



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report**  
**Al Ain Academy.**  
**U.A.E**

Date	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Inspection number	20230206

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## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom. The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for students and students' achievements.

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

During the inspection visit, over 50 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Colin Dyson. The team members were Edward Pearce, Monica Hamlin and Kate Wells.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Al Ain Academy is providing high quality education and care for its students. The high quality outcomes are due to the hard work of the principal and his team. The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. As a result, students achieve well in their education and development. Students and their teachers enjoy school. Strong relationships based on mutual trust and understanding are evident throughout the school.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the following:

- The school has demonstrated, through undertaking self-evaluation and accreditation a desire to move the school forward.
- Leadership and management lead a strong sense of community. Parents recognise and value the strategic role of the school in their sons' and daughters' lives.
- The school is held in high regard by the wider community; parents and students are proud to be members of 'their school'.
- The Early Years/Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a strength of the school – implementing some highly creative teaching strategies and innovative assessment strategies.
- All staff, both teaching and non-teaching play a highly effective role in ensuring students at Al Ain Academy are valued and encouraged to enjoy their learning in a safe and stimulating environment.
- External examination results at Key Stages 4 and 5 are another strength of the school highlighting the professionalism of the staff and the hard work of the students.
- Students at Al Ain Academy benefit from teaching that is consistently good or better and this promotes positive attitudes towards learning and highly positive outcomes.
- The role of the board is highly supportive in aiming to achieve a school of excellence that values the contributions made by all staff.
- The curriculum is skilfully adapted to ensure students make rapid progress in language acquisition.
- The school values are implicitly interwoven in all aspects of school life
- The quality of relationships is outstanding. Students show a genuine concern for the needs of others and display a high level of self-awareness and confidence.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. implement more consistent and effective marking and feedback that enables students have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning;
- ii. ensure that data on student progress is effectively used to inform teaching;
- iii. further support learning by ensuring that the quality of teaching is as high for all students as it is in the best lessons;

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Al Ain Academy				
Address	Al Niyadat, Al Salaam Street Al Ain, Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	+971 3715 1000				
Fax Number	NA				
Website Address	Alainacademy.sch.ae				
Key Email Address/s	ipugh@alainacademy.sch.ae				
Headteacher/Principal	Ian Pugh				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Kulsum Munshi				
Age Range	3 – 19 years				
Total number of students	<b>981</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>419</b>
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	168	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	250	<i>17-18 years</i>	9	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	553	<i>18+ years</i>	1	
Total number of part-time students	0				

Al Ain Academy - originally known as Al Ain International School - is part of the Aldar Academies group, one of the UAE's largest providers of private education in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. Al Ain Academy officially opened in September 2011 in a former government school building.

The school follows the English National Curriculum, but modified for the UAE.

Most students join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with little or no English and the significant growth of the school has historically involved new students with low starting points joining across year groups. This, together with the high percentage of students whose first language is not English, has had a significant impact upon attainment levels. Strong teaching and intervention have meant that students overall make very good progress, supported by very good learning skills.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

Al Ain Academy provides a strong British appearance and ethos

- The organisational structure reflects that seen in a typical British school from Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Year 13, all following the National Curriculum of England.
- The school libraries contain a wealth of English literature to which students have regular access under the supervision of a knowledgeable librarian.
- Performance management and staff target setting follow a similar approach to many British schools.
- There are robust child protection and safer recruitment procedures as evidenced in the single central record.
- The leadership and governance structure produces lines of accountability and responsibilities that are similar to those proven to be operationally successful in the UK.
- There is very high importance placed on pastoral care, with dedicated staff positions created to foster and support students' welfare and well-being.
- The education of the whole child and the development of the broader skills and awareness towards becoming a valuable, contributing citizen in society are important aspects of school life.
- The school is maintained to high levels of safety and cleanliness.
- Child protection policies are derived from UK best practice.
- The school embraces tolerance, democracy, human rights and has respect for freedom of expression, within the laws of the UAE.

## 5. Standard 1 The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is overall good with many outstanding features. The school meets the standards for BSO.

Al Ain Academy provides a high quality of education and care for its students. The high quality outcomes are due to the hard work and commitment of the principal and his teams. Students and their teachers enjoy school. Strong relationships based on mutual trust and understanding are evident throughout the school.

