



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **Al Yasmina Academy**

**Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates**

Date **1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023**  
Inspection number **20230501**

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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; 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 pupils 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, 138 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. Discussions were held with the executive leadership team (ELT), a representative from the governing board, management teams, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team were in school for three days. The lead inspector was Nan McKeown. The team members were Alun Yorath, Tom Woodhead, John van der Marel, Rayan Omar, Asma Siddiqui and Nichelle Jackson.

## 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 Yasmina Academy (AYA) is a highly effective, inclusive school, part of the Aldar group. Opened in 2008, AYA provides a British education for families living in the Khalifa City area. Currently there are 2,929 students on roll, with 85 different nationalities represented. The vision of the academy focusses on a holistic approach to develop the whole child. 'All Students Thrive' through three main domains: wellbeing and positive moral values, cultural awareness and responsible and ethical leading citizens.

AYA invests time and energy into building critical relationships. It actively promotes the involvement and support of all stakeholders and enables them to be involved in the school's decision-making processes. The school's purpose is to "Empower our next generation to shape our future". Delivering the highest standards of education and inspiring a love of learning is central to the school's philosophy. The values of the school; Excellence, Creativity, Passion, Respect and Collaboration, are embedded in all aspects of school life.

Students feel secure and valued within the friendly, mutually trustful learning environment and the real sense of community that prevails throughout the school. Students are very well supported by outstanding pastoral care and robust welfare, health and safety policies and procedures. Students display great pride in their school and their personal achievements.

Responding to the needs of the growing population AYA is transitioning to a new purpose-built campus, with the Early Years department already in-situ. This will allow the school to provide extensive facilities specifically designed to further develop its' educational aims.

AYA is highly respected by the community it serves.

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### 3.1 What the school does well

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

- A culture of trust has been driven by the principal and senior leaders;
- Leaders at all levels are fully committed to improving outcomes for students;
- Inclusion. Every child is important;
- Robust quality assurance processes are in place;
- The values of the school are embedded in daily practice;
- A thematic approach to teaching ensures learning is meaningful and relatable;
- The day to day running of the school is smooth and calm;
- Deployment and supervision of students creates a safe environment;
- Students are very well behaved and have excellent manners;
- Relationships between all staff members, students and parents are excellent;
- The wealth of data which is skilfully used to inform planning for the needs of all groups of students;
- There are consistent long and short -term plans in place, leading to high quality teaching and learning;
- The use of effective questioning to provoke deeper levels of thinking;
- Student voice is encouraged and valued. “Everyone is a leader”.
- The school keeps parents well informed on the progress of their children;
- The sense of community and pride all stakeholders have for the academy;

### 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Embed further the principles of *Higher Performance Learning* and monitor the impact on learning;
- ii. Continue to develop the strong practice of innovation in all aspects of school life;
- iii. Provide further opportunities for the higher ability students to be challenged and academically stretched.

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## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Al Yasmina Academy				
Address	Al Mireef Street, Raha Gardens, Khalifa City A PO Box 128166 Abu Dhabi				
Telephone Number/s	00971 2 5014888				
Website Address	<a href="http://www.alyasminaacademy.sch.ae">www.alyasminaacademy.sch.ae</a>				
Key Email Address/s	<a href="mailto:pre@alyasminaacademy.sch.ae">pre@alyasminaacademy.sch.ae</a> <a href="mailto:admissions@alyasminaacademy.sch.ae">admissions@alyasminaacademy.sch.ae</a> <a href="mailto:pa@alyasminaacademy.sch.ae">pa@alyasminaacademy.sch.ae</a>				
Headteacher/Principal	Keith Miller				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Steve Sharples				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	<b>2,929</b>	Boys	1,556	Girls	1,373
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	11	<i>12-16 years</i>	675	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	682	<i>17-18 years</i>	144	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	1,411	<i>18+ years</i>	6	
Total number of part-time children	0				

## 4.1 British nature of the school

AYA has a British nature and is organised in a typically British structure, both academically and pastorally. Characteristics of the provision at AYA are similar to those of an independent school in the UK.

