



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **Al Rabeeh School**

**Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates**

Date **15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023**  
Inspection number **20230315**

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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, where it is offered); 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 75 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 Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Vicki Price, Simon Sharron and Michael Wilson.

This report was written by the inspection team, then passed through an AI programme, ChatGTP. It was then re-edited by the lead inspector

## 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 Rabeeh School provides a high standard of education. It has a strong family feel and is the heart of its own community. Relationships are positive and valued highly by all: it is a very happy place. All school decisions are driven by what is in the best interests of the students. Academic standards are high and the students make excellent progress.

Al Rabeeh School (ARS) provides a high-quality UK-style education that meets the needs of its pupils well: as a result, they enjoy school, learn fast and thrive socially. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Teachers are passionate about improving their skills. The senior leaders drive school improvement with energy, determination, and enthusiasm: the continuous professional development provided for staff has had a real and obvious impact. Middle leaders are eager and keen to increase their effectiveness even more through data analysis and developing learning in their teams. The school's ability to forward plan with recruitment by training staff internally, leads to effective succession planning, for example, with the development of leaders and specialists, and teaching assistants (TAs) who become teachers.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

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

- the executive principal and leadership team are aspirational and have high expectations: they identify challenges and take steps to ensure that barriers to achievement are removed;
- the team/culture approach to school development, which has had a very positive impact;
- student leadership;
- outstanding student behaviour;
- highly effective communication with parents;
- the Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength;
- cohesive and impactful middle leaders team;
- administrative and facilities management;
- the *Palms Sports Library* is at the heart of the school and contains well over 20,000 books;
- improvements made in student attendance;
- a curriculum that is adapted to the needs of all the students, with effective additional support to those who require it e.g. students with special educational needs (SEN);
- curriculum enrichment through a wealth of ECA activities;

- above average standards compared to the UK in reading, maths, and science - in reading, maths and science, students achieve above standards compared to the UK;
- the promotion of English and Arabic oracy and literacy throughout the school;
- improvement in teacher retention.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Further improve the quality of learning, teaching, and assessment, so that all matches that of the best, for example by:
  - a. developing the use of higher-level questioning;
  - b. consistently facilitating the effective use of classroom assistants throughout the school;
  - c. sharing best practice in classroom differentiation techniques;
  - d. ensure consistency of the marking policy and to better support student progress;
  - e. consistency in higher order questioning;
  - f. developing even more the students' literacy skills and literacy across the curriculum.
- ii. develop more opportunities for students' IT-based digital and independent learning in the classroom.
- iii. further improve students' skills of innovation, enterprise, enquiry, research critical thinking and their use of technology in lessons

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Al Rabeeh School LLC				
Address	Al Zafranah, Nr Pakistani School, Mushrif Area, Abu Dhabi, UAE				
Telephone Number/s	+971 2 4482856				
Website Address	<a href="https://alrabeeh.sch.ae/">https://alrabeeh.sch.ae/</a>				
Key Email Address/s	<a href="mailto:riaan.huysen@alrabeeh.sch.ae">riaan.huysen@alrabeeh.sch.ae</a>				
Executive Principal	Mr. Riaan Huyser – Executive Principal				
Chair of Board of Governors/ Proprietor	Mr. Fouad Darwish – Director of the Board of Governors/Trustees				
Age Range	3-12 years				
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>451</b>
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	49	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	370	<i>17-18 years</i>	0	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	531	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Al Rabeeh School (ARS) opened in 1979; now in 2023, it is oversubscribed with students on waiting lists. Emirati students make up 38% of the population, with another 40% Arab from other GCC countries, the majority being from Jordan. The remaining 22% of the population includes international students from the UK to Vietnam. There are over 60 different nationalities in the school population. The Queen's Jubilee, National Day, and World Book Day highlight some of the school's diverse international and cultural whole-school celebrations.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The ethos and culture of ARS are clearly British in nature and fully meet the standard.