### 5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

The quality of the curriculum in EYFS is outstanding and student achievement is exceptionally high. The curriculum is skilfully modified to take into account the needs of all students and considers the students' different starting points. The newly revised UK EYFS Framework is merged with DfE recommended guidance to ensure students are exposed to all skills and match UK expectations. Additional high-quality exposure to Communication and Language and Literacy meets the needs of the school by explicitly supporting the accelerated development of English language learners, enabling students to function effectively. Communication skills are exceptionally well embedded.

Assessment for learning informs planning. Differentiation shows support as well as challenge, demonstrating high expectations when target setting. The procedures for assessing and tracking progress on a 7-point system are highly effective leading to good progress for students of all abilities across all areas of learning. The recently introduced innovative creative curriculum promotes high levels of engagement. In the best lessons observed, teachers demonstrated deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and used resources skilfully to suit students' different ways of learning. Highly effective modelling and questioning moved the students' learning on. The creative curriculum is currently being rolled out across the department, and development plans have clear timelines to allow time to share and embed.

The *Character of Education* accreditation, achieved in November 2022, has been a highly successful initiative promoting language development and contextual understanding of the key values that underpin the scheme and are well-matched to those of the school. Learning environments show much evidence of exposure and it has had an immediate impact on students learning behaviours and opportunities for self-reflection. Parent feedback positively described how the language and understanding is reflected at home as their children regularly discuss the relatable characters and how to apply it to their

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personal experiences, even giving recommendations to their parents in some instances. Weekly *character of education* accreditation lessons are explicitly timetabled as well as the values being implicitly interwoven into the rest of the curriculum and daily practice.

Phonics teaching, communication and language, numeracy and writing skills are of a high standard across the key stages (KS) and planned tasks were shown to be effective in developing the students' knowledge, embedding good practice and ensuring a consistency of skill acquisition. Teachers effectively plan a range of challenging activities for the most able students in most lessons.

The students' behaviour is exemplary, with teachers and managers having high expectations, linked to school values. Values and learning dispositions are embedded into the curriculum and embraced by the children.

An effective learning support department works closely with class teachers to identify students with additional learning needs to successfully access the curriculum. This is an area for possible further development to ensure all learners needs are met in every lesson. Students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) throughout the primary school are also supported in their learning. The needs of the high ability learner are met through effective lesson planning and delivery.

A clear progression of knowledge and skills are planned for in lessons across each year group. The ethos and high levels of pastoral care established in the primary school follows through to the secondary school, with young people's ability to develop resilience, approach challenges positively, and work collaboratively for the good of the whole community being central to their learning. The impact of a varied enrichment programme and the wider curriculum is that students are helped to become well-rounded, knowledgeable global citizens.

Across the school, the curriculum is implemented effectively through planning which is monitored well by senior leaders. As most students are English second language learners, there is an appropriately strong focus on the development of language and literacy skills. Students who enter the school with no English benefit from dedicated English as an additional language provision. The planned curriculum ensures students are well prepared for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society and the wider world. The secondary school's mission is to ensure learners are fully prepared and ready to take the next steps in their educational aspirations.

Curriculum content across all subjects in KS3 is frequently linked to International GCSE standards to prepare learners for choosing their options and beginning the courses upon moving into KS4. The iGCSE program is conducted over 3 years. Lessons are all pitched at curriculum standards within the key stage, allowing learners to develop application, analytical and meta-thinking skills in all subjects. Key vocabulary is emphasised and supported.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is consistently good with outstanding features.

The quality of teaching and assessment in EYFS is good with outstanding features. Language rich learning environments expose students to high levels of attainment and students successfully use working walls and displays as scaffolds to consolidate and further extend their learning. A rigorous formative and summative assessment process, supported by an excel tracking document, clearly aligns standards to match those of UK expectations, and indicates the amount of individual progress made towards the Early Learning Goals. Records and results inform future planning. For new teachers joining the department, a bespoke EYFS guide is used as part of the induction process. Key development points of the department are shared including a guide to assessment procedures.

