

# Victory Heights Primary School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection dates: 9–11 January 2017  
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Age group: 3–11 years

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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 in England and 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 (BSO) 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 Edubase.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. 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 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 for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The purposes of the 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.

The BSO inspection was combined with an inspection carried out with inspectors from Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). The DSIB inspection evaluated the school's performance

when measured against the quality indicators for schools in Dubai. The outcomes of the DSIB inspection are contained within a separate report which is available from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai.

### Key for inspection grades

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

### 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

Victory Heights Primary School is an independent school located in the Sports City district of Dubai. Pupil numbers have steadily expanded since the school opening in 2013; it is now an average-size school compared with others of its type. Pupils follow the National Curriculum of England. There are 708 pupils aged between three and 11 years, with approximately a third of the roll in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). There are over 18 different nationalities represented at the school; almost half of pupils are of British heritage. Pupils who speak English as an additional language use over 22 different languages. The school has identified 31 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. On leaving Year 6, pupils move to other schools locally and internationally.

The school has 49 teachers. Of these, 15 joined the staff this academic year. The largest nationality group among the teachers is British. The school is an accredited member of the British Schools of the Middle East.

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The inspection was conducted jointly with a team of eight DSIB inspectors. The school was given three weeks' notice of the inspection. The combined inspection team was given access to information about the school in advance of the inspection. Responses from parents and staff to surveys formed part of the evidence base for both inspection teams. The inspectors used the same evidence base for reaching the judgements found in both reports.

Over three days, inspectors visited 76 lessons; four of these lessons were jointly observed by an inspector with a senior member of staff. Inspectors held 42 meetings with senior leaders,

governors, subject coordinators, the special educational needs coordinator, other staff, parents and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, extensive documents including the school's self-review, improvement plans, assessment systems and safeguarding policies. They generally observed the school at work and followed up on any issues raised.

## Evaluation of the school

Victory Heights Primary School is a good school. It provides a good education for pupils from early years to Year 6 and meets the Standards for British School Overseas. The clear and challenging vision is energetically promoted and exemplified by the principal. It is shared with the whole school community with the help of the committed senior leadership team and middle leaders' group. The drive for improvement is shared by the class teachers and gives the school a good capacity to develop further.

Progress in **English** across the school is good. About 10% of pupils are learning English as an additional language and have received support during the current academic year. They make very rapid progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing English as a result of highly focused support. The very small minority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress in English as a result of well-planned support.

Children come into school in FS1 with skills which might be typical for their age. Some start with skills in a language other than English. They make good progress overall especially in their personal, social and emotional development and also in speaking and listening. Skills in literacy develop well, so they are well-prepared for Year 1. The percentage of children exceeding expectations is 70.5% as compared to 69.3% nationally in England. Children are keen to share their ideas, including with visitors, because they know their contributions will be valued and adults will listen to what they have to say. Progress in reading and writing is promoted well and, from an early age, children are able to use writing implements to make recognisable marks. By the time they have moved through FS2, they are creating their own simple stories, generally unaided, and with phonetically plausible spelling.

Pupils in key stage 1 increase their knowledge of phonics and apply this to suggest alternative ways of spelling different sounds. In Year 1, they also use phonics to spell new words and when reading unfamiliar words. Pupils adapt their spoken English for different purposes, for example, using a more formal tone and speaking full sentences when speaking to adults.

By Year 4, handwriting is well formed and pupils produce extended writing for different purposes. They use comparative and superlative adjectives correctly and are confident to develop and improve their initial drafts to produce more polished writing. External assessment reports from 2016 show that vocabulary and grammar are weaker than other aspects of English. This information has been used to identify priorities for improving English attainment in writing across the school.

By Year 6, pupils are confident to present structured arguments in debates where they draw on earlier learning from persuasive writing. They use a broad vocabulary in imaginative writing tasks and a range of grammatical structures. All pupils now have a learning target for English. At the time of the inspection, the focus for these was writing.

Pupils across the school read widely for knowledge, pleasure and subject material. The extensive range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library is used widely by readers at all levels and encourages them to be active readers. Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in their spoken and written English as a result of skilful teaching from the learning enhancement team. They quickly become fluent English speakers in formal and informal settings.

