



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection Report**

# **British International School Riyadh Al Hamra**

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Date

6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Inspection number

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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); 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, over 70 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the leadership team and a range of teachers, parents, and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for two and a half days, with one inspector working remotely.

The lead inspector was Nicola Walsh. The team members were Mel Davis, Kathryn King, James McDonald and David Wilson.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

British International School Riyadh Al Hamra (BISR) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

## 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

BISR is a good school with many excellent aspects. Pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is exceptional. The development of pupils' personal, moral, cultural, and social development is very well provided for across all Key Stages, so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum is broad and enriched by a wide range of extracurricular activities in which most pupils participate. The school's leaders know the school well. They have a clear vision and sense of purpose and are well equipped to lead the school during a period of change. During the recent pandemic, the school operated very effectively online and ensured pupils' well-being was maintained.

### 3.1 What the school does well

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

- The school's strong sense of purpose and direction
- Safeguarding
- Preparing pupils to be global well rounded 21st century citizens
- A positive and valued standing within the local community
- A rich and engaging curriculum well matched to the needs and aspirations of pupils
- The 'futures' curriculum in the Sixth Form
- Pupils' attitudes to school, one another, and staff

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Ensure that the provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) fully meets the needs of those requiring support
- Further develop the consistency of teaching through a collaborative approach that is sharply focused on improving outcomes for all pupils
- Ensure curriculum planning is sufficiently demanding for all pupils and provides increased opportunities to challenge the most able

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school	British International School Riyadh Al Hamra Campus		
Address	PO Box 85769, Riyadh 11612, Saudi Arabia		
Main telephone	+966 9200 33963		
Website	www.bisr.com.sa		
Email	principal@bisr.com.sa		
Principal	Helen Olds		
Chair of Board of Governors	Neal Beevers		
Age range	3-18 years		
Number of pupils	Total = 1,387	Boys = 717	Girls = 670
Pupil numbers by age on date of entry	(0-2 years) 0	(3-5 years) 575	(6-11 years) 624
	(12-16 years) 185	(17-18 years) 3	(18+ years) 0
Total number of part-time pupils	0		

British International School Riyadh Al Hamra opened in 1979, to provide a British education for children of British and Dutch expatriates who were working on contract in Riyadh. In 1982 the school moved to its current site in northeast Riyadh, and a sixth form was added in 2004. Since then, the school's population has increased, and the current accommodation is no longer large enough for almost 1,400 pupils on roll. A new school is planned to be completed and in use by 2024.

The school's population is very transient. As parents' contracts end, families relocate back to the UK. Also, many parents choose to send their children to the UK for secondary schooling, often through boarding school provision. Therefore, the number on roll in Key Stages 4 & 5 is much smaller.

Within the last few years three primary schools, previously operated by British Aerospace Engineering Systems (BAES) have joined the BISR group of schools. Another school in the diplomatic quarter of Riyadh opened in September 2021, so that the BISR group now constitutes five schools, three of which are based in Riyadh. Al Hamra is the largest school within the group and the only school currently offering FS to year 13 provision. Al Hamra holds a very high reputation for international education in Riyadh and is the base for the many

shared services across the group of five schools. The BISR group operate as a not-for-profit organisation and are managed by a Board of Governors who meet regularly.

At Al Hamra, there are 60 different nationalities of pupils on roll. 36% of the pupils on roll are British. Of the staff employed at the school 80% of teachers are British, 34% of teaching assistants are British and 41% of the administration staff and leadership team are also British.

The school is actively involved in British School of The Middle East (BSME) both regionally and nationally. It is also a COBIS training school for UK teacher qualifications; PGCE, ECT, QTS and CPML. In addition to accreditation visits by BSO, the western association of schools and colleges and Council of International Schools, the school is inspected by the British Ministry of defence.

Throughout the recent pandemic the school moved quickly to providing lessons online and pupils attended lessons and extracurricular activities virtually. Since the last inspection in 2018 the school has had 2 years delivering lessons online and pupils have been unable to attend lessons or events at the school. Despite the remoteness of learning during this time, the pupils who had only recently returned to full time schooling displayed excellent social skills, even the youngest pupils.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The school has a strong British ethos.

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum (ENC) and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum
- The school is organised into Key Stages and year groups
- Assessments are UK sourced and benchmarked against UK standards
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision, curriculum activities, displays and events
- The school's board of governors replicates that of a UK school, most members holding British passports
- The school is very well resourced in materials that are in use in English schools
- Libraries are well stocked with British literature, reflecting the modern multicultural character of the UK
- The school has a uniform policy, like many English schools
- The school's house point, school council and rewards system reflect those used in English schools
- The professional development of staff is delivered by UK providers and there are links with UK teacher training providers
- All teachers are either trained with UK qualifications or experience of teaching in ENC schools
- The academic calendar replicates that of a British school
- There are established links with schools and universities in the UK as many students transfer back to the UK after their time at BISR
- BISR has strong links with the British Embassy who attend many of the school's events
- The school has been awarded the UK Eco Schools Green flag award



## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by BISR meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The school has met the standard and the quality of the curriculum is excellent.