- The leadership structure matches that of British schools with defined roles for senior management, middle management, and teachers.
- Most of the teaching staff are UK trained.
- Academic staff have a comprehensive programme of training with input from both internal and external sources. Staff professional development is used to develop consistency and competency in the delivery of the recognised schemes and aims to ensure teaching is reflective of UK standards.
- Students at AYA experience a culture of freedom and equality.
- The school embraces democracy and mutual respect.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies are comprehensive and in alignment with the expectations for British schools.
- House systems, school uniform and pastoral initiatives are evident and aligned with standard UK practices.
- Displays in classrooms and corridors around the school reflect British values and typical British pedagogy.
- Key values are embedded within the school and permeate all aspects of school life.
- The school is extremely well resourced with books from UK publishers and learning resources that would be typical in other British curriculum schools.
- Teaching and learning styles are informed by UK best practice. A broad range of DfE approved curriculum schemes underpin planning and consequently students can enter schools in the UK with minimal disruption to their education.
- The students are divided into year groups and key stages consistent with British definitions and models.
- There is high importance placed on pastoral care, with dedicated staff positions created to enhance and support student welfare.

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

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

### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum provided by AYA is excellent and meets all relevant BSO standards. The school curriculum is based on the English National Curriculum and the EYFS *Development Matters* guidance. It is broad and balanced, with a very clear rationale aligned to the Emirati and national visions. It is relevant, comprehensive, and promotes innovation and challenge.

The school's curriculum planning and design is outstanding, with high expectations that lead to exceptional progress for students of all abilities. Long and medium-term schemes of learning show clear progression. Links within the national curriculum and explicit objectives, promote high-quality learning. The use of data in the planning and focus on EAL in all classes, allow every student to access the curriculum at an appropriate level.

At AYA, two curriculum policies are in place, one for primary and one for secondary. Both policies are visible and monitored to ensure students have the best possible educational experience appropriate to their age and needs. The primary curriculum is differentiated appropriately so that all students are given the opportunity to flourish, and this promotes eagerness to be challenged in all areas of the curriculum.

Cross-curricular planning is evident in the primary section. An appropriate, consistent, and highly effective tracking check list for self-assessment is available in the students' notebooks. In primary, the curriculum has been redesigned to promote innovation through a STEAM project-based approach. Students apply the skills they have learned in the core subjects to demonstrate their understanding at the end of the unit. The STEAM classes are impressive and stimulate the students' minds to think critically.

The curriculum encourages leadership. For instance, during the moral education class in Year 3, all the students were encouraged to promote themselves for the responsibility role of term 3 leader. Students were also taught the importance of choosing a leader and the criteria for making their own choice. The students show a clear understanding of highly social aspects such as democracy. A positive educational atmosphere exceeds expectations everywhere, in classroom activities and among the students. Kindness and respect are recognised. The relationships between students and teachers are inspirational.



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AYA offers 20 optional subjects in Key Stage (KS)4 and 25 subject choices in KS5. Subjects range from STEM, humanities, languages, and creative subjects thus catering to a wide variety of students interest and talents. The middle school programme is well adapted to the needs of students, improving transition, and developing a one school ethos. Cross-curricular planning is effective, with examples of integration between English and Arabic, and PE and Science. To fully develop the skills needed to be successful at GCSE, students start their GCSE courses in Year 9. Students have the opportunity to make changes at the start of Year 10 to ensure they follow the best pathway.

Students receive sound advice and assistance to make important choices. The employment of a whole school careers and further education coordinator leading careers week, work experience week, and mock interviews, allows students to gain an authentic taste of future career opportunities or university courses. Options evenings, assemblies, including a 'careers of the future' assembly and 1-1 options meetings, are provided to assist students and parents in making informed decisions. *Unifrog* is also used to support students in their future plans.

The school provides a rich and varied extra-curricular programme through the provision of academic and non academic extra-curricular activities (ECAs). The programme provides students with ample opportunities to develop their skills outside the classroom and to join regional or international competitions. The academy for excellence focuses on STEM, creative art, performing art, languages, humanities, national identity and Emirati culture, sport, and business and enterprise, allowing students to explore their personal talents and interests further.

The school focuses on developing well-rounded individuals through its moral education programme that highlights the importance of respect, tolerance, diversity, British and UAE values. Additionally, during form time, students receive positive education that emphasises the importance of kindness and positive relationships. There is an abundance of opportunities for students to volunteer, develop leadership skills and make a difference in the wider community. For instance, students can help to organise national or international day, join the student council, become a prefect, participate in the mentoring programme or lead an ECA. The school uses the VESPA model to develop meta-cognitive skills, which allows students to become more self-aware and confident learners.