- The school follows the English national curriculum;
- The language of instruction is English;
- The National Curriculum for England is fully implemented at ARS and is carefully designed and adapted to suit the local environment;
- Pupils are supported by an effective pastoral care structure, which is very similar to that found in many UK private schools;
- Organisational structure is recognisably British: the school is organised into four sections, Foundation Stage (FS1 – FS2), primary (Y1-Y6), and Key Stage 3 (Y7);
- The executive principal and vice-principal oversee the whole school with deputy headteachers and assistant heads overseeing different phases of the school.)
- Almost all teachers have qualified teacher status (QTS) as described in UK;
- Professional development is delivered through a combination of internal expertise, through the sister school Al Rabeeh Academy and through external agencies such as British Schools of the Middle East (BSME).
- The principal is the BSME Country representative for Abu Dhabi and works alongside the executive committee to support BSME schools across the emirate.
- ARS is officially partnered with a British group of schools from Manchester in the United Kingdom
- Plans are underway to develop this partnership and apply for the British Council International Award 2023-2024.



## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school.

The quality of education provided is excellent. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at ARS is excellent. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that has been designed to stimulate, challenge and support students in their learning. The school follows the English National Curriculum whilst ensuring that the local requirements of the UAE are adhered to. This includes the teaching of Arabic, Islamic and UAE social studies. In EYFS, Foundation Stage (FS) 1 and FS2, all the students are taught together irrespective of whether Arabic is their first language. Arabic lessons in EYFS focus on letter formation and phonics. In primary and secondary, the students are divided into different groups for Arabic and non-Arabic who follow the prescribed curriculum as outlined by ADEK. Arabic reading is supported with e-reading platform, entitled (*I read Arabic*) for Arab and (*I start Arabic*) for Non-Arab.

The school celebrates and reinforces British values and customs through displays and assemblies. The curriculum is mapped out for all year groups and is reviewed annually to check progression. The curriculum has been designed to support the core subjects of English and mathematics and has adopted a topic-based approach to ensure that students remain motivated and engaged in their learning. This is reinforced across the curriculum.

There is a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities which are designed to nurture and develop personal and social skills, encourage personal responsibility and promote the awareness of Islamic and Emirati values. These are offered to all year groups and was evidenced by after-school clubs such as Arabic reading skills for Years 1 and 2, a chess club, creative robotics and sporting activities such as Jiu-Jitsu, karate and swimming. Attendance for these activities is high and students engage in them with enthusiasm.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) follow the English EYFS curriculum and the school is working towards 'Curiosity Approach' accreditation. The curriculum is designed to be child-centred and foster curiosity. The learning environments, both inside and outside the classrooms support this and are of a very high standard and are designed to enhance sensorimotor skills. The use of natural materials is effective and displays are effective in supporting learning and celebrating achievement. Students access outdoor learning daily when the temperature permits. Staff foster strong relationships with children and teachers are responsive to children's learning needs. Students are confident and independent within their environment and are excited about learning.

Phonics is a core component of the EYFS curriculum. During terms 1 and 2 of FS1, students learn how to form letter sounds and this is further enhanced by the application of Read

Write Inc. Progress in phonics is assessed every six weeks and screening takes place in Year 1. Students' progress to short story books and accelerated readers. In mathematics students are supported by 'White Rose' maths and 'Timetable Rockstars'. Parents receive curriculum updates every half term that outline the forthcoming learning objectives. This is further supported by 'knowledge organiser' on class dojo. The school has designed a curriculum that focuses on the core skills of numeracy, reading and writing. The school has introduced *Talk4Write* as a tool to support writing and communication. All teachers have been trained in its delivery.

For the foundation subjects, the school adopts a cross-curricular approach to learning. Topics are taught within designated timetabled slots entitled 'topic'. Topic areas are identified through regular planning meetings and coverage is supported by cross-curricular teaching in other subjects. This allows for greater flexibility e.g. the curriculum content for a year group with a high percentage of boys was amended to allow for the topic of 'superheroes' to be included to stimulate the learning.