The school follows the NCE and the new EYFS framework. This provides full-time supervised education for pupils from 3-19 years. The language of instruction is English. The school complies with the requirements of the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia. In every year group lessons on Arabic culture enables pupils to develop their understanding of their locality.

The curriculum is built around the three pillars of the school: enrichment, learning and wellbeing. All areas of the curriculum fit into one of the pillars. There are comprehensive policies in place which describe the curriculum intent and rationale and ensure the school delivers a broad and balanced curriculum. The school vision is embedded through the school motto; REACH, which stands for respect, excellence, accountability, challenge, and happiness. This is visible throughout planning, and lessons across the school.

Regular curriculum reviews ensure that the school adapts to pupils' needs. During the pandemic, the school revised their curriculum to ensure all students could access learning online and on their return the use of gap analyses has enabled the school to restructure areas of the curriculum to address areas of weakness and consolidate learning.

Progression documents clearly detail how learning is built upon as pupils move through the school and there is a particular focus on key transition points. A thorough process is in place to support pupils moving from year 6 to year 7, which includes taster sessions, visits from form tutors and student leaders working together. Specialist teachers teach across Key Stages two and three. This enables pupils and teachers to become familiar with one another before transitioning into the secondary school.

In year 9 and year 11, pupils and parents are supported with options choices, to guide them in their future pathways. This involves pupil and parent information sessions as well as careers advice with the career's counsellor and Head of Sixth Form. This support continues when pupils leave the school in the way of careers support for university pathways. Pupils receive support in writing personal statements as well as UCAS applications for UK universities, a college club for USA universities and personalised support for pupils wishing to go to other universities around the world. The 'Futures'

programme is run at Key Stage five and aims at preparing pupils with life skills to ensure they are ready for independent living. Topics include road safety, the importance of sleep and household chores. The physical education programme in the sixth form promotes healthy lifestyles through a range of physical activities, with the aim that pupils maintain healthy lifestyles beyond their time at school.

At present, the offerings for Key Stage five pupils are limited to A-Level subjects. However, the school has identified this as an area for development and are currently exploring other vocational pathways, including the High school diploma.

In the primary school, specialist teachers teach physical education, music, science, French, Arabic, art, and design technology. In the secondary school, all subjects are taught by specialist teachers. Planning in the primary school is based on a thematic approach, where pupils engage with a theme through different topics. This enables them to apply their learning in different contexts and creates meaningful and relevant learning opportunities.

Published schemes of work for maths and writing ensure teachers have a clear progression of knowledge and skills to teach and assess against throughout Years 1-6. Phonics is taught as a discrete subject using a published phonics scheme based on UK DfE letters and sounds. This is taught daily from the Early Years Foundation Stage to year 2, matched to pupils' abilities.

Planning for early years has recently begun to focus on 'in the moment' planning as pupils return to face to face teaching. The early years area is very well organised and resourced so that teachers can assess pupils against the early learning goals as they learn through play. Phonics and maths sessions are delivered to pupils by ability groups in FS2. Reading activities are shared with parents as pupils take home books to share at home.

Planning for lessons in the primary section is taken from longer term plans where a thematic approach creates cross-curricular learning opportunities for pupils. This was evident in year 1 in a computing lesson, where pupils were applying skills in collecting and handling data from their maths lesson, to create their own pictogram to represent the data they had collected.

In the secondary school, curriculum leaders plan units of work to ensure progression across the year groups. For example, Shakespeare is taught in each year group but the texts and skills progress as pupils move up through the school. A year 9 drama lesson looked at Elizabethan theatre and pupils enjoyed acting out scenes from Shakespeare's Hamlet. Primary and Secondary curriculum leaders meet at key points within the school year to discuss curriculum planning and progression.

Planning for lessons in Key Stage 5 is derived from longer term units of work based on exam board specifications. Pupils are supported to prepare for examinations through low-stakes assessments within class and the ability to reflect and edit their responses.

Comprehensive revision tools shared with students via Google Classroom allows them to consolidate and recap on previous learning.

There has been a recent focus on the use of strategies based on an understanding of cognitive science within the classroom. Teachers received in-depth professional development to embed strategies such as retrieval practice in lessons, to support consolidation of knowledge. The use of PASS and CAT4 data is being used to identify how the school can better meet the needs of groups and individuals. Teachers commented that since introducing cognitive science strategies, pupils in Year 5 have increased fluency in maths and were able to apply their learning more effectively to different contexts in English.

There is an extremely rich and varied programme for extra-curricular activities across the school which is available to all students from year 1 and above. Extra-curricular activities are offered daily and include options such as Lego engineering, financial literacy, and self-defence for girls. During the pandemic, the school ensured that the strong extra-curricular programme continued through virtual learning platforms. The impact of this is that the school has maintained a community of aspirational learners, even through the challenges of distance learning. The wider curriculum is further complemented by enrichment opportunities such as student leadership positions, curriculum enhancement days and residential visits in Saudi Arabia and further afield.