The extended project qualification (EPQ) is offered in KS5 to provide opportunities for students to develop independent research skills and enhance their university applications.

The curriculum at AYA prepares students for the next stages of their education as leading global citizens.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching at AYA is outstanding. Teachers in primary plan lessons skilfully to meet the needs of all learners, including those with specific needs. A thematic approach to learning is used across primary. Lessons showcase real life situations and make cross-curricular links. Routines and expectations are set which lead to student engagement and high levels of learning.

At AYA, there is consistent high quality long and short-term planning. Teachers deliver well-planned, exciting and enjoyable lessons. In lessons observed, a range of teaching methodologies was employed including direct instruction, individual and group learning, inquiry-based learning, and games-based learning. In an English lesson in Year 2, the teacher modelled role play by passing through different “time machines” which created an enthusiasm for learning about the Great Fire of London. In an Early Year’s science lesson, the “Queen’s crown” was frozen and students were excited by the creative activities to find out the most appropriate way to melt the ice.

Effective questioning is a strength across primary. Teachers ask probing questions to prompt deep thinking. Bronze, Silver and Gold success criteria create personalised learning goals. Teachers ensure students are given opportunities within the lesson to share their learning.

The learning environment of the school contributes to students’ learning experiences. The learning spaces are stimulating and make imaginative use of both indoor and outdoor spaces. The areas are well thought out and planned which provide a wonderful opportunity for the learners to develop their language and social skills. The displays in the classrooms and corridors are vibrant and meaningful. There are clear links between displays and lesson content. Learning is enhanced by a range of good quality resources and the practical subjects of Art and Design Technology are particularly well-resourced. A focus on language-rich working walls and topic displays in all classrooms benefit English language learners and their understanding across the core subjects. Many displays have dual coding to support the EAL learner.

Assessment for learning is well embedded within primary. The traffic light system is well used and understood by students. Learning gaps within the lesson are addressed to help students move on with their learning. Marking policy is followed consistently which was evidenced in the notebooks. The EAL assessment process within primary is effective and an impact of this is seen across secondary.

Primary students have two reading books every week and it was impressive to see that the library books were labelled as per the accelerated reader levels which makes it easy for students to make independent choices.

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Data is used effectively across primary to inform teaching and learning. Middle leaders and senior leaders have access to data trackers and data is reviewed every four weeks. A thorough gap analysis is carried out and intervention strategies are put in place where necessary. There are three waves of intervention which are explained in detail in the intervention policy. Detailed individual education plans (IEPs) are in place and are monitored through regular meetings.

Arabic for native and non-native classes exceeds expectations in terms of student progress in all language skills: reading, writing, and speaking. Similarly, in Islamic subjects for native and non-native classes, the lessons demonstrate an inspirational and high level of understanding of Islamic concepts in relation to world situations.

Students in the secondary school are taught in mixed ability classes, with the exception of mathematics, for which the students are placed in sets in Term 2 of Year 7. AYA justifiably prides itself on being an inclusive school with high expectations of all students. A range of differentiation to ensure that all students reach their individual targets is highlighted in planning documents. In a few secondary lessons, the level of challenge was inconsistent, especially for the higher ability pupils. Student progress meetings lead to IEPs being put in place. Some students have one to one support in lessons, while others have withdrawal group support. The Accelerated Reader scheme is used in Years 2-9 to support students' reading development. Students spoken to were enthusiastic about the scheme. They know their levels and display an eagerness to progress. Students are proud of their achievements. In a Year 7 Art lesson, a student was overjoyed to complete the activity of mask making after much perseverance with a cutting task. He was heard to tell his teacher "It was hard but I am very proud I made it".

In the secondary school, subject teachers delivering revision lessons for the external examinations showed a deep understanding of the examination requirements and tailored their lessons to the individual needs of the students. Bespoke work was given to the students based on their performance in their recent mock examination, with clear guidance about how to improve in specific areas. Students know to improve their grade and this is greatly valued.