The nature of the curriculum allows Year 6 to transition smoothly into Year 7. The latter is the only year group in secondary. Students are already familiar with the teachers and are assisted in their progression by organised 'transition days'. Year 7 students follow the same curriculum design as primary and the classes are of mixed ability. The school is often able to share the science laboratories with the Al Rabeeh Academy.

There is a robust quality assurance process of the curriculum undertaken by assistant headteachers: they review weekly plans and liaise closely with the heads of year to ensure that the curriculum meets the school standards.

Personal, social and health education is integrated into topics across the curriculum. This is reinforced through assemblies, the input from outside visitors and themed weeks e.g. mental Health Awareness Week and Cancer Awareness days.

The provision of education for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a strength: the school is fully inclusive. The executive SENDCo oversees the provision and is supported by other colleagues who have received training through the UK's national award. Students who require additional support are identified on entry to the school and are referred to the SENDCo team who advise teachers on appropriate support and learning strategies. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are set out by the classroom teacher and are reviewed at regular intervals with the SENDCo and parent.

Parents acknowledge and appreciate that the school is inclusive and recognise the positive impact that this has on the community and the promotion of tolerance towards disability. The curriculum is differentiated to also support the learning and progress of the more able students. Short-term plans outline success criteria and seating in lessons clearly indicate that teachers plan lessons that differentiate for these students.

The school delivers *Philosophy for Children*. This has a positive impact which is evidenced in group and pair work across all subjects. Students are seen to accept and acknowledge the views of others and develop ideas.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is excellent.

Relationships across the school are outstanding: it is genuinely a happy place. In an FS1 PE lesson moving in different ways, the strength of relationships was evident throughout. Students were familiar with the behaviour management strategies which were used to good effect with all responding very positively. Students were engaged and enthusiastic; links were made to prior learning about a story read before. Images were used in the classroom to prepare the class for the learning about moving like different animals that they were going to be developing in the hall. Behaviour was of an extremely high standard both in the classroom and during the practical session.

In the best lessons, the emphasis is on engaging and challenging the students. This was very evident in a Year 5 Philosophy for Children lesson, during which discussion was very carefully nurtured by the teacher. Students were encouraged to use key phrases to develop ideas, like "I would like to challenge \_\_\_\_'s idea because..." and "I would like to add to \_\_\_\_'s idea because...". The teacher used the microphone skilfully as a learning tool to clarify responses and guide students in tolerance to the ideas of others.

Students are enabled to acquire new knowledge and make good or excellent progress according to their ability, so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. Nearly all lessons involved good planning and use of effective teaching methods, activities, and management of class time. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, students made excellent progress, because the teacher ensured that the core learning objective to subtract fractions with a common denominator was achieved by everyone in the class. There was continuous formative assessment through the use of whiteboards to signal achievement of a task or gaps in understanding which the teacher could address individually to the learner. The most able were invited to accept the challenge of explaining in writing the calculation process using key mathematical vocabulary they had been taught. One wrote, "I subtracted 9 from 12 and kept the same denominator". High-level questioning by the teacher demanded the definition of improper fractions and gained the answer: "Improper fractions are when the numerator is bigger than the denominator".

Teachers are skilled at fostering students' self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves. The teachers show excellent understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson on ancient Egypt, the class achieved an excellent understanding of mummification in an engaging, creative and hands-on activity which clearly inspired and captivated the students. This required the hollowing out of large tomatoes representing the bodies of Egyptians and the filling of the red fruit carcasses with salt to preserve them. A boy explained, "When famous

people died, they cut out their organs.” Another girl was excited by this topic, because she could clear links to prior learning.

