

The Arbor School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 7 – 9 March 2022

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Age Group: 3 - 14
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent three days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on the UK Government's Get Information about Schools (GIAS) website.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The DfE issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information.
7. The manner in which complaints are handled.
8. The leadership and management of the school

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Information about the school

The Arbor School is situated in the Al Furjan district of Dubai and opened in 2018. It is an independent co-educational school with a specific focus on sustainability and inclusion.

There are 851 pupils on roll, aged from three to 14 years, with 82 in key stage 3. As a growing school, it is currently smaller than others of a similar type. However, numbers have increased rapidly since its inception with 369 new pupils this academic year. Year 10 will be introduced from September 2022. Six hundred and sixty-nine pupils have a principal language other than English, although a large majority of these are bilingual. A small number receive support for English as an additional language (EAL). One hundred and thirty pupils speak Arabic as a first language and 15 are Emirati. The school follows the English national curriculum. In the academic year 2021 to the date of inspection, 72 pupils left to transfer to another school, mainly because of parents' employment, many to enter the United Kingdom.

At the time of the inspection only seven pupils in Year 6 to current Year 9 had been in the school since it opened. Only 36 pupils (all in Year 2) had been in the school for their first four years of education. All other pupils had joined the school in different year groups and at different times during the previous three years. Apart from the limited external data available, the school was not adversely affected by the pandemic, closing for just one term before returning immediately to full classroom-based learning.

The school actively welcomes applications from pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with 68 currently on roll, including those with complex needs as well as a range of specific learning difficulties and others on the autistic spectrum.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in November 2021 and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 39 lessons. There were 20 meetings which took place with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, and parents and carers (including parent governors). There was a further meeting with members of the school's executive board (including the proprietors) and the Arbor Advisory Council, including the chair of governors, who is the safeguarding governor, and deputy director of education, who is the inclusion governor and proprietor.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and more commonly that which was produced and assessed digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements and safer-recruitment procedures were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered.

Evaluation of the school

The Arbor School is a good school and provides a good quality of education for all its pupils, irrespective of age, any individual challenges or obstacles to learning.

The school meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of legislation in the United Arab Emirates. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and therefore no action points are specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Attainment and progress in English are good in each phase.

Most foundation stage pupils are making strong progress due to integrated literacy across the curriculum and systematic daily phonics. Primary pupils also make good progress from their starting points. Those who have been in the school longer make greater progress. Most key stage 3 pupils make expected or better progress from varied starting points.

The robust phonics programme that continues from foundation stage into the primary phase assists successful transition into key stage 1. A book-based curriculum focus, with 'football goals' encourages reading among boys. The Talk for Writing programme develops pupils' oral skills. In response to KHDA's initial visit, tracking is now rigorous, assisting planning to meet pupils' individual needs.

Primary pupils experience different styles of writing, including recipe lists, use of parenthesis and storyboards. Key stage 3 pupils are encouraged to question and to share their opinions. These pupils can analyse different styles of literature. They know how to improve their work in preparation for forthcoming examinations.

In mathematics, most pupils make good progress and almost all reach standards that are in line with English national curriculum expectations.

In foundation stage there is a strong focus on understanding of basic number skills. Pupils soon progress from simple counting to matching groups of objects. They develop a sound understanding of one-to-one correspondence and have a good understanding of shape and measure. They can

estimate numbers of objects from one to five without finger counting and enjoy collecting recycled items such as bottle tops to help them.

Almost all primary pupils make good progress. Their understanding of number and calculation is well developed. Most teaching ensures a daily focus on consolidation of mental arithmetic and basic number skills. A new calculation policy has been written to address any inconsistency in teaching. The accurate use of mathematical vocabulary enables most pupils to achieve high levels of conceptual understanding. Key stage 1 pupils can use a QR code to find a certain shape. They confidently describe the properties of a triangular-based pyramid, identifying vertices, faces and edges. Key stage 2 pupils can confidently convert decimals to fractions and explain their reasoning. They can convert millimetres to centimetres and centimetres to metres with the aid of their 'talking partner' and a tape measure.

Most key stage 3 pupils make expected progress. They begin to apply their knowledge of coordinates and linear equations.

Attainment in key stage 3 is in line with English national curriculum expectations and progress is good, especially in terms of acquisition of knowledge and investigation skills.