In the best examples, annotated weekly planning demonstrates high expectations for learners at all levels based on a thorough knowledge of students' current attainment including their strengths and weaknesses. This, alongside how well teachers know how students learn, lead to exceptional progress for students of all abilities. In the best lessons observed, prior learning was reflected upon, vocabulary development was continuously highlighted and open-ended questions, sometimes directed, supported consolidation, understanding and deeper thinking. In the best phonics lessons observed, teachers' subject knowledge, excellent modelling, combined with effective teaching styles and resources, ensured students successfully accessed the learning, made progress, and subsequently good outcomes were achieved. Students self-reflect on their writing and identify their best example; this was evident in a selection of best examples of phonics books. Phonics is tracked per student per sound using the DfE programme. Students are set according to need to ensure pitch is appropriate to need. In the best lessons observed, opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving were provided. Clear modelling and effective questioning were used to extend learning and challenge thinking. For example, in one maths lesson, students were asked to use manipulatives to find number bonds to 10 and represent this on their own dominoes. They were then further challenged to create their own problems for peers to solve.

The recently introduced curiosity approach provides a stimulating learning environment that is efficiently organised with clear areas of learning, question prompts and high-quality models of outcomes. Best examples reflected well-resourced classrooms that strongly promoted links to real-life experiences. Lesson observations showed students played purposefully and with a sense of calm and respect for resources. Students are able to demonstrate their knowledge verbally and make links, for example one student was playing in the home corner and was washing up the kitchen equipment. He showed me the frying pan and told me he could cook eggs using it.

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Lesson observations show the vast majority of teaching assistants (Tas) are effectively supporting the learning and progress of individuals by giving clear direction and in some instances translating between languages to support EAL learners.

Students have positive attitudes towards their work which is proudly celebrated within and around the classrooms and learning areas, as well as in Floorbooks that are created with the students. In a large majority of lessons, students were keen to share their learning and thoughts, for example one student in FS1 demonstrated how he made the letter 'p' using round pegs and then found the letter on the sounds display. He went on to sound out all the letters with their corresponding actions, providing the letter names.

Positive relationships between adults and students across the school are underpinned by high levels of pastoral care. Lesson observations show almost all students are well-behaved, know their routines well, participate confidently, and respect each other and their resources. Students lead their own learning and happily work independently alongside others or engage in activities with their peers.

The standard of teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2 is consistently good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The behaviour of the students is outstanding. Relationships between students and teachers are highly positive. In key stage 2 teachers strictly follow the timetable. Most lessons use time well and clear learning intentions are frequently shared, so that students know what they are learning to do.

The teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they teach. They encourage students to behave responsibly and show a good understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, needs (including those who speak English as an additional language) and prior attainments of the students. In nearly all lessons, students were very focused on the tasks set, and worked together actively to achieve learning objectives. In Year 1, Talk for Writing is clearly embedded into the curriculum and students show they are familiar with learning routines. Lesson observations of Innovated Writing consistently showed clear modelling and high level of pitch and expectations, ensuring students were being exposed to expected standards of that in the UK. In one sample of books, there was exemplary levels of stretch and challenge and progress across all subjects. These are recommended as best examples to share with others.

In most lessons teachers ensured tasks provided a good level of challenge for the most able students. However, in some lessons students were not always provided with enough differentiated support to enable them to always fully access the learning.

Students were well behaved in all lessons, but more creative planning of practical tasks could have developed a greater enthusiasm for learning. In the best lessons in Key Stage 2, students are actively engaged and inspired by their learning, they are provided with opportunities to share their ideas and to lead the learning of their peers. This was

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evident in year 3 maths lessons; students were sharing examples of how to measure the perimeter of shapes and explore the properties of 2D shapes. In a year 5 music lesson, students engaged fully in playing the ukulele and each enjoyed the opportunity to perform together. Students were encouraged to support and guide their peers to ensure high quality outcomes.

In the primary school the most effective use of exercise books provides evidence of marking and feedback. In general marking is not always regular and consistent. The most effective marking and feedback provides qualitative feedback and identifies next steps for progress. This gives students the opportunity to respond or to self-assess and reflect. However, this is not consistent across all ages and subjects.

Teaching assistants are well deployed in lessons to help individuals or groups of students. In whole class teaching sessions, they quietly intervene and help students to understand and concentrate. During group work, they support students with gentle guidance and prompting, so that they gain confidence.

