

# Raffles International School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 14 to 17 November 2021

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Age Group: 3 to 18  
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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 four 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.
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### 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

Raffles International School - South Campus is a private school which opened in September 2007 and is managed by the Innoventures education group which also runs five international schools and nine early years centres. The school is situated in Al Baghla Street, Umm Suqeim. It provides education for three to 18 year olds. Currently there are 1154 pupils, including 26 who are less than three years old. The school is smaller than many similar schools in Dubai and has recently developed its post-16 provision, which has 90 pupils on roll. Eighty-five nationalities are represented in the school. Twenty-five pupils are learning English as an additional language and 107 have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school follows the English national curriculum; pupils take International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in Year 11. Post-16 provision offers the choice of both A levels and BTEC courses. In the early years, children follow the early years foundation stage curriculum. Turnover of pupils is high due to parental mobility. Pupils go on to attend a wide number of international schools. The majority of post-16 leavers go on to universities, mostly in the UK. Most teaching staff qualified in the UK or Ireland. During the COVID-19 pandemic the school was fully locked down from March to July 2020 and provided only distance learning. It reopened in September 2020 offering a blend of on-site and distance learning. Since October 2021, learning at the school has been fully on site.

## 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 October 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 three weeks before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 56 lessons of which six were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. 32 meetings took place with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, administrative and support staff, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board, including the chief executive officer (CEO).

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of policies and documents relating to assessment and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The recorded views of parents and staff were analysed and pupils' spoken views considered.

## Evaluation of the school

Raffles International School is an outstanding school. It provides high-quality education for all its pupils and has made significant improvements since its last BSO inspection. It shows excellent capacity to continue to improve. It provided high quality remote learning during periods when pupils were unable to attend school as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns.

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 no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Pupils make outstanding progress in **English** from their various starting points; children starting in the early years have had much less access to spoken and written English than those in the UK and many new arrivals start with low levels of English. However, the focus on improving their skills, in some cases with specialist support, means that by the time they take their IGCSE examinations, they achieve standards at least comparable with those in England and in some cases higher. Standards have risen in recent years. Results at A level in both English Language and Literature were excellent in 2021. Teachers use their subject knowledge to diagnose and assess pupils' learning accurately and plan teaching that enables all pupils to make rapid progress, including those with SEND and those learning English as an additional language. Pupils develop awareness of the link between sounds and their written form; vocabulary and grammatical skills are taught systematically throughout the primary years enabling them to develop as independent readers and writers. By the end of Year 6, pupils know the main features of different types of writing and write for a range of different purposes and audiences. They use persuasive writing to sway opinion, for example when writing advertisements or travel brochures to entice tourists to visit their home country.

Pupils develop a passion for reading that starts in the early years and continues through the school, enhanced by a daily period of reading in the primary school for personal enjoyment. Pupils are presented with an extensive range of literature of high quality which provides an excellent basis for their development of vocabulary, grammar and comprehension. They read fluently and with understanding and by the end of key stage 3 know how to retrieve, infer and deduce information from texts.

Pupils' literacy skills improve steadily as they move through key stage 4 and into post-16 provision. They write with increasing confidence and fluency and read a range of stimulating and thought-provoking literature. In Year 13, students study the concept of power and compare and contrast how writers such as Kazuo Ishiguro and Margaret Atwood develop this. They deepen their analytical skills and communicate their learning with increasing confidence and fluency and attain good passes in English IGCSE and, more recently, at A level.

In **mathematics**, pupils' progress throughout the school is outstanding and results at both A level and IGCSE are well above UK averages. In the early years, children make rapid strides in their learning and nearly all children reach age-related expectations by the time they enter the primary school. They settle quickly and soon enjoy counting and recognising shapes. Through structured teaching and handling a variety of objects they quickly understand the concept of number and that 10 is one more than nine, for example.

Pupils, including those who have SEND and those who are learning English as an additional language, continue to make very good progress in mathematics in the primary school. Teachers work hard to provide interesting work which matches the needs of pupils. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are highly competent in using the four rules of number and enjoy the challenge of solving number problems relating to real-life situations. They reflect on the methods they are using in solving mathematical problems and thus become increasingly independent learners who check their own learning and support that of their peers.