The teachers clearly care for their students and know them well, both in terms of their academic ability and their welfare. Consequently, students display a very positive attitude to their learning and during the vast majority of lessons, are very well-behaved. On the rare times that low-level disruption was noticed, this was dealt with swiftly by teachers in a calm but firm manner.

Students have homework timetables. The home learning policy states homework is regularly given and monitored. However, there is some inconsistency in practice. There are examples of thorough and regular homework for some classes and Year groups, but not all.

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Secondary students are regularly assessed, both summatively and formatively, and the data is used to inform future planning and targets. Students are aware of their targets, and these are found in the form of Progress Maps at the front of all their exercise books. Lesson expectations are also found in all exercise books. In KSs 4 and 5, assessments are linked to external examination criteria and on-going formative assessment is used to assess students' levels of understanding, together with regular summative assessments. Marking and feedback was variable in the secondary school; however, the best examples showed praise and constructive comments with students clearly understanding the next steps to take to make progress. For example, students' books for Year 7 Geography demonstrated high levels of engagement, peer marking and teacher feedback with many examples of in-depth student reflection and redrafting.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students at AYA are outstanding.

In the Early Years, attainment trends demonstrate a significant improvement year on year. Attainment in comprehension has shown a 10% increase over the last three years, due to the highly effective measures put in place.

Phonics progress for students in Year 1 is excellent, despite 86% of the year group having English as an additional language (EAL). Most recent phonics testing data show that students perform in line with UK National averages. In 2022, 72% successfully passed the phonics screening test. In Year 6, students achieve strong reading results with 74% of students achieving above the curriculum expectations.

In KSs 1 and 2, attainment data across the curriculum areas show that most students achieve the expected level and a large majority achieve above the expected level. Reading attainment is consistently strong in all year groups. Almost all students are in line with UK National Curriculum expectations.

Primary CAT data indicates that student starting points are much lower than the UK National average. Students' excellent achievements by the end of Year 6 evidence the high levels of value added by the excellent learning and teaching opportunities they have at AYA.

Responding to the increased number of EAL students joining the school, there is a strong identification and targeted interventions programme in place to provide the relevant level of support.

Across the primary school, high standards regarding the presentation of student work are evident. Students clearly take pride in their work. The writing standards are also high which is demonstrated through student workbooks, assessment tasks and end of year attainment data.

In the primary school, the attainment and progress made by all students at AYA is significantly above expected UK levels. Standards achieved throughout the primary school reflect strong student attainment. Assessment data shows that students' starting points are typically lower and progress across the primary years is strong and sustained.

In the secondary school, attainment is above average in all subject areas and by all groups of students this is illustrated by a wealth of assessment data including internal measures and external assessments including GL Assessment tests (CAT4, PTE, PTM and PTS), GCSE, ALPS and A Levels. Assessment data shows that new students often join the school with starting points below expected levels in core subjects. At the end of each

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key stage attainment is above age -related expectations with all student groups consistently making progress above expected levels.

In KS 3, students enjoy a rich, varied and balanced curriculum enabling all students to make exceptional progress. Thorough and well understood data is used adeptly to ensure that all student groups make outstanding progress: Students with additional learning needs and EAL students make exceptional progress throughout the secondary school across all subject areas.

Standards attained by students at GCSE are significantly above UK and International school expected levels in all subject areas. The school is rightly proud of the value it adds with students achieving +1.4 grades higher than expected at GCSE. Students with additional learning needs are very well supported to achieve excellent outcomes. At GCSE these students achieve, on average, +2.7 grades higher than expected.

Secondary heads of departments have developed a consistently applied approach to exam preparation, highly individualised support and intervention, and meticulous data tracking and reviews. This strategic and developed approach has seen GCSE results at AYA improve significantly over the last five years in all performance metrics.

In KS 5 students study A levels from a broad and diverse range of options suited to their ability, career and university aspirations. With the expansion of the school's facilities and campus the school is able to plan to offer alternative examination pathways to best suit the changing needs of its student population. The very high levels of engagement and enthusiasm by teachers and students at both GCSE and A level helps all students to make much higher than expected progress throughout their school career. Students graduate from AYA very well prepared and equipped to continue their study at some of the best universities in the world including Ivy League North American Universities.

