curriculum review, senior leaders implemented a published curriculum based on the ENC for primary pupils. This sequences knowledge across all ENC areas and is based upon recent research on how pupils learn best. This curriculum engages pupils through memorable experiences to 'hook' pupils into a new topic. Year 2 pupils visited the beach for their topic 'beachcombers', FS1 visited the local park for their topic 'the scented garden.' For a year 3 dinosaur topic, teachers created a scene including dinosaur eggs and footprints for pupils to discover. Maths follows a progressive published scheme of work, applying methods and approaches used in the UK. It builds upon previous learning and delivers curriculum objectives in a sequential approach.

To promote reading a timetabled weekly library session and online library enables pupils to access a wide range of books. The school uses a reading scheme from year 2 to year 9 that develops fluency and understanding through engaging quizzes and activities. An online digital reading programme further supports vocabulary understanding and ensures pupils make progress. To embed language and literacy skills drama and role play are included in music and English lessons. Reading intervention groups ensure pupils make progress in reading. As a result, standards in reading are high and pupils enjoy sharing books and talking about what they read. Where required English language learners (ELL) and pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are exempt from Arabic until they are at a proficient level in English.

A PHSE curriculum is provided through the learning skills programme which includes topics on cultural awareness, citizenship, leadership, responsibility and global and environmental awareness. These are further embedded in whole school events and assemblies. The moral, social and cultural (MSC) studies curriculum also broadens pupil's understandings of cultures different from their own. In year 6 pupils compared a city from ancient times with a city of today. Displays within the moral studies classroom evidenced pupils working on challenging topics regarding different cultural expectations over time and economies of different regions. For pupils who do not attend Islamic education a social learning and innovations (SLI) sessions is timetabled. During these sessions pupils learn about citizenship, national and global issues, develop personal and social skills including cooking, and about learning and innovation.

The curriculum is enhanced by a broad offer of extra-curricular activities, including robotics, karate, food tech, outdoor games, circuit training and coding. These are well attended. Pupils contribute ideas to the extra-curricular activities so that after-school activities enable pupils to be aspirational and develop talents in areas they have an interest.

The school offers for pupils with special education needs in KS3, a bespoke SLI programme that rewards pupils when they achieve developmental milestones, such

as meal preparation and cooking. The ASDAN courses are accredited and celebrate the achievements that individual pupils make. Pupils following this course of study as an alternative to the ENC learn how to use money, buy furniture and follow courses that are very closely related to their own interests, such as photography or ICT. In addition to this full-time course, pupils have access to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy as part of the school's curriculum offer. Makaton is used throughout the school and each week a new sign is introduced to all pupils.

Invited speakers to the school guide pupils with their career choices. As the current year 9 pupils are the oldest, they are about to participate in the school's first option choices evening. This is in preparation for their transition into KS4 and iGCSE courses.

DHA will expand to KS4 in the 2023/2024 academic year.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good.

Across the school teachers plan lessons that are structured and use time well. Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils. The level of care and support is evident in lessons and teachers manage the behaviour of pupils very well. Talk is used widely across the school so that pupils learn to become confident and articulate speakers.

In EYFS teachers plan a variety of activities linked to the topic and early learning goals. Where teachers keep whole class carpet time short, pupils are quick to engage with the activities and enjoy learning. EYFS teachers use resources very creatively to engage pupils. In a FS2 Maths lesson, a treasure box with jewels was used to help the pupils embed addition. These resources were then left for pupils to use independently. Artefacts from the UAE and UK were used to support learning, such as pictures of famous landmarks in the construction area for pupils to recreate. As part of their 'scented garden' topic, FS1 had natural resources and pictures of bugs to provide opportunities for children to create their own minibeasts. However, opportunities, particularly outdoors, to lead their own learning journeys, are being developed and should enable pupils to show higher levels of curiosity and thinking.

EYFS teachers assess pupils using the early learning goals and a phonics scheme. Although this is in place there are plans to improve the accuracy of judgements through closer attention to moderation of teacher's judgements. Most pupils attain a good level of development by the end of EYFS with strengths in expressive arts and design. The school is aware that physical development and writing are areas for development.

Teachers in KS1 follow ENC objectives and plan tasks that engage pupils. They use a published reading scheme and phonics scheme which is enabling teachers to plan tasks that are very well matched to pupil's abilities. Most pupils were working in line with the standards expected in phonics.