Teachers utilise classroom resources, including IT, effectively and they are of a good quality, quantity and range. In a Year 5 English lesson, the teacher used the power point presentation to support and scaffold learning, rather than to lead it. There was very effective use of assessment for learning which ensured that all learners were confident and therefore progress was rapid. The more able students were used skilfully to facilitate the progress of others. This was evidenced when an able student demonstrated concisely which written text from the board was the more complex and why. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

In the less successful lessons, though still of sound quality, the teaching did not fully engage the class. In one science lesson, for instance, less progress was made because students were unsure of the lesson objective. Although planning was evident, it felt like a standardised lesson plan and the teacher appeared less confident in its delivery. This resulted in a less effective plenary task which was purely to write a conclusion to the activity undertaken by students on circuits.

Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have an individual education plan (IEP) which follows UK practice. This ensures that the outcomes set for the students are based on their personal progress, not solely on their academic needs. Where appropriate, SEND students are involved in creating their IEP and are encouraged to participate in the decisions made regarding their schooling and social-emotional development. Students with SEND are identified at different levels based on their specific requirements. Students who are deemed as requiring Wave 3 or Wave 2 have appropriate support based on their individual needs.

There is a clear and robust framework in place to assess students' work. Teachers show a sound understanding of the abilities, needs and prior attainment of the students. Students are assessed in many ways: teacher judgement, end-of-unit assessment and end-of-term of term assessments. There is a mixture of formative and summative assessment methods, which provide a good balance of attainment data and an overall picture of the child. Internal and external assessment, as well as pupil progress evaluation processes are consistent across the school. Internal, external and international benchmark data are used effectively to guide learning to meet the needs of students, including GL Progress Tests, Cat4 (from Year 3 upwards) and the Arabic Benchmark Test (ABT). In EYFS, daily observations of children engaged in play, alongside open-ended questions, and resources and when necessary, teacher facilitated play, inform the steps of learning and progress. Students' learning is evidenced and shared with parents weekly via the online learning platform *Seesaw*. Progression of writing and mathematics tracking sheets are implemented to ensure children are challenged to their next step.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

Students' behaviour, attainment and progress are overall excellent.

Attendance is in line with UK requirements and is steadily improving in the wake of the Covid-19 restrictions. Standards in the Abu Dhabi Ministry of Education curriculum, consisting of Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies, are also very high.

In general, the school measures academic standards achieved by the students through a robust and varied system of assessments. Predicted performance is established through CAT4 tests, while real progress and attainment are plotted with the help of GL progress tests in English, mathematics and science. Assessment is a rich mixture of teacher judgement, end-of-unit assessments and end-of-term assessments. Moderation across years groups assures the accuracy and reliability of the teachers' judgements and marking.

In EYFS, teaching and assessment in 2021/22 were severely disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, at the time of inspection in March 2023, 60% of children in the FS2 class had already been assessed as having attained a *Good Level of Development* (GLD) because they had achieved the expected level for the Early Learning Goals in the prime areas of learning and specific areas of mathematics and literacy. By the end of EYFS in July 2023, the school predicts that 71% of children will have attained GLD. This compares to 65.2% of children attaining GLD at the end of EYFS in the UK in 2022. This standard is all the more remarkable given that the vast majority of pupils at Al Rabeeh School have English as an Additional Language and have little English when they start school at the age of 3 or 4 years.

In the 2022 phonics screening check 77% of Year 1 children met the expected standard slightly above the average score of 75% in the UK. For 2023, 91% of Year 1 pupils are on track to meet the expected standard and this compares favourably with a pre-covid average of 82% in 2019.

The majority of students make outstanding progress against their CAT4 predictions in reading, mathematics and science, meeting standards at their expected age level or above. These are frequently in line with or above the cohort average attainment in the UK. Although in writing progress and attainment lag behind what is achieved in other subjects, standards of writing seen in students' books are of a good standard and clearly improving over time. At present, there are no combined average attainment scores in the core subjects, or in spelling, grammar, and punctuation (SPAG), which misses the opportunity to make direct comparison with standards in the UK.

The standard of student behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Student attendance stood at 95% at the time of inspection, which is above with UK expected standards.

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

The spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the students is excellent and is a significant strength of the school.

It is given high priority and a systematic approach towards spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is evident.