The quality of teaching and assessment in secondary school is good. The teachers' subject knowledge is a particular strength, allowing them the confidence to model effective and appropriate vocabulary to stimulate student interest and engage students in their learning. Planning is detailed and demonstrates a clear progression of knowledge and skills to promote progress. To move teaching and assessment further, the use of data to inform planning must be more evident in the teaching strategies used to engage all learners.

The kitemark characteristics of respect, resilience and responsibility formed part of the lesson planning and students displayed these characteristics during a variety of group work that was undertaken by being collaborative, resilient and patient even where pace may have slowed down during some parts of the lessons.

The majority of lessons encapsulated challenging content and key terminology being taught explicitly; for example, in a Year 7 drama lesson, students were given ample opportunities to practise and build on their physical, vocal skills along with excellent modelling provided.

In Key Stage 4, teachers' secure subject knowledge enables students to make progress in preparation towards their examinations which is reflected in the excellent GCSE results. Teaching in Key Stage 5 demonstrated a strong understanding of the demands and coverage of required coursework to successfully take the A level exams. Teacher subject knowledge in this phase was a particular strength, leading to high levels of student engagement. Small class sizes allowed the students to receive individualized guidance and seek clarification to take the next steps in their learning. In the best lessons students were given the opportunity to learn from one another and collaborate where possible.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

The standards achieved by students at Al Ain Academy are consistently good with outstanding features.

The quality of standards of achievement in the EYFS is good with outstanding progress. Where attainment on exit overall is lower, it shows consistent improvement. This year's cohort are on track to receive their best results to date and are on track to meet the GLD requirements of the UK standards (currently 61% at the end of Term 1). Baseline assessments show students start school, working below age related expectations across all 7 areas of learning, inclusive of all 17 aspects of learning. Part of the baseline assessment consists of the external Bell Assessment measuring individuals' level of proficiency in English. Teachers use this information, alongside their internal assessment data to adapt teaching and learning strategies, and tasks, to provide individualised accessibility. For example, most lesson observations showed students linking actions to sounds and having visual representations. The Bell Assessment is readministered at data drop points throughout the year to measure progress levels of English language proficiency.

Books and data effectively show how the use of teachers' daily observations inform judgements and clear guidance and documentation is created and skilfully designed to allow teachers to match the students attainment against age related expectations.

Student outcomes are regularly moderated within year groups and across the phase to ensure consistency of standards. External moderation across the Aldar Academies group also takes place where examples from each setting are explored for quality assurance purposes.

The 7-point Assessment for Learning (AfL) tracker acutely matches UK standards including expected levels of progress. Best examples of short term planning demonstrate how the formative nature of the AfL tracker provide diagnostic individual and group targets. Topic plans are informed by a Gaps analysis of data resulting from the summative nature of the AfL tracker.

Overall, the standards of attainment of students in the primary school are good and broadly in line with UK expectations for the end of key stages, this represent a high level of progress being made across the primary years. External assessment results compare favourably to UK national expectations. Assessment data shows that students make progress at least in line with their ability, some better.

The standard of student's writing by the time they leave year 2 is developing. By the end of Year 6 many students write fluently and many are using a cursive style and have a range of strategies to help them write independently at length. Reading is good across

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the key stages; most students by the end of KS2 read fluently and can talk about their reading. Students in year 1 were observed reading high frequency words on sight and using phonic attempts to write them. Students' behaviour and attitude are exemplary and where students need reminding of how to behave, this is appropriate and timely.

Standardised assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science are used in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, along with teacher assessment. In 2022 results indicate the level of progress and attainment of students meeting or exceeding expected levels are higher than UK averages in English, mathematics and science. A range of assessment strategies were observed in lessons, with peer assessment and feedback effectively used. Students are immersed in a language rich environment which supports their learning. In the most effective lessons Assessment for Learning allows teachers to effectively establish students' progress within the lesson and target questions to move learning forward. This approach to awareness of students' progress is not yet fully embedded in all lessons. Marking is becoming more consistent in some classes with next steps and evidence of students responding to comments. This is a key focus for further development to ensure a consistent approach across the primary years.