Pupils make outstanding progress throughout the secondary school, where teaching is of a consistently high standard. They enjoy the challenges presented by teachers in lessons, which are interesting and structured well. Able pupils in Year 9, for example, calculate algebraic formulae to determine the next numbers in complex sequences. Able pupils take their IGCSE examinations a year early and obtain excellent results. Results have been improving year on year. In 2021, 91% of pupils gained A\*-C and 69% A\*-B, which is well above UK and international averages. Results in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) also indicate significant improvement in standards over time.

Students who take mathematics in post-16 provision attain very high results. Last year all students gained at least a B grade in their A-level examinations; all three students who took further mathematics gained an A or A\* grade.

In **science**, pupils across the school, including those with SEND and those learning English as an additional language make at least good progress against their targets and often better. Standards are improving and results from external tests, including TIMSS, show rising levels of performance with increasing numbers of pupils exceeding their targets.

In the early years, children enter the school with standards of attainment which are lower than those typical for their age in Britain. Careful planning of the curriculum, combined with consistently good teaching, ensures that they make sustained progress. They enjoy finding out about aspects of the world around them and are beginning to use scientific terms such as 'explore' and 'observe' to explain their ideas. Experiments such as mixing oil, water and colours and finding out how to grow grass help the children to become familiar with scientific experimentation and method. They delight in discovering features of the natural world.

In the primary school, pupils make very good progress and attain well. Good teaching and continuous assessment, which includes instant feedback in lessons, enables pupils to make significant gains in their levels of knowledge and understanding. Pupils are confident in carrying out experiments. They use scientific methods, establishing a hypothesis, testing it and recording results. In a Year 6 lesson on heredity, pupils hypothesised on genetic features such as eye and hair colour, investigated fellow pupils and family members and recorded their results. Great care was taken by them in presenting results accurately and clearly.

In the secondary school, pupils make at least good progress and attain well. Pupils build successfully upon the firm foundations laid in the primary school. Pupils deepen their understanding of scientific concepts, processes and methods as a result of the very good teaching provided by subject specialists. In a Year 9 lesson on farming, the teacher's subject expertise ensured that pupils developed a clear understanding of the impact of different types of farming on the natural world.

Students in post-16 are highly competent in their use of scientific methods. They make very good progress and attain well in their A level examinations.

## Other subjects

Attainment and progress in other subjects are in line with those in core subjects. Progress is always at least very good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils' skills in using information technology are outstanding and many pupils enjoy robotics, with enthusiasts performing well in national competitions. Results are improving continually as pupils make consistently good progress against the targets set for them. High quality teaching, based on high expectations and the planning of work which is carefully matched to the needs of all pupils, is a feature of the whole school. Pupils in key stage 4 and those in post-16 provision choose from a widening array of subjects, which motivates them as they follow their own interests. Progress is greatest for those pupils who have been in the school for longer periods of time.

### Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- Standards have improved in all subjects and are outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding overall and has been improving steadily (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding with meticulous planning to ensure the school's safe re-opening after lockdown (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, providing an excellent environment for learning (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 outstanding and have been the driving force for improving standards (see Standard 8 below).

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during November 2021, 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 **curriculum** is outstanding. It is broad, balanced, relevant to modern life and very well matched to the needs of all pupils. A broad curriculum was maintained throughout most of the remote-learning and lockdown period, with the exception of drama, which is now fully reinstated. During lockdown pupils of all ages were provided with a full curriculum and developed their skills in the use of technology and became adept at recording their work online. The curriculum is the embodiment of the school's vision statement: 'to empower students with a holistic rigorous and international education for success in an ever-changing world'. The curriculum has been reviewed and redesigned in recent years and provides increasing choice for older pupils in the secondary school and those in post-16 provision so that pupils are able to select subjects that best meet their individual needs and interests. It provides an excellent balance, focusing on both academic and personal needs with the recent introduction of well-being sessions which are very well received by pupils.

Provision for inclusion is similarly outstanding and pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language have access to the whole curriculum because of the planning of their teachers and the consistent support of high quality that they receive.

The curriculum meets the requirements of the framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and the national curriculum for England. Through excellent careers guidance, pupils choose appropriate options for IGCSE courses and gain access to universities, the majority of which are in Britain. Britishness permeates the curriculum and provides a solid basis for entry to the English educational system at any stage. The school celebrates key British festivals and occasions. The very strong personal, social, emotional and health programme promotes the key British values of tolerance and respect for all groups.