Pupils from year 4 and upwards have the chance to visit countries such as the UAE, Nepal, Switzerland, and the UK. Trips support subjects such as geography to Sri Lanka, Shanghai for Business studies, Art and music cultural trip to London and a ski trip to the Alps. This is in addition to residential trips to 'The Farm' an offsite location used by the school to develop pupils personal, social, and emotional skills. The school has sought permission from the local authorities to enable mixed gender trips to take place. This further replicates the provision in the UK and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

The school values global citizenship and works hard to make connections with organisations in other countries so that pupils can make a positive impact on the wider world. An example includes pupils working on sustainability in Mozambique. Global citizenship is also integrated into thematic planning, PSHE lessons and assemblies through themes such as equality and human rights.

Curriculum delivery is further enhanced by engaging and interesting learning environments. A balance of learning prompts, celebration of work and working walls to support learning are evident in most of the primary classrooms and a large majority of the secondary classrooms. In year 1 an interactive display 'We are writers' encouraged pupils to write a letter to Sofiya about elephants in Africa.

The curriculum for pupils who have been identified as requiring support is delivered by a support for learning team. They work with teachers to create inclusive learning environments through planning support and interventions. They advise on curriculum

modification and adaptation to support the needs of learners. There is a SEND register in place and policies outline the referral process for pupils, but does not include a clear definition of SEND. Pupils with additional needs have an individual education plan which is reviewed termly to ensure progress is being made in relation to the targets. There is some support in place for pupils with English as an additional language. However, the school is currently developing more robust processes for identifying and supporting learners with English as an additional language, so that the impact can be monitored over time.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching overall is good with some outstanding lessons observed. However, a small number of lessons are not yet securely good in all, aspects. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour and as a result, behaviour across all lessons is exemplary. Strong positive relationships enabled a highly effective learning environment in all lessons observed. Collaboration among pupils worked very well, with pupils showing a high level of respect for each other, even with the youngest pupils.

Teachers model subject specific vocabulary and pupils use correct terminology when explaining their learning. As a result, all pupils can articulate their learning clearly. Teacher subject knowledge is very strong in a large majority of lessons.

Pupils reported that teachers support them with their learning. Teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure pupils understand the teaching. A pupil commented, 'we can learn without fear of failure' which is clear throughout the school.

Pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1 have a very high level of engagement in their learning. They enjoy their lessons and refer to them as 'fun' and 'interesting.' Teaching is mostly pitched at the standard expected with some adaptations being made due to pupils recently returning to face-to-face learning. This has resulted in some wide ranges in ability of pupils. In the best lessons, adult support is targeted to work with pupils on directed tasks. This was evident in a year 1 mathematics lesson, where the class were split into 2 groups and teaching was targeted to their current working level. Across the early years foundation stage and Key Stage 1 pupils are taught in groups matched to ability levels for phonics. However, in a number of lessons observed, there were groups of pupils who could have been challenged further.

In the best lessons in Key Stage 2, pupils are actively engaged and inspired by their learning, they are provided with opportunities to share their ideas and to lead the learning of their peers. This was evident in a year 3 maths lesson; pupils were sharing examples of how to use repeated addition to multiply two-digit numbers. Here pupils had been split into four groups with a different set of manipulatives for each group. Then each group had time to investigate their ideas before demonstrating to their peers how they could use the strategy. In lessons which are less good, pupils who complete activities and grasp concepts with ease are seldomly stretched or challenged.

Cross curricular links, allow pupils to explore links and make connections to different contexts and prior learning. A clear example of this was observed in year 4 where the theme was World War 2 (WWII). In English the pupils were considering thoughts and feelings of evacuees following their interview questions with the 'hot seat' evacuee in their class. In a science lesson where pupils were exploring morse code machines and how they were used in WWII, pupils learned morse code. Then they created an electric circuit with a bulb to create a short message for their peers.

Assessment in the primary section monitors and tracks pupils' attainment and progress against international standards in the core subjects. The accelerated reader (AR) programme is used effectively to identify what level the children are reading at. Each of the libraries have AR levels on the books, pupils are allowed to choose one book at their AR level to ensure appropriate level and a book of their choice to promote an interest in reading. Pupils across the school read well. They talked about a love of reading and read literature from a wide variety of authors.

Across the primary section of the school assessment for learning was observed in most lessons. However, this was less strong in lower Key Stages where teachers missed opportunities to modify the lesson based on formative assessment information. Across both Key Stages 1 and 2 when verbal feedback was present, pupils were highly responsive. In the best lessons, targeted questioning challenged pupils' thinking and probed for depth. In a minority of lessons, there are opportunities for child-led learning and where this is evident, pupils can develop outstanding learning skills. In those lessons, pupils show resilience and perseverance when faced with challenges.

Across Key Stage 3, pupils are actively engaged in the learning process and demonstrate the ability to work independently. This was evident in many lessons observed. Pupils utilised effective research skills to consolidate their learning. Questioning is a key feature and pupils willingly share their responses and are not afraid to take risks. In the best lessons observed pupils are appropriately challenged through the effective use of formative assessment strategies and constructive, timely feedback from the teacher. Pupils passionately talked about their learning, and this was mainly observed in lessons linked to real world contexts. In a year 9 geography lesson, pupils were animatedly discussing the challenges and subsequent dangers of life in the Karakorum Mountain range.