An understanding of democracy is developed through the voting system that is part of the school's strong Student Leadership programme. Leadership skills are developed through participation in the Student Council, Sports Leaders, and the Innovation Team for Gifted and Talented students.

Positive relationships are nurtured through the explicit teaching of values including kindness, respect, inclusion, and empathy. These are promoted through assemblies, PSHE teaching and a monthly value focus. These values are modelled by all adults within the school and are reflected in the students' behaviour towards each other which is of an extremely high standard. Parents also talk about their positive relationships with school staff. Inclusion is valued by all.

Students feel strongly about the importance of taking care of all members of the school community. They know that all members of staff care about them and would be available to listen to their concerns. Students particularly appreciate access to the school counsellor to support them when needed.

In addition to feeling supported by adults in school, students demonstrated a clear understanding of their own responsibility for taking care of others. They talk about the importance of having the courage to appropriately challenge behaviour that may upset another student. The school counsellor has taught students to adopt a peer-mentoring approach towards supporting each other. Students are able to talk about what this means and they were clear about the importance of involving an adult should they be concerned about another child's safety.

A consistent and proactive approach is taken towards managing behaviour. This is evident in the school behaviour curriculum. Expectations are made clear to students and parents and staff take opportunities to acknowledge when these are being met through the use of specific verbal praise, class rewards and stickers. One example of this is the STEPS to politeness acronym, reminding students what good manners mean.

Behavioural issues at ARS are addressed using restorative processes. Students take responsibility for their choices, consider the impact of their actions and learn from mistakes. Parents are informed and involved at each stage of the process. The school's pastoral team meets regularly and take a holistic view towards supporting students of concern. Individual

behaviour plans are written and implemented for students who need additional support. These are reviewed regularly.

ARS has developed strong links with community organisations. An innovative approach to the use of external agencies to support children with additional needs is taken. Links have been forged with two external agencies who are regularly in school ensuring ease of access for parents and strong communication between the provider, home and school. The two organisations are able to address health, SEN and well-being concerns. The school also has close links with a domestic sports club and a national charity.



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

The welfare, health and safety of students are excellent.

The school implements robust measures to ensure that all children feel safe and cared for. The school has a fully equipped clinic that is managed by a qualified nurse and nurse assistant. The clinic meets all the requirements as specified by DOH and ADEK. The nurses meet weekly with members of leadership to review accidents, illnesses, and infections. An outcome of this is the deep cleaning that is undertaken in areas of the school if there are ever increases in infections identified.

The school operates a *no nuts* policy. Students who have high risk medical allergies are displayed in key areas around the school e.g. staff rooms and management offices. Sick children are reported via a tiered system to the nurse who directly contacts the parents. School leadership is also informed immediately.

Just under half of the students travel to and from school by bus. The arrival and departure of buses is supervised by members of staff and the school employs bus wardens. All the buses are fully air conditioned with seat belts and first aid resources. All children are logged on and off by swipe cards. The school also has the UAE Department of Transport's 'Salama' application which enables parents to track the journey of their children.

The school adopts very stringent safeguarding procedures. All school employees and volunteers are level 1 safeguard trained. There are 8 members of staff who are level 3 safeguard trained. Safer recruitment practices are in place and strict vetting procedures are followed. The school employs a school counsellor who offers social and emotional support to students. Self-referrals can be made as well as by parents and teachers. The counsellor is part of the safeguarding team and is a fluent Arabic and English speaker. Parents have also been able to attend Level 1 Safeguarding training through the school.

The school site is very secure. Security is present twenty-four hours a day with 2 security guards present from 5 am until 5 pm. Visitors to the school are checked twice by security before arriving at the reception desk. All visitors are required to provide identification. CCTV is operational across the school and first aid boxes are located on every corridor.

The school undertakes termly fire evacuation drills. Evacuation routes are clearly displayed around the school and practices are reviewed by the health and safety committee. All fire equipment complies with Civil Defence requirements.