Curriculum policies and plans encourage respect for all, with particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, race and religious belief. They cannot fully address marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation and gender assignment due to the laws of the United Arab Emirates.

Explicit links between subjects provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to transfer skills and knowledge from one subject to another and to understand the inter-relatedness of learning. Information technology is integrated into all subjects and the expansion of portable technology takes learning beyond the classroom and helps pupils develop independent and collaborative skills.

A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the range of languages offered. The curriculum is enhanced through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which provide pupils with ample opportunities to pursue their individual interests and talents and play an essential part in preparation for life after school. In the week of the inspection a group of students were undertaking a demanding overnight 'expedition' as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Take-up of extra-curricular activities is at a high level and quality is high. Visitors to the school, such as authors and sportsmen and women enhance the school's curriculum and their contributions are well integrated.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** is outstanding overall and has been central to the ongoing improvement in standards. It is especially strong in mathematics in the secondary school. Teachers across the school have a depth of both subject and pedagogical knowledge that enables them to plan accurately how to develop their pupils' learning. Through good questioning and checking of learning in books, online and in lessons they identify and quickly remedy pupils' misunderstandings and develop teaching that is highly responsive to their needs; this enables pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress. Teachers and leaders have high expectations of pupils and of each other; they have devised a

clear approach to what is expected in successful lessons. Teachers provide work at different levels based on ongoing assessment of pupils' needs and encourage pupils to challenge themselves. In many mathematics lessons, for example, pupils are given some brief questions to answer after initial teaching and, dependent on their level of response, are given options as to the level of difficulty in further work or are assigned work according to their ongoing needs.

Teachers are conscientious and are well supported by their assistants. Pupils benefit from well-informed, well-planned teaching which builds on their prior knowledge, understanding and skills; this supports both their academic progress and personal development. Lessons are structured well and give pupils the opportunity to revise previous work and build on it. Pupils know the purpose of lessons and can assess the progress that they have made at the end.

Teachers develop excellent resources, including the widespread use of digital technology, which enhances pupils' independent and collaborative learning. It is used creatively to create a dialogue between teachers and pupils with the continual exchange of ideas and feedback. This was especially important during periods of remote learning when the school continued to offer a wide curriculum and teaching of high quality which ensured academic standards were maintained. The school provided most of its remote learning by video conferencing with work completed online using a variety of software packages appropriate to the age of pupils. Where work was completed on paper, or orally, it was captured on film or video by pupils, including those in primary classes. Pupils followed a modified timetable but with a similar workload to that in school. During remote learning teachers engaged directly with individual pupils to check both on their work and on their personal development. Pupils of all ages recorded work online and enjoyed engaging with teachers about their work. Teachers identified how pupils could progress further and provided additional ideas and suggestions as needed. This feedback was well received and acted upon by pupils. Much of this very good practice has now become embedded in the way teachers and pupils interact with detailed, personal online feedback a feature of many classes.

The excellent relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils develop pupils' confidence and self-worth and support their acquisition of learning skills. Pupils who have English as an additional language quickly acquire basic language skills and by the end of Year 6, most are ready to develop the more complex and formal skills required for the secondary curriculum. Pupils at all levels of ability learn from, and are supportive of, each other. In many lessons this is developed formally as part of lessons as 'learning partners' share initial thoughts and ideas before wider class conversations with the teachers. In physical education lessons, pupils are expected, from an early age, to give specific feedback to each other so that they can help each other improve.

The school uses formal assessment linked to the national curriculum to provide a clear and regular check on pupils' progress. The use of laminated sheets and mini whiteboards allows pupils to try out answers and for teachers to assess instantly how well pupils are learning. Assessment is accurate and carefully moderated, with regular and sensitive feedback helping pupils to know how to improve their work. Pupils are very well prepared for examinations and know how to assess their work against examination criteria.

In Year 13, students who study literature demonstrate a marked capacity for critical discussion and enjoyment. They study a wide range of books. Teachers make lessons interesting and are adept at encouraging pupils to think about issues of contemporary life.

