



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection Report**

# **El Alsson British International School**

**Cairo, Egypt**

Date 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
Inspection number 20211011

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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 the students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for and students' achievements.

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

During the inspection visit, the British phase of the school was inspected. 70 lessons were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the senior staff, the management teams, a range of teachers, parents, and groups of pupils. Two and a half school days were monitored. The lead inspector was Nicola Walsh. The team members were Pete Collings and Sean Sibley. This report details the inspection of El Alsson *British* School. The American school, operating on the same site was not inspected.

## 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

The school offers a British education that meets the needs of its' pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teaching is effective and pupils make good progress across the school.

During the recent pandemic the school acted very quickly to move all lessons online so that no lesson time was lost. Communication links with parents remained in place throughout so that pupil's welfare was monitored and there has been a smooth transition back to face-to-face teaching.

Pupils' behaviour is good, and they enjoy school. As a result, pupils become caring and confident learners.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

El Alsson has many strengths which include the:

- leadership and management of the school
- high-quality provision of the premises and accommodation, very well suited to the needs of the pupils.
- high attainment and pupil attitudes in Key Stages 4 and 5
- purposeful sense of community where all stakeholders including a strong alumni network, are proud of the school.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Continue to embed the Early Years such that it is in line with UK best practice
- Ensure all pupils are punctual and attendance is at least in line with UK expectations
- Arrangements are made to ensure all administrative procedures are managed effectively.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	El Alsson British and American International School			
Address	KM 22 Cairo-Alex Road PO Box 16 Smart Village, Cairo, Egypt, 12577.			
Main telephone number	(+202) 38270800			
Website	<a href="http://www.alsson.com">www.alsson.com</a>			
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@alsson.com">info@alsson.com</a>			
Head	Mr. Matt Topliss			
Chairman of Board of Governors	Mr. Karim Rogers			
Age range	3-18 years			
Total number of pupils (British section)	1,245	Boys	673	Girls 572
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	395
	3-5 years	230	17-18 years	55
	6-11 years	563	18+ years	2
Total number of part-time children	0			

El Alsson British and American International school is situated on the outskirts of Cairo having relocated to a purpose-built site in 2017. The British school operates on one campus that it shares with the American school. The school's identity, strategic leadership and administrative responsibilities are shared across both schools.

The school was established 40 years ago delivering an Egyptian national curriculum with a separate language school. Later the Egyptian national curriculum was replaced with an English based curriculum and in 2003 the school was renamed El Alsson British International school. Between 2006 and 2017 many changes took place, a new sixth form was added, and the Egyptian national curriculum was replaced with the American curriculum.

The school is very popular and serves to provide an education for local Egyptians, of which many are graduates of the school. 96% of pupils are Egyptian nationals and almost all pupils use English as a second language. The school has grown considerably with an increase of 800 pupils in 4 years across both schools. This led to recent and rapid restructuring of the school's vision, mission, leadership, and curriculum focus.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
- The school is organised into Key Stages (KS) and year groups
- The British school's 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 is well resourced in materials that are in use in English curriculum schools
- The school has a uniform policy, like many English schools
- The school's house point, and rewards system reflect those used in English schools
- The professional development of staff is delivered by UK providers
- The school has a high proportion of teachers trained with UK qualifications or experience of teaching in English National curriculum schools
- The academic calendar replicates that of a British school
- A large majority of pupils transfer to UK universities at the end of KS5.



## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by El Alsson British International School is good and meets the requirements of the BSO Framework.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum is broad, balanced and matched to the needs of its' pupils. It effectively supports the school's vision and mission to develop successful 21st citizens through thinking, learning and caring. The language of instruction is English.

The school delivers the English National Curriculum through the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) at key stages 1&2 and the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) at key stage 3. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is delivered via the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). This ensures clear progression through the school. Transition between key stages is smooth and well planned. A written policy on the curriculum is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work.

All pupils are expected to study English, maths, physical education and Arabic up to Year 11. There is a broad offer of subjects at key stages 4 & 5 which was appreciated by pupils, and this is continually reviewed. The school offers Arabic, National Social Studies, and religious studies to Egyptian pupils in preparation for the Thanaway Amma and Adadiya examinations and meets the requirements of the Egyptian ministry of education. Arabic as a Second Language is studied by non-Arabic speaking pupils.