Progress in **mathematics** across the school is good. In the early years, specific time is set aside for the children to develop their skills in numeracy; they also make good progress here as there is a varied range of activities to help them develop an understanding of numbers. This means that, by the time they enter Year 1, they are ready to sequence numerals and also to select appropriate numbers to complete a sequence. They can also define accurately the properties of two-dimensional shapes. They make good attempts to sketch these in proportion and with the correct number of sides and vertices, for instance to create a hexagon.

When pupils start in Year 1, they have good skills in numeracy and other aspects of mathematics. They make good progress overall and, by time they leave Year 6, they have a good knowledge and understanding, which they can apply to problem solving. The achievements in mathematics of a few pupils in Years 5 and 6 are exceptional and they use their skills extremely well. For example, they deduce that a specific net will form an exact three-dimensional shape.

Collaboration and critical thinking are usually demonstrated in some, but not all, lessons although real-life situations are promoted most of the time. In Year 2, pupils calculate using both British and UAE currency and consider the best methods to use. There is a specific focus on making learning meaningful and to develop cross-curricular links between mathematics and science. Pupils' ideas about mathematical concepts in geometry, algebra and statistics are promoted as an initiative across the school. When included in lessons and activities, the 'Big Solve' approach offers opportunities for problem solving.

The progress made by pupils throughout the school in **science** is good. Children in the early years are interested and keen to explore the world around them in their immediate environment, particularly outdoors. The children enjoy the range of activities such as measuring using water and containers to investigate capacity and also how liquids change shape when moved from one container to another. The mud kitchen is popular with children as they create their own rugged or smooth models while developing small hand muscles as a precursor to writing skills and forming letters. Their attainment in understanding the world is good and this reflects the progress they make. Topics are chosen specifically to engage all children. The theme on snow enables them to consider different terrains and types of animals which could survive in extremes of temperatures. They link this topic to specific places in Dubai which depict cold climates.

In key stage 1 science, practical skills are developed; less evidence is seen of investigative work. Pupils in Year 1 examine dead fish that have been prepared by staff; they work collaboratively as a team to share ideas. The pupils use magnifying equipment to examine the fishes' organs and engage in animated discussions with their peers, for example about the function of gills. At an age-appropriate level, the pupils can accurately record their findings, using drawing and language skills, and digital camera technology.

Year 2 classes examine plants in and outside the classroom environment, leading to discussion and recording plant facts, for example the need for water and light. Highly effective teacher

questioning enhances most pupils' understanding and encourages 'hands-on' investigations, for example feeling the soil and examining its consistency. The most able pupils develop their investigative skills, such as hypothesising, analysing and evaluating; these higher order skills are closely linked with elevated attainment.

Pupils in Year 4 respond well to the challenges set out by the teacher relating to the symbols used in electrical circuit plans. They can assemble simple, battery-powered circuits, including a lamp and a switch. By Year 6, a small minority of pupils can explain clearly the functioning of parallel circuits.

Pupils enjoy successes in other subjects. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning. For example, in the early years, children use simple cameras to acquire photographic evidence. Enthusiastic physical education activities enable all pupils to develop their fitness, stamina and skills, and understand rules and team ethics. Progress in music is good throughout the school. Older pupils enjoy demonstrating their singing and keyboard skills.

#### **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 is good overall (see Standard 1 below). Even so, pupils, especially in primary, are not consistently benefitting from opportunities to develop their critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good (see Standard 2 below). Pupils' behaviour is outstanding throughout the school; relationships at all levels are excellent and characterised by mutual respect.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good (see Standard 3 below). A few adult volunteers who plan to work in school do not yet have the full safeguarding documentation.
- 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 this 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 9 below).

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2017, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas. 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 **curriculum** offered in the school is good, with a topic approach which reflects British-based themes and expectations, but also with the wider context in mind and an emphasis on UAE culture, heritage and features. The way in which the curriculum is designed and delivered means that pupils' needs are met and this is especially the case for those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a specific focus on deepening pupils' understanding, particularly in relation to developing mastery of skills in mathematics. There is specific tracking of progress and achievement which means that support and interventions are particularly timely. Such interventions reflect the most effective means of tackling any misconceptions and closing the achievement gap before these become issues. Provision is organised so there is close team work to enable pupils to progress quickly alongside their peers. Systems in place mean that the consistency of practice is carefully checked and results in highly effective levels of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. English is the language of instruction, but there are a number of pupils for whom this is not their first language. Additional support is provided to ensure their needs are met.