Support for the inclusion of pupils with SEND and those at an early stage of learning English is exceptionally well planned and enables pupils to make excellent progress from their starting points. Meeting pupils' needs is rightly seen as a collective responsibility of the whole staff and is apparent through the individual education plans or 'passports' which are in place. Able students are challenged well, although in occasional primary lessons the level of challenge could be heightened.

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

Most of 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.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is outstanding. Pupils are very proud to learn in an inclusive learning environment. They see the school community as an extension of their family and fully appreciate the importance of treating every member equally and with respect.

The school is inclusive and strongly promotes respect for others. A close examination of the school's curriculum and discussions with senior leaders, pupils and parents and carers shows that the school pays due regard to the protected characteristics of race, religion, belief, disability, pregnancy and maternity and age (as laid out in the UK Equality Act 2010). It cannot meet fully the requirements of the act in relation to marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation and gender assignment due to the laws in the United Arab Emirates.

Pupils believe that working hard and doing their best are important features to enable them to become effective learners. They understand that regular attendance is essential if they are to reach their full potential and progress towards university and successful careers. They are resilient, recognising that determination and commitment are needed to succeed.

Pupils are responsible and value their friendships and relationships with staff. They enjoy coming to school and participate in all aspects of school life, including the leadership of the school. Pupils are welcoming and polite. They take care to conduct themselves sensibly around the school site. They contribute strongly to producing a calm, collegiate learning environment that they value highly. No aspect of school life is disrupted by poor behaviour.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of British values, such as the rule of law, and enjoy putting democratic principles into practice. For example, pupils take part in elections for head boy and girl and house, sports and environment leaders. They show leadership skills with their involvement, for example in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Pink Day and 'Sports 30-30,' in which they led arrangements for members of the school community to participate in 30 minutes of sport for 30 days in November. Pupils played a significant role in a review of the school uniform and the design of the new one. Pupils believe that their views are considered and acted upon by school leaders.

Pupils commemorate Remembrance Day and show knowledge and understanding of the British monarchy and its role in ensuring separation of powers through the functioning of institutions such as the British parliament.

Pupils contribute positively to the lives of people living in the local community. They are involved in a wide range of charitable events. They collect second-hand school uniforms for pupils in India and collect funds to help build a school in Nepal. They are aware of global issues and have set up a pupil-led United Nations group with the aim of raising awareness of world crises. They actively engage in events such as International Day.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including Spanish dancing, volleyball, robotics, computer coding, journalism and cartoon club are available to pupils and contribute to both their personal and wider academic development. Pupils enjoy these opportunities. A large majority of pupils take part in a wide range of clubs. Many participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which helps them to develop self-reliance, confidence and teamworking skills which challenge them to take increasing risks but to do so safely. Pupils participate in a wide range of competitive sports such as football, swimming, basketball

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and volleyball, nurturing their teamwork, while challenging themselves to achieve their highest possible level. Given current COVID-19-related restrictions on the number of pupils who can use the pool at any time, pupils in the swimming teams commit to starting dedicated training early in the morning. Pupils have been very appreciative of the arrangements made for their learning and personal safety during periods of lockdown and remote learning.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. Considerable care and attention are devoted to ensuring that pupils are free from harm. The school adopts a preventative approach in which every individual understands his or her role both in keeping safe and helping others to do so. Assemblies and lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE), help pupils identify potential dangers and keep themselves safe.

The school has developed policies which outline, in detail, required practices relating to health, safety and well-being that meet the required UK and local standards. The designated child protection officers all have current training and lead the school's response in this area, providing regular training for school staff and others who work with pupils. The school's student leaders play a valuable role in championing safety and pupils are quick to support each other.

Procedures for arrival and departure are clear and appropriate levels of supervision are in place throughout the day. Younger pupils are supervised suitably as they move around school. Security staff ensure that visitors are checked as they come into the school and play a valuable role in ensuring ongoing safety in a pleasant and supportive manner. Pool safety is given high priority with a lifeguard present when pupils are in the water.

The school uses closed circuit television (CCTV) to monitor key areas in the school and staff check all aspects of the school regularly. Problems are recognised quickly, responded to, reported on, recorded, referred and rectified speedily. Fire drills are held and analysed for possible improvement and suitable checks are carried out by external agencies to ensure that electrical products, fire equipment and pool water are monitored on a regular basis. Hygiene standards in the canteen are high and healthy eating is encouraged.

