

Al Ain English Speaking School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

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Lead Inspector: Nadine Powrie
Team: Rekha Bhakoo, David Jones

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

The Standards are as follows:

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

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

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

Key for inspection grades

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

Proportions used in the report

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

Information about the school

Al Ain English Speaking School is an independent and fully inclusive school for pupils from age three years to age 18 years. It is situated in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi. There are 1,685 pupils and 50 different nationalities. There are 206 children in early years, 987 pupils in primary and 494 pupils in secondary, of whom 72 students are in the new sixth form. Seven per cent of pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), for whom it makes additional or special provision. English is not the principal language of 81% of the pupils. The school offers a wide range of 22 GCSE and IGCSE courses in key stage 4 and 19 A levels in key stage 5.

The school principal has been in post for seven years and two deputy principals were internally promoted last year. This year, the school has a below-average staff turnover of 7%. The governing board has five members. Forty-two new teaching staff were appointed in September 2021 as a result of the school continuing to grow with 393 new pupil enrolments.

The school has started building an extra annexe to teach home economics, design technology and engineering and media studies, due to open in September 2022.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school closed between March and May 2020. All pupils had equal access to remote learning. In September 2021, the school remained closed for two weeks. Nursery was closed for six months last academic year and then two months this year. It re-opened after October half term 2021. Rigorous processes to ensure that standards were maintained were put in place. Attendance dipped to 92% but the school has worked very hard to bring it back to 96%. Safeguarding arrangements, including a well-being risk assessment for staff and pupils, were well implemented through online webinars. Communication with all stakeholders was done using emails, WhatsApp and the school website. Following the school's assessment to identify gaps in learning, it put in place 'Keep up Curriculum' to enable a large majority of pupils to catch up.

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 January 2022 and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the inspection start date. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 68 lessons both in classes and live online. One lesson was jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. Inspectors gave feedback to three members of staff.

There were 23 meetings with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and carers and members of the school's governing board, including the owner of the school.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered by looking at survey results and in meetings with parents, pupil councils and teachers.

Evaluation of the school

Al Ain English Speaking School is a good school and provides a good quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

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.

English

In English, pupils' attainment and progress are good across the school. This includes those with SEND and those who are learning English as an additional language (EAL).

Most children in the early years arrive with skills in English language and communication that are below those typical for their age. In early years, children make at least good progress in English and achieve the early learning goals in Communication and Language. Most children listen attentively and practise their speaking skills by expressing ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences. Their confidence in using recently introduced vocabulary is growing.

By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics is in line with the English average. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress in reading and writing skills. By the end of Year 6, 94% of pupils met the expected standard in English. Of these, 73% of pupils made more than expected progress.

The 'Talk for Writing' strategy has been embedded in English lessons, which has led to significant improvements in pupils' use of grammar and language in their independent work. In key stage 3, pupils continue to make good progress and reach expected standards for their age. Most pupils can read and write fluently, using the appropriate tone for different audiences.

In key stage 4, the quality of teaching and well-planned interventions enable most pupils to make good progress, particularly with summaries and synthesis and critical reading and comprehension. By the end of Year 11, a large majority of pupils exceeded UK national averages in external examinations (71% in language and 100% in literature for grades 7 to 9).

Students in the sixth form attain high standards in English literature at A level. However, the number of students opting for it remains very low. Both students who were entered for the examination achieved A* to B.

Mathematics

The progress and attainment made by pupils in mathematics are good. This includes pupils with SEND, boys and girls and those for whom English is an additional language. Most young children in the early years make at least good progress from their starting points and typically achieve the early learning goals in mathematics. In primary classes, most pupils make consistently good progress. Pupils are developing secure knowledge of number facts. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is at English age-related expectations. This good progress continues through into key stage 2 and by Year 6 pupils confidently work out the factors of numbers and identify common factors quickly and accurately. By the end of key stage 2 pupils' attainment is at similar levels to the standards typically found in schools in England.

In the secondary school pupils make excellent progress. By Year 9, almost all can find missing angles in a right-angled triangle using the inverse of trigonometric functions. By Year 11, the accelerated mathematics group is successfully integrating functions. A large majority of pupils attain grades in their GCSE examinations which exceed national and international benchmarking.

Both the AS and A-level examination results for 2021 show attainment to be very good with a large majority gaining grades that are above UK national averages. Pupils continue to develop very good knowledge and are able to make deductions and inferences to draw conclusions by using mathematical reasoning. A large majority demonstrate their knowledge and skills when solving complex equations or critical-thinking problems.