The standards achieved in the secondary years are good, with outstanding academic attainment results in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Students in Key Stage 3 are assessed throughout the year against the Aldar Academies 7 point scale and externally assessed annually using the Granada Learning (GL) progress tests. GL CAT4 data is used to assess aptitude and GL PASS assessment for pastoral measures. Data suggests that on average across Key Stage 3 that 64% of students across KS3 achieved a mean grade that equates to the top 25% of students nationally in the UK in terms of progress.

The summer 2022 A level results were strong, with 43% of students achieving an A\*-A grade, compared to 35% in the UK. A\*-D Grades were 94%, which is in line with UK national averages. Of particular note was a student who achieved the highest mark in the world for A Level Geography (Edexcel) and highest in the Middle East for Geography (Edexcel) and English Literature (Edexcel). IGCSE results were equally impressive, given the starting point of many of the students, with 97% achieving Grades 9-4 compared to 73% of students in the UK. 66% achieved Grades 9-7 which is more than double the UK average. English language was particularly impressive with 100% Grades 9-7. Students in the secondary years are to be congratulated on their achievements.

Students' behaviour is exemplary. They are confident and articulate and take on roles of responsibility with enthusiasm. They act appropriately towards one another. Students are very respectful of staff and are very proud of the school.

Standards of marking and feedback across Secondary were inconsistent, with some departments demonstrating an adherence to the school policy on marking content, accuracy and feedback to students. Moderation of standards is evident across the Aldar Academies and within teaching departments.

## 6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of students

Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding in all respects.

The students attitude to school is exceptionally positive, their conduct in lessons and around the school is impeccable and reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. The students are courteous to others and take pride in their contribution to the school and wider community. Resilience and responsibility are successfully replicated in students' behaviour. Moral education teaching permeates all aspects of school life including reflection on taking responsibility for their own action. School displays proudly celebrate students who have carried out tasks such as community service through assemblies and display boards. Student outcomes are shared and celebrated during student-lead assemblies. Leadership opportunities are extended through the student-elected school council in the primary school; the formation of Junior Leadership Team in senior school and Sixth Form students seamlessly collaborate with each other to promote a strong student voice. The student leaders are given the opportunity to show initiative and act as mentors, volunteers, academic coach regularly to younger students helping to engender an environment of respect for beliefs, cultures and tolerance.

Students are confident, self-assured learners who thrive in and appreciate the school's calm, family-orientated yet purposeful setting and environment. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong, positive impact on their progress. They value their education and are proud of their achievements and of their school. They recognise and praise the teachers' extensive support to enable them to become well-rounded individuals. The school provides for the opportunity every week for Year 11 students to visit the Sixth Form centre to discuss their career and higher education options; the most senior students are keen to provide guidance on various pathways available for the next phase of their life.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety of the students is excellent and meets the requirements of the BSO standards. Al Ain Academy puts the safety of its students at the centre of the school's ethos.

The school has a rigorous health and safety system and policies are in place which are reviewed annually. Information about the designated safeguarding team is displayed throughout the school and on visitors badges. Staff and students know the process to follow should they have a concern about keeping safe. All teaching and non-teaching staff receive thorough training. Regular monitoring by school leaders and managers ensure that any child protection, safeguarding and wellbeing issues are continually monitored and discussed. The school effectively uses a monitoring system (CPOMs) safeguarding software to track and support any vulnerable students. This ensures appropriate staff can monitor and support students. The use of CPOMs ensures reporting of incidents and concerns are timely and secure, and all relevant staff are informed with ease. Governors are aware of their responsibility for safeguarding; the recruitment process is aligned with best safeguarding practices with staff responsible for recruitment undergoing Safer Recruitment training. Students of all ages know who they can talk to and are confident that their concerns are listened to, and they would be supported. 'Open door' policies are in operation throughout the school including that of the Principal.

Attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Whole school attendance is excellent, and attendance is tracked and analysed. The attendance and punctuality expectations are clear and a system is in place to monitor and follow up any instances of repeated absence or persistent lateness. Any issues are followed up by SLT following a clear procedure. Students are taught from an early age how to keep themselves healthy, and this is woven into the curriculum. Students in the early years are aware of healthy foods in their lunch boxes and as they move through the school, they become more aware of healthy choices and keeping fit. Sessions from the PE staff also support this.

