



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

**Amity International
School**

**Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates**

Date **24th – 26th April 2023**
Inspection number **20230424**

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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 pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding, where applicable); 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 pupils' 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, nearly 100 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with pupils. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Karen Hanratty. The team members were Lesley Birtwell, Lee Falconer, Anisa Haji and Andre Nel.

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

Amity International School provides an outstanding, rounded, holistic education for its pupils. The extensive range of curricular choices together with good standards of teaching result in strong outcomes for pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pastoral care is very well provided for, with safeguarding given high priority. All matters related to health and safety are managed effectively and to a very high standard. Parents are fully engaged as partners in their child's learning and are extremely supportive of the school. School leaders are committed to continual improvement and are excellent role models.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- Pupils, who are motivated, proud ambassadors for their school;
- School leaders, who are driving the school forward through an uncompromising commitment to continuous improvement in all areas;
- Clear vision and values which guide the purpose and direction of the school;
- Warm, respectful relationships across the school between staff and pupils, and within the pupil body;
- Focus on wellbeing of pupils and staff;
- Rich range of opportunities available within the curriculum and in co-curricular activities, supporting pupils finding their talents and interests;
- Post-16 provision which includes a breadth of bespoke pathways for a wide range of pupil abilities and career aspirations;
- Procedures for pupils' welfare, including safeguarding;
- Commitment to inclusion, to support pupils with a variety of additional needs;
- Shared planning in the primary phase which ensures consistent provision;
- Analysis and use of assessment data to identify learning needs and plan next steps;
- High standards of health and safety across all aspects of school operation;
- School premises, facilities and resources, particularly for sports and the creative curriculum, which are of very high quality;
- Relationships with parents
- Pupil achievement in the co-curriculum, especially sport and music, is strong – Amity is one of the only schools that have had two years of consecutive winners in the Abu Dhabi Young Musician of the Year award.
- Amity pupils also won the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) cup for football, against 283 other schools.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Develop strategies in teaching and learning so that:
 - all lessons delivered are as good as the best lessons and engage pupils as active learners;
 - there is sufficient challenge to adequately stretch the most able pupils;
 - effective learning skills are embedded across the primary phase;
 - additional adults in classrooms are always used effectively to support learning throughout the lesson;
 - recent initiatives (such as 'skills for success', 'Horizons' and a range of IT projects) are embedded and evaluated.
2. Streamline communications with parents;
3. Further develop initiatives for encouraging high levels of pupil attendance and punctuality.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Amity International School, Abu Dhabi				
Address	Exit 39, Al Bahya, Abu Dhabi, UAE				
Telephone Number/s	+971 2 503 9000				
Website Address	https://www.amityabudhabi.com/				
Key Email Address	Info@amityabudhabi.ae				
Headteacher/ Principal	Adrian Frost				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Dr Vajahat Hussain				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	1,565	Boys	840	Girls	725
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	274	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	322	<i>17-18 years</i>	34	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	935	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Amity International School is a British curriculum, not-for-profit school for pupils from Foundation Stage (FS) 1 to Year 13 located near to the Raha Beach area of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The school, which was founded in 2015, now has over 1,500 pupils from more than 80 different nationalities making up a thriving, diverse community.

The school has seen considerable expansion in its short history. Opening with only early years and primary classes, the secondary section followed in September 2017 with the addition of years 7 and 8. This year will see the first cohort of year 13 pupils sit A level examinations and graduate. The school offers a wide range of educational activities. These include a sailing and other water sports centre, with Royal Yachting Association (RYA) accreditation, which is used by pupils from year 3 up as part of the formal and co-curricular offering. Pathways for post-

16 pupils in the sixth form are flexible, offering academic or vocational routes, or a blend of both.

Amity International School is part of the Amity Education Group, which has over 100 educational establishments in its portfolio globally. The school is a member of British Schools of the Middle East (BSME).

The school identifies some areas for further development in the future, such as :

- developing lifelong learning skills and competencies;
- ensuring challenge for all, opportunities for extension and enrichment in and out of the classroom.