Suitable records are kept for admissions and attendance with effective systems to follow up pupils' absences. Attendance levels are high and were at 96% prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents and pupils all state their confidence in the school as a safe place in which to learn. There are very few incidents of bullying.

The behaviour for learning policy stresses the right for children to learn in a safe and secure environment and the school achieves this with very rare use of sanctions. On those occasions where pupils fall out with each other, restorative justice is used to help them resolve their problems in a constructive manner. No pupil has been excluded in recent times.

Regular and relevant risk assessments are undertaken. These are always in place for trips beyond school and for special events. First aid boxes are regularly replenished and hazardous materials for cleaning or scientific experimentation are stored under lock and key. Procedures for managing accidents and first aid are very good. The school has two full-time nurses and a doctor who ensure that medicines are stored safely and that pupils receive suitable care when needed.

The school's health and safety team is proactive. It played an important role in ensuring that pupils and staff returned confidently to a school which was safe for them after the COVID-19 lockdown. All local requirements were implemented fully. Throughout periods of remote learning close attention was paid to the emotional and physical well-being of pupils and staff. Suitable arrangements have been made across the school to keep pupils and staff socially distanced and regular sanitisation is employed. Procedures for entry to the school have been modified to ensure that visitors, including parents, are checked before coming onto the premises.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Thorough checks are made when appointing all staff. Initial advertisements to recruit staff include a statement about the school's commitment to child protection and safeguarding. Suitable checks are made to ensure the identity and history of potential appointees and references, police and medical checks are all scrutinised and recorded on a secure, electronic data base and are fully aligned with UK expectations. Board members too have been subject to identity checks; appropriate arrangements are in place for external contractors. The provision of training ensures that all staff are aware of the importance of safeguarding and their role in promoting the highest possible standards of safety.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The school provides a highly attractive and safe environment in which to learn. It is very well maintained and has been imaginatively developed to create a vibrant learning environment. Facilities are excellent and are constantly evaluated to ensure that they are well used and meet the needs of pupils. Specialist facilities include laboratories, design and technology, music, art and drama areas, a lecture theatre and several sports areas both within the building and outside, including a large sports hall. Additional sporting areas have been added in response to pupils' recommendations. The library is well organised and well stocked with factual and fictional books and includes a good range of books in Arabic and some in other languages. It has areas for independent study and is well used. There is a splash pool for younger children and a covered 25 metre pool for more advanced swimming. Children in the early years use outside learning areas to extend their learning opportunities. Outside areas are suitably protected from the sun.

Classrooms are of good size and are nearly all equipped with an electronic board which helps teachers develop attractive and purposeful learning materials to stimulate learning. Teachers increasingly use this technology to project pupils' work onto the main screen, helping pupils to learn well from each other.

Permanent and changing displays around the school enrich the environment and reflect global, British, home-country and multicultural aspects of modern life. They also provide space for notices about ongoing developments, and they celebrate the work of pupils. Within classrooms, displays not only celebrate the learning of pupils but act as an 'additional teacher' as they provide information which pupils can use to progress without reliance on others.

Dedicated space for post-16 students is currently limited and the school has rightly identified the need to provide tailored space so that students can have better facilities both for study, collaboration, relaxation and recreation.

There is plentiful office space of good quality. The medical room is well equipped and stocked and includes a sick bay. There is also a separate isolation bay when needed. The school has made multiple, carefully considered adjustments to its provision as a result of COVID-19 and these have helped ensure that everyone in the school remains safe.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. It provides clear information for parents in a timely manner; parents regularly visit the school's website and its parent portal. The website is updated regularly so that parents have access to school policies as well as the latest news, events and information about pupils' performance in external assessments. The website also contains important information about the curriculum, timings of the school day, extra-curricular activities, the maximum number of pupils in a class and the arrangements the school makes to support pupils with SEND. Details of the owners and CEO are available, together with information on how to contact the school's leaders.