The curriculum is delivered to pupils in mixed ability classes, except for maths and French in key stage 3, and English and maths at key stage 4. In these subject areas it was decided by the school that grouping by ability met the needs of older pupils. In the secondary phase boys and girls are separated for Physical education.

Subject specialists in the secondary phase deliver timetabled lessons of 1 hour 5 minutes. In the primary phase class teachers deliver the curriculum including French from year 5. Primary teachers are supported by subject specialist teachers in art, PE, computer science, music, and Arabic. To further support primary non-specialist teachers, externally published schemes of work for phonics and reading are in use. In the EYFS a maths scheme is in use, well

matched to the needs of the young learners. These materials enable teachers to measure pupil progress, benchmark against UK standards and ensure curriculum coverage over time.

Across the school opportunities for collaboration and the development of communication skills are evident in pupils work, displays and in lessons observed. Year 2 children were encouraged to explain their thinking during a multiplication lesson. This was in terms of repeating sets of 10. Cross curricular elements were observed in a year 3 literacy lesson where pupils applied their recent learning about plants in science to structure a piece of writing. Homework is set routinely, and feedback is given either online or verbally. Google Classroom is used to deliver and store learning resources and as a channel for communication and feedback.

The Foundation stage curriculum provides a range of teacher led and play-based learning experiences. This was evident in a FS2 class where pupils were bathing dolls and embedding the associated language through play. The school has invested in a range of resources, which are used effectively to enhance provision, such as a central shared area for water and sand, creative and role play. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy within lessons and this includes the development of a systematic and progressive phonics scheme based on the DfE's letters and sounds. Curriculum plans detail activities that promote collaboration, enquiry, and creativity. Teachers and teaching assistants provide learning role models and encourage pupils to be curious and independent through plans that meet the needs of the pupils.

There is a high focus on reading within the curriculum for primary pupils, classes are timetabled a weekly library visit where library staff support the delivery of an accelerated reader programme. Primary pupils take part in 'Drop Everything and Read' at the end of each day and staff members join in with this. In the primary phase pupil's interest is sparked through an 'entry point' to each area of study and this ends in an 'exit point' where the children reflect, share, and celebrate their learning. During pre-COVID times parents would visit classrooms at the 'exit points' to share and celebrate with their children.

At Key Stage 4, pupils work towards Edexcel and Cambridge GCSE and IGCSE public examinations. Pupils select 5 option choices from a broad range of courses on offer: art & design; biology; business studies; chemistry; drama; French; geography; history; computer science; and physics. At key stage 5, a broad offering of AS and A level choices is available to pupils: art, Arabic, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English, French, geography, maths, further pure maths, physics, and psychology. The Sixth form pupils reported that they are very happy with the offer of subject choices at A level.

Pupils in sixth form are further supported through a range of enrichment opportunities that encourage independence and prepare them for the next stage of their education. All pupils leave El Alsson to attend a university either in Egypt or overseas. In 2019 40% of pupils left El Alsson to join a UK university. In 2020 this number decreased due to the pandemic as more pupils chose to join local universities. Transition to universities overseas is well established. The school is registered with Bridge U and UCAS. A supportive network of alumni advises pupils in their university application process. Trips overseas for key stage 3, 4&5 pupils in addition to careers guidance, and projects based around living overseas, effectively prepared pupils for a university career.

Transition points between phases of the school are planned for and managed. Team meetings are held to share key information about each pupil. The curriculum progression between the IEYC, IPC and MYP is clear in curriculum plans. Year 6 pupils spend a week in the secondary phase working on transition units of work with their new teachers to support them in their move to key stage 3. Pupils reported that the nature of the learning in Years 7-9, via the MYP programme, supports them in the move into their GCSE years, with them being equipped with the skills and competencies required to be confident and successful. The school offers Option Evenings for key stage 4 & 5 pupils and taster sessions for pupils in different subject areas.

Specific adaptations are made to the curriculum to support pupils who are identified by the school as not making expected progress, through data analysis and teacher assessments. A register of these pupils is in place and is reviewed regularly. These pupils are provided with an individual learning plan that details their needs. They are supported with effective and targeted interventions, often using resources specifically produced for individuals or small groups. As a result, the curriculum for these pupils is excellent.