4.1 British nature of the school

The school fully meets the required standard. Amity International School has a distinctly British feel, which is evident in a range of facets of school life. British values underpin the school's own values of celebrating diversity, togetherness, inspiring excellence and collaboration. These values are the pillars of school life, which drive the curriculum, teaching and learning, pupils' personal, social and emotional development and the direction of school leadership. They are widely displayed and discussed frequently in assemblies and lessons.

The school delivers the National Curriculum for England 2014 in Key Stages (KS) 1 to 3, together with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021 for children in FS 1 and 2. English is the language of instruction in all lessons except Arabic subjects and foreign languages. Topics followed reflect those found in British schools, enhanced with theme days and weeks. In KS4 pupils take courses leading to iGCSE examinations in a broad range of subjects. The British curriculum options further expand in KS5 to include AS and A levels, together with alternative pathways through British and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and the Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ). Across the school, pupils' achievement is evaluated using British assessments including GL Progress tests for English, mathematics and science and Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT4). The school benchmarks pupils' outcomes against UK standards.

The school year is organised into three terms, and the school timetable mirrors a typical British timetable in terms of lesson length, curriculum allocation and breaks. Pupils are offered an extensive range of co-curricular activities (CCAs) which reflects British interests as well as some options which expand pupils' understanding and appreciation of local culture. Lessons and CCAs are delivered in a style which matches British expectations. The library contains an extensive collection of British literature which all pupils access and borrow regularly.

Nearly all teachers, with the exception of Arabic curriculum staff, have British qualifications and experience of working in British schools. All staff undergo rigorous background checks before employment is confirmed, including suitability to work with children via the International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) for staff who have lived in the UK. Annual safeguarding and child protection training is in line with best UK practice and DfE guidelines. All staff undergo an annual appraisal and target setting performance review and are supported with an extensive range of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities, much from UK sources.

The school's emphasis on developing the whole child, including an impressive array of sporting and creative opportunities, aligns with UK aspirations. Key British events are celebrated in school – at the time of the visit FS children were taking great delight

in practising crowning King Charles III. The house system, head boy and girl, prefects and school council all further add to the British feel.

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

Pupils at Amity International School receive an outstanding education. A broad, rich and varied curriculum, delivered formally and through an extensive range of co-curricular opportunities, supported by teaching which is consistently good or better.

5.1 Curriculum

The school provides an outstanding curriculum, through an extensive and diverse range of creative, progressive and challenging opportunities for learning in academic and personal growth, as well as excellence in sports and performing arts. It fully meets the requirements for BSO.

The school follows the National Curriculum for England, along with the EYFS Framework. This is successfully combined with the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum requirements. A comprehensive curriculum policy is supported by long-, medium- and short-term plans. There is a clear progression of knowledge and skills in order for pupils to acquire skills of numeracy, reading and writing, including phonics. The curriculum is reviewed and adapted regularly to ensure relevance and the correct targeting of objectives.

The curriculum is augmented by programmes such as White Rose and Talk for Writing, along with Amity's own Minerva enrichment programme, which offers extensive enrichment opportunities and scholarships for gifted and talented pupils. Through a broad and balanced curriculum, the school is able to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN), gifted and talented learners, and pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL). Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) are created for specific pupils which guide classroom teaching and targeted support.

The curriculum in EYFS is relevant and interesting. It is designed effectively with a consistent pedagogy and a 'Playing to Learn' approach through carefully planned continuous provision to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Pupils learn and revisit skills, vocabulary and challenge their thinking through highly stimulating, purposeful and cross-curricular learning environments. Throughout lower primary, the acquisition of English language skills is a key priority, to enable pupils to access all learning. Through the 'characteristics of effective teaching and learning' (COETL) programme, pupils identify themselves as learners and develop appropriate independent learning skills. In KS2, the curriculum is creative and stimulating with a growing emphasis on pupil responsibility. It is underpinned by 'skills for success' such

as collaboration and critical thinking. Cross-curricular topic work is a strength of the KS2 curriculum.