Science

Attainment and progress in science are good across the school. Girls perform better than boys in science, but this gap is closing and over time science outcomes for pupils continue to improve. Pupils with SEND and those learning EAL make similar progress to that of other pupils.

In early years, children make at least good progress in science and achieve the UK early learning goals in Understanding the World. They practise early science skills through observations of animals and explain why things happen. Through discovery sessions they have opportunities to explore and describe different materials.

Pupils develop their scientific skills and knowledge as they progress through the primary phase. For example, during the inspection in a Year 3 class, pupils compared the differences between an exoskeleton and an endoskeleton. They explored the limitations of an exoskeleton by wrapping paper around their finger joints and testing for dexterity. Through this they consolidated scientific knowledge and enquiry skills. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment and progress are in line with UK averages.

Pupils' knowledge and skills in science continue to improve throughout the secondary phase. For example, during the inspection in a Year 9 class, pupils' previous scientific knowledge of acids and alkalis prepared them well for an investigation into the potential hydrogen of different chemicals. A large majority of pupils attain grades in their biology, chemistry and physics examinations which exceed UK and international benchmarking.

By the end of secondary, most pupils make at least good progress. For example, during the inspection in a Year 13 class on selective breeding, students provided strong articulate answers to the teachers' questions on the biological processes involved. They demonstrated very secure understanding of concepts and precise scientific vocabulary. A large majority of students in the sixth form attain grades in their biology, chemistry and physics examination which exceed UK and international benchmarking.

Other subjects

Pupils make the same good progress in subjects across the wider curriculum as they do in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In the nine other GCSE subjects, pupils achieve at a similar level to their English counterparts and do better than them in six subjects across all grade thresholds. They achieve better than their English counterparts in all seven other A-level subjects at grades A*-B.

Leaders responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the continuity of learning. During the school closure, teachers provided high-quality live and recorded lessons using video conferencing. The school have ensured that every child has access to learning by providing the necessary equipment. The school gave guidance to parents through supporting videos, troubleshooting sessions and online workshops to give guidance for learning at home. E-safety was one of the school's main priorities. All parents attended a workshop to ensure that pupils would continue to develop safer online behaviours out of school. The students' council organised an online homework club and ran revision sessions where prefects tutored younger pupils. As a result of the pandemic there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. However, leaders have implemented a very effective recovery plan, 'Keep up Curriculum', that has enabled a large majority of pupils to catch up quickly.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good.
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met.
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard.
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this standard.
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.

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

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

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

The quality of the **curriculum** is good. The curriculum enables pupils to make good progress in following the English national curriculum. There is a clear rationale well-planned programmes of learning across different subjects through a thematic cross-curricular approach. The curriculum is underpinned by shared values, enrichment opportunities and pastoral support. It is planned coherently for progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. Units of work for individual subjects are sequenced to build systematically on pupils' knowledge and develop their skills.

The curriculum has been planned to meet the needs of all learners and the UAE educational setting through the promotion of a strong set of morals and values. The school is committed to embracing British culture. For example, pupils experience democracy in action through the school council where 48 elected representatives represent their peers. Pupils follow a code of behaviour that respects diversity and promotes tolerance. Pupils are well prepared for external examinations commonly used in UK schools. This enables them to enter or re-enter the UK educational system effectively.

Teachers' planning follows the English early years foundation stage curriculum and supports the needs and interests of all children through play-based provision. Literacy and mathematical provision through texts like 'Owl Babies' help children to recognise and understand numbers up to 5 and enable them to explore story sequencing. Children have access to dedicated indoor and outdoor learning spaces to provide a variety of early-learning experiences across the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a broad and rich curriculum from the revised English early years foundation stage framework to the English national curriculum for key stages 1 to 3.

The school is thorough in providing pupils in the secondary phase with a wide range of subject choices to prepare them for their future and allow them to meet UAE requirements. It also provides them with access to a range of national and international universities. In studying for their IGCSEs pupils have a wide choice of different approved subjects. Pupils are well prepared to choose either three or four A-level subjects and for the next steps in their educational career with a strong career-education programme from Year 7 onwards. The school makes good use of its local community to enhance the curriculum and promote pupils' aspirations, including by inviting successful professionals to talk about their experiences.

The curriculum is fully inclusive, broad and balanced with systems in place for early intervention and personalised learning plans for pupils with SEND. The needs of pupils learning EAL are met via small-group or individual tuition.