Student attendance during the inspection was 96%, whilst attendance for the whole academic year to date is 94%. This reflects the high levels of enthusiasm and motivation shown by students to their studies and school life.

## 6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. Students have an exceptionally positive attitude towards their school. Students have a strong desire to be involved in school life. They are proud to contribute to their community. Students have organised Iftar events and helped to write the yearbook. Student achievements are celebrated through awards, house points, and rewards which sets a positive culture for learning throughout the school.

The school's focus on positive reinforcement and a growth mindset enables students to take risks and thrive in class. No-one gets left out. Students praise the strong relationships they have with each other as well as with their teachers. Kindness and friendship weeks, positive education during form time and consistent positive reinforcement of teachers in and outside of the classroom further emphasise the importance of positive relationships. Students report they feel comfortable and equipped to approach their teachers to ask for support when needed.

The PSED in EYFS and the moral education in Year 2 and beyond, enables students to make well informed choices about moral perspectives and for them to be excellent ambassadors for fundamental British values. The moral education programme emphasises the importance of tolerance, respect, and inclusion. Students learn to understand and deal with their emotions, are open-minded, considerate, polite and well-mannered. Students gain an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures through events such as national and international day.

Students are encouraged to seize opportunities and to be involved in class and in the wider school community. Through the wide range of ECAs, students are able to develop their sporting, dramatic, musical, creative and artistic talents. The academy of excellence allows students to engage in a variety of workshops and a final project in collaboration with students from other schools. Many other leadership opportunities are available to students, such as joining the student council, a mentoring programme, leading the warm up at the start of a PE lesson, leading an ECA or becoming a prefect.

EPOCH data is used effectively and initiates conversations between students and staff to support students' well-being. Strategically placed assemblies during the year informed by EPOCH data, allow students to discuss and continue to develop their well-being. The school has a detailed culture for learning policy that fosters positive well-being for all students and deals effectively with any behavioural issues. Led by a passionate team of pastoral leaders, it is evident that the well-being of students is at the forefront of everyone's mind. As a result, students can develop themselves in a safe environment.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety is excellent.

Students have very positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in and out of lessons is also a strength. The ELT places all matters relating to welfare, safeguarding, health and safety of the students at the core of their practice. Students are extremely well cared for, feel safe, valued and come to school happy. Students are very proud to be part of AYA. Relationships and mutual respect between all stakeholders are exemplary. The school has a clear Culture for Learning Policy which focuses on positive behaviours. There is a culture of positivity and happiness throughout the school.

Safeguarding has a high priority at AYA. The ELT and designated safeguarding leads are supported by a team from the Aldar Education head office as required. Relationships are also established with external agencies who the school can liaise with for additional support. Robust policies are in place regarding safeguarding, and they are effectively implemented. Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and the joint responsibility of everyone in the school community regarding this. The safeguarding reporting and record keeping is being further enhanced as the school is transitioning to using 'Child Protection Online Management System' (CPOMS).

The school's health and safety framework ensure that all staff members receive training on a regular basis. The school fully complies with the local ministry's health and safety requirements. They have external and internal maintenance teams to support the upkeep of the facilities and to ensure that the health and safety is of the highest quality. The school has an on-site clinic located near the main entrance and is staffed by a medical team. All medications are securely stored and appropriate records are kept regarding the inventory. Stringent records are also kept regarding all matters relating to a student's visit to the school clinic, including the communication with parents. The procedures in place for students who need to leave the school campus early are clear.

Healthy eating is promoted across the whole school as is regular hydration. Drinking water is readily available throughout the campus. Healthy living is promoted through the ECA programme as well as in moral education lessons and assemblies. Students are also taught about online safety and the use of social media. All students are taught about the importance of sun safety, which is supported by a 'no hat, no play' policy for the younger children.

Students in the primary school spoke highly of how the school supports them in living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining positive relationships with others. Student Voice surveys from FS1-Year 6 show that 99% reported feeling happy most or all the time, with 100% stating they felt safe in school. 100% reported that they had an adult to go to if they needed.



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As part of the ELT, the manager for Operations and Support Services is meticulous in his work in ensuring very high standards of health, safety and welfare for students, staff and visitors. The welfare, health and safety of the students is supported by a robust set of policies that are recorded centrally. The implementation of policies is consistent and monitored to maintain a safe environment.