At KS3, the school provides a broad, balanced curriculum adapted to suit the needs and interests of all pupils. This prepares them very well for the next stage in their education. Teachers tailor their lesson planning to set an appropriate pace in order to meet the needs of all the pupils. In KS4 and KS5, pupils follow the syllabi for iGCSE, AS and A level. There is flexibility in the iGCSE curriculum, ensuring bespoke pathways for a wide range of pupil abilities. In KS5, alongside AS and A levels, alternative pathways such as vocational BTEC qualifications have been introduced in some subjects. The school also offers the EPQ and mini-MBA, in collaboration with Amity university, as well as the extensive Amity Horizon programmes. As a result, pupils are able to choose an educational pathway which matches their ability and career aspirations.

Across the school, there is a strong curriculum focus on practical and creative subjects, alongside academic development. From year 3 pupils learn sailing and kayaking as part of the PE curriculum. Provision for art and performance subjects is excellent across the school, with pupils taking part in a wide range of performances, events and exhibitions within the curriculum.

The personal, social, health, citizenship, moral and economic education (PSHCME) curriculum is delivered through formal and informal curriculum. PSHCME covers many areas of personal development and supports the 2010 Equalities Act within the confines of the local context. The value of respect is constantly reinforced with mutual respect and tolerance evident in most lessons. As a result, pupils have high self-esteem and demonstrate strong levels of confidence and motivation.

An impressively broad range of extra-curricular activities enhances the formal provision and expands pupils' interests and aspirations. The breadth of over 200 CCAs is exceptional, with options including opportunities for sports, arts and music, together with academic clinics and activities to support the development of individual enthusiasms and wellbeing. In addition, pupils have opportunities to participate regularly in internal and external competitions such as Model United Nations (MUN), UKMT Maths Challenge, Young Musician Abu Dhabi and BSME sports. Educational visits, such as the recent year 8 Aquarium visit (geography) and the year 9 Louvre Museum trip (French and art), and visiting speakers, serve to further augment the curriculum.

The planned curriculum ensures pupils are well prepared for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society and the wider world.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment fully meet the BSO standard, and are outstanding. Teaching is excellent across the school; most lessons are good or better and many are outstanding. Outstanding assessment and tracking systems support teaching and learning throughout the school, accurately analysing pupils' learning needs and identifying next steps.

In EYFS and lower primary, 'playing to learn' enables personalised teaching and learning. Teachers demonstrate very good knowledge of the strengths and development needs of their pupils and thus provide well-targeted support and challenge. For example, in year 2, as a result of effective rotation of small group support and varied input, pupils thrived and made exceptionally good progress when writing about 'The Great Fire of London'. Praise is often targeted, with comments such as, "Do you know what I like about your sentence?"

Across primary, team planning in year groups is a strength and ensures consistency of provision across classes. Teachers adapt plans to meet the needs of individual learners and many make good use of teaching assistants (TAs) to support learning. Where deployed effectively, TAs are fully engaged in supporting pupil learning and use effective techniques to support and challenge pupils' understanding. Where there is less effective support, there was less awareness of learning objectives.

The acquisition of English and strong language skills is a key priority from EYFS into KS5. Many planned opportunities for speaking and listening activities are provided within the curriculum. For example, in FS1 the teacher joined in the children's role play of the coronation of King Charles III, introducing vocabulary such as orb, sceptre and crown. In a Year 11 English lesson, pupils worked to develop core competency skills of communication and critical thinking. Opportunities were provided to build confidence through individual delivery of set texts followed by verbal feedback. In upper primary, pupil progress is monitored and tracked using *Learning Ladders* for all subjects, towards targets aligned with UK age related expectations

Where teaching is most effective, teachers' use of questioning to probe and extend learning is a strength. Pupils engage in learning dialogue confidently and visible gains in understanding can be observed. In many lessons, effective questioning promotes challenge, higher level thinking and critical responses, which results in high quality teacher-pupil interactions and engagement. Through questions such as "How do you know?" and "What can we do?", pupils are challenged to explain thought processes, and to think and evaluate their own answers. For example, a child in FS1 filling a 10 frame ran out of counters when he reached 7. The teacher challenged him saying, "What are you going to do about it? What can you use to solve the problem."