Teachers encourage pupils to develop higher-order thinking. Pupils are committed to learning and are keen to do well in science. More-able pupils extend their learning by taking the initiative. For example, a Year 6 pupil, assessing the impact on a buzzer of adding further energy cells, realised that she was registering other sounds in the room and so she asked to leave the lab to continue.

Attainment and progress in science in the other phases are varied. In foundation stage, teachers help pupils to develop investigation skills such as prediction. However, sometimes children do not know the meaning of the scientific vocabulary used by teachers. In the primary phase the use of specialist teachers in eco-literacy enhances learning. They recognise the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments and apply their learning in practical situations.

Attainment and progress in other subjects are good. The introduction of ASDAN for any pupil in key stage 3 has had a positive impact. Swimming and physical education (PE) are particularly well provided for and taught, leading to very good outcomes. In music, standards are high with Year 3 pupils able to enhance their own compositions with additional elements such as melodic and rhythmic ostinato. Humanities enables pupils in key stage 3 to discuss controversial topics and to demonstrate deeper critical thinking.

Although a large majority of pupils have EAL, only a small number require support to ensure that they have access to the English national curriculum.

A significant number of pupils are identified with SEND, including medical needs, autistic-spectrum disorder or specific learning difficulties. Leaders and teachers ensure that these pupils follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They receive good support within and beyond the classroom. The inclusion manager has developed comprehensive individual education plans with teachers, pupils and parents. Teachers implement these plans well, so pupils make similar progress to that of their peers.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment are good overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good (see Standard 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).

- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of the standard (see Standard 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are good (see Standard 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during March 2022, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas 2017 except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the United Arab Emirates. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The quality of education provided is good. The school meets this BSO standard.

The curriculum is good in each phase. It is broad, balanced, age appropriate and personalised. It prepares pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. It follows the English national curriculum with an additional eco-literacy focus and International Baccalaureate (IB) methodology. The six eco-themes: Nature of Self, Place and Time, Sustainable Thinking, Systems Thinking, Community Thinking and Inspired by Nature, are interwoven through the curriculum. The promotion of the principles of democracy, tolerance and equality, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief is mapped across all subjects. For example, pupils' leaders are elected. Humanities lessons provide opportunities for open discussion of contentious issues, such as differing perspectives on, and political responses to, global warming. These themes and the school's motto, 'Enough for all forever', promote inclusivity and equality of opportunity, as well as sustainability and environmental awareness.

Cross-curricular links are made through eco-literacy. During an English lesson pupils discussed plastic pollution and the danger to animals. A mathematics lesson used seedpods and recycled beach pebbles for counting. In science pupils helped to create an artificial reef using oyster shells recovered from a restaurant.

Children in foundation stage and pupils in Year 1 engage in discovery sessions and Years 2 to 6 apply project-based learning. The foundation stage is working towards accreditation for 'The Curiosity Approach'. Experimentation, investigation, acquisition of knowledge and guided questioning are key components. At the end of the year pupils present their work at 'The Big Event'. The immediate environment is used outstandingly well with a series of biodomes, a bio farm and other outdoor learning environments. Darwin the tortoise is found wandering around this area. The 'farm-to-fork' food programme is led by an enthusiastic chef, using home-grown food. Eco-literacy curriculum workshops for new and established staff ensure their understanding of this ethos and approach.

Extensive planning, adaptation and review mean that pupils have a comprehensive, eco-aware curriculum promoting respect for differences and with scope for personalisation. Specialised courses accommodate pupils with SEND and those with EAL. They are very well supported by the inclusion team with individual education plans (IEPs), learning assistants and additional focused extra-curricular activities such as cooking club to aid coordination and fine-motor skills.

Year 6 pupils follow the 'Lift Off' unit to prepare them for transition both internally between phases and into UK schools. The ASDAN curriculum was originally introduced for pupils with SEND but is now followed by all pupils in key stage 3, providing valuable skills that assist in transition to key stage 4 or transfer to UK schools. Within the local community and the school's immediate environment, pupils in key stage 3 participate in animal care, sports and enterprise. Enquiry-based, independent learning is encouraged. Personalised scholarship programmes are provided for a number of particularly able pupils.

The school successfully minimised the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by delivering all subjects remotely and then fully reopening after just one term. A wide range of extra-curricular activities has resumed since the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. These are available to all pupils and make good use of internal and community resources. They extend to gardening, biodome explorers, dance, storytelling, swimming, carpentry and Spanish.