At Key Stage 4, most lessons observed were good with some being outstanding. The positive relationships between the teachers and pupils are a key feature and conducive to creating an effective learning environment. Teachers exhibit strong subject knowledge and lessons are clearly planned in line with relevant GCSE syllabi, with clear thought given to make the subject content interesting and engaging. Supported by relatively small class sizes and effective use of Assessment for learning techniques pupils' academic needs are successfully met. In the best lessons observed, pupils are consistently stretched and challenged, given the opportunity to think critically, work collaboratively and solve problems. This is skilfully facilitated by their teachers through responsive teaching techniques such as the use of prior assessment data and live feedback. This was particularly evident in science and computing.

Pupils in Key Stage 5 make excellent progress in lessons and are highly engaged in their learning. Through all lessons observed, pupils demonstrated exceptional behaviour and very mature and responsible attitudes. This was evident in a year 12 English lesson where pupils were discussing sensitive topics with emotional intelligence and in a year 13 'futures' lessons where pupils were discussing road traffic safety. Relationships

between pupils and between pupils and teachers were highly developed, which allowed for a relaxed learning environment with plenty of humour.

Small class sizes in many lessons in Key Stages 4 and 5 ensures that teachers can personalise learning for individuals. This is seen through targeting questioning, individual support, and verbal feedback within the classroom. In a business studies lesson, pupils were prompted to think critically about their responses through opportunities for peer feedback. During a physics lesson, year 11 pupils were challenged to solve a problem practically, regarding magnetic fields and electrical currents. In a year 11 chemistry lesson, the teacher expertly linked the learning in the chemistry lesson to the learning in biology. Visual and video resources effectively supported pupils. In all lessons where collaborative learning was evident, pupils were extremely supportive of each other. Pupils from different lessons across Key Stage 5 commented that lessons were 'challenging but fun.' In all lessons observed in Key Stage 5, teaching was consistently good and in many outstanding.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Pre-pandemic attendance data of pupils is slightly below UK averages but is now showing an improving trend. Pupils are punctual and arrive to lessons on time, ready to learn. Their behaviour at and attitude to school are exemplary. Pupils actively engage in their lessons.

Pupils attain well and summative data indicates that most pupils are working at or above age-related expectations in English, mathematics and science at the end of each Key Stage. Maths is the strongest subject overall.

Results at GCSE are strong with 98.1% of pupils achieving 5, A\* to C grades including English and maths in 2021. At A Level, 97% of pupils achieve A\*- C grades. Both GCSE and Advanced level results are above UK averages. These grades have steadily improved over the last 5 years. Pupils from BISR successfully secure places at a wide range of universities around the world.

The school uses progress tests to externally benchmark pupils against international standards in English, mathematics and science. However, it is worth noting that due to the pandemic, the school has been unable to administer the tests over the last 2 years. CAT4 assessments have been conducted in the secondary school and are planned for the primary school within the academic year. In some areas of the school, information on pupil's spatial and verbal bias is being used to support pupil's individual learning styles.

Pupils are assessed on entry to the school to ensure they can access the curriculum. The school works hard to remain inclusive so that no child who can access the curriculum is refused a place at the school.

The standards of reading are high across the school, with pupils demonstrating reading standards above UK curriculum standard in most lessons observed. In Key Stage 1, where pupils were heard to read a wide range of fiction and nonfiction texts competently. The systematic teaching of phonics through a published scheme ensures progression of phonics skills through the Early Years and Key Stage 1. These pupils utilise a good standard of phonic knowledge to decode words in reading and this was also evident in their writing.

The standards in music are high across the school due to well-planned and engaging lessons, high quality teaching supported by a rich offer of peripatetic tuition classes. Year 8 pupils worked together in class to rehearse and perform a rhythm piece on djembe drums.

Standards in pupils' workbooks were high in books observed in the secondary section of the school. Examples of constructive and purposeful feedback were evident, helping pupils make progress and improve their work. During the lengthy period of online working, there had been limited opportunities for teachers to monitor workbooks.



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

The spiritual, moral, and cultural development of pupils provided by BISR meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards: it is excellent.

The school's motto REACH (Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Challenge and Happiness) is fully embedded across all areas of the school. It is highly visible throughout the school and is integrated into most aspects of school life including the school rewards system. REACH points are awarded when pupils display excellence in learning, for achievement and endeavour. They are awarded to an individual and closely linked to the school's house system. Within the classroom, with community events and through the extracurricular programme pupils can receive REACH points. The number of REACH points per house are announced in termly assemblies, with major awards given at the end of the year.