In KS2 and KS3 teachers use their subject knowledge to set tasks that engage pupils. Learning environments are tidy and have attractive wall displays. Pupils' opportunities to work independently are being developed with more support materials, stimulating displays, artefacts and books in classrooms. Teachers plan using the interactive whiteboard (IWB) which meets the needs of most pupils. This whole class approach is most effective with the oldest pupils in KS2 and 3, where pupils ask considered questions and interact with the teacher. When tasks are more active such as in music and PE, pupils are more purposefully engaged.

Across primary subject's pupils are offered different levels of 'chilli' challenge in every subject. In KS3 different levels of challenge are termed bronze silver gold or platinum where it is used well by pupils to self-determine the level of challenge they will achieve. For example, one KS3 pupil commented that the challenges 'help to keep me motivated and focussed. I always aspire to achieve the platinum challenge.' In some primary classes, pupils are still working on their understanding of what they are expected to do. Language used by teachers to define the challenge is being developed. As a result, the use of the chilli challenge is not yet fully embedded across the primary school. Where teachers were able to use it successfully, pupils start work with the appropriate challenge.

Specialist teaching in KS3 is highly effective as teachers have small groups of pupils who are keen to learn and make progress. Teachers engage pupils with competitive tasks and relevant stimulating topics. Pupils in year 8 read an extract from The Guardian newspaper about a footballer. This motivated pupils and broadened pupil's knowledge of world affairs. Teachers plan tasks referencing cognitive ability test results, this consideration of pupil's abilities ensures teachers are considering the level of challenge to give pupils and where to target support. A year 9 first language Arabic lesson had 3 different tasks set for pupils of different abilities. This close attention to pupils' levels of attainment and what they need to learn to do next, strongly supported progress for all pupils in this lesson. A year 9 history lesson on the suffragette movement in the UK had clear definitions of success criteria and pupils chose a level at which to succeed.

Teachers of pupils of determination and pupils who are identified by the school as having additional needs (AEN) are highly effective. In these sessions learning is personalised to each individual pupil. Teachers know pupil's strengths and areas to develop, and tasks are very closely matched. Teaching assistants are utilised extremely well to guide and motivate pupils often in small groups following tasks set by the teacher. Teachers feedback through verbal comments and marking is very effective and motivating.

Teachers assess pupils using a mixture of assessing against the curriculum objectives, teacher judgements and summative testing. Teachers also assess pupils work in their exercise books. In primary pupils' workbooks a greater focus by teachers on standards in presentation may result in pupils showing increased pride in their work. Overall, the school's wealth of internal assessment data indicates a more positive outcome than the external data. Pupils attain in line with UK standards at the end of KS1, but this declines over KS2 as a large minority of new pupils join KS2 classes and take time to settle. Low pupil numbers in KS3 cohorts impact significantly on the reliability and validity of the data. Pupils of determination make exceptional progress and this can be seen in their work and in lessons.

Parents and pupils expressed that the teachers know each pupil's strengths and areas for improvement. One pupil commented that teachers 'don't compare you, they know everyone has their strengths.' All staff are valued, whatever their role. Everyone greets each other and pupils demonstrate good manners as they move around the school. In lessons pupils collaborate, take part in debates and listen to each other. This was evidenced during a KS3 English lesson where children researched and discussed the salaries of UK careers, debating whether it was right for footballers to receive higher salaries.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.

The school's strong community ethos is valued amongst pupils, parents and staff. Relationships are excellent and everyone is proud to be part of the school. Parents comment that 'being greeted every morning with a smile, and using our names makes us feel that they (staff) really know us and care for our children.' Pupils are confident and articulate, demonstrating high levels of self-esteem and self-knowledge, especially in KS2 and KS3.

Pupils from year 2 to year 9 develop their awareness and understanding of social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects through the moral, social and cultural studies (MSCS) curriculum. This includes opportunities for the children to take part in debates, plan projects, work towards economic wellbeing and develop an understanding of local and global cultures. Whilst there is no set curriculum for PSHE, it is woven into all areas of the curriculum throughout the school. This includes, assemblies, wide ranging extra-curricular activities and enrichment days, school trips and residential opportunities from year 4 to year 9. Opportunities to take part in charity and community projects, such as Ramadan Gallery and National Day activities, develop pupil's empathy, tolerance and respect. Other examples include Ramadan projects to provide workers with gifts and pupils taking donations from the school to the autism centre. The school council then lead a presentation on how the money was distributed, encouraging empathy for others.