The school does not yet have a fully established secondary section. However, it has prepared to introduce BTEC, Global Impact Certificate, GCSEs and eventually A levels, in order to facilitate transition through key stage 4 into post-16 education or transfer to other international and UK schools. Alternative pathways are in place and careers-guidance sessions are provided for Years 7, 8 and 9. The University of Birmingham and others already offer on-line advice, supporting future transfer to higher education in the UK or internationally.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils are challenged to consider a learning question, reflecting the enquiry based methodology that the school applies to the delivery of the English national curriculum. This sets the tone for continued questioning to promote problem solving and higher-order thinking. Teachers create plentiful opportunities for pupils to explore, analyse and make links with the world around them. Most teaching is based on strong planning which extends pupils' vocabulary and knowledge and ensures good progress.

Literacy is the responsibility of all subject areas and the emphasis on extending subject-specific vocabulary to improve understanding is having a positive impact. Increased professional development, a book-based curriculum, learning walks and lesson observations are helping to improve teaching. Opportunities to observe good practice are well utilised.

In key stage 3 (currently including Year 6) science teaching is well planned, with clear links to pupils' prior learning. Almost all pupils consistently grasp key concepts of lessons and develop their understanding of the method of scientific investigation. In mathematics, teaching is particularly strong in foundation stage with well-planned, well-resourced lessons and high learning expectations.

In all phases, most teachers make good use of support staff in the classroom. Pupils are empowered to make choices and are encouraged to become independent learners and pursue investigative discovery.

Most pupils are engaged during lessons and complete all set tasks. By the end of lessons, almost all pupils can explain what they have been doing, what has been learnt and how it can be applied. In English an older pupil spoke about his mother as a positive female role model. He made connections with Desdemona in Othello and International Women's Day.

There is a significant number of EAL pupils and teachers are aware of their needs. Effective IEPs are in place for pupils with SEND. Emirati pupils are well supported to achieve in line with their peers.

Best practice from online learning during lockdown has been incorporated into classrooms. It is used to evaluate submitted work and provide feedback. The school has incorporated the online platforms used during lockdown to improve communication, marking and feedback. The 'Tell, Ask, Give' initiative is used in the primary phase and has been adapted to fit the requirements of foundation stage. The school is also now considering this approach for key stage 3.

Assessment for learning has been introduced and effectively used by some teachers to plan pupils' next steps. Robust tracking and monitoring systems have been developed recently to improve assessment and data analysis. This has resulted in detailed planning, stronger teaching and

improved pupils' outcomes. The school's new assessment policy is an integral part of teaching and lies at the heart of promoting pupils' learning. It is gradually being embedded in all phases.

Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

Inspection activities showed that the school's policies, curriculum content and implementation promote respect for the protected characteristics outlined in the UK Equality Act (2010) in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. However, the school is unable to meet fully the requirements in respect of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation due to the laws of the United Arab Emirates.

This is a caring school where pupils are tolerant, respectful, kind and supportive of each other. There is a strong pastoral structure in place and pupils say they feel safe and welcome. Pupils' leaders (currently in Year 9) provide a conduit for the pupil voice. On an individual level, pupils address issues face to face with their dedicated staff or via an online process. This proved particularly valuable during the lockdown period and has been continued as the school returned to normal contact.

Behaviour in all phases is good within and beyond the classroom. There have been a few friendship issues in Year 6 but strategies are in place to ensure support and resolution. Pupils know where to find help in the event of bullying and there are posters, QR scans and signs all around the school. All pupils engage with a programme of well-being sessions including a focus on relationships, conflict and difference, healthy eating and mental health. These contribute very effectively to pupils' respecting people who have the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Introductory sessions at the beginning of the year welcome all pupils and later new arrivals also receive this information. Online support systems work well for those who do not want a face-to-face meeting.

This is an open school where pupils feel comfortable in voicing their feelings. All behaviour and pastoral issues are recorded and logged on a school system. Tutors receive weekly behaviour logs and the system is carefully monitored. 'Reflection Time' sheets provide pupils with the opportunity to consider their behaviour and to understand its impact on others. 'Above and Beyond' cards acknowledge special actions, particularly in relation to interactions with peers.