A wide range of co-curricular activities further enriches the curriculum, but this was reduced due to the COVID pandemic. Sixth Form pupils lead the Model United Nations programme. Teaching staff deliver after school clubs related to sport, the arts and academia. Off-site trips are offered to pupils and visitors to the school, including parents and Alumni, add a richness to the curriculum offering. The school competes successfully in local and regional competitions with the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME), such as Athletics, poetry writing, art competitions and young musician.

Pupil's personal, health, social and emotional learning is taught through timetabled lessons, assemblies, after school activities and leadership roles. They are reinforced by the school's mission, vision, and values. Opportunities to define

the school's goals to become thinking, learning and caring pupils is delivered through tutor group sessions in secondary and further embedded through an award system in primary that reflects these goals. A peer mentoring programme in the secondary phase creates opportunities for pupils to actively support younger pupils in both pastoral and academic matters. This is valued by pupils.

## 5.2 *Teaching and assessment*

The school meets the standard and the quality of teaching and assessment across the school is good.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They know their pupils well and relationships are strong. Positive affirmations are used widely to encourage pupils to stay on task and behave well. Classroom time is well managed, and pace is appropriate. Teachers plan lessons that contain a specific learning objective based on the curriculum plans. Across the school, teachers use questioning to check on pupils understanding.

Attractive classroom environments support learning in class. This is used most effectively in the primary phase. For example, a display of pupils' work about a caterpillar in FS2 embedded learning about colour and shape.

Teaching in the early years and key stage 1 is active and hands on. There is a strong creative element to the tasks and activities planned by teachers, such as pupils making letters with playdough or identifying rhyming words. Pupils here are busy and engaged. In the best lessons observed differentiated tasks were planned and pupils knew what they were learning to do. Teachers' classroom management skills are good and used effectively to manage pupils through a range of planned tasks.

In key stage 2 & 3 teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboard to deliver well planned lessons and pupils complete the tasks set in the required time. Almost all pupils bring their own devices and use these in lessons. Teaching is mainly teacher led and pupils are responsive to the teachers questioning. However, in most lessons observed in key stages 2 & 3 responses were sought by teachers from pupils who volunteered responses. Teachers did not routinely check on the understanding of pupils who did not respond.

Differentiated tasks are often by outcome, teachers in key stages 2 & 3 are not yet planning tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. In a Year 6 maths lesson observed, pupils enjoyed the opportunity to choose a level of task that was applicable to them. This enabled pupils to work at a level well suited to their needs. However, it did not appear that this strategy was in use routinely and there was an overall lack of challenge for a few pupils in most lessons observed in key stages 2&3.

The quality of teaching in the lessons observed in key stage 2 & 3 was inconsistent. In the best lessons observed, the teaching was engaging, and teachers sought feedback from pupils on the understanding of the learning

objective. One example of this was in a Year 4 English lesson where all pupils provided feedback to the teacher on the use of direct speech in a text using a thumbs up / thumbs down, whole class approach. Teachers use of feedback to monitor pupils' progress during the lesson was inconsistent.

Pupils in key stages 4 and 5 have a focussed and responsible attitude to their studies such that teachers are rarely required to employ behaviour management strategies. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject areas and are keen to share this with the pupils. In the lessons observed, teachers continually sought to check on pupils' understanding by asking questions. There was an attention to language and clarifying the meaning of words, such as protectionism in a year 10 business lesson. Pupils were demonstrating abilities to work independently and asked questions of the teachers to ensure that they made good progress. Feedback from teachers to pupils was targeted and purposeful, both online, in class and in written comments on pupils' notebooks. Pupils knew their target grades and what they needed to improve upon. Small class sizes in art and French enabled a very personal approach to the study of the subject. The style of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 4 &5 equips pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter or re-enter the UK educational system at the appropriate level.

The school put in place recently a broad range of externally sourced assessment systems. These regularly and routinely record and measure pupils' attainment through summative tests. Senior leaders analyse pupils' assessment data to ensure all pupils are making progress and attaining the expected levels of progress. Teachers are becoming more confident in their use of assessment information across the school as the use of the assessments become embedded.