The school has developed a system of continual review of all Health and Safety measures. The premises and on-site equipment are safe, secure, clean, well maintained and regularly monitored by dedicated facilities and security teams to minimise risks.

The school has a suitable fire emergency response procedure in place. Evacuation maps are visible throughout the school. Both evacuation and lockdown drills are practiced on a regular basis and the Health and Safety team completes a report following each drill. Students were able to explain procedures relating to these when questioned. Fire equipment is up-to-date and checked on a regular basis. Arrival and departure procedures are extremely well managed and operate very smoothly.

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

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

All staff involved in the recruitment process have received training in safer recruitment, are knowledgeable and understand the responsibility to ensure the very highest standards are maintained throughout the process. The ELT and Human Resources (HR) department are expertly supported by HR and Safeguarding Department at Aldar Academies central office.

Identity, medical, qualifications, police checks, UK DBS and references, are in place for all staff appointed to the school. This includes teachers, classroom assistants, administration and support staff. Extensive and meticulously organised HR files are maintained for all staff. Reference checks including follow up phone checks are carried out and are well documented.

The school works very closely with the relevant UAE Ministries to ensure that all documentation and qualifications are compliant with local legislation allowing the accurate and timely issuing of work permits as required.

All planned visitors to the school are also required to provide documentation including proof of identity, police checks and qualifications which are processed through the relevant Ministry, before access to school is granted.

A key strength of AYA is its very talented and hard working staff. The school has higher than expected retention rates for its staff and offers many opportunities for internal promotion and career development. Staff spoke very highly of the supportive culture in the school, the rich and varied CPL programme and the collaborations with the other schools in the Aldar Academies group. Staff are proud to work at AYA. They are outstanding role models for the students. They show very high levels of mutual respect to one another and are excellent ambassadors for the school and the parent company.

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

The premises and accommodation at the school are excellent

The school's buildings and premises are excellent in major respects. Their inspirational design qualities make a highly significant contribution to the students' outcomes. AYA consistently provides a fully safe, hygienic and secure environment for students and staff. Supervision of students is highly effective at all times. Full compliance is guaranteed by frequent audits and evaluations of the practice and documentation. Which can be evidenced in the school's accomplishment of HSE related certifications such as OSHAD certification and Green Flag Certificate.

Contracts with external entities are in place to ensure the maintenance of high-quality premises and accommodations. The Academy has in place processes and procedures for round-the-clock monitoring/cleaning and regularly replenishing environmentally safe toiletries within the entire campus. Outsourced specialist cleaning company (Khidmah LLC) are regularly quality assured for standards of cleanliness. Outsourced maintenance company (Khidmah LLC) undertakes frequent checks and maintains accurate school building records. An Annual Preventive Maintenance Schedule is in place to ensure that HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing and Specialized Systems are monitored periodically. The Academy conduct fifteen monthly Health and Safety related audits each month, these are rigorously quality assured by Al Aldar Education. These audits are captured in the comprehensive and dedicated HSE management system Evox, which is also used as source of Policy reference, incident investigating tool and audit record ERP. All Security Guards are PSCOD (Private Security Company Organization Department) and NSI (National Security Institute) compliant from an outsourced professional security agency. A digitally monitored 'Guard-Tour System' ensures frequent round-the-clock safety checks. CCTV is being monitored closely by a dedicated female security guard, and any health and safety issues which may arise are escalated to the Health and Safety Officer for action.

## 10. Standard 6

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

The provision of information for parents, carers and others meets the BSO standards; it is excellent.

AYA embraces parents as partners in their child's education. The parent community within the school is significantly strong. The school follows an open-door policy. The ELT is visible every morning to meet and greet students and parents can easily approach them during the morning hours. The school has employed three full time parent relation executives to support parents with their queries and liaise with the leadership team or members of staff for appointments.

Communication is a strength across the school. Parents are kept well informed about school matters and their child's learning. Weekly newsletters sent to parents contain the required details for parents to refer to. Parents are regularly invited to school for workshops, information evenings, termly book looks and drop ins. Furthermore, there are review meetings, termly coffee mornings with the executive principal and topic engagement days. There is a clear reporting system. The parents can meet the class teachers or subject teachers to discuss the progress of their children at any given point of time. An events calendar is in place and activities for parents are planned. There are multiple opportunities for parents to provide their feedback. Formal questionnaires are shared twice per year. The views and opinions of the parents are sought, listened to, and responded to. Seesaw is used as an online platform and parents stated they find it very convenient.