School communication systems are effective in providing parents with an up-to-date picture of their children's performance through regular emails from teachers and form tutors, access to an online platform and the school's parent portal. Parents become active partners in their child's education and support their child's progress. Reports are provided five times a year and are accompanied by two teacher-parent conferences. Parents who are less familiar with the British education system sometimes find difficulty in understanding the content of some pupil reports. However, they value greatly the teacher-parent conferences which follow as teachers clearly explain in detail the progress being made by the pupils and what they need to do to improve in individual subjects. These conferences are well attended.

Parents play an active role in the life of the school and see their involvement as making a valuable contribution in helping their children to learn. In the primary school every class has a nominated parent enabling the sharing of information and views between parents and class teacher. In the secondary school the parent-teacher association is very active and meets with the principal every week. It identifies issues, works with senior leaders in making improvements and raises funds for improvements and projects. The association was instrumental in modifying arrangements for dropping off and picking up pupils to reduce the amount of congestion and played a leading role in securing changes to the school's uniform. The association helped to organize the sending of second-hand books to a school in India. Before the lockdown parents worked with the librarian to support book exchanges.

Parents are members of the school's advisory council. They also play a significant role helping to organize special events such 'International Day' where different cultures are celebrated.

Parents feel that they are seen by staff and leaders as an essential part of the school community collaborating to provide high quality learning opportunities. They believe the school has dealt with the effects of COVID-19 very effectively as the school has engaged with them in detail about arrangements made to ensure safety. They are happy with the arrangements that were made for online learning and believe pupils are kept safe in school.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Its complaints policy is published on the school's website and is based on a staged system which seeks to resolve matters informally wherever possible. Parents have ready access to teachers and most difficulties are speedily resolved without any need to involve others. Records are kept of individual cases and are monitored as a regular feature of the school's approach to ensuring that parents are satisfied.

Few cases need to involve the school principal or the board due to the preventative stance taken. Parents indicate that the school listens well to their concerns and addresses matters speedily.

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## Standard 8. Leadership and management

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Leadership and management are outstanding and have led the creation of a culture which sets high expectations for pupils and staff, while supporting their development and well-being. Senior leaders, supported by middle leaders, pay ongoing and detailed attention to improving the quality of teaching. Results for every pupil are analysed carefully and interventions made to maximise their progress. Leaders know the school, its teachers and its pupils very well and develop clear plans to promote ongoing improvement. They are good listeners and are keen to gather feedback from parents, pupils and staff and act on this information. Leaders' high expectations are accompanied by practical decision making; they understand what is needed to improve even further the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving steadily as a result of the support and guidance they provide.

The school's arrangements for health and safety and the well-being of its pupils are exemplary; policies are well written and well communicated, and actions taken are recorded and reviewed. The curriculum has been extended to provide not only more academic choice and rigour but to provide greater attention to the well-being of pupils and staff. The work of different school teams is well integrated with the child at the heart. Pupils enjoy school and trust their leaders, who have created an environment in which pupils thrive and are empowered to try new ideas and take risks. They increasingly understand both their own needs as learners and future citizens and those of others.

The school's owners and board work very closely with the school's leaders. They are knowledgeable and very involved. Financial and staffing decisions are delegated to the principal and senior staff who know that they are fully accountable for their actions. An advisory council, comprising some board members, company staff, parents, senior leaders and invited teachers is a driving force for change. It meets regularly and operates as both a think tank to develop ideas, a collector of information, an advocate for action and a monitoring group.

A subgroup of the council undertakes the appraisal of the school principal. The school's appraisal system combines well the development of staff with the needs of the school. Growing attention has been given to professional development with a focus on classroom practice through peer and leaders' observations, coaching and group discussion. Teachers access UK courses to develop their leadership skills.

Leaders play a lead role in ensuring that all are treated with equity. An ethos of tolerance and care for others permeates the school. Staff are recruited and deployed very well. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and fully aligned with UK practice.

Careful consideration is given to the composition of year teams, balancing the development of teachers with the best interests of pupils. With return from lockdown, there has been a significant additional demand on all staff and senior leaders are alert to risks to their well-being. Staff retention is high, compared to many similar schools, as the vast majority of teachers take pride in being part of a school which is constantly improving.

The school operates very efficiently with a strong administrative team working alongside academic leaders. Measures to make the school safe during the recent pandemic have been implemented thoroughly and communicated clearly and effectively.