The mindfulness curriculum with key points such as friendship and kindness is central to the school. Older pupils have sessions on mental health, body image, self-harm and anxiety. Transition activities, moral education, assemblies, guest speakers, tutor-led sessions and digital resilience reinforce well-being. Pupils' leadership opportunities include membership of an eco-council. There are roles for sports leaders, house captains, well-being, inclusion and cultural ambassadors, as well as a head boy and head girl. Democracy and elections are part of the appointments procedure for leadership roles and based on the British electoral system. Pupils are aware of the local institutions of the UAE and have an understanding of UK society reflected within the school community.

Even as the school grows rapidly, it is maintaining its strongly inclusive values. While pupils are encouraged to discuss contentious issues, particularly during English and humanities lessons, they show respect for the opinions of others, irrespective of gender, race, religion or belief.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard and the regulatory requirements and cultural obligations of the host country.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils, parents and staff feel safe and secure. Relationships are positive and mutually respectful. New pupils say they appreciate how quickly they make friends through their buddies' group.

Premises and equipment are checked regularly to ensure that they are safe. Repairs are dealt with immediately by specialist staff on site.

Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to reflect and to respond to changes in local or international requirements. They are shared with parents and the wider community via the school's website.

Effective written risk assessments are completed for all school activities, including excursions and activities such as swimming. Appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks. Fire evacuations and lockdown procedures meet the expectations of the host country and are as stringent as those of the UK. All procedures are well rehearsed, monitored, recorded and then reviewed on a regular basis. All security systems are well managed and include swipe cards, key fobs and CCTV.

The systems for handling medication and the recording of medical incidents are robust. Support for pupils' well-being and mental health, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been invaluable for some pupils and their parents. The school counsellor, who is a qualified psychologist, continues to hold well-being sessions including training on relationships, conflict, healthy eating and mental health. There is an emotional well-being check-in app available to the pupils. This sends an automatic alert to pastoral staff. Lunchtime drop-in sessions, playtime chats and formal appointments are available.

Safeguarding systems are robust and conform to the best practice in the UK and UAE. All pupils participated in a module about keeping themselves safe and staff now wear lanyards, with an invitation to pupils to speak to them as a safe adult. A high priority has been given to cyber-safety. All staff have received the regulatory training as expected of a UK school. They understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. This is overseen by a highly experienced and UK-trained designated safeguarding lead.

Attendance is consistently good across the school at 98% with foundation stage being slightly lower at 96%, although this is improving. Attendance was successfully monitored online during lockdown and was not significantly lower. The school is working hard to improve punctuality in the mornings and after school.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The Human Resources (HR) department maintains an accurate single central record of appointment checks, including reference to the date of each check and to the person responsible, in line with UK expectations. Where UK police checks are not possible, due diligence is pursued, involving local police checks in the UAE and additional checks in a candidate's home country or domiciliary country prior to appointment.

Appropriate checks are undertaken for all support staff and those provided by external contractors, as well as teachers. The opportunity of visa renewal is used to review all checks of suitability. Three references are sought and the date of receipt of all references is recorded.

Section 128 checks are undertaken for senior staff and governors if they have links with the UK. Prohibition checks are standard for UK based appointees.

The proprietors have undergone local checks for suitability to open a school.

All this means that everything possible is done to safeguard pupils, staff and the institution, ensuring that appointees are appropriately qualified, medically and emotionally fit to work and within the terms of their visa have a right to work in this context.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements for this BSO standard.

The premises provide well-maintained, well-resourced and spacious accommodation. As the school population is rapidly growing, there are many empty rooms which are well utilised to allow splitting of classes into smaller groups for the purpose of greater social distancing during the pandemic. This allowed the school to return to face-to-face teaching and learning after just one term, minimising the impact of the pandemic. There are stimulating learning spaces for all pupils, which include the auditorium, the Black Box drama studio, food-technology suite, science laboratory, music rooms, design-technology facilities, sporting and performance spaces. There is appropriate surfacing and maintenance of all facilities to ensure the safety of pupils. There are plans to increase and improve facilities for art and design and technology as the school grows.

The unique 'living classrooms' include climate-controlled biodomes, two of which function as full tropical ecosystems. The school's mini biodomes are dedicated to a range of purposes from plant nurseries to reading spaces. There are two further specialist teaching spaces, the Reflection Garden which is in the centre of the school and used for quiet time. The Learning Garden is a community space dedicated to sustainable agriculture. Pupils grow herbs, fruit and vegetables organically and sustainably. They learn how to make compost and to harvest their crops. These reflect the school's philosophy on sustainability.