Yalla Yasmina is a parent-initiated group which represents the parent body. There are approximately 40 parents and monthly meetings are held in school. The group is very active in supporting a variety of events, for example, International day, charity days, community iftars, and national day celebrations.

The school's comprehensive website includes important contact information including the leadership team, administration staff and key contacts. Links to key policies are easily found. The school is very active on social media to engage parents, prospective parents and the wider community.

The school is an inclusive school and promotes equal opportunities to all groups of students. There is a culture of respect. Parents feel that their children are in a safe environment. Parents spoke very highly of the principal and the ELT. They trust the school to work in the best interests of all students. One of the parents spoken to mentioned that in their very first meeting with the principal they were very inspired to hear him say, 'I am here for the kids.' Positive relationships were observed throughout the inspection visit.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

This meets the requirements of BSO.

Class teachers are available at the beginning and end of day to respond to parental concerns and meetings with other teachers are made at mutually convenient times. Senior leaders are available throughout the day to meet parents and answer any questions they may have in a prompt and efficient manner. Parents spoke positively of the openness of the school to listen and respond to their requests for information and appreciated the daily (the start and end of the day) visibility and accessibility of the principal and ELT. They felt that this invariably stopped any minor concerns becoming larger.

The school has a comprehensive complaints policy that establishes a clear and detailed procedure for formal complaints. This can be accessed via the school's website or by visiting the school office. The policy explains that concerns are initially dealt with at an informal level before moving to the formal processes if necessary. Complainants can raise a concern with the relevant member of staff or Year leader, either in person or by letter, telephone, or email. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, the situation can be escalated to the assistant principal and then to the school principal.

Clear timelines are set out for each section of the process. Escalation of concerns is quick and responsive ensuring that all concerns are investigated thoroughly and in a timely fashion. If a concern has been received in writing, it is then considered a complaint and will be acknowledged within 24 hours. The assistant principal will conduct an investigation and reply within 10 school days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of this procedure, they should inform the school principal in writing within five school days. If the complainant is still dissatisfied, there are 10 school days to appeal to the executive principal who will investigate the complaint and reply within five days.

Further escalation is to the ALDAR director of education who will give a decision to the complainant and the executive principal within five school days. Appeals against this decision are made to the CEO whose decision is final.

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

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding and a strength of the school.

The school's vision, values and strategic direction is shaped by an experienced, inspirational principal and the highly motivated ELT. The supportive governing board makes a significant contribution to the school's leadership and direction, based on ethical principles. The board provides an objective and independent view of the school, quality assures the decision-making process, and provides strategic guidance to its leaders.

The school leadership further benefits from expert strategic support from its parent organisation ALDAR and their community of schools which provide staff training and collaboration links.

Critical self-review is continuous. Comprehensive school improvement plans (SIPs) are in place. The academy development plan is structured according to the 6 performance standards with a committee for each standard designated to monitor progress towards the achievement of targets set out in each section of the plan, at least 3 times per academic year.

A culture of trust and mutual respect has been developed and embedded in practice. Leaders at all levels have autonomy to develop their departments. Middle leaders are valued and are effectively driving school improvement. Internal growth is encouraged and fully supported. The coaching model of observations has led to a non-threatening system of support where teachers' skills are continually being developed.

The ELT is proud of its unified leadership approach. This provides the template that the many middle leaders follow.

Leaders at all levels have a clear and accurate understanding of what is required of them to ensure they continue to innovate and develop. Clear roles and responsibilities are outlined. There are robust accountability mechanisms in place and a shared commitment to continual improvement of standards exists across the academy.

The school's leaders encourage both the staff and students to take risks, innovate and not to be afraid of making mistakes. As a result of these leadership initiatives, students, staff and parents feel very much at the heart of the school's collective endeavours. They trust that the school leadership teams support them and are working in their interest. Consequently, relationships throughout school are excellent.

The school operations are highly effective. As part of the ELT, the operations manager is highly successful at ensuring all systems are efficient in enabling the smooth daily running of the school and its extensive facilities.