Pupils are confident, courteous, and respectful to others with excellent manners, and this was noted in many of the observations across the school. Their attitudes to school and learning are mainly positive, and they are proud of their school and its community. Standards of behaviour are excellent, with clear expectations set in line with the school REACH motto. These are actively promoted by staff, enabling pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

BISR has a house system in place that supports pupils with different initiatives and opportunities, however there was evidence to suggest it hadn't been fully embedded in certain areas of the school due to the long period of online learning. The different houses compete in different events and competitions, which take place over the academic year. The house system encourages the development of the whole child, such as leadership, teamwork, communication skills, citizenship, mutual responsibility, self-discipline, initiative, perseverance, and resilience. This is led by teachers who hold the position of house leaders and an elected head boy and girl. Pupils also take on leadership positions as student librarians, school council members and Eco warriors. Recently a Precious Plastics Project has enthused pupils to be very conscientious about the use of plastic.

The school offers 130 different extracurricular activities (ECA) programmes for pupils. In term 1, 77% of pupils at the school participated in the extracurricular activities that are organised on a shift system at the end of the school day. Pupils believe they have a good choice and enjoy attending the different activities. Some of the activities on offer include Model United Nations, football, taekwondo, French language, chess, different art clubs and a highly successful Duke of Edinburgh award. BISR ensures pupils can attend outside school events. Pupils compete in domestic and international sports events such as the BSME games, but this has been restricted during the pandemic.

BISR provides many different opportunities for pupils to develop different cultural understandings. A diverse pupil and staff population represents many different cultures. Flags

displayed prominently in the central quadrangle represent each one of the 60 nationalities of pupils at the school. This creates a richly diverse community where pupils are given the opportunity to learn about and respect different cultures, as well as learning to make friendships and build relationships with others from different cultural backgrounds.

The school hosts an international week, which ends with pupils hosting a cultural show. Respect for peoples' differences is promoted via the Positive Education Enhanced Curriculum (PEEC). Staff promote understanding of different cultures and traditions, often through their own personal experiences of culture and heritage, which is in line with the international dynamic of the school. There is a 'zero tolerance' policy of any behaviour that is perceived to be negatively prejudicial about anyone with a background or circumstances that might determine the perception that they are 'different'. BISR has developed a new intercultural framework that has been set up to support pupils' understanding of different cultural beliefs such as religion, different languages, opinions, and views. The school appointed an interculturalism coordinator that is overseeing the implementation of the framework. The coordinator is also responsible for promoting equality, diversity, inclusion in the school and promotion of the UK's Prevent initiative.

There are regular assemblies both in primary and secondary that support the development of SMSC across the school. Primary assemblies are being carried out remotely and are shown on the class interactive whiteboard via google meet. This is due to the current restriction on large numbers of unvaccinated pupils coming together. Secondary assemblies have resumed are hosted in the j-hall, where mask wearing is compulsory and pupils are suitably distanced. Assemblies cover a range of different topics and fully incorporate all areas of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

There is an appropriate and effective anti-bullying policy that clearly identifies bullying using the 4 P's: Premeditation, Persistence, Personal and Pain. There is a clear systematic procedure in place and lists the different strategies the school engages with in the prevention of bullying. On the very rare occasions that an incident occurs, careful notes are kept, and staff act swiftly to resolve issues and prevent reoccurrence.

Pupils know who to talk to if they have a problem. Pupils were able to talk about what they would do if they had an issue that they could not resolve themselves and readily identified trusted adults they were happy to discuss their feelings with. The school has focused on the wellbeing of pupils, particularly since the return of pupils to face to face teaching. It has worked very hard to ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met and this can be seen in the recent development of the school wellbeing framework. During the time pupils could not attend school, they felt very well cared for both in terms of educational support and how the school was supporting them with their wellbeing. Pupils are happy to be back at school and continue to feel supported in what they feel is a happy and caring environment.

The school is successful in helping pupils to develop their personal skills and qualities. Pupils are motivated learners. By the time they leave school, they have the personal and social skills needed to move successfully to the next stage of their lives. Career education at the school is

strong with excellent guidance given to pupils transitioning to GCSE and A Levels. University guidance is provided for the pupils and there is excellent support in place during the application process. BISR supports 6<sup>th</sup> form pupils through talks, workshops and other activities that develop skills needed for life after BISR and in preparation for attending university.

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

The welfare, health, and safety of the pupils at BISR meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards and is excellent.

All required policies in relation to the welfare, health and safety of pupils are in place, regularly reviewed and shared with all relevant staff. The policies are coherent and comprehensive. Records of fire and evacuation drills are maintained and clear signage, evacuation routes and meeting points are clearly visible around the school. Fire extinguishers are regularly maintained, and this is recorded on each appliance.

The school has made every effort to ensure IT systems are secure and robust, both to protect staff, pupils, and data. They have recently employed an external expert to conduct a full review and stress test the school's systems. Pupils have also received age-appropriate guidance on how to stay safe online. Year 5 pupils created their own website about how to stay safe online, following a lesson regarding online safety.

The school site and its facilities are clean, well-managed and maintained, with a clear system for reporting any issues in operation and swiftly acted upon by the operations team. Risk assessment policies and practices are in place and records show these are conducted appropriately. All specialist areas of the school such as science laboratories, chemical storage cupboards, the sports hall and swimming pool are secure when not in use.

BISR also has areas identified as secure sites for the purpose of keeping pupils and staff safe in a lockdown. Lockdown procedures and fire drills take place regularly when pupils are in school, and pupils know what to do in when they hear the fire alarm or lockdown drill. They clearly understand the different commands for each alarm.