The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is woven through all subjects. Pupils have a broad understanding of and show great respect for faiths and cultures different from their own. The curriculum promotes the key British values of respect for, and tolerance of, different faiths, beliefs and ideas. This contributes to creating a cohesive school community with respect, cooperation and high levels of engagement among all groups.

Pupils benefit from an effective programme of high-quality personal, social and health education in which they explore healthy living, democracy and social issues. Popular extra-curricular activities enrich and extend the formal curriculum, allowing pupils to develop their personal interests and skills. Clubs include sports, drama, chess, public speaking and choir.

The curriculum was modified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic with a blend of recorded and live online lessons. The school ensured that it provided means of communication and resources for pupils to give them access to the curriculum at home.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. It enables most pupils, of all cultural backgrounds, to make at least good progress in securing knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Those with SEND and who speak EAL receive teaching which matches their needs. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and over time. Pupils respond very positively and make good progress.

Across all phases of the school, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Across the school relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive and respectful. Consequently, pupils are well motivated and are keen to participate actively in their learning. They enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively and learn through discussions with their peers. They feel confident in seeking clarification or help if they are having difficulty. As a result, the learning environment in lessons is productive and pupils say that they enjoy lessons.

Learning activities are well managed and teachers plan tasks and activities that engage and motivate pupils. Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and to extend and deepen their learning. Teachers in the primary phase have a good understanding of the expectations of the national curriculum for England and teach well-organised and well-resourced lessons. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson based on identifying the number of vertices of different 3-D shapes, the work was carefully planned with effective use of resources to enable pupils to work collaboratively. Through careful teacher modelling and use of subject-specific vocabulary pupils were able to identify the vertices of the shapes and record them successfully with confidence.

In the secondary phase teachers make excellent use of their subject expertise as they plan their lessons to meet very specific and relevant learning goals. These are closely aligned with the requirements of the syllabus and examination requirements of the UK-based curriculum. Many lessons in secondary feature a strong balance between teacher instruction and pupils' opportunities to think critically. This promotes effective learning skills.

Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils is constructive and personalised and peer marking has a strong impact on pupils' independent assessment skills. However, the quality of written feedback requires further detail to ensure that pupils are helped to identify their next steps for learning and gain a depth of knowledge in key areas of the curriculum. Teachers gather and record a great deal of accurate assessment information but do not use it well enough to address specific gaps in pupils' learning. This is particularly evident in the early years.

Behaviour-management strategies are effective. Pupils behave well during structured and unstructured periods of the day. The relationships between staff and pupils are indicators of the highly positive ethos of the school.

The school has been successful in maintaining the quality of learning experiences in online learning during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote learning consisted of a mixture of recorded and live online lessons. This included the successful use of a range of online platforms for pupils of all ages to demonstrate their learning in core subjects. The quality of remote learning was maintained through monitoring and regular survey feedback from parents, pupils and teachers.

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

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi) of the UK Equality Act 2010 that cannot be met due to the laws of the host country. The school's provision promotes respect for all people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief and pregnancy and maternity. Those characteristics which UAE law precludes the school from addressing are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Al Ain English Speaking School is an inclusive school with examples of strong practice. All pupils including those with SEND are fully accepted by others. Those pupils with more severe needs and disability are fully involved in school life and provided with the care that they need. The school is characterised by caring and respectful relationships between pupils and adults. It has high expectations of respect for others, resulting in a school that is a harmonious community where pupils can grow.

The school develops pupils' self-esteem, confidence, knowledge and resilience through various programmes. These include sporting opportunities and adventurous pursuits, which are internationally recognised. Opportunities are also provided for older pupils to participate in national collaborative projects and for those in primary to participate in programmes developing skills in early entrepreneurship.

The school is proactive in promoting equality of opportunity, for example in raising awareness of health issues that predominantly affect women and planning to ensure that boys' academic performance is at least the same as that of girls.

The physical needs of a healthy life are promoted through strong physical education provision, focused assemblies, tutor guidance and healthy-eating campaigns. The emotional needs of pupils are addressed through events such as 'Happiness Day', when pupils organise enjoyable events and reflect on the importance of acts of kindness. The school's wide range of extra-curricular provision is now restarting after the pandemic. It includes sports activities, academic revision and specialist clubs that are chosen and led by pupils. These activities are well attended by both genders.