It is evident that teachers know their pupils well and extremely positive relationships support learning. For example, in a year 11 English second language lesson, the teacher used relevant examples that pupils could relate to; the teacher used the knowledge that one pupil enjoyed scuba diving to explain new vocabulary. In most lessons, teachers frequently offer praise and encouragement. Clear, well-embedded routines are in place and pupils demonstrate respectful behaviour towards their peers and teachers. The best teaching observed was engaging and well-paced, requiring pupils to take responsibility for their learning. However, in a small number of lessons, pupils are passive learners or are required to wait for peers to complete work before moving on to the next activity, both of which result in disengagement and some low-level disruption. In primary, there are still more opportunities for further embedding of learning skills across classes.

In the best lessons, learning activities are differentiated to meet the needs of all groups of learners, including the most able. For example, in a year 7 mathematics lesson, pupils were highly motivated to problem solve and apply independent learning skills. Differentiated activities ensured appropriate stretch and challenge for the most able, with teacher support for a smaller group of lower ability pupils; as a result, all pupils were engaged in their learning and progress was excellent. However, adequate stretch and challenge was not evident in all lessons.

The quality of teaching and assessment for pupils with identified learning needs is strong throughout the school. Learning support (LS) staff ably support pupils and the warmth of relationships is evident. Class teachers are well-informed of pupils' needs, by targets and appropriate strategies through excellent IEPs. Strong relationships with parents ensure good wrap around care and academic provision for pupils. Whilst the total number of SEN pupils is below UK average (3.2%), there is an increased level of need in some year groups, for example 10% of pupils in year 11 requiring Wave 3 support. Changes to the admissions process now ensure that pupils' needs are identified early to ensure they can be successfully met by the school upon entry.

The analysis and use of assessment data for tracking and supporting pupils' attainment and progress is a strength. Pupils are effectively identified for additional support or extension activities. Assessment data informs the curriculum and lesson planning. In EYFS, *Tapestry* is used to record observations, outcomes and next steps. Phonics acquisition in EYFS and KS1 is carefully tracked and data used to stream pupils for phonics sessions. In primary and KS3, GL assessments are used to track outcomes in English, mathematics and science, the results of which are benchmarked against UK standards. Regular pupil progress meetings are held to plan interventions and support. In secondary, CAT4 assessments are used to predict grades at iGCSE and pupils are urged towards their 'if challenged' grade to secure the highest outcomes. Mock examinations help to prepare pupils for exams as well as identifying gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding. All attainment data is scrutinised thoroughly by school leaders, with deep dives into sub-groups within cohorts, for

example, by gender, SEN and EAL. As a result, teachers and leaders have a thorough understanding of the strengths and development needs of pupils across the school.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Standards achieved fully meet the standard for BSO. The academic standards achieved by pupils are good with most pupils making expected or better progress over time: behaviour is excellent and the attendance of most pupils is good. There are examples of many successful initiatives to improve reading and literacy. The school has put a great deal of work into display of pupil work and community art projects as well.

Behaviour is excellent and pupils are proud ambassadors for their school. Attendance and punctuality overall are satisfactory; the school is developing policies and procedures for monitoring these and encouraging pupils to arrive at school on time.

There is a wide range of attainment in EYFS and KS1. Many pupils start school with English as a second language and starting points below UK averages. Pupils make rapid progress resulting in good levels of attainment by the end of EYFS, with 63% of pupils achieving a good level of development, in line with UK averages. Pupils continue to make good progress in KS1; by the end of year 2, attainment in reading is in line with UK averages while in writing and maths it is above. In lessons and pupils' recent work, it is evident that the majority of pupils are working in line with expectations and that progress over time is good. Some of the more able pupils are challenged to make outstanding progress in mathematics and English.

At KS2, academic standards are good; almost all pupils make expected or better progress with many above expected progress in maths and English. In GL assessments in 2021-22, of pupils in years 3 to 6, 76% achieved stanine 5 in mathematics, 81% in English, and 84% in science, compared with the norm of 60%. For stanine 6 the levels were 61%, 68% and 75% respectively compared to a norm of 43%. From lessons and pupils' books sampled, the majority of pupils are working in line with expectations for the end of KS2 with good progress over time and evidence of challenge.