In Foundation Stages 1 and 2 pupils learning journals are maintained which record key stages of development across the IEYC. In the primary phase progress tests are used to benchmark and measure progress in English and maths. Cognitive ability tests are carried out in Year 3 and Year 6 and data is triangulated with that from the progress tests and internal teacher assessment data. Information regarding the pupil's reading level and progress is monitored closely through the primary phase. End of unit assessments in other subjects are planned and delivered, writing samples are reviewed termly and judgements moderated. Exit points from IPC units are reviewed and other available data is used to adapt the IPC units as required.

Progress tests are in use routinely in key stages 3,4 and 5. This informs learners of their next steps and enables teachers to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils. This is used most effectively with Key stages 4 and 5 where pupils are given a list of the areas of a subject in which they are doing well and the areas

that require more attention. In a year 10 computer science lesson the teacher used the pupil's attainment data to plan lessons and monitor progress.

Across the school pupil's assessment data regarding behaviours, attainment and progress is stored and tracked. Regular progress review meetings are held in teaching teams where available data is analysed and emerging patterns and insights related to individuals, groups and cohorts are discussed. Provision for pupils who are not making expected progress is met through learning support.

Examples of effective feedback to move learning forward was found in a small minority of workbooks. In the best lessons in key stages 4 & 5 feedback, whether it be in written format or verbal, was efficient and adaptive to the needs of the pupils. But this approach was not applied consistently across the school. Work scrutiny of pupils' workbooks evidenced that most teachers are not yet routinely providing purposeful feedback through marking of pupils work or encouraging pupils to present work to a high standard.

### 5.3 *Standards achieved by pupils*

Across the school pupils enjoy learning. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is improving. Over the past 4 years the pupils attendance data averages 92.7% attendance, but this includes the attendance data for 2020 when teaching was disrupted due to the global pandemic. Excluding the data for 2020, the school's attendance data for the academic years 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020 is 94.06%. This indicates that the attendance in the past has remained below what is expected in the UK. Pupils' attendance is slightly better in the primary phase but still drops below what is expected in UK schools overall, even disallowing the data for 2020. The school is aware that attendance in school is a priority area and needs to work on ensuring pupils arrive in lessons on time and ready to learn.

Pupils behave well and move about the school courteously. They are respectful of one another, school rules and procedures that are in place. Pupils respond quickly to teacher's requests to wear masks and when reminded of school rules. Pupils work together well and can talk about what they are learning to do. Although most pupils enter school with English as a second language, pupils acquire a good spoken vocabulary in English quickly and build upon this as they progress through the school.

Pupils enter the school into FS1 or FS2 with some fluency in English. Children in FS1 were able to list what was in their lunchbox and talk about how old they are, although the language was stilted and lacked fluency with a few errors in grammar. This indicates that children are entering FS1 with some fluency in English but slightly below what would be expected in a UK school.

In the year 1 phonics tests conducted by the school, using externally published materials 70% of pupils achieved average expectations or above in May 2021. The schools end of year maths data indicates that 88% of pupils were at or above the national UK standard at the end of 2021.

By the end of key stage 2 pupils are attaining in line with UK standards in English and maths. Key stage 1 & 2 maths results based on summative tests and teacher assessments indicate that at 82.6% of pupils are attaining the national standard or above at the end of 2021. The results are slightly lower for upper key stage 2 where the dip in pupils' performance is attributed to acquisition of mathematical language and problem solving. The school's internal data identifies numeracy as a strength across the school.

In key stage 3 changes to the assessments have impacted on the school's ability to make comparisons to its internal KS 3 data over the past 3 years. Currently



eight summative assessments per year are now in place for every subject and pupils' attainment and progress is measured using a point score of 1-9. There is an expectation that pupils make 3 levels of progress per year. The mean scores across all subjects in 2021 for year 7, year 8 and year 9 were respectively 2.9, 5.0, and 7.1.

Academic standards for most pupils in key stages 4& 5 are high and above UK averages. Over the past three years in year 11, 94% of pupils have achieved 5, A\*-C grades including English and maths at IGCSE. This is a considerable achievement for pupils who speak English as a second language. 59% of all grades at IGCE were at A\* or A in 2021. The school's attainment 8 scores have risen since 2018 and now place the school in the top 2% of UK schools.