The school fulfils its mission of treating others with respect and dignity and fostering global citizenship. It has fifty different nationalities and has ensured that values of care, tolerance and integrity are developed in the curriculum. Pupils and staff report that the school is like a 'big family' where pupils' views are listened to and honoured. The school celebrates different cultures and traditions with activities which are now returning as live events. Student leaders organise International Day, when pupils and staff dress in national costume and run stalls and events to reflect different countries. The school commemorates UAE National Day, with Emirati food tasting and visits from camels. Religious festivals such as Diwali and Christmas are also celebrated.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of laws and good citizenship. British values are woven into the schools' work. Pupils understand the meaning of democracy and use its process in the election of head boy and girl, the school council and primary parliament. Pupils demonstrate these values in the way that they support others and through their good manners towards everyone, including visitors. Views contradictory to British values are always carefully treated and addressed through balanced argument. British life is explored through assemblies and special events, including the British Pudding Competition, to find the best British recipe. This aspect is also reviewed in the curriculum, through history, geography and literature, in which they learn about Britain both in the present and past.

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

The school meets the requirements of the standard and the regulatory requirements and cultural obligations of the UAE.

Planning and provision to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good. Pupils conveyed to inspectors that they feel safe in their school and that teachers help them in the same way as parents. They know that adults listen to their concerns and always take account of their welfare and safety. Parents know that the school gives safeguarding priority. Pupils and parents have been made aware of the importance of online safety through a comprehensive policy that has been shared with everyone and followed up with special lessons for pupils. In school assemblies, pupils learn how to stay safe when out in public places and in their neighbourhood.

Behaviour across the school is at least good. The school has carried out events to celebrate inclusion and raise awareness of pupils' differences. Anti-bullying is strongly promoted, with school policy shared with everyone in the community. Pupils report that bullying is rare in their school and if it does occur, is swiftly managed by student leaders and staff.

The school environment is calm and encourages very positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils new to school are helped to settle in quickly and those moving to other places are well supported with careful planning for their individual needs.

The school has good systems to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality. Attendance is in line with the UK average, at 96%.

School leaders have developed effective systems for safeguarding and child protection, following UK guidance. All staff sign to confirm receipt of the child protection policy and key contacts for safeguarding are available on the reverse of staff and visitor badges. To protect pupils further, the school has included a link to the 'Whisper e-safety' system on their website where pupils can disclose any safeguarding incidents or worries.

The school has eight appropriately trained leaders for safeguarding. All adults and those new to the school are trained in safeguarding. Those responsible for health and safety ensure that UAE and UK regulations are followed and that the school environment is safe for learning. All staff are responsible for the safety of the premises and report any incidents, which are appropriately logged and actioned. Risk assessments are undertaken for all school activities which present a potential hazard. Pupils are well supervised at all times both inside and outside the school premises. In line with best UK and UAE practice, the school has robust systems and procedures in place for fire safety.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school provided effective guidance to both pupils and families. This included tips to promote pupils' happiness and motivation at home and advice on online safety.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has a human resources team of four to ensure that there are comprehensive checks on staff. These include background checks to comply with the expectations for the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Recruitment procedures check identity, qualifications and up to three references from previous positions. Police checks, together with proof of the right to work in the UAE, are verified prior to potential candidates joining the school. These checks are made on governors, teaching and non-teaching staff. Records of all checks are kept in a single central

register. Staff, governors and the proprietor on the appointments panel have completed the safer-recruitment training.

Over half of the teachers are UK trained. This contributes to the British ethos of the school. The school has already secured the appointment of 21 new British teaching staff for September 2022. A further eight teachers will be appointed. This is due to the growth of the school.

The safeguarding and child protection procedures are very thorough and mirror the expectations of both UK legislation and of the UAE.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The requirements of this standard are met.

The school is housed in a well-designed building on a spacious site. The premises are contained within a secure perimeter wall with staffed entrance gates. All visitors are required to wear identity badges. There are sufficient entrances to allow adults and pupils to enter and leave, including in emergencies. Ramps and lifts give those with limited mobility access to all parts of the school. The use of CCTV cameras ensures the safety of all pupils across the school.

The school is well resourced with learning and recreational spaces that are well maintained and have a welcoming feel. Daily checks of the school campus, carried out by the premises leaders, ensure that the premises are safe and any maintenance issues are swiftly addressed. Relevant authorities carry out regular checks of the premises and the school has all the certificates needed to operate. Cleaning and maintenance staff ensure that the buildings and classrooms are regularly cleaned and maintained to a high standard. Pupils are proud of their school and treat their surroundings with respect. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are litter free.