The school's policies on pastoral care are robust and this is a key strength of the school. In primary years, class teachers are aware of the importance of knowing their students well and acting quickly on any concerns. The secondary form tutors also play a key role, however there is also an emphasis on the importance of teachers across all subjects knowing the student and being a key part of the student's pastoral care. The school counsellor works across the school. School assemblies promote the schools' focus and update students on all relevant information on a weekly basis. Students actively participate in school assemblies, as do staff and the leadership team.

Behaviour in the school is excellent, students are supportive and kind towards each other. This is as a result of the importance the school places on positive relationships, and the clear

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policies and procedures for this. Bullying is very rare in the school, as are examples of unacceptable behaviour.

Risk assessments for the school site and trips are in place. The risk assessment is based on the trip location and age group of students and ratios are adjusted based on the level of risk involved.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at Al Ain academy fully meets the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school's proprietor represented by Aldar Academies education group ensures that all standards regarding the suitability of teaching and non-teaching staff and keeping students safe in school are fully met.

All members of staff undergo appropriate checks by the ministry of education to ensure their suitability for the role when they are appointed to the school. There are robust systems in place to ensure staff at the school meet the ministry's requirements. Aldar Academies education provide training and an online portal to ensure the school's HR staff are compliant with ministry requirements and those required by BSO. Staff have qualifications and teaching experience matched to their role. During the recruitment phase, particular attention is paid to the development needs of the school.

Identity, medical, qualifications and police check, or DBS checks and references were in place for all staff appointed to the school. This includes teachers, administration staff and teaching assistants. These are held in individual files and on a single central record held centrally by Aldar Academies and by the HR manager in the school. Police checks are required for teachers who are in regular contact with students. Information regarding staff who have resigned in the past three years are stored on this record. All information is stored securely and confidentially.

Staff who are recruited locally must undergo the same checks as expatriate staff regarding identification checks, police checks, medical, qualifications and references. A disclaimer letter for all staff is sought from the previous place of work in line with ministry requirements. Qualifications are checked by the ministry and attested for overseas staff. Three references, one from the most recent place of work, are sought which are followed up by the school. Visa details are stored centrally on the single central record for all staff.

Induction for teaching staff includes guidance around the expectations of the school for activities such as lesson planning, lesson delivery, homework, marking, health safety, welfare, and dress codes. New teaching staff undergo an interim probationary review to ensure their suitability for the role. There are strong systems and procedures to welcome and support new staff as they arrive to the country from overseas, and in their role at the school by the school's HR staff.

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

The school's premises and accommodation are outstanding.

The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching facilities, including but not limited to specialist science laboratories, art studio, music room and an auditorium with seating for over 250 people. Specialist sports facilities include an outdoor swimming pool, shaded courtyards, and indoor sports gymnasium and a recently added Astro turf sports field. The school is currently in discussions about adding additional specialist spaces for the next academic year. Recent maintenance works to replace flooring in outdoor areas has improved the overall standard of facilities, with a further commitment to correct all outdoor flooring during the forthcoming summer break to address current health and safety concerns.

Displays are used across the school site to celebrate students' learning and to encourage participation in the many opportunities available to the students outside of the classroom. The recently added 6th form centre provides an age appropriate independent learning space for the older students.

The school site is well ventilated around two central courtyards and natural lighting is well utilised. Recent works to add sensors to light switches across the school support their focus on sustainability initiatives. External contractors are used for lighting, cooling, cleaning, security and medical staff and all are monitored and quality assured by the newly appointed Operation and Services Manager (OSM). The school buildings are clean and hygienic and well suited to the age of students and the curriculum.

The recently upgraded fire safety system enhances the school's commitment to health and safety, which is evidenced by evacuation maps, fire extinguishers and first aid resources distributed consistently throughout the school. The school has adequate toilet and changing facilities that are all signposted for adult or student use.

Site security is controlled via the main gate, which is the main entry and exit point for the school site. All visitors are required to log their entry digitally and wear a visitors lanyard during their stay. Colour coded lanyards are used to distinguish between parents/carers, visitors and contractors. Entry and exit are well supervised by security and academic staff; an alternative pedestrian access should be considered at the front of the school site to avoid students, staff and parents from exiting the building through the same gate as the school buses.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is excellent and is a strength of the school.