There is a wide range of facilities to support the developing curriculum in the secondary phase, including many learning-support and administrative spaces. There is good access to information technology, which is used successfully to support pupils' learning. Library sessions are led by the librarian and are used to improve pupils' reading and research skills. Further enhancing library facilities and improving access is part of the planned growth of the school.

Excellent indoor and outdoor sports facilities enhance pupils' participation in a range of sports and PE. There are two swimming pools and a large, spacious gymnasium. The foundation stage has readily accessible outdoor spaces that enable discovery learning.

Toilet facilities are well supervised, hygienic and plentiful. There are water fountains throughout all buildings. Pupils know about the importance of remaining hydrated. A large team of staff works hard to ensure that the buildings, grounds, cloakroom areas and toilets are cleaned to a high standard.

Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Parents really appreciate that the principal is available to greet them each morning and that he knows pupils and parents well.

All staff, including medical, counselling and pastoral staff, liaise with and give guidance to the parents of pupils who are vulnerable or at risk. The inclusion manager and pastoral-support leader works very closely with the parents of pupils with SEND when planning to meet their individual needs. Parents feel that leaders and staff listen to their views and they appreciate the speed with which staff respond to communications.

Using online portals, parents have access to information about their children's academic progress, attainment, physical fitness, behaviour and attitudes. There are daily bulletins with practical information including a physical- and emotional-health section. The school ensures that its news and the celebration of any successes can be found using a range of social-media platforms. The parent-relations team communicates regularly with parents and teachers use WhatsApp groups for their class.

The school's website is informative, interactive and easily navigable. It contains all required information, including a range of up-to-date policies and information about the school's curriculum.

The admissions policy and photographs or videos of school life give prospective parents a clear indication of the school's inclusive selection criteria, ethos, curriculum and expectations. The admissions policy outlines very clearly how the school supports pupils with SEND. The website has useful electronic links, newsletters, e-bulletins from staff and a regular podcast by the headteacher on current educational issues. Parents appreciate the school's response to parental questionnaires.

The Arbor Advisory Council includes all stakeholders. This group makes a significant contribution to the strong relationships which leaders have established. The parent members feel that they are genuinely listened to by senior leaders and the owners and governors. There is a parent representative for inclusion.

Parents are particularly appreciative of how the school keeps them informed in times of difficulty, such as when the school was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this period, the headteacher sent regular emails and posted end-of-week videos providing up-to-date information, guidance and reassurance. As well as organising formal parents' evenings to discuss pupils' progress, the school arranges less formal awareness-raising events such as coffee mornings on topics including the importance of reading for pleasure, phonics and inclusion.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The complaints policy and contact details of the chair of governors are accessible by parents via the school website.

A small number of parents' questionnaire responses referred to concerns having been raised. Some parents suggested that they had been very happy with the school's responses and an equal number suggested the opposite. However, no parent has triggered the formal complaints process and all parents interviewed by inspectors insisted that they feel that all concerns they ever have would be dealt with appropriately without needing to trigger a formal complaint.

The complaints policy and processes follow all expected steps, allowing for review and appeal. Outcomes and evidence provided for a complaint are kept confidential and governors are aware of their part in the process.

Standard 8: Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the requirements of this BSO Standard.

Senior leaders are successful in ensuring that the school consistently fulfils the requirements of all standards expected of a British School Overseas. They are all accomplished leaders and managers with experience of UK schools or of other UK curriculum schools in Dubai or across the globe. As such, they are very effective leaders and managers. Their action plans and systems already created demonstrate their capacity to improve the school further.

They have created a unique learning environment which embodies the owners' vision and reflects their philosophy of creating world citizens as custodians of the planet. The school's motto of 'Enough for all forever', illustrates its approach to equality and tackling discrimination. An important part of this philosophy is to offer both holistic and inclusive education which is supported by the extensive range of extra-curricular activities enjoyed by all pupils irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity or additional needs. There are 69 different nationalities in the school and this diversity makes for a rich and varied community.

There is an expectation that all staff will share the owners' philosophy and, as the curriculum delivery applies an enquiry based approach to the English national curriculum, the school seeks to appoint staff with additional experience of and commitment to that enquiry-based learning.