Year 12 AS results have risen significantly in the past 3 years. Subject strengths can be found in chemistry, business studies, economics, French, maths, ICT, physics, further maths, and psychology. In 2021, in 8 of the 15 subjects offered at AS level 50% of pupils attained A grades.

Pupils' achievement at A2 in year 13, show an improvement since 2018. The % of pupils achieving A grades in A2 have doubled from 16% in 2018, to 39% in 2021. 81% of pupils achieved grades A-C in 2018 this increased to 92% in 2021. The subject strengths are biology, business studies, economics, maths, further maths, and physics. 10 out of 14 subjects offered at A2 have at least 50% grades A-A\*. 53% of pupils exceeded their predicted grades in 2020 and this rose to 90% in 2021. Academic standards at the school are high in key stages 4 & 5.

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

The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development meets the standard for BSO. It is good across the school.

The school promotes a friendly and inclusive environment. Pupils feel happy at the school and value their education. They feel safe and report that any issues and complaints are dealt with fairly and swiftly. One pupil, new to the primary phase this academic year, reported that they had 'settled in very well' and that they felt like they 'belonged here'. Pupils explained that the school offered a sense of 'family.' Pupils know who to talk to if they have concerns, both in terms of finding support from staff members and peer mentors.

Moral values are shared throughout the school through the schools consistently applied behaviour policy. At the start of every academic year the school's home school agreement is shared with parents and pupils. The expectations of behaviour are displayed in every classroom and the policy is shared on the school's website and is also translated in Arabic. The consistent approach by staff and parents to the school's behaviour policy has impacted on promoting positive behaviours across the school. The school's information management system shares incidents of poor behaviour with the relevant personnel promptly. This ensures that communication is clear and relevant action can be taken swiftly.

In the primary phase, golden rules, circle time, house points, progress awards related to the school's mission statement of thinking, learning, and caring are awarded. Across the whole school prize giving days, graduation ceremonies and celebration assemblies further support the school to reward individual and team achievements.

Pupils said that incidents of bullying were dealt with effectively. Informal discussions with pupils show they are taught strategies to deal with bullying. Pupils in Key stages 2, 3,4 and 5 can talk about the difference between falling out and bullying. They know what to do if bullying happens, including bullying through social media. They are confident that an adult will help them resolve issues. Incidents are rare and dealt with effectively. One Year 8 pupil told us, *"We feel safe at this school as we know we can go to one of the well-being staff members or to other teachers who we feel we can talk to."* The school reported no incidents of racism had been recorded or brought to the attention of staff.

Sixth form pupils enjoy the extra responsibility they are given around time management and leadership. They appreciate the opportunity to wear their own clothes to school but within the guidelines provided. Sixth formers act as learning mentors for pupils lower down the school. They also support teams around the school for example in administrative tasks and in the science laboratories.

Pupil's social development is promoted through curriculum provision and extra-curricular activities such as awareness days for antibullying, autism, and environmental issues. House competitions within the school around recycling, film festivals, art exhibitions, sporting and music events help to develop within pupils a sense of competition and teamwork. Pictures of inspirational Egyptians are displayed around corridors and inspirational geographers are displayed in the Geography Department. An elected student council represents the views of pupils regarding different areas of school life. The council and an established House System, with an elected head boy and head girl take responsibility for organising projects and events to include pupils, staff, and the wider community.

Pupils participate in fund raising events to raise money for charities, such as non-uniform days, secret Santa events, a Christmas photo booth and Operation smile. Year 10 entrepreneur projects, year 9 'service as action' week, Community Projects in year 8 and the El Alsson carnival enable pupils to become financially and socially responsible.

Diversity is celebrated and promoted through a primary international week and international days in the secondary phase. A wide range of cultural events are celebrated including British, Egyptian, and American cultural events such as Thanksgiving Day.

Ex patriate teachers promote life in modern Britain. There is a close relationship with the British Embassy in Cairo and the school attends a Christmas carol service held annually. The British Council is also active within the school. The school ensures that British values of equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted and shared, but act within Egyptian law. The secondary school head reminds pupils at the beginning of the academic year that extreme views are not promoted in the school. Pupils are confident in the secondary phase to raise concerns where appropriate and matters are shared and discussed at an age-appropriate level.