Security at the school is extremely high. Access to the site is effectively monitored by the security team. Different coloured lanyards identify staff, pupils, and visitors. All staff wear lanyards with a photograph of the member of staff. Visitors must produce identification, vaccination status and sign in before entering the school. Entrance and exit procedures for all pupils are very secure. Pupils enter and leave through a turnstile gate. This is closely monitored by security staff and every pupil must check in or out using their lanyard. This updates attendance records so that the school's operations team can very easily see who is on site.

Buses that transport pupils are parked adjacent to a pedestrian area immediately outside the school's gates. Supervision in this area and at the car park pickup area is appropriate and efficient. The school's security staff manage the cars that are parked and the movement of cars as they pick up and drop off pupils. Pupils leaving and arriving at the early years foundation stage area are closely supervised. Handover is smooth and takes place within a gated area, within the perimeter of the school.

All staff in the school are trained routinely in safeguarding and the school operates an online recording system for staff to report concerns. Accurate records are kept. Training is regularly updated. The school has a designated safeguarding team which is displayed prominently around the school so that staff and students are aware of who to report any concerns to.

Behaviour at BISR is exemplary and a clear behaviour policy is in place across the school. Pastoral teams work effectively to ensure any incidents are resolved quickly. Pupil and staff relationships are very strong, and pupils express that they feel safe and secure in school. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare.

Pupil wellbeing is a strength of BISR, reinforced by the fact it is one of the three of the school's core pillars. Numerous initiatives and strategies have been employed particularly during COVID to ensure pupils were not left feeling isolated or worried. This focus has continued during the re-integration of pupils into school. Both parents and pupils comment positively about the efforts the school has gone to ensure pupils have settled well back into school after a long period of absence from school.

Pupils' attendance is recorded electronically at the start of the school day for primary and at the start of every lesson for secondary pupils so that at any one time all pupils are accounted for. In the event of a pupil being missing from a lesson the schools internal systems act quickly to locate the pupil. Pupils who arrive late are logged into the school's electronic management system as they arrive through the gates, with the reason for their late arrival. The head of houses and form tutors manage persistent late arrivals or long-term absences, although this is rare. The importance of attendance is promoted with parents in the newsletters.

The school has highly efficient and qualified medical and counselling teams that further support the health and wellbeing of the pupils. This is valued by the parents. Pupils are encouraged to stay healthy. Food technology is offered, and a well-equipped specialist area enables pupils to learn how to cook healthy food. Physical education is timetabled for every pupil in the school from FS1 to year 13. Swimming is very well attended within the curriculum, girls and boys are taught separately for PE in the secondary school. Sun hats are available throughout Key Stage 1 and early years. Pupils wore these and knew where to find them and where to store them. Sex and relationships education is offered to single gender groups of pupils in years 5 and 6 with the consent of parents.

Throughout the Covid-19 restrictions, the health and safety and facilities teams have been responsive to ensure that all government requirements are implemented to maintain safe procedures within the school. BISR also meet the required civil defence criteria and have been issued with a certificate of compliance, demonstrating the site complies with the standards of health and safety regarding UK law.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at Al Hamra British International School Riyadh meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school ensures that all required checks are carried out on all staff who are employed to work at the school. This includes checks made against identification, medical fitness, the right to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, qualifications, and suitability to work with children. These checks are made before the person is appointed to the role. This includes a detailed medical questionnaire to highlight health needs before a person is appointed to the role. This is to ensure that the school can offer the required level of support where a member of staff may have a diagnosed health need. Teaching staff and teaching assistants who are expatriates must be approved by the ministry to gain a residence visa. This ensures further, that the checks on a person's suitability to work in the school are robust.

Qualifications are attested and the school asks to see a police check certificate, International Police certificate and DBS. Three references are taken up to check against the person's identity and these include a reference from the most recent place of work. Questions are asked of referees to provide assurances that the person is suitable to work with children. Systems regarding the suitability of staff to work at the school and across the BISR schools are robust. All information is stored centrally on a single record that is monitored and updated.

When supply staff are used their details are stored on the single central record and contain the same checks as required for staff employed full time at the school. Police clearance certificates, DBS checks and identity checks are required for volunteers who work in school. However there have been limited volunteers working in school during the pandemic. Staff who have left the school since the last inspection are listed on the single central record as leavers.

Recruitment procedures highlight that the school is proactive in ensuring that suitability checks will be made by the school. The recruitment and vetting policy has been recently revised to ensure the school is fully compliant and acting to a very high standard in recruiting people who are well suited to the role and working in a school. Advertisements all contain a statement that promotes the schools very strong commitment to safeguarding its' pupils. An induction week and probationary period for staff new to the school is also monitored. This ensures that staff new to the school are well trained, understand the school's high expectations and actions can be taken swiftly where they or the school have concerns.

The schools HR staff attend training to ensure that the practices in school are in line with the highest expectations of the UK government regarding safeguarding pupils. They work closely with ACRO, the criminal records office and have led training with other international schools.