In the early years foundation stage, the topic-based approach suits well the needs and age range of the children. There is a wide range of child-initiated activities from which the children can select; they have a good degree of autonomy for their own learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, but also a focus on ensuring they have a wide range of aesthetic and physical activities in order to develop their creativity, and to move with good coordination and control. The curriculum framework used in the school reflects that of an early years setting in England and covers topics and themes with an emphasis on developing an understanding of the world, using technology to support learning and creating two-and-three-dimensional models and structures.

Personal and social education is a strong feature of the curriculum and is included in a variety of subjects, such as social and Islamic studies, during assemblies and in the special events the school offers across year groups on a range of topics. Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding about pursuing a healthy lifestyle. They consider their future choices, such as choosing schools; this process starts in good time when the pupils are in Year 5 and continues until they leave Year 6. Work experience opportunities are not forgotten with links to local businesses and other educational establishments. Enterprise initiatives are used to give the pupils a sense of making a contribution but also developing workplace skills, along with cooperation and collaboration on specific projects. Enhancement and enrichment of the curriculum are features of the work of the school such as gardening, homework club and sporting events, with aesthetic and creative work also promoted extremely well.

The school has an inclusive approach to admissions and works hard to ensure that the needs of individual pupils can be met through careful planning well before the pupil joins the school. There are currently 31 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with a further 164 on the school's 'early alert' intervention programme, which is categorised into three 'waves'. Pupils on waves 2 and 3 have individual educational plans. These are reviewed at least three times a year.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities access the full curriculum and are fully included in school life. The school provides a blend of in-class support and small group

intervention to meet individual needs. The school currently uses a number of indicators to identify each pupil's needs. Leaders recognise that systems for this will benefit from the planned further developments to ensure that appropriate interventions for every pupil can be provided. Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good or better progress in all subjects.

**Teaching and learning** are good, reinforced with effective **assessment** procedures. When given opportunities and encouragement to take risks in their learning, pupils show willingness to experiment and to try new approaches. However, these opportunities are not consistently available, especially in primary, with regard to pupils' critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning skills and this occasionally slows pupils' progress. Teachers have generally good knowledge of their subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, but not quite as strong in science. Lessons are frequently well planned and the support offered meets pupils' needs. Objectives are made clear in lessons and pupils are aware of what they are aiming for which aids the learning process and their progress. Curricular links are identified within plans; for example, making connections between scientific aspects, mathematics and everyday situations which make the learning meaningful. Learning is successfully promoted by teachers' assessment of pupils' emerging understanding and skills' development. At appropriate points during lessons, teachers take note of any misconceptions and adjust accordingly both plans and strategies.

Teachers have clear expectations of what pupils can achieve and are prepared to challenge their thinking. A strong work ethic permeates lessons and this is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6. Problem solving and critical thinking are sometimes features in lessons.

The relationships established between staff and pupils are indicators of the highly positive ethos around the school. Learning environments are usually interesting and attractive with many displaying relevant links to the work the pupils have undertaken. Behaviour management strategies are excellent so pupils behave exceptionally well. Their attitudes to learning are also wholly positive as they are mostly very interested, engaged and motivated in what they are asked to do. Resources are used well and sometimes ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning, such as the blended learning platform. The youngest children use the interactive whiteboards and have great fun programming toys to move around in set patterns.

Assessment systems are effective and are being fully embedded across the school. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and have an increasing awareness of the progress they make and their levels of attainment. Early interventions are put in place as required to ensure there is no loss of momentum in progress and to close any emerging gaps in attainment. Across the subject areas, internal assessment processes are improving to provide a wealth of assessment data to accurately track pupils' progress and attainment. Training for teaching staff runs alongside the evaluation and any modifications to the assessment system. The identification and assessment of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are robust and secure.



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

The school meets the requirements of the Standard. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school's vision aims 'to nurture responsible global citizens who are sensitive to other cultures and people.' This is reflected in how pupils from the different nationalities represented at the school interact and treat each other with respect. They are polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors to the school. They behave well and show self-control in lessons. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are unusual and are dealt with promptly to minimise the risk of recurrence.