The academic standards achieved by the majority of pupils in KS3 are good. Pupils make progress over time in all core subjects with the majority of pupils meeting expectations in English by the end of KS3 and most pupils meeting expectations in maths and science. In lessons and pupils' books, the majority of pupils are working in line with expectations and progress over time is good, with some evidence of challenge for pupils in the work sampled, although this was inconsistent.

The standards achieved by pupils in KS4 are good and above UK averages. In 2022, 21 year 11 pupils sat the school's first externally assessed iGCSEs, with 82% being graded 4 or above compared with the UK average of 73%. Higher attaining pupils also achieved good standards with 22% of iGCSEs being graded 9 or 8 compared with 15.1% in the UK. Value added residuals are strong and reflect the determination of school leaders and teachers in supporting pupils with a wide range of abilities

through their bespoke iGCSE pathways. Regular and robust data analysis results in excellent support for pupils throughout their KS4 education.

The predicted A level grades for the first cohort of year 13 pupils are good, with pupils expected to achieve grades that will allow them to move on to the next stage of their education. Recently introduced Alps data analysis is empowering school leaders to drive standards higher and secure the best possible outcomes for pupils.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Amity International School provides an inclusive and diverse environment supported by outstanding provision for personal development of pupils, which fully meets the standards for BSO.

The school's core values of celebrating diversity, togetherness, inspiring excellence and collaboration enable pupils to understand British values of democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance within the context of the laws of the UAE. This is supported by the PSHCME programme, Islamic studies and the pastoral system.

Spiritual awareness is developed through many opportunities for reflection and imagination in learning. Lower primary pupils have opportunities for role play using both western and Arabic resources. Year 1 pupils using *Scratch* in ICT had 'wow moments' when they made their characters grow and shrink. CCAs include art appreciation through mindfulness and creative hand lettering. High quality displays demonstrate the many opportunities for pupils to use their imagination, be creative and find humour in learning. A display about scientific terms was full of jokes to reinforce vocabulary. For example, "What do you call an acid with attitude? Answer: A-mean-old-acid." Questions on displays encourage pupil interaction and social awareness. For example, 'How do our food choices affect sustainability?'

Pupils and parents are enthusiastic about the wide range of opportunities available that support pupils' holistic development. Curriculum enrichment, CCAs, leadership opportunities and other initiatives enable all pupils to develop their interests, self-esteem and self-confidence. For example, year 6 wellbeing leaders are trained to support their peers. Pupils in years 11 to 13 are able to gain sports leadership qualifications. Excellence is promoted and celebrated in academic, sporting, creative and personal development. Pupils are confident and strive to do better. There are high levels of resilience. A year 7 pupil said; "I feel proud of myself even if I don't get the grade I wanted, but will keep trying."

Relationships within the school promote a strong sense of community. Throughout the school there is a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. Pupils explain that this is created because teachers lead by example and the school values are reinforced from an early age. Pupils describe staff as caring, welcoming and "They always greet you with a smile". High expectations and respect are constantly reinforced enabling pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong and respect the rule of law. Opportunities are provided for pupils to have choices and make decisions. For example, in lower primary, pupils have choice in their learning and in KS2 they collaborate to decide a topic of choice.

The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is praiseworthy, enabling teachers to teach and pupils to learn. High standards are promoted by an effectively enforced behaviour policy with appropriate rewards and sanctions, although a pupil commented that

repercussions were rarely used because “We all know why we are here”. Throughout the school, pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community. They take part in beach clean ups and raise money for charity through a ‘Coronation Cup Cake Bake Off’. Pupils feel they have a voice and opportunities to develop initiatives. “I stood for the School Council because I wanted to leave my mark on the school,” was one comment.

The school serves a wide range of nationalities which enhances cultural development. The culture of the UAE is respected, promoted and celebrated on a daily basis with the national anthem, UAE flag, the curriculum and many displays. Pupils learn about British and other cultures through the curriculum and whole school events, including celebrating King Charles III coronation, National Day and International Day. Pupils are encouraged to make links and consider similarities and differences. In years 1 and 2 classes are named after artists and famous people, both male and female, around the world.