On the playground pupils play cooperatively together and friendship buddies are available to support those struggling to join in. Pupils' efforts to demonstrate these values are visibly encouraged and recognised through rewards, such as house points, star of the week, PE and swimming stars. Pupils are keen to explain their project work on mental health and well-being. A year 5 pupil shared her event planning project and offered to share a video that another pupil had created. Opportunities are also given for pupils to share achievements gained outside of school through celebration assemblies and via the weekly newsletter. Children from year 3 to year 9 regularly perform in assemblies as well as during events such as the winter concert and Peace Day concert. These opportunities contribute positively towards pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

The school actively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. Through the work of the school council ideas for Emirates Day activities are elected by the student body to promote democracy. The school council meet weekly and influence events that take place in the school. Pupils learn tolerance, empathy and respect at an early age due to the strong inclusive ethos across the school where everyone can participate.

In KS2 and KS3, additional leadership responsibilities are available for pupils to apply for. Pupils reported that they elect peers to positions of responsibility because they are 'the best person for the job, not just for our friend or someone who offers free ice creams.' These include library monitors, Emirati and Muslim leaders, unified champions and school ambassadors. Pupils explained that they use the job description to create a video or write an email to apply to the principal and vice principal. At the time of the inspection pupils were developing a stationery shop for use by pupils and parents. They had created a business plan and were about to appoint pupils to roles within the shop. Pupils had to sign up to take part and included pupils with additional learning needs.

An extensive events calendar is mapped out at the start of each academic year. This includes cultural, faith and social events such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and a winter concert. These enable pupils to be respectful and learn about people with different faiths and beliefs. The school shares local events such as Emirates Day, Peace Day and Ramadan, as well as significant British events such as The Queen's platinum Jubilee. The school closed early on the day of Queen Elizabeth's funeral and gave pupils and staff the option to watch the funeral together. Global events are presented sensitively in form tutor time at age-appropriate levels.

Throughout the curriculum and school environment there are opportunities for the pupils to learn about the culture and history of both the UAE and Britain. The school observes both Remembrance Day and Commemoration Day. In the early years classrooms significant landmarks of both countries are displayed in the construction areas as building ideas. Pictures of the British monarchy and castles are used to support art and history topics. During a year 3 humanities lesson, pupils were learning about British chocolate production from field to shop floor as part of their Scrumdiddlyumptious topic. A picture of the British prime minister was displayed to prompt a discussion about tax and profit. The teacher took great care not to give political opinions and ensured there was a balanced debate around the issue.

Pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong and are given opportunities to debate moral and ethical questions through moral, social and cultural studies. Whilst pupils reported that behaviour is good throughout the school, they feel that making everyone aware of the newly introduced behaviour pathways would improve consistency of behaviour overall.

7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for welfare, health and safety is excellent.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety is embedded across the school. All stakeholders are committed to the school's motto, 'We respect the rights of every child, every mind and everybody.' This is displayed in every classroom and is visible throughout the school.

Parents have full confidence in the school's procedures for the welfare, health and safety of their children. Pupils reported that they feel safe in school. Rigorous safeguarding procedures and policies are in place and implemented by all staff. Annual training sessions ensure staff remain updated and staff who join the school mid-way through the school year receive training. Two members of staff are level three trained, and they ensure that training is completed, and procedures followed.

Staff are also trained to use firefighting equipment and are first aid trained. The school ensures that staff who are trained most recently are allocated to sections of the school so that there is full coverage of the school. This is part of the school's risk assessment process.

Fortnightly walks around the school by the facilities manager and health and safety officer ensure actions are followed through where issues may have been raised. The facilities manager completes daily checks. All utilities are serviced and checked annually by external authorities, such as gas burners in the science laboratories and electrical supplies. Every 3 months the firefighting equipment is checked and serviced by an external provider. Fire drills take place termly and the schools records indicate that the school can be fully evacuated in less than 3 minutes. Evacuation chairs are sited in upper floors to ensure persons with restricted mobility can be evacuated quickly. The school is fogged as required to remove mosquitoes.

A well-equipped clinic with a full-time qualified nurse and part time doctor onsite supports the medical needs of the school community. Grab bags are prepared for offsite trips, first aid boxes and defibrillators are sited around the school. Pupils with significant medical needs have a health care plan in place and this is implemented by the school nurse. The school nurse has led workshops on healthy sleep, breast cancer awareness, and supported pupils' understanding of changes in their bodies, this within the requirements of the UAE and sensitivities to parents requests. A school clinic service provider presented workshops with parents and pupils. The school enforces a strict no nut policy.