Students are very carefully supervised at break times. All staff wear high visibility jackets and the outside areas are covered with canopies and surrounded by high fencing. The timetable has been designed to minimise movement in the corridors and avoid overcrowding in the outside play areas. Student seating and desk height are age appropriate. Washroom areas are

available for male and female students on every corridor; a team of cleaners undertake hourly checks. Windows are fitted with mosquito screens and are designed to partly open. Stair rails around the school have been raised up for added comfort and safety.

The school encourages students to adopt a healthy lifestyle. There is a healthy eating policy and the school organises a “Healthy Eating Week”. Healthy lunch box awards are issued weekly. The catering suppliers promote healthy food and parents are informed in advance of the weekly menus. The school nurse reinforces personal hygiene practices through assemblies. There is a mental health awareness week. Physical fitness and sporting fixtures are promoted and the school holds a monthly ‘Fitness Challenge’.

The safety, health and well-being of staff are also given a high priority. There is a staff well-being committee and teachers are provided with a workroom on every corridor. Staff are offered medical checks as a goodwill gesture by a local hospital.

Parent workshops are provided by the school to support the well-being of their children. Parent feedback indicates that these are valued. The school has been identified by ADEK as a model of excellent practice.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

The school is owned by the Royal Family and is part of the Royal Group in Abu Dhabi. It is one of two Al Rabeeh schools in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The school implements a single central register system to record all staff, paid and unpaid: it includes the name, job title, start and finish dates, qualifications, police clearance, UAE good conduct certificate, and at least two references. Host country *good conduct* certificates are obtained where possible and applicable.

All staff, including teachers, proprietors, volunteers, and third-party providers who work at ARS are checked to ensure that there are no restrictions to their working in schools. Prior to appointment, all potential candidates undergo a rigorous two-stage interview process. In addition to this, all candidates have appropriate background checks, and references are requested to ensure that staff are suitable to work in a school, physically fit to work and have the correct qualifications. All staff obtain ADEK approval to be able to teach in any school in Abu Dhabi. The safer recruitment policy and safe onboarding procedures are rigorously followed at ARS.

Staff and the senior leadership team are trained appropriately to deliver high-quality learning and provision in accordance with the National Curriculum of England, with at the same time recognising the local context. The majority of staff have UK qualifications: all staff hold relevant teaching qualifications.

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

The premises and accommodation of ARS are excellent.

The accommodation has been designed to support learning and the delivery of the curriculum. The school has 3 floors in addition to a rooftop playground. EYFS is located on the ground floor and has its own designated entry and departure gate to facilitate early collection. There is also an indoor multi-purpose indoor sports hall. Years 1, 2 and 3 are located on the first floor. Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 are located on the 2nd floor. Year 7 has been allocated the largest classrooms.

EYFS has 2 newly developed bespoke play areas that are designed to stimulate curiosity and play based learning. This is evidenced by the provision of a mud kitchen, water troughs, mirrors and sand pits. The outside areas have been painted with colours designed to reinforce visual literacy.

The school has made maximum use of the space available. This is evidenced by the rooftop play area. Students are able to play football and it also allows more space for social interaction and recreation.

The library has recently been relocated to the first floor and the new Palms Sports library has been constructed to enable access for all primary students. It is well resourced and provides a comfortable space for children to develop their reading skills. There are 2 computer rooms, one is located on the first floor and one on the second floor. These are supplemented by 2 sets of chrome books and iPads which can be booked out.

The outside play area is fitted with a large stage and there is a sound system that enables parents to attend assemblies without having to enter the school building.

The classrooms are well lit and there is air conditioning that has a pre-set temperature. Classrooms are linked together by small breakout rooms to provide extra learning space for extension and support activities. These also allow teaching assistants to move between teaching groups. Learning resource books are available in the corridors. All the classrooms have age appropriate furniture and are fitted with height-appropriate electronic smart boards and there is a mobile smartboard for PE.

The school has a fully equipped clinic and a small cafeteria on the ground floor. Fire hoses are located on each corridor which are compliant with civil defence regulations. There are first aid boxes located on every corridor.