The PSHCME curriculum, pastoral care and school environment teach pupils about healthy lifestyles and personal safety within the context of UAE law; for example, active lifestyles through sport, healthy eating and E-Safety. The contributions of the UAE cyber security team to E-safety teaching enables pupils to respect the law and understand actions have consequences. The pastoral support and careers advice provided to pupils in the sixth form enables pupils to make choices about their future pathways. Both pupils and parents praise the support they receive.

The house system, school council and variety of leadership opportunities enable pupils to learn about democracy, democratic institutions and citizenship. Pupils wishing to take on leadership roles apply and are shortlisted by staff. School council representatives are elected by their peers following a process that mirrors an election campaign in the UK, involving written applications, shortlisting, election campaigning including posters and video presentations and finally a vote by their peers. The school council is an open forum for discussion and debate where the views of all are respected. Pupils learn that the democratic process involves compromise and to respect the outcomes of discussions by looking for win-win solutions. For example, pupils wanting to change the stools in the laboratories had to look at the health and safety implications and come up with a better way of making them more comfortable.

Within the context of UAE education requirements there is an expectation that staff deliver the curriculum in a balanced way and do not share personal or partisan views. Using the philosophy for children (P4C) approach, pupils have many opportunities to discuss and debate. For example, in year 7 PSHCME, a safe and open learning environment encouraged pupils to discuss feelings, emotions and values they bring to their friendships. They listen carefully to the views of their peers.

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

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding. The school's staff are highly committed to promoting welfare, health and safety resulting in practices that fully meet the standard of BSO.

The safeguarding of pupils is supported through annual training for all staff, including clerical and support staff. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is supported by eight members of staff who are all level 3 trained. Bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and the school has systems in place to deal with these issues. Detailed behaviour records are kept by the school. Clear policies are in place and shared with staff, parents and pupils. Pupils feel safe and are confident that issues brought to the attention of a trusted adult in the school would be handled sensitively and effectively. A successful anti-bullying week was recently organised, including a workshop for parents. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and understand the dangers of social media and networking.

Attendance registers are kept using iSAMS and follow-up phone calls made to parents on the first day of absence. Trends are tracked and analysed. Pupils who arrive late are registered by the reception staff. The procedures to enter and leave the school site are safe and efficient. Pupils and parents arrive and leave the premises in an orderly, controlled manner.

Staff interact extremely well with pupils to maintain safe and orderly conduct. The school site is very secure. Surveillance cameras are installed across the premises. Access is controlled in certain parts of the school, for example, science laboratories and the EYFS area. Visitors are required to wear a colour-coded lanyard, after registering personal details. There is adequate outdoor space for children to access during breaks and lunchtime; pupils are well supervised at all times. School transport is well organised, buses are clean, all have seatbelts and are checked routinely for maintenance or safety issues. Pupils scan in and out upon entering and leaving buses, providing real-time information of who is on each bus.

The school has regular emergency procedure practises, at least once a term. Fire safety meets the local requirements. Fire extinguishers are plentiful and regularly maintained. Signs indicating what to do in case of an emergency are visible around the school. Chemicals used in science are locked securely in the preparation rooms. Risk assessments are written before all practical lessons. Robust risk assessments for other areas of the school site and trips are in place. The toilet facilities around the school are suitable and hygienic with cleaning logs displayed in each toilet.

The school has a well-maintained clinic, with three qualified nurses, two female and one male. 60 members of staff are first aid trained. Key staff around the school are first aid trained. Several staff are trained as lifeguards and the school maintains a 1:10 ratio, when the pools are in use.

The school is frequently inspected by compliance teams to ensure the school meets the country's requirements. Rigorous measures are taken daily to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff, and visitors.

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

The proprietors ensure the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for all pupils. Staff are all carefully vetted before employment and supported to fulfil their roles. The suitability of the proprietor and staff therefore fully meets the standard for BSO.

Clear procedures have been put in place following safer recruitment best practice. All staff provide evidence of previous employment history and any gaps in employment records are investigated. Robust interviews and referencing identify candidates' strengths and suitability to work in the school. Appointments are subject to rigorous background checks which include identity, proof of address, verification of qualifications, right to work in the UAE and police checks for any country the applicant has previously worked in. British staff must obtain an ICPC clearance. All staff have qualifications appropriate to their role, some staff have further academic or teaching qualifications that enhance school development; school leaders encourage and support staff to pursue qualifications such as those from the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) suite of trainings.