Risk assessments are in place for school events such as off-site trips. They are also in place for individual pupils who have a higher level of risk. These risk assessments ensure needs can be assessed particularly where medical and evacuation needs are significant. Storage of chemicals in science laboratories is appropriate. Firefighting equipment in areas of higher risk such as science laboratories, the school café, and kitchens must be visible to all users. As the

pupil number on roll expands into using all areas of the school's purpose-built accommodation, all staff must be vigilant to ensure no areas are overlooked.

Portable drinking water stations are sited around the school and pupils bring packed lunches into school. A new school café had recently opened, and pupils can order lunch packs instead of bringing food in from home. Physical education and swimming lessons are timetabled for 50 minutes weekly for all pupils. This promotes an active lifestyle amongst pupils. Displays of school teams celebrated team efforts in football and a variety of sports.

A school counsellor actively supports pupils in school. Sessions are timetabled to support pupils with issues such as anxiety, self-esteem or managing emotions. The school counsellor is also available for parents, and this was valued by parents especially during the pandemic. A well-being team meet with all pupils in small group sessions, termly. Worry boxes are located around the school for pupils to raise concerns. Annual surveys to gather the views of parents and pupils. This enables the school's wellbeing team and counsellor to monitor and review provision related to the needs of the school population.

Through considered actions the school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for diversity and inclusion. A vast array of enrichment events including 'This Is Me Day' held on the last Friday of each month enables pupils to celebrate together when pupils have achieved a significant milestone in their development. Other days celebrate and promote the use of braille, Inclusion Superhero Day, World Downs Syndrome Day, Cerebral palsy day and World Dyslexia day enable pupils to understand how people are different.

During the inspection visit Unified Champions announced a well-being activity every morning for mental health week. This gave all pupils and staff the opportunity to stop and reflect for a few minutes each day to do breathing exercises, exercise and employ other mindfulness strategies. There was also an opportunity of pupils to participate in painting a buddy bench for the playground as part of mental health week.

Antibullying week is used to promote the message that bullying is not tolerated. Workshops for pupils and parents have taken place so that there is a strong understanding of what bullying is and can be easily identified. The school are very proactive when issues arise and deal with them swiftly and effectively, supporting specific individuals, or year groups if this is required. A behaviour log is in place and recoded on the school's online management system. Currently teachers know the pupils very well and consequences for misbehaviour are well matched, impactful and age appropriate.

Although pupils' attendance is not yet meeting UK standards the school has worked hard to promote good attendance amongst parents. As a result, a 3 part warning system and the prompt issue of letters to repeat offenders are beginning to have an impact. The parent handbook also stresses the importance of good attendance and arriving in school on time. The school's administration team are vigilant in contacting parents on the first day of absence.

8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

All members of staff undergo appropriate checks to ensure their suitability for the role when they are appointed to the school. This includes staff hired locally and those recruited from overseas. Identity, medical, qualifications and police check, or DBS checks and references were in place for all staff appointed to the school and recorded on a single central register (SCR). This includes teachers, administration staff, and teaching assistants. There are no volunteers or supply staff used by the school. Details of contractors such as bus nannies, cleaners and security guards who work at the school are also stored on the school's central record, they are expected to supply a passport copy, VISA police clearance, qualifications relative to the role, and a safeguarding training certificate. However, all staff employed by the school must first seek approval from the authorities.

Staff details are held in individual files held by the HR manager in the school. All information is stored securely and confidentially. However, details regarding staff who have left the school and members of the governing body must be added as a separate tab on the single central record to ensure full compliance.

The school's proprietor is a member of the governing body and fully involved in supporting the school. The governing body and proprietor are fully aware of their role in ensuring suitability of staff and keeping children safe.

Staff who are recruited locally must undergo the same checks as expatriate staff regarding identification checks, police checks, medical, qualifications and references. A disclaimer letter for local staff is sought from the previous place of work in line with ministry requirements.

Qualifications are checked by the ministry and attested for overseas staff. Three references, one from the most recent place of work, are sought from an organisational email, which are followed up by the school by telephone if required. VISA details are stored centrally on the single central record for all staff. The school may also complete social media searches to ensure that all staff are suited to work with children. Advertisements of job vacancies promote safer recruitment practices. The school places adverts on corporate websites. The interview panel are all safer recruitment trained and procedures include a question to check on a person's suitability for the role.