Communication is efficient and the community is updated well in advance of key dates and events. Key policy documents are available on the school website together with basic contact details and information about the school. The school calendar approved by ADEK was shared with parents at the beginning of the year. Parents speak very positively about the high quality of communication and availability of information.

An open-door policy, alongside direct email communication, ensures parents are continuously updated on students' progress and targets, enabling them to support at home. Formal reports provide detailed information of individual achievements. The school has aligned its parental involvement with ADEK's policies and regulations. Parents feel that the school engages them in their child's education and their views are regularly sought both informally and formally.

Workshops, newsletters, class meetings and comprehensive handbooks are published to assist parents and carers to understand school protocols, curriculum and assessments. Regular workshops provide parents with the necessary information and tools to assist them for current or upcoming learning and key events, for example, how to support your child with exam preparation and how to help your child make informed decisions about IGCSE options. Positive relationships are embedded and parents reported that all teachers and management are like family. They speak positively about the holistic care that is provided and can see the specific impact it has on their children's dispositions.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

Complaints are uncommon, but the school has procedures in place that meet both local requirements and reflect good practice in the UK.

Consistent practices are assured by a common policy across all Aldar Academies. There are clear and well documented procedures for handling complaints, in line with best UK practice. Complaints and concerns are well documented and stored securely. Documentation states clearly the procedures followed, and records are kept for at least 3 years.

Parents and carers are kept well informed about the process through school documents and the website. This information is regularly updated. The class or subject teacher is the first port of call. If an issue is not resolved, progression through the management follows.

Appropriate written records are kept and confidentiality is assured. After action by the assistant principal, head of year or key stage leaders, any unresolved complaints are then dealt with through a formal process. This involves providing full details of the complaint in writing to the principal, who then investigates the issue and provides a written decision. Any decision made by the principal may be appealed within five working days. If appealed, a meeting is held between the complainant and the principal for further discussion and consideration, followed by a written decision from the principal. If a complaint remains unresolved it will be passed to the Aldar Academies ELT team. Parents will be contacted and a mutually convenient meeting arranged off-site to discuss issues further. Parents will be informed of any outcomes from further investigations and will be invited to attend a meeting to try and resolve the issues. If a concern remains unresolved the parent may contact Abu Dhabi Education Council who will act as final arbitrators. Parents interviewed by inspectors, stated they felt confident with the way the school dealt with concerns.

## 12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of Al Ain Academy are outstanding.

Although relatively new in post, they have demonstrated in a short period of time that they are highly effective and underpin the drive to create a highly successful school. The development of a strong senior leadership team under the guidance of the principal has developed trust and an understanding of the importance of high standards amongst staff and students. The school has a robust school improvement plan, in which development priorities are set and regularly reviewed by senior and middle managers. Self-evaluation is a core strength, which leads to the development plans being accurately targeted. The principal and senior leaders have further developed the thoughtful and wholesome approach where a love of learning balances with high academic outcomes, strong personal development, skills for life and the wellbeing of students.

The students reported that “being an Al Ain Academy student is something amazing”. The school’s leadership is driving improvements in the quality of teaching and robust assessment practices of all ages to make excellent progress and achieve very well at the end of each phase. Leaders and managers have an inspirational effect upon the school community and beyond, proving themselves capable of sustaining outstanding outcomes for students. Middle leaders are involved in the improvement of their particular subject areas and feel they have significant ownership over the development of their specific subject areas. Staff morale is high, as senior leaders ensure teachers are motivated and trusted. Staff reported that staff at all levels have continual opportunities to air views and are provided with opportunities to grow and develop.

Leaders communicate in a highly effective manner with parents, providing them with the information they need about the school and their child’s progress. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve. The school involves parents fully in the life of the school, and it enjoys strong support from the parents. The parents commented that they “appreciate that leadership is approachable and highly appreciate how the senior leadership team are visible”.

The school’s day-to-day organisation is outstanding, supported by high quality administrative and financial support.

The local governing board are highly involved in the monitoring of teaching standards and academic outcomes and are viewed as supportive partners for the school leadership. They draw on their expertise to provide critical and growth oriented feedback in an effort to support school improvement. The proprietor board, led by the executive principal of Aldar Academies, supports the school administratively across all areas and holds the school accountable for all desired outcomes.