A robust induction programme including a comprehensive staff handbook and buddy systems quickly familiarises new staff with the school and local culture. A six month probationary period includes observations of teaching and coaching discussions. An appraisal system is in place which monitors standards of teaching and learning, and links teacher targets with school development priorities. Lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutinies provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on and develop their practice. Professional development targeted towards school priorities alongside teachers' own development needs ensure teachers have the opportunity to grow professionally.

The school maintains a register of all staff who currently work in the school. This shows when employees started working in the school and includes staff who have since left the school. Staff who are working in the school as sub-contractors, for example bus drivers and nannies, have similar checks verified by their employer; this information is shared with the school. The single central register was made available to inspectors.

School governors provide a balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They are experienced and knowledgeable, and act as a critical friend to the principal.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation at the school are outstanding. The state-of-the-art facilities support and enhance the curriculum and fully meet the standard for BSO. The school is extremely well maintained, clean and well-presented.

Specialist teaching facilities include science laboratories, design and technology rooms, art, drama and dance studios as well as music rooms. Sports facilities include indoor pools, sports hall and gymnasium, a full-length soccer pitch, basketball and netball courts, cricket nets as well as a 400-metre running track. The school has water sport facilities and offers sailing and kayaking from year 3 up. The sixth form centre provides space for study and socialising. The auditorium has seating for 540 visitors. Supervised prayer rooms are available for both staff and pupils.

Classrooms across the school are well equipped with modern technology such as interactive whiteboards and protectors. Throughout primary, lessons can be delivered using large breakout areas. These are inviting, well-resourced and age appropriate. Ample outside play areas are available: some are shaded. Corridor and classroom displays in both primary and secondary include a good balance of pupils' work and support for learning. The library is well-resourced and provides a comfortable learning space with plenty of seating areas conducive to reading.

The canteen is spacious with ample space for pupils to sit and move around safely. Particular care is given to hygiene and cleanliness. Pupils can either bring in their own food or purchase food from the cafeteria by using their ID cards which have money pre-loaded. The staff in the canteen follow all ministerial hygiene directives and receive appropriate training.

Bathroom facilities for both staff and pupils are clean and more than adequate. All floors are equipped with disabled toilets and, for those who are unable to use the stairs, there is lift access to all floors. Drinking water is available at many points around the school. The building is well-ventilated with ample natural light as well as high-quality artificial light. Sensors are in place to turn lights on and off in corridors which support sustainability initiatives. Sound proofing is effective.

The facilities manager ensures that all furniture is of a good standard in both the primary and secondary classrooms. Science laboratories and art and design and technology studios are very modern and purposeful, bright, well lit, well-equipped and enhance the pupils' learning experience.

The head of facilities, with the support of the health and safety coordinator, works with a dedicated team to ensure that the facilities are maintained to an incredibly high standard. The physical environment is kept clean, fresh and safe at all times.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

Information provided to parents, carers and others is outstanding and fully meets the standard for BSO. The school embraces parents as partners in their child's education. They form strong relationships and parents value the support their pupils receive to enable the progress they are making – academically and holistically.

The range of information provided by the school is diverse, innovative and often personalized, through handbooks, newsletters, emails, a wide range of education platforms, the parent portal and social media. Parents interviewed commented that the range of communications can sometimes be a little overwhelming and would welcome a more streamlined approach. This was reflected in the recent parents' survey, where communications with parents was the lowest scoring indicator.

The school's website provides a comprehensive source of information, including essential names and contact details. Additionally, information is provided pertaining to admissions, an array of policies and details of education and welfare provision for pupils with SEN and EAL. The website also includes examination results, previous inspection reports and a link for complaints. The school's guiding statements, which cover the vision, mission, and values, are prominently displayed throughout the campus.

The school operates an open-doors policy; the principal and senior leaders are visible at the start and end of the school day and parents are welcome to speak to class teachers when they collect their child. The transition into school for new pupils and families is particularly impressive when they join the school mid-year.