The board of governors are proactive in ensuring that the checks on staff suitability are made. A designated board member is assigned to check the safeguarding systems within the school

and meets regularly with the HR team. They are updated on safeguarding concerns by the principal at regular meetings. Members new to the governing body complete online safeguarding training and take their responsibilities very seriously. Board members are regularly informed around their responsibilities to keep children safe in school.

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

The premises and accommodation at BISR meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school makes very effective use of the existing premises and outdoor areas. The site is secure with two main points of entry and exit for BISR staff, pupils, and visitors. A large high wall clearly defines the perimeter of the site. Signage is clear throughout the school. There are two floors with the senior section of the school operating mainly on the second floor and in an adjacent separate building. Classrooms are clearly marked by room number. Fire exits are signposted. Wide staircases provide access to the second floor and have adequate handrails. The main area of the school is situated around a large outdoor quadrangle.

Classrooms across the school are well lit, have appropriate ventilation and are furnished with age-appropriate tables and chairs. Adequate resources and storage facilities are available within classrooms and communal areas. Shared areas between groups of classrooms are utilised very effectively in the primary section. These enable groups to work outside the classroom and share resources between classes.

Picnic tables are available throughout the school's outdoor areas and are well used at break times. Shaded areas are appropriate and offer suitable protection from the sun. Shared areas, including indoor spaces, outdoor spaces, and the AstroTurf, are fully utilised by operating on a rota system for break times.

In primary, classrooms and corridors are used as working walls and are decorated with displays of pupils' work. In the best classes, the displays support and stimulate learning and are interactive. The learning environments are of a good standard. There is a balance of learning prompts, celebration of work and working walls to support learning. Work on displays is relevant to learning in adjacent classrooms.

Specialist subjects have dedicated facilities, such as science laboratories, food technology, design technology, music rooms well-equipped with instruments, and two well stocked libraries. Physical education lessons are held in the large sports hall, the gym, the indoor swimming pool or on the outdoor pitch. There are suitable changing and showering facilities for boys and girls. The EYFS and KS1 have separate outdoor areas with permanently installed, age-appropriate play equipment, including large sand pits and climbing frames. The sand pits are covered at the end of each day.

Ramps allow access for wheelchairs to ground floor areas.

Although there is no school canteen a shared parent and sixth form café is available on site. Secondary age pupils have access to the 'tuck shop' serving hot, snack style foods or the option of packed lunch. Younger pupils bring packed lunches that they eat either in their classrooms or on picnic benches in outdoor areas.



The health and safety staff work in partnership with the facilities team to ensure the premises are well maintained, that they are safe and provide a positive environment for learning. Regular weekly health and safety walks, along with an online system of reporting allows the relevant maintenance teams to be responsive in ensuring that the premises and accommodation are well-maintained.

Adequate and well used storage of pupils' personal belongings was evident throughout the school. Even in the Key Stage 1 and early years pupils had personal areas to store personal belongings. These were used well to keep the classroom and corridor areas tidy.

The school clinic is well equipped and staffed to cater for the medical needs of pupils who are known to have existing conditions, those who are sick and those who present as injured. During the Covid-19 restrictions, separate isolation rooms are available within the clinic if needed, with toilet facilities adjacent.

It is noteworthy that the school has three secure rooms on campus to offer protection from potential bomb or terrorist attacks. Pupils and parents feel reassured knowing that there is a space available to offer a higher degree of safety if it was ever required. Regular fire and lockdown drills are carried out on a termly basis when the school is occupied.

## 10. Standard 6

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

The provision of information for parents, carers, and others at BISR meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school mission, vision and values are clearly communicated through displays around the school, the school website, and newsletters. The website is very informative. It provides a wealth of material about the school and includes contact details, the name of the head teacher and the academic performance of the school over the past five years. Regular reviews of the website ensure parents and prospective parents have access to the most up to date information.

Parents are highly supportive of the school and value the opportunities it provides for their children. Parents are aware of the various leadership roles, councils, and initiatives that their children can get involved in at the school, speaking confidently about the processes involved and felt well informed about the processes involved for their children. Parents of students in the primary section receive half termly updates about the curriculum themes.

Parents interviewed were extremely complimentary about the ease of communication with the school, the regularity and quality of information provided. They were impressed at the school's ability and flexibility to move to distance learning when required but more so by the opportunities for extracurricular activities which were also offered online. One parent of children at the school commented "the teachers were on top of their game during Covid, we felt comfortable and confident with the level of communication".

Communication is cited as a strength by the parents, they feel they have a voice. The virtual learning environment (VLE) has been replaced following feedback from parents and they welcome that all the information that they need including upcoming events is placed on the parent Google website. However, parents of pupils who are requiring support with their learning felt more information about what their children were learning to do would be useful.

There is an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) group who meet on a regular basis, organise the annual family fun day and run the PTA shop. The family fun day is a highlight in the school's calendar, bringing the community together whilst raising funds for charity.