The school has several outdoor shaded play areas for pupils to climb, slide and socialise in addition to being valuable outdoor learning environments. The buildings are light, spacious and well ventilated. Classrooms are bright and orderly and teaching areas are fit for purpose. Every classroom has an interactive whiteboard. Teachers develop purposeful and appropriate resources that engage pupils in their learning and inspire them to work harder. Interesting and relevant displays promote pupils' personal, social and academic development. There are two purpose-built swimming pools, one of which is for the children in the early years, a large hall, a library for both primary and secondary pupils and an auditorium with seating, a stage and sound and lighting. This is used for assemblies, pupil award ceremonies and performances.

There are suitable medical facilities with a well-equipped clinic containing treatment and recovery rooms staffed by two qualified nurses. There is also a separate isolation room.

The school has made carefully considered adjustments to its provision as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic to ensure that everyone in the school remains safe. It follows mandatory rules on social distancing, mask wearing and temperature monitoring and all protocols expected by UAE authorities.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Parents are well informed about their child's education. This continued throughout the school closure between March and May 2020 and subsequently in September 2021 for two weeks. The website contains school policies, information about school life, its mission and vision, its core values, the admissions procedure, an outline of the curriculum, information about student life, a

parents' handbook and a school brochure. There is also information about how to contact staff and leaders. Staff always welcome parents for informal discussions at the beginning and at the end of the day

Parents receive regular communications from the school, including via weekly newsletters, online chat groups and emails. Parents say that they are kept well informed through termly reports and termly online consultations.

Parents are happy with the way the curriculum is implemented throughout the school. A vast majority of parents say that their child enjoys being at school and that the school shows concern for the safety, care and welfare of their child. Parents feel that the school is well led and speak very highly of the inclusive culture. They say that the school goes out of its way to help pupils and make sure that they reach their full potential. The school organises talks for parents about career prospects so that pupils aim high.

Parents are proud to work together with the school. For example, the parents' committee makes suggestions to the school on what can be improved. The school built a tennis court and shaded areas were put in place as a direct response to parents' feedback.

Parents feel that the pandemic has been well handled. A typical comment was: 'The school adapted really well during the pandemic and was actively engaged with students and parents. There was no disruption in studies at all.' The school has worked hard to ensure that 'bubbles' did not separate friends. Parents speak highly of the quality of the online learning and a typical comment was: 'Teachers made lessons fun and engaging. The school really cares about the online safety of the children.' Parents were able to help their children as the school produced a step-by-step guide for what they needed to do, guidance on liaising with classroom teachers, a helpline number and a helpline email for technical problems.

Being involved in the life of the school is important for parents. The vast majority of parents say they are now ready to be involved in the face-to-face International Day this year. There is a strong sense of community.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The complaints policy is available on the website and is updated annually by the senior leadership team. The three-stage procedure outlines how complaints are resolved and the expectations of all parties within clear timescales. Day-to-day concerns are usually managed in an informal manner and parents all agree that queries are dealt with in house very easily and swiftly.

The school dealt positively and fairly with a range of concerns to the satisfaction of all parents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Leadership and management across the school are good and ensure that the BSO standards are consistently met. Leaders are ambitious for all the pupils to achieve well. They are committed to providing a high-quality education as well as a caring and emotionally supportive environment. They know the school well. Subject leaders and senior leaders work closely together to generate strategies to drive improvement. Leaders empower aspiring leaders 'to take the hot seat' because

the school is committed to develop existing staff to become future school leaders. Middle leaders are encouraged to gain leadership qualifications. A vast majority of staff strongly agree that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for pupils.

The governing body of the school is effective. Governors and staff are passionate about their school and all work hard to keep improving it. The board's clear financial policies have ensured the successful growth of the school with the expansion of its provision and the construction of a new building to accommodate new GCSE and A-level subjects in September 2022. Twenty-two new members of staff have already been appointed for next academic year. Further plans are in place to ensure the recruitment of eight more high-quality teachers. Governors ensure that the school is compliant with all legal requirements and that safeguarding procedures are effective. As a result, all staff agree that pupils are safe at school. Governors have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are kept up to date because senior leaders give them regular reports on the school's effectiveness. Governors challenge leaders regularly. They routinely seek pupils', teachers' and parents' opinions to ensure that their views influence decision making. Governors support and challenge leaders well with clear accountability procedures. They conduct the headteacher's appraisal with rigour. The board is confident in the leadership team and respects its separate responsibilities.