Induction processes are thorough. New staff are presented with a staff handbook, whistle blowing policy, code of conduct and are safeguarding trained before they can commence work at the school. A period of induction ensures staff are fully understanding of the school's child protection policy, the host country requirements and procedures at the school. A probationary period is supported by regular meetings and a probation tracker. This has 16

parameters which gives clear benchmarks around the expectations of the school and is useful as a starting point to support staff new to the school.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation of the school meets the standards for BSO and is excellent. The school's buildings and outdoor shared areas are exemplary in many respects. A large reception area welcomes visitors into the school and has the school's mission statement visually displayed. A communal coffee shop has recently been added to this area. Central stairs allow access to the upper floor and a lift can be accessed from the reception area.

The school's premises contain individual attractive gardens and seating areas enclosed within the school's buildings. Thoughtful equipment is provided in these areas for pupils to be active, curious and adventurous in their play. Such as, large climbing equipment, sound stations, tunnels, and slopes. All areas have safe textured non-slip surfaces and are regularly checked. Indoor areas are spacious, with high standards of cooling and ventilation throughout. Thoughtful design of the spaces has allowed the school to be inventive with its use of the accommodation. Areas of the school can be secured so that when the school is not in use areas can be rented out to other users who can enjoy the facilities. Such as a large central well-equipped auditorium and smaller communal areas for workshops.

A strong feature of the design is the provision of specialist facilities for pupils with sensory or physical needs. Such as the fun junction, Lego room, wonder world and the sensation rooms. These areas are well equipped with soft play and equipment to stimulate pupils' development. All specialist areas such as the food technology room, swimming pool, gymnasium, science laboratories and music room are very well equipped to suit the demands of the ENC and ASDAN course. As a result, pupils enjoy their education and teachers make very effective use of the facilities and equipment. Libraries are well stocked and central shared areas such as corridors have attractive displays and seating areas where pupils can work in groups and independently.

The EYFS area is centred around an outdoor area hosting a pond which is home to small, domesticated animals, such as a rabbit and ducks. This is enclosed but can be viewed from the central corridor and accessed separately. Each classroom has its own age-appropriate washroom facilities and access to an outdoor area which is appropriately shaded. A central multi-purpose hall links the EYFS area to the main body of the school. The drop off and pickup area is on the school site and allows for very safe and smooth entrance to the school at busy times. The EYFS classrooms are well resourced with up-to-date equipment to support the delivery of the full EYFS curriculum.

A wealth of facilities for pupil's physical development are provided and these include for pupils of determination. Age-appropriate swimming pools are provided and a large outdoor Astro turf area to promote athletics and large outdoor games such as football. An indoor gymnasium is well equipped and located centrally within the school's main primary buildings.

Although the site is large and, in some places, not yet occupied the school is clean and well maintained. Fire exits are clearly signed and provision for people with disabilities is excellent so that all areas of the school are accessible.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others fully meets the standard and is excellent.

The school has a comprehensive website, providing a wealth of information regarding the school's curriculum, admissions and a downloadable school prospectus. The school has an online calendar which is sent to parents, and a detailed parent handbook.

Parents are highly satisfied with the quality of information provided by the school. Parents reported that communication is frequent and informative, with reminder emails sent regularly. Parents can contact their child's class teacher via email and felt that this was an effective way to make contact and response times were swift. Primary and EYFS parents have access to an online app that keeps them updated. A weekly newsletter is provided, and all editions are available on the school website. This includes academic updates, well-being and safeguarding updates, celebrations and dates for the diary. In addition, parents receive information via parent coffee mornings and can share their views through regular parent questionnaires.

Parents have informal access to teachers daily. An open-door policy allows parents direct access to all members of staff. Parents feel that a strong staff presence at the beginning and end of the day contributes towards a shared feeling of trust amongst the parenting community. Parents feel that their opinions are listened to, and where appropriate acted on. One parent commented 'if something happens with my child at school, I know about it before I even pick them up at the end of the day.'

Pupils reports are age appropriate, detailed and informative and are shared 4 times a year. They include details regarding attendance, punctuality and cognitive testing data. Primary and secondary pupils write a comment regarding their performance in school, and this is included in the report. Parents can also discuss their child's progress in parent-teacher meetings that take place termly and more frequently when pupils receive additional support. Parents report that they are well informed about their children's attainment and progress.

Homework is set by teachers and parents felt that this was an effective method of keeping them informed with their child's learning in school. Parents feel confident that teachers will communicate with them when needed about their child's progress in school. Parents described situations where pupils with special needs were given opportunities at school to complete their homework, when teachers felt it was appropriate.