One group of pupils spoke openly about the need for rules and laws to keep people safe and avoid 'chaos'. They were very concerned about the dangers caused when motorists ignore laws relating to using seatbelts and mobile telephone use when driving. Pupils gain increased awareness of their strengths and what they need to do to improve their learning when teachers add thought-provoking comments to marking. This is most successful when the comments encourage pupils to reflect on their learning and so helps to build their skills as independent learners. This forms part of the school's focus to build transferable learning skills, the 'effective lifelong learning inventory'.

Topic work allows pupils to deepen their understanding of environmental issues, including pollution and the need to develop sustainable energy. They take pride in edible plants they have grown from seeds in the 'ground to plate' initiative, linking the plants to healthy eating, reducing pollution from artificial fertilisers as well as making attractive displays around the school. Pupils are given a range of leadership opportunities, for example as members of the students' council or as house captains.

The school is an international community and celebrations of this cultural diversity help pupils to gain an understanding of differences and similarities between nations. One pupil described the affable relationships between pupils of different nationalities saying: 'Doesn't matter who you are, it's what inside.' Pupils are aware of features of life in Britain at age-appropriate levels. By key stage 2, they make meaningful comparisons between the climate, geography, history and some industries. One group talked about the significance of farming in Britain and how this contrasts with the absence of large-scale agriculture in Dubai, making it heavily reliant on imported food. They are aware of differences between England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales including different languages and regional accents. Pupils spoke of how everyday foods eaten in Britain are influenced by people of different nationalities who live in the country.

In 2016, the school used the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to raise pupils' awareness of the British monarchy. Key stage 2 pupils were curious about why only two British prime ministers have been women, whereas there have been kings and queens. They expressed firm views about the need for equality between men and women. They were aware of the 2016 presidential elections in the USA and were confident to express personal opinions about the candidates.

Pupils happily take on responsible roles and understand the importance of representing their classmates as members of the student council. They are confident to make requests to school leaders and give reasons for those requests. The school operates in a similar way to schools in Britain with a house system, the study of the English National Curriculum and the celebration of

national events. This means that pupils would be able to enter or re-enter comfortably a school in Britain or another British school overseas.

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

The school meets the requirements of the Standard. Procedures for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. There is a happy family atmosphere within the school; pupils of different ages play together during break times and care for each other. There are many opportunities for pupils to support each other, which helps newcomers to the school settle in quickly.

The school recognises the importance of safeguarding and child protection and robust systems are in place. To further improve the provision, a working group meets regularly to review and strengthen arrangements. This group has been successful in spotting areas for improvement. For example, the introduction of identification badges for all parents. The group is reviewing procedures to ensure that all adult volunteers who plan to work with pupils undergo suitable checks and that records are systematically updated.

Pupils are well informed about the need to be healthy by keeping fit and not eating unhealthy food. They are encouraged to bring healthy foods in their lunch boxes and the cafeteria serves a balanced menu. Pupils wear hats when outside and drink water regularly to avoid dehydration. Lessons in physical education and science include meaningful links to healthy ways of living.

A full-time nurse monitors pupils' health and ensures that any pupil who becomes unwell or injured at school is cared for in the well-equipped clinic. The nurse is also actively involved in promoting healthy ways of living. First-aid kits are located throughout the building with staff from all departments trained in first aid. Pupils are closely supervised while at school and risk assessments are carried out for off-site activities, following the appropriate procedures.

The policies to encourage positive behaviour and prevent bullying are widely known, along with the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. Incidents of bullying are well-managed at an early stage. The school keeps a record of sanctions following serious lapses of behaviour, including how parents have been informed. Policies for admission and attendance comply fully with local requirements. Attendance is good at 96% and teachers escort pupils to lessons so these start punctually.

Good arrangements for health, safety, fire and evacuation are regularly checked by external agencies to ensure that local requirements are met. Fire extinguishers are located throughout the building. Exit routes and assembly points are clearly marked and regular evacuation practices are held. Practices of the lockdown policy had not been held, leaving adults and pupils uncertain of how to minimise risks during an emergency. High standards of hygiene are maintained throughout the school day, with diligent cleaning of all areas.