There is provision for car parking at the front of the school and there are spaces available at the side and rear of the school that allows buses to park away from the gates.

## 10. Standard 6

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

The provision of information and communication with parents is a strength at ARS.

Parents report that excellent communication is central to the school community. Achievements are shared and concerns raised are listened to and dealt with promptly. Parents are kept informed at all times. Class teachers are very responsive when contacted through *Class Dojo*, via email or verbally. Higher-level concerns are addressed quickly and effectively. Heads of year, members of the leadership team and the principal are accessible and approachable. They ensure that they are available and visible by being outside to speak to parents and students at the start and end of each day.

Careful consideration is given to ensure that communication with parents is supportive and accessible to all. All formal communication from the school is in both Arabic and in English. Front desk staff are bilingual.

A whole school termly update is provided in the form of a video by the principal with contributions from staff and students. Half-termly year group curriculum overviews are shared with parents in addition to weekly newsletters communicating learning objectives, upcoming events and parental involvement opportunities. *Class Dojo* and *Engage* are used to send out communications. The school operates an open-door policy. Many initial queries are answered by the parent liaison officer and parents may request meetings with teaching staff or members of the leadership team at any time. *Class Dojo*, in addition to *Seesaw* in EYFS, are used effectively to share daily achievements at home and at school.

Three formal written reports are shared during each academic year. These focus on behaviour for learning, attainment and progress and are followed up with individual parent meetings during academic review days. EYFS reports reflect progress towards the EYFS for England early learning goals in the prime and specific areas of learning. The final report includes judgments about engagement, participation, and independence.

Parents are invited to attend workshops and coffee mornings to help them to understand the school's ethos and approach. The subjects for these sessions are selected in response to parental feedback. Examples of these include establishing routines and keeping children safe online. These are well-received by parents who find them effective and supportive.

Communication is central to the proactive approach taken to supporting behaviour and ensuring that all feel included. Parental involvement in behaviour management and when there are pastoral concerns is valued highly. The school works with parents to ensure that positive outcomes are reached for all children concerned. Parents are included in restorative processes which are consistently based on mutual respect.

The admissions process is led by the admissions team. Parents who wish to apply for a place are invited to complete an online expression of interest, following which, a comprehensive application pack is shared with them. They are then invited for a school tour and children are

assessed onsite. The SEN department may be involved in the assessment process if appropriate. The school takes pride in being inclusive. EYFS applicants join a group play assessment. The school currently has a significant waiting list. Offers of places are made following a list of priorities listed in the application documentation. Applicants who are unsuccessful are supported through signposting to other schools, assessment, and support. The school has an appeals procedure through which parents can request reconsideration of their application. This may include an additional assessment.

Attainment data is shared annually with ADEK or directly from the school at parental request.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

ARS meets the BSO standard fully.

The complaints procedure is known as the 'escalation policy' and is shared with all stakeholders. It is also available on the school website with a shortened version visible around the school. The school follows the guidelines and procedures in relation to complaints as detailed in the home-school agreement. This is supplemented by a complaints policy that, where possible, follows the guidance from the UK's Department for Education 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2019'.

ARS ensures that all existing families and new admissions follow procedures as outlined in the home-school agreement that is signed at the beginning of each academic year. The school follows guidance from ADEK requirements to ensure that correct procedures are followed when dealing with parent complaints. The school's parental relations executive (PRE) and front of house are usually the first point of contact for a parent complaint.

The PRE/front-of-house staff can then direct the complaint to the appropriate teacher or leader depending on the nature of the complaint. Members of the executive leadership team may be included, depending on the complaint. All complaints are logged and recorded on the school management system.

The school offers an open-door policy where parents are welcomed to come and discuss their concerns when suitable. In many cases, this de-escalates the complaints and allows the school to deal with the issue in a timely and effective manner. Parents are also welcome to make appointments to see any teacher or member of the leadership team, including the principal, at a mutually agreed time.