Annual written reports, interim reports and parent teacher conferences are scheduled in advance and communicated to manage expectations of parents and carers. Not all parents were able to agree that they knew the level at which their child was working in relation to UK standards. However, all parents were confident that teachers are very proactive and alert parents to any concerns. Teachers are approachable and work with parents to overcome issues. Reports are shared using the 'My School' application which also updates parents about school attendance and behaviour.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints at BISR meet in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school has a complaints policy and procedure, which is available to view on the school's family portal and available on request. The policy clearly outlines the steps in the complaints process across the 3 different stages. Clear time scales are set out for the management of the complaint. The handling of complaints and how it is dealt with in the primary and secondary sections of the school are clearly defined. This ensures that concerns or complaints raised with the school are dealt with quickly and effectively. If a concern is raised and not dealt with, it becomes a complaint.

The policy defines each stage. At stage 1 concerns and complaints are handled firstly by the relevant class teacher or form tutor. Parents confirmed that this is the most likely course of action when they have a concern or complaint. They also stated that concerns are dealt with quickly at this stage and resolved promptly. A complaint may be escalated to the year leader and then the Key Stage coordinator if needed. If the complaint is not addressed at this point, it will be passed on to a member of the senior leadership team.

If a parent feels the complaint has not been adequately resolved it is escalated to a stage 2 formal complaint. The complaint will be addressed by either the head of school, the chief operating officer, or the principal.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the school response at any stage of the complaints process or they believe the complaint is of a serious nature, they can make a stage 3 formal complaint to the school principal. The principal will meet with the complainant and attempt to address the complaint to their satisfaction. If this is not achieved, the principal will establish a three-person panel not directly relating to the matter to hear the complaint. All meetings will be minuted. Written records of panel findings and recommendations will be available for the complainant.

Where the complainant remains unsatisfied with the school's response, or the complaint involves the principal, they may make a formal complaint to the board. The board chair will then carry out an investigation of the complaint and respond in writing. All meetings regarding a stage 3 complaint are minuted. If a panel has been set up, the chair will report the findings to the board who will decide on the appropriate response to the complainant.

The school maintains written records of all complaints, both formal and informal. This includes complaints raised by staff. The register of complaints records information about the matter raised, the person who raised the complaint and the date at which it was raised and at which stage of the complaints process it was resolved. Correspondence, statements, and records of complaint are kept secure and confidential. Most complaints are resolved at stage 1.

## 12. Standard 8

### Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management at Al Hamra British International School, Riyadh is very good and meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

The executive principal leads across the British International Schools Riyadh group of five schools and works closely with the Board of Governors to determine the school's strategic direction, financial planning, and development of staff. A SWOT analysis has recently been undertaken and this feeds into a school development plan. The schools Board of Governors constitutes 12 members who each take on an aspect of the school's development on which to focus. They possess a broad range of skills well suited to the needs of the school and act as a critical friend to the school's senior leaders.

The school's senior leadership team have a strong sense of purpose identified in the school's mission statement and a clear vision for the future. They are highly driven to ensure that the school represents a high standard of British international education within the host community, and that there is the capacity to sustain this drive into the future.

Over the past few years and during the time of the pandemic the school's senior leadership team have very effectively centralised policies and procedures across the five schools. The three pillars of enrichment, learning and well-being are visible across BISR school. Staff are allocated areas of responsibility based upon one of the pillars and work together. Policies and administrative procedures have been centralised, but each school within the group retains its own identity. The identification and sharing of best practise across the group of schools is already showing an impact.

The principal leads the school closely supported by the board of governors. A senior leadership team consists of head of senior school, head of primary school and chief operating officer. They oversee the day-to-day business of the school and are supported in this role by deputy head teachers of which there are 3 in the senior section, 3 in primary section and four assistant heads; two whole school, including the DSL and director of student services and two in the primary school. They are all accountable for the performance of their sections of the school and meet regularly with the principal. The head of senior school joined during the pandemic in August 2020 as deputy head of senior, taking on head of senior in August 2021. The head of primary joined in August 2021.

The school's leaders are committed to school improvement. The school's action plans are detailed and based upon a range of information to inform school self-evaluation. Whole school targets to improve pedagogical practice, foster wellbeing for all stakeholders and use accreditation as a vehicle for school self-improvement are fed down into the senior school and primary development plans. The learning primer is also a common document that details the expectations around teaching and learning, referencing 4 areas: the learning environment, planning for transfer, pedagogy, and responsive teaching. Learning walks and lessons observations are a regular feature at the school which utilise the learning primer to

identify areas for development and staff training. However due to the recent time spent online some aspects of the school's development planning have been delayed and the impact has not yet been embedded.

There is a whole school approach to continuous professional development (CPD). This is based around the three pillars of learning, well-being, and enrichment. Staff are asked to reflect on the school's vision and mission and consider their own professional growth targets. Ensuring staff are updated in the latest approaches based on educational research is a strong feature at the school. Regular weekly CPD meetings and a CPD newsletter help to keep staff updated in the latest approaches and those that will impact on pupil outcomes.

Staff are happy in the school and talk positively about the leadership team and the pupils. New staff feel welcomed into the school community and there is support for those moving to the school from abroad.

The school operates very effectively on a day-to-day basis. The schools operations team ensures supervision and movement around the school is safe, calm, and purposeful.