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

The school meets the requirements of this Standard. In line with the school's updated recruitment policy, the principal and human resources department currently ensure that all the required checks are in place when recruiting staff locally or overseas. Applicants who do not meet the school's recruitment and checking procedures are not offered employment. Scrutiny of available records confirms that members of staff have the right to work in Dubai and that they are suitably qualified to work with children. Staff appraisal procedures are well established and work well. The teaching staff is very well qualified and largely recruited from Great Britain. Their retention and promotion are improved by the governors' and principal's commitment to internal career development opportunities. All members of the teaching staff have access to good quality professional development to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education and care.

## **Standard 5. The premises and accommodation**

The school meets the requirements of the Standard. The premises meet all requirements of Dubai regarding school premises. The premises are contained within a secure perimeter wall with manned entrance gates. Security staff check visitors and now parents must wear identification badges when on site. There are sufficient entrances to allow adults and pupils to enter and leave safely, including in emergencies. Ramps and lifts allow those with limited mobility to access all parts of the school.

The spacious classrooms are designed to make the most of the available site. Interactive whiteboards are fitted in most teaching areas and other technology is available to enhance teaching and learning. Specialist areas include two indoor gymnasias, music, science and information technology rooms, and a well-stocked library. All areas are light, with good ventilation and acoustics.

The school has invested in quality furniture and fittings appropriate to different age groups. These enable the broad curriculum to be delivered in stimulating environments. Displays, particularly in the early years, add interest and encourage curiosity and imaginative learning. Resources match the ages of pupils and fully support the curriculum. High standards of maintenance and cleaning keep the premises in good order and very clean. Decoration enhances the learning environment. Flooring is in good condition and cushioned matting in outside areas adds to safety.

Outside areas are mostly well shaded and are used extensively for teaching and play. An artificial pitch is used for sports and athletics by all age groups. The indoor swimming pool is equipped with life-saving equipment and staff carry out daily checks to ensure that water quality meets requirements. Separate boys' and girls' changing rooms at the swimming pool have toilet facilities, with bathrooms available throughout the school. The canteen is very hygienic with ample storage facilities for food. Cleaning staff ensure that the outside tables and benches where pupils eat lunch are clean and free of litter. The clinic is staffed by a qualified nurse and is well equipped to cater for the needs of pupils who become ill or who are injured at school.

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

The school meets the requirements of the Standard. Parental engagement is at the heart of the school community. Frequent communication, on many platforms, ensures parents are kept very well informed. The school's website is informative and contains much of the information that prospective and current parents might need. Details of school contacts are available to parents through the website, and on written communication, such as publications, letters and emails. A digital screen in the school's entrance lobby shares key information and celebrates the pupils' successes.

Parents value the adopted mobile telephone application and the social media software systems that trigger text and email alerts, class and information about events. The 'Voice' newsletters celebrate achievements within the school community. They also include examination results, calendar events and other up-to-date information. A recent governors' supplement edition enabled the governors to communicate directly to parents promoting a forthcoming 'meet the board of governors' event at the annual festive fayre.

Responses in the parents' survey and in verbal feedback indicate that almost all parents feel they have a genuine partnership with the school. The principal is held in high regard by parents; they also value the 'open door' policy that ensures they have easy access to teachers and staff. Parents are especially confident in the school's leadership and about the information they receive. Parents comment that suggestions and concerns are taken seriously and responded to swiftly, often by the well-respected parents' liaison administrator. The parent class representatives provide a focused channel for communication and engagement within class groups. The school has a parent representative on the board of governors.

Twice yearly written reports to parents indicate whether their children are performing at, above or below expectations in relation to their next steps in learning. Meetings between teachers and parents to discuss progress and target setting are very well attended. Overviews for all topics and subjects are distributed as part of the school's efforts to inform parents about the curriculum, teaching and learning. Pupils' homework diaries are informative, including information regarding academic performance and progress.

## **Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school meets the requirements of this Standard. The complaints' procedures are clear and are available on the school website or in person from the school. There is a staged approach to the handling of complaints with clearly stated timelines. The procedures allow for a complaint to be referred to the board of governors if it cannot be resolved satisfactorily at school level.

Parents confirm that easy access to teachers and school leaders ensures that any issues are generally addressed promptly and informally. The use of smart telephone technology enables parents to keep fully apprised of developments at all times, and within easy contact with the parents' liaison administrator.

## **Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding**

Not applicable.

## Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school

The principal leads enthusiastically and effectively from the front. The deputy headteacher and senior leaders support her in promoting a clear and challenging vision. The strong ethos of the school is evident in the high quality relationships among pupils, staff and parents. The leadership of the school is widely distributed following new appointments and promotions, with a strong capacity to further the school's development. Middle leaders are increasingly effective in accepting responsibility and accountability for standards within their areas of responsibility; some need more time and experience to bring about improvements to pupils' outcomes and sustained improvements in all areas. Leadership in the early years is strong and dedicated to high standards. The team sets a clear direction and promotes an inspiring vision that is shared by all staff deployed in this age group. Good, supportive relationships exist between all leadership levels and the broad learning community in the school.

Governors clearly articulate the school's strengths and areas for development, and are dedicated to engaging in well-supported improvement actions. The board of governors is diverse; there is representation from the parents, business sector, teachers and an education consultant. Together with the staff, they promote the school's celebration of diversity and equality, and zero tolerance of any forms of discrimination. The strategic and advisory roles of governance include holding the professional leadership of the school to account for its performance. The separate responsibilities of governors from the school's professional leadership are understood and respected. A developing aspect of governance is the monitoring of pupils' outcomes linked to the use of assessment data analysis. The new initiative of governors working closely with the school's middle leaders is a high priority in improving academic achievement across all subjects and phases. Governors closely liaise with the safeguarding working party, senior leadership and school's administrators to ensure that safeguarding and child protection procedures are effective. Robust financial procedures and management enable high quality resources to be acquired to support pupils' learning and achievements. The governors ensure the school operates legally according to local requirements.

The governance supports quality staff recruitment and training; for example, academic staff benefit from a range of training sessions, providers coming from external sources or the in-school leaders. In order to raise the school's performance, governors are helping to organise positive links between other schools within the ownership group. The school's leadership benefits from the 'critical friend' role of governance and the necessary sharp focus on raising standards.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning are good; the continuing drive for a wider, distributive style of leadership promotes an informed level of staff involvement in the self-evaluation process. This, in turn, generates valuable information about the school's performance and areas for improvement, enabling the leadership to set challenging priorities for continuing improvement. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and aligned to whole-school priorities aimed at improving learning outcomes and the pupils' experiences at school. Self-evaluation takes account of the views of pupils, parents, the governing body and the staff. There is an evident sense of engagement and ownership within the school community. Appropriate development priorities have been identified and strategies have been introduced to help the school improve. The leadership team monitors the quality of teaching and learning across the school and gives feedback to teachers about their performances.



Performance management is in place and all teachers have access to feedback and development to enhance their performance. Professional development for staff is based on personal needs' analysis and observations and is linked to improving outcomes for pupils.

The day-to-day life of the school is managed very effectively and efficiently. The school runs smoothly and staff can focus on the care and support of all pupils. Open and friendly administration and support staff further enhance the welcoming atmosphere at the school. Most teaching staff are British trained and qualified which enables them to confidently teach the National Curriculum of England and prepare pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK education system. The school has a good balance of experienced and newly appointed staff.

Almost all parents and teachers believe that the school is led well, and that school leaders and staff are approachable and open to discussions and solutions. Surveys indicate that almost all parents are very satisfied with the school.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

Victory Heights Primary School fully meets the requirements for British Schools Overseas.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

1. Build on the robust safeguarding arrangements by ensuring that adult volunteers who plan to work in school undergo suitable checks.
2. Improve further the consistency of teaching, especially in the primary year groups, by providing regular opportunities for pupils to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning.



## 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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### The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable				
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		√		
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	<b>Victory Heights Primary School</b>
<b>Type of school</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Date school opened</b>	<b>September 2013</b>
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	<b>3–11 years</b>
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	<b>708</b>
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	<b>Foundation Stage 1 - 33000 AED to Year 6 - 45000 AED</b>
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Address of school</b>	<b>Dubai Sport City, Dubai, UAE</b>
<b>Telephone number</b>	<b>+9714 4231100</b>
<b>Email address</b>	<b>reception@vhprimary.com</b>
<b>Headteacher or Principal</b>	<b>Ms. Sasha Crabb</b>
<b>Proprietor</b>	<b>Mr. Dinesh Kothari</b>

## 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 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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