Workshops enable parents to learn about teaching and learning strategies and have covered subjects such as PE, science, maths and Arabic. Parents also enjoy opportunities to be involved in whole school events, such as International Day, sporting events and the winter

concert. One parent during mental health week visited the school to share her knowledge of mindfulness and yoga activities with the pupils.

Parents found the inclusive nature of the school to be a real strength and believe that this has a direct impact on positive outcomes for all pupils. Excellent relationships provide a role model, with parents and pupils feeling 'seen, heard and part of a family.'

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

The complaints and resolutions policy details the formal complaints procedure and is available to parents via the policy section on the school's website. The policy is reviewed annually and refers to local regulations and is linked to other relevant school policies. The school states clearly the aims of the policy and the preventative measures that it takes to reduce complaints and concerns. The policy states clearly that anonymous complaints may not be considered by the procedures in the policy and will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The policy procedure consists of 4 levels broken down into 7 stages: informal, formal, a formal panel hearing with the governing body, and finally a formal complaint to the knowledge and human development authority, KHDA. These levels and the stages within are represented in a diagram as well as a detailed description of the process. Timescales are stated clearly at each level. The first level details the stages in which the complaint will be escalated within the school from first being raised with the class teacher. Details of how to contact the school either by email or telephone are clear within the policy.

The complaints procedure enables complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis. Once the school receives a complaint it is recorded on the school's management system for it to be progressed. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint is heard by the vice principal or principal before progressing to the governing body. Parents can attend the panel hearing and can be accompanied if they so wish. In the rare occurrence where a parent is still unhappy with the outcome, parents have the right to refer the matter to KHDA.

Correspondence, statements and records of complaints are all kept on a complaints log using the school's management system. Parent feedback indicates a high degree of satisfaction with both the speed of response and the outcomes of any concern or complaint raised, meaning it is very rare for a complaint to escalate beyond the informal process of level 1. Parents talked very positively of informal concerns raised by email being resolved quickly. Very few complaints were recorded on the complaints log, and all had been resolved.

Staff talked of a supportive work life balance and that any concerns were listened to. A staff grievance policy was in place so that there is a formal process for staff to follow if they wished to raise a complaint.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good, and there are significant excellent features.

The proprietor and board members have a detailed understanding of the school and its performance. They support the principal and senior leadership very effectively through regular visits to the school. They attend meetings that are focussed on the school's five-year vision and school development plan and review school policies and ensure policies are implemented effectively. The board members have a broad range of skills with which to draw upon to enable the school to develop and grow. Sub committees are in place to oversee HR, finance, marketing, health, and safety, such that finances are managed well and the school is well placed to secure its' vision.

The school's development plan accurately identifies the areas on which the school needs to focus and is benchmarked against the Dubai school's inspection framework. Priorities are clear and the targets are specific and measurable. A close attention has been made to focussing on the quality of education. This will enable to the school to grow further and embed its many strengths and focus on the areas for improvement.

The school has strong systems in place to monitor and support the development of staff. Observations and learning walks and analysis of data give the schools leaders information regarding the quality of education in the school. However, there is a wealth of data that can be overwhelming. The low pupil numbers in KS3 and large minority of pupils joining into KS2 make this analysis unreliable. Teachers can talk very knowledgably about individuals, and as the number of students on roll increases, data analysis will increase in parallel.

Staff are all observed and feedback on their teaching performance, on their strengths and any and areas to develop further. New teachers are monitored closely and there are systems in place to support teachers where this is required. Pupils' work books are scrutinised, and this process gives leaders the information required.

Teachers are supported through links with British School of the Middle East to moderate writing judgements and remain updated in new approaches. The middle school model that is currently in place where all pupils from year 3 to year 9 are taught by specialist teachers is favoured by parents. The school is seeking to move back to a more traditional approach where one class teacher is in place for the youngest year groups. This will enable greater flexibility in the curriculum and one teacher to build upon strengths across all areas.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel fully supported. A trusted atmosphere amongst staff enable staff to work together to resolve issues and concerns. The performance management system allows staff to set their own key performance indicators as long as these

are matched to the school's priorities. Staff are also expected to lead one extracurricular activity as part of their role. Staff talked about recent CPD initiatives which have been around safeguarding and implementing the new primary curriculum, the literacy scheme and maths scheme. Staff reported that work life balance is fair and when staff feel overwhelmed there is always someone they can talk to.

The positive relationship between leaders, staff and pupils supports the progress and good behaviour of all pupils at the school. Parents are fully supportive of the leaders and the actions that the school take to secure even more improvement. Day to day events run smoothly so that the school is a safe and a happy place to learn.