Emphasis is placed to ensure parents receive high quality, individualised feedback on their child's development through termly written reports, parent teacher meetings, and informal conversations. Reports contain pertinent information regarding attitudes to learning, attendance, strengths and targets, as well as attainment and progress measures. Pupil reflections are also included in reports for older pupils. Parents are regularly invited to workshops and information sessions, which they have confirmed are helpful in supporting their child, particularly regarding teaching and learning, curriculum and child welfare.

A key strength of the school is the sense of belonging and community. This is evident through the contribution made by the 'Friends of Amity' that unite the school during events such as International Day. Drama and music performances are regular calendar events in the school year and highlight pupils' creativity, innovation and confidence. Parents are invited to join in with dedicated activities including yoga and sailing on a weekly basis to further develop community cohesion.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

The school encourages ongoing dialogue between parents and staff in all matters related to pupils' education and welfare. The school expectation is to resolve any complaint informally, as quickly as possible, through open communications. Any concern raised verbally should be resolved within three working days. If the complainant is not satisfied, the complaint must be put in writing for the complaints committee to consider, using a form provided by ADEK. Concerns raised may be related to education issues; pastoral care; disciplinary, financial, or operation matters or staff concerns.

The school has a dedicated complaints coordinator within the administration team. Her role is to ensure complaints are communicated and recorded, and managed professionally. She is the first point of contact if matters are unresolved after initial discussions. She will monitor, manage and keep a detailed record of the complaint, report to the principal regarding the matter and keep parents updated on progress.

All matters raised formally are thoroughly investigated by the principal or a senior member of staff. They report to the complaints committee – a permanent board consisting of school senior leaders and governors, chaired by the principal. The complaints committee review the findings and respond to the complainant within five working days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, s/he has the right to appeal to ADEK against it or request further investigation. This would involve a hearing with a panel consisting of three individuals, one of whom is independent from the management and running of the school. The complainant may be accompanied to the hearing should they so wish. The principal chairs the hearing panel. The panel will reach a final decision and inform the complainant both verbally and in writing.

Should a complaint relate to the principal, his role in all proceedings is taken by a governor.

The complaints policy is made available to parents via the school's website.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are outstanding and fully meet the standard for BSO. Leaders across the school show strong commitment to continuous improvement in all areas. They are focused on raising pupil outcomes both academically and in developing rounded, confident individuals. Leaders act as outstanding role models for staff, pupils and parents.

The school vision effectively drives the direction of the school – “Amity International School aims to serve all its pupils by preparing a diverse range of courses, programmes, resources and facilities that serve pupils’ individual talents and interests, and help them secure the best chance of success and happiness in both their professional and personal lives”. The wide range of courses offered and the consistently good or better standards of teaching act as enablers for this. The school’s values of inspiring excellence, diversity, togetherness and collaboration are clear and well understood by all stakeholders. They are regularly shared and discussed in lessons and assemblies, and are highly visible around the school.

School leaders have a good understanding of the key strengths and next steps required in the development of this relatively young school. They ensure that comprehensive development plans are in place, which are carefully tracked and monitored. Strong communications between leaders at different levels facilitate the cascading of plans and understanding of development priorities by staff. Leaders at all levels provide accountability for staff through a robust appraisal system, aligned to school development targets. CPD is aligned to development priorities, much of it provided in-house by senior leaders. A recent emphasis on leadership training has enhanced the skills of the senior leaders in the school to move initiatives forward.

School leaders set an ethos which focuses on the well-being of pupils and staff, providing a high-quality education in a happy and harmonious environment. Morale is high amongst both staff and pupils, all of whom value the opportunities that being a member of Amity International School affords them. Leaders place high importance on pupil welfare and safeguarding and ensure that robust policies and procedures are in place and followed carefully. Relationships are a strength of the school. Communications with parents keep them well informed of their child’s progress and development, as well as school news and initiatives. High visibility of the leadership team and an open door policy ensures that any parental concerns are dealt with rapidly.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and finances are effectively managed. As a result, the school is well resourced to meet learning needs across subjects and age groups.

The governing body provides effective support, guidance and accountability, working closely with the principal to develop the strategic direction of the school.