If a complaint comes in the form of an email, it is directed to the appropriate department of the school. Staff are trained to support parents through this process and all complaints must be recorded, written up, and officially closed in writing. The policy replicates that of the management structure of the school. In most cases, many minor complaints can be resolved at the class teacher level and in an informal manner. If this is not possible this is then escalated through the organisational chart including middle leadership, senior leadership, and finally at the executive leadership level including the school principal.

Parents who are still unhappy that a complaint has not been handled correctly through the escalation policy procedure, may then subsequently log this complaint with ADEK. Any complaint of this nature is dealt with by the ADEK liaison officer and the school principal.

The school offers several platforms affording parents the opportunity to voice their concerns, raise a query or offer a suggestion, throughout the school year. This includes both digital and face to face media.

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

The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

Leadership is highly effective because the executive principal leads as the captain of a strong team: he is sensitive, hard-working, talented and innovative, but his greatest strength is his ability to create and nurture the team around him. He is very highly regarded in the school community and in the wider Abu Dhabi context.

At ARS, he works effectively together with an engaged and fully supportive board of proprietor trustees and parent governors as well as two heads of school, to drive forward school improvement and create the conditions for excellent academic success, This is on the back of a clearly articulated and shared vision for the school “Aspire, Acquire and Achieve”.

The dynamic executive and middle-tier leadership team work cohesively as a joint force to agree on and implement the priorities for school improvement. All the leaders has been grown and developed from within and therefore know the school extremely well when they come into post. The recent appointment of four new assistant headteachers, who are all lead practitioners in the classroom, has clearly added consistency to the high quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection. Collectively, the school leaders ensure that excellent academic standards are achieved. They do this by sustaining a constant focus on the quality of teaching, planning and assessment, by close monitoring and tracking of student performance and through exemplary communication with parents whose partnership and understanding of their children’s learning journey is solicited at all times.

The principal ensures that distributed leadership is effective through accountable delegation of responsibilities and encouragement for middle leaders to innovate. Delegated performance management, whereby heads of year line-manage teachers and teaching assistants in their teams, supports the transmission of school improvement strategies up and down the leadership structure. This process generates in-house professional development programmes linked to the school priorities such as a new teaching and learning programme coupled with a new student performance tracking system. Al Rabeeh School and Al Rabeeh Academy regularly share best practice in joint CPD events. The heads of EYFS, SEND and human relations can draw on their experience of working across both the Al Rabeeh School and the Al Rabeeh Academy. School leaders enjoy 360-degree reviews by their staff as well as coaching and external leadership courses organised by BSME. All school leaders are licensed by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge. Noticeably, there is very strong retention of academic staff.

The leadership's infectious enthusiasm for the students and their well-being permeates the whole school. As a result, a culture has been created where students are happy and eager to learn. Their academic and personal achievements are regularly celebrated at assemblies. The supervision and care of the children are exemplary with the result that students and parents



report negligible incidents of bullying. A considerable praiseworthy aspect of the school is its commitment to nurturing children with complex special needs and disabilities if it believes these children can thrive in the school. Four trained SENCOs operate in the school. The principal and his leadership teams are constantly visible and always approachable. They model the positive personal and social values that underpin outstanding relationships in the school community. It is not uncommon to see the principal and his executive leadership colleagues greeting pupils throughout the school day.

The senior leadership team and heads of year constantly monitor student well-being through its online reporting system, student questionnaires and scrutiny of recorded student visits to the school's medical centre. The head of EYFS has introduced the Leuven Scale for well-being to support the emotional health of the youngest children in the foundation classes.

The senior HR officer and her team have in place a rigorous system of child protection safeguarding checks, including a well-maintained and regularly updated single central register of staff. This is in compliance with UAE and UK safeguarding standards. The leadership ensures that refresher safeguarding training is undertaken annually and is a core element of induction training and a key focus of the employment probationary period. The school has 2 DSLs. The administration, and facilities management team ensure the smooth operation of the school with a strong emphasis on student welfare, health and safety, another significant strength of the school.