School leaders have a sound base for its ongoing development because of their detailed knowledge of all aspects of school life. They have already developed a realistic post-lockdown improvement plan to continue and extend all aspects of work with a continuing focus towards ensuring the continuation of well-crafted, stimulating lessons. During periods of remote learning and return to school with COVID-19 restrictions, leaders have ensured that pupils and staff are fully safe and that high quality teaching and learning has continued.

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## Early years provision

In the early years, teachers and teaching assistants create a safe and welcoming atmosphere in which children thrive. Children settle well and make rapid progress in their personal and social development, gaining confidence in experimenting and trying new things. They learn to share and take turns and be kind to each other. Most children can speak and understand conversational English when they start school but very few have any experience of reading or writing. They make rapid gains in their spoken language and steady gains in their early reading and writing skills. Most complete simple sums, add and count on and back to find the answer and can describe the characteristics of shape. Children experiment with different materials and set up 'mini investigations'. They are adept at taking care of their personal hygiene, following COVID-19 safety procedures and scrupulously washing their hands after activities. At the end of the EYFS, most children are working at age-related expectations and are ready to start primary schooling.

The early years teaching team is very well led and shares a common vision of how young children learn. They strike the right balance between encouraging children to initiate their own learning activities and the direct teaching of basic skills. Children with additional learning needs are exceptionally well supported.

Curriculum planning has been adapted to meet changed requirements in the framework for the EYFS. The different areas of learning are interconnected with excellent opportunities for children to become active learners, developing thinking skills and learning through developmental play and exploration. Detailed planning with specific learning outcomes for the various activities ensures that children progress in all areas of learning.

Assessments are appropriate to the age of the children as their starting points are established and progress is closely monitored and assessed across all areas of learning. Communication with parents is excellent; during the present COVID-19 measures, parents received videos showing their children's development. Resources are plentiful and are well organised.

## Post 16 provision

Post-16 is a popular option both with Year 11 pupils in Raffles and pupils from other schools. Numbers have risen considerably over the last three years and are now close to 100.

A levels and BTECs form the basis of the sixth-form curriculum. This provides considerable choice in the subjects studied and a clear pathway to higher education. Results are improving year on year.

Teaching is very good overall and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are specialists in their fields and use their expertise to provide interesting and challenging lessons. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent. Teachers create a welcoming learning environment where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and achieve the highest standards. Students show commitment, resilience and a determination to succeed and progress to study at university.

Students enjoy considerable opportunities to take on extra responsibility and develop as leaders. Leadership positions include that of head boy and girl, deputy head boy and girl and leaders of student groups in sport, the environment and pupil well-being. Students also take the lead in organising special events such as distributing charity boxes for workers in work camps abroad.

Students are mature and knowledgeable about current world issues and are committed to learning more about how the United Nations can improve the lives of people across the world, for example. They are active in helping to improve their environment. They have a deep respect for different cultures and beliefs and a real sense of responsibility for their community.

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The leadership of the sixth form is highly effective. Leaders have been successful in improving the range of study opportunities available to the students, have overseen an improvement in standards and prepared students well for the next phase in their educational journey.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

Raffles International 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 point for development:

The school has expanded its post-16 provision appreciably but has not yet been able to provide a dedicated area for study or relaxation, partially because of distancing requirements of COVID-19 restrictions. Providing dedicated facilities available for students will support the growth of this provision and help to build a culture that prepares students for independent and collaborative study. It will also support students' preparation for adult study when they leave school.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstandin	Good	Satisfactor	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

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

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

	Outstandin	Good	Satisfactor	Inadequate
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	X			
The behaviour of pupils	X			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

	Outstandin	Good	Satisfactor	Inadequate
The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	X			

### Leadership and management

	Outstandin	Good	Satisfactor	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	X			

## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	Raffles International School
<b>Type of school</b>	Independent, privately owned, co-educational
<b>Date school opened</b>	September, 2007
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-18
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1154
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	0
<b>Annual fees day (pupils)</b>	Nursery 31,485 – Year 13 83,420 dirhams
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	n/a
<b>Address of school</b>	Al Baghla Street, Umm Suqeim 3, Dubai
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 4 427 1200
<b>Email address</b>	sandraa@rafflesis.com
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Richardson
<b>Proprietor</b>	Innoventures Education Group

## 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.

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**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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