Leaders and governors take their responsibilities for equality of opportunity seriously. For example, female staff are given breastfeeding time and a dedicated well-being space.

Governors ensure that all pupils are safe and happy. Staff training is carried out and updated annually and as a result teachers know how to report concerns about pupils' well-being and act promptly. Governors make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Self-evaluation and the school development plan are written by middle leaders and their teams. Leaders know that the quality of teaching is good and that this is having a positive impact on the progress that many pupils make. They are aware that not enough teaching is outstanding because the wealth of accurate assessment information gathered by teachers is not used well enough in planning future learning, especially in the early years. The school is currently recruiting for an early years leader. Performance management provides good opportunities to develop and enhance capacity. Leaders have the determination and capacity to improve the school further.

The school's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was well managed. Leaders worked hard to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning was maintained. The vast majority of pupils and parents agree that teachers provided effective remote learning. The school's distance-learning provision was rated as developed, the highest grade, by Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge.

Early years provision

Provision in the early years is good.

The majority of children in the early years are learning EAL and enter the school with skills which are lower than those typical of their age. On entry, children in their first few weeks in school are assessed. Teachers track their progress from starting points and monitor it through an online learning journal, using photographs, observations and comments. While a great deal of accurate assessment information is recorded, teachers do not use it effectively enough to plan future learning. Leadership of the early years is in transition and developing well. Leaders are aware that provision would be further enhanced by better use of assessment information.

Teaching encourages children to make some choices in their learning and gives them opportunities to work with their peers. Through discovery-time provision, the children work outside to enhance

their learning. The children follow well-established routines, behave well and are eager to learn. The relationships between children and staff are generally warm and supportive.

Parents are involved in their children's learning. Online journals, records and assessments are regularly shared with them. The early years team has developed good communication and supportive relationships with parents, ensuring close links between home and school.

Staff gave pupils and parents high levels of assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included webinars on online learning for parents and games to play to reduce children's worries.

Sixth form provision

Students in the sixth form are well prepared for life after school. Provision is good.

Attainment across the sixth form is higher than UK averages. In 2021, the majority of students attained grades A* to B at A level in English literature, mathematics and science subjects.

The quality of teaching is at least good. The majority of students are taught in small groups, which allows teachers to give them more individual attention. Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that students are prepared well for examinations. In addition, teachers' relationships with students are very positive.

All students are seen as individuals with pathways tailored for their needs. The routes available towards university or work are currently mostly academic, although plans are in place to provide more work-based qualifications, such as BTEC.

This increasingly holistic view of the student is further enhanced through the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic these included swimming, basketball and athletics and now also include a good range of specialist and academic clubs.

The sixth form has a good retention rate on its courses and attendance is in line with the UK average.

Students are mature, happy and independent. Their safety and welfare are a priority. They have access to a counsellor and individual support from their tutor and secondary leaders. They are curious learners and are well motivated. The school also promotes students' interests and wider development, including leadership skills, through international outdoor-pursuit awards and partnerships with universities offering technology-based experience. Work experience will resume next academic year.

Students have access to regular careers advice and receive pastoral support on the experience of university and life skills to help them abroad. Most students go to university in the UK and others into work, either in the UAE or overseas.

Leadership of the sixth form is good. All aspects of provision are regularly reviewed leading to ongoing improvements and opportunities.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Al Ain English Speaking 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(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) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

What the school could do to improve further

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

Teachers' written feedback on pupils' work does not identify clearly enough what pupils should do to reach higher standards. Leaders should ensure that feedback gives pupils enough guidance to enable them to deepen their knowledge and make greater progress.

Teachers, especially in the early years, do not use assessment information well enough in planning learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers improve their use of assessments to plan teaching which addresses specific gaps in learning and promotes stronger pupil progress.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

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

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		x		
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School details

Name of school	Al Ain Speaking School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 1979
Age range of pupils	3-18
Number of roll (full-time pupils)	1687
Number of roll (part-time pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	from 21,200 AED to 43,280 AED
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Khalid Bin Sultan Street, Al Muwajji, Al Ain
Telephone number	+971 3 7678636
Email address	school@aaess.sch.ae
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Thomas
Proprietor	Mr Mohammed Al Ghussein

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standards –

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Education Development Trust
16-18 Duke Street
Reading
RG1 4RU
UK

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