Spirituality is developed in lessons including religious education lessons, through community service and assemblies. The pupils develop an awareness and understanding of how others may hold different beliefs and principles. There are opportunities within

the curriculum for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt to do and to consider questions for which there are no answers.

Opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils have been affected by the restrictions imposed upon the school due to the COVID pandemic. Access to school and the inability of the school to offer off site trips, school drama productions, after school clubs and receive visitors has impacted across the whole school.

## 7. Standard 3

### The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school meets the standard.

Systems are in place to ensure that the welfare, health, and safety of the pupils is continually monitored and reviewed across the whole site. This includes a written health and safety policy. Regular weekly health and safety inspections of the school are carried out with a director of the school and the school principal. The health and welfare of pupils and staff is a high priority for the whole school site.

The school site is secure, there is a large wall around the site and 24-hour security on all gates. Cameras around the wall further ensure that the site is secure and monitored. The sports field is fenced so that access is restricted during break times and balls do not enter the playground areas. There is shading provided through large umbrellas situated in outdoor social areas. The school has plans to increase this further. It is recommended that pupils wear sun hats when taking part in outdoor activities, particularly young pupils on the primary sports field where shading is limited.

The school is clean and well-presented. The buildings are ventilated and well lit. The open atriums provide extended ventilated areas for the pupils to extend their learning. Stairways are wide and have clear signage to mark which side of the stairway to use. Lifts are available for pupils and staff who have restricted mobility. The three food outlets and staff canteen are well organised and clean. They follow the ministerial hygiene directives and appropriate training.

A qualified doctor on site and 4 nurses are employed across three clinics, one for each school and another situated by the sports hall where the risk of accident is greater. The school's doctor is available to support pupils and families for advice regarding illnesses and accidents. There are also staff who have basic first aid training, including early years and PE staff. A first aid policy is in place. Minor issues are recorded on an internal system which the medical staff monitor. The nurse keeps a record of incidents, logged on the school app. Children and staff at risk of severe allergic reaction or with ongoing medical conditions such as diabetes are identified on this app and then shared with the relevant staff.

The school routinely calls parents to check up when pupils do not arrive in school and seeks information on the reason for the absence. Registers are taken in every lesson in the secondary phase by specialist teachers and at the start of the day in the primary phase.

The school's systems ensure that supervision is effective. Staff interact with pupils appropriately to maintain safe and orderly conduct. Primary pupils line up to enter school and are accompanied to move around the school. Matrons are positioned in corridor areas to ensure pupils move around school and make use of the facilities in an orderly fashion. This helps to avoid any potential accidents in corridors and washrooms. Bags in the primary phase are stored safely on racks outside the classrooms, again reducing the risk of slips and trips over bags.

Procedures at the beginning and end of the school day are closely monitored by school staff. The procedures to enter and leave the school site, for visitors, pupils and parents are shared across both the British and American phases of the school. A badge system ensures that visitors, parents, and contractors can be easily identified, although this was not used by parents who came onto site to collect children at the end of the day and needs enforcing with maintenance staff.

There are specific gates designated for parents and siblings collecting pupils, visitors to the school and for the buses. Parents enter the site via gate 4 and collect their child from clearly marked areas close to gate 4. Older pupils collecting younger siblings also leave via this gate. There are a lot of children and people moving along a narrow path and then through two gates to leave the school. The situation has been recently improved by ensuring that the youngest pupils remain in clearly designated areas for collection, supervised by a member of staff. The school is aware of the need to continually seek ways to improve the procedures for parents arriving to collect pupils at the end of the school day and have plans to build steps. This will enable parents to be able to be seen clearly by teachers so that handover of primary pupils is efficient and safe.

The flow of school buses is well organised. The use of the bus app enables parents to track where their child is and is appreciated by parents. There are organised checks on all the school buses which include seatbelts, lighting, mechanical and safeguarding checks on the drivers. A matron or member of staff accompany pupils on each bus.