As the school is now expanding through key stage 3 and into key stage 4 from September 2022, senior leaders are currently recruiting or appointing heads of department for core subjects. However, the current phase leaders and those senior leaders with direct responsibility for teaching and learning are good role models and are already developing the capacity of teachers and learning-support assistants.

Following on from initial induction of new staff, performance management is used to identify training or support needs of individuals. Formal and informal lesson observations and work scrutiny provide senior leaders with further insight. Middle leaders' development includes the opportunity for joint observations with senior leaders of members of their departments or phases. The senior leader with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment has a strong understanding of data analysis. In consequence, the response to the KHDA recommendation on assessment has been addressed robustly. Academic leaders have very successfully mapped cross-curricular links to develop the school's unique eco-literacy approach.

Governors remain committed to appointing a combination of young teachers and those with considerable experience in the classroom and in middle leadership positions. They are fully committed to making the necessary investment to ensure that the school continues to improve as it grows.

Governors and proprietors have a clear understanding of the difference between governance and management and are proactive in supporting and challenging the leadership of the school. They implement clear and appropriate systems to monitor the school's finances effectively. Although the principal does not sit on either the executive board or the advisory council, he meets members of the executive board every two weeks, has immediate contact with the director of education for Praxis who is also chair of governors, and addresses either board whenever required to do so.

Several parents sit on the advisory council and, as part of the school's governance structure, they feel that their voice is heard and proactively sought both by the leaders and proprietors.

Governors and leaders are committed to ensuring that robust safeguarding procedures are maintained by creating a dedicated team in HR which manages all recruitment checks and recently appointing a head of primary who brings extensive current experience of safeguarding and child protection from the UK.

With the support of parents, leaders and proprietors managed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic particularly well, moving seamlessly to online learning and then returning to the classroom at the earliest opportunity. In response to parental reaction, they quickly established a pattern of one real-time lesson per day for each pupil and then recorded lessons in all subjects which could be accessed individually as required by pupils and their parents. This was particularly valuable for those households with several children needing to engage with online learning at the same time.

The financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were also well managed with the cooperation of the whole staff and the status quo has already been re-established, so the staff feel they are well supported, secure in their employment and suitably trained.

Early Years provision

The foundation stage programme caters for children from three to five years. The facilities include well-maintained and spacious classrooms with access to well-designed outdoor provision. Resources to support learning are of high quality and help to motivate and engage young learners. The high ratio of adults ensures that children are cared for and supported very well and safeguarding requirements are fully met. The foundation stage provision meets the UK independent-school standards.

The curriculum is based on the English early learning goals, enabling tracking in all areas of development. Children successfully develop their confidence and independence. Their behaviour is very good. Curriculum delivery and teaching are good in literacy and numeracy, ensuring that children make good progress. The well-integrated approach to literacy and numeracy ensures that the transition to Year 1 is seamless.

In Knowledge and Understanding of the World children are coached through eco-literacy to learn scientific terms such as prediction and symbiosis. Occasionally, their progress is slowed because teachers do not always share the scientific terms in age-appropriate language.

The recently appointed head of foundation stage has a clear vision for the future and has already brought about improvements to the provision.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The Arbor School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country's laws. It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010.

2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;

5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- In the early years foundation stage, sometimes teachers use scientific vocabulary which the children do not understand. Teachers should review their use of subject-specific vocabulary so that children can understand and use it to enhance their learning.
- In the primary phase the teaching of eco-literacy does not provide enough opportunity for pupils to experiment or to model the real world. Teachers should ensure that they plan enough activities which allow pupils to apply their knowledge of this area of the curriculum.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		√		
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School details

Name of school	The Arbor School
Type of school	Private, Independent, co-educational, inclusive school
Date school opened	02/09/2018
Age range of pupils	3-14 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	851
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 56000 – AED 90000
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Al Furjan West, Dubai
Telephone number	+971 4 581 4100
Email address	Principal@thearborschool.ae
Headteacher	Brett Girven
Proprietor	Praxis Educational Investment L.L.C.

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

Accreditation – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

Accreditation Board – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

Assessment – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

Attainment – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO) – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

Education Development Trust – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

Central Support Team – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

Combined or Joint Visit – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

Cycle of Inspection – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

Curriculum – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils’ gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Management – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school’s work in an efficient and useful way.

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

Progress – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

School self-evaluation – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school’s work on the outcomes for pupils.

Standards –

(1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.

(2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

Teaching – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils’ learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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