The school follows the COSHH guidelines. Potentially dangerous substances are kept locked in cabinets. In science laboratories there are safety cards on desks for pupils to reference and pupil's bags are kept outside the science rooms. Fire extinguishers were

sited in science laboratories and staff knew how to use them in the event of a fire. Electrical cabinets were locked, and fire exit doors opened when checked. Fire exits are clearly signed in the auditorium and around the school including the swimming pool and sports hall. The swimming pool was securely locked when not in use, and matrons were seated by the entrance.

Annual quarterly checks are carried out on play and PE equipment, gas, and electrical supplies. There are clear systems for reporting any maintenance concerns and these concerns are responded to immediately with an acknowledgement email and thereafter a follow up visit.

Risk assessments are in place for specific areas of the school and off-site trips. The school has a risk assessment policy which includes key information about the school's process for writing and reviewing risk assessments. The school currently carries out risk assessments for different school activities but these need to include detail regarding the likelihood and impact of risk. Records are maintained but they were not centralised for ease of access.

Pupils and staff demonstrated what to do during an unplanned evacuation of the school. The school's systems to evacuate the school swiftly were robust and appropriate. Fire drills are regularly held and there are records kept which include strengths and developments for each drill. Fire hydrants are located around the site and fire extinguishers sited strategically around the school.

## 8. Standard 4

### *The suitability of the proprietor and staff*

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standards required for BSO.

All members of staff undergo appropriate checks to ensure their suitability for the role when they are appointed to the school. Identity, medical, qualifications and police check, or DBS checks and references were in place for all staff appointed to the school. These are held in individual files and on a single central record. The single central record contains details of all employees across both schools, American and British. Information regarding staff who have left the school since the last inspection was also detailed on this record.

All employees have their criminal records checked either via the Egyptian Police, foreign police certificates, DBS certificates or ICPC (International Child Protection Certificate) as appropriate. All checks are undertaken prior to commencement of work. References are sought and thoroughly checked. The school does not use supply staff.

There are three directors of the school and two are qualified teachers, they have demonstrated over time suitability to work with children and meet and exceed local requirements. The directors are actively involved in the recruitment process of all teaching staff at the school and interview every teacher to ensure their suitability for the role.

The school follows safer recruitment procedures and has a safer recruitment policy in place. A designated safeguarding team promotes safeguarding in the school. The team comprises of the school principal, head of secondary and head of primary and 4 other leaders within the school. All staff completed the national online safety and safeguarding child protection course during the school year 2020-2021. All teaching staff receive refresher training twice a year in keeping children safe in education. A child protection policy and register are in place. The school revised its e-safety policy when all learning moved to an online format, so that risks regarding online working were reduced. Training around keeping children safe is delivered in Arabic to staff members who are not proficient in English.



## 9. Standard 5

### The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent and exceed BSO standards.

The school was purpose built in 2017. The buildings and facilities ensure that learning is very well supported and matched to learner needs. Areas in and around the school were tidy and organised.

The organisation and design of the buildings on the campus are thoughtful and purposeful. The American School and British school buildings are adjacent to the central shared administration building and auditorium. All shared areas are well maintained, including gardens, designated car and bus parks and paved areas. Sports fields, adventurous play areas, the swimming pool, sports halls, and gym facilities ensure that a wide range of sporting activities can be offered within and out of the formal curriculum. Outdoor picnic tables with umbrellas provide shaded seating areas which promote socialisation and discussion. There are three food outlets, situated appropriately to provide food to secondary pupils at break times, with minimal congestion.

The site is appropriately secured. Buildings are well insulated, resisting the infiltration of heat, dust, water, and noise pollution from outside. They are well maintained and decorated, with many examples of student's work, most prolific in the primary phase. An art exhibition of secondary pupils' work was on display in the entrance to the secondary phase. Flooring is flat and smooth and free from obstacles and hazards. Sufficient staircases and wide corridors enable pupils to move around the school with limited areas of congestion. Access to the school is adapted to accommodate pupils with impaired mobility, including ramps in outdoor spaces and lifts in the 2 storey buildings. A bridge links the primary and secondary sections, enabling easy access for staff from Key stage 2 into key stage 3.

Classrooms are well lit, have good acoustics and are spacious. Specialist classes include music rooms and practice rooms, drama studios and theatres, art rooms, science laboratories and a well-stocked library. Different phases are accommodated in specifically designed areas of the school.

The early years foundation stage area is well provided with a central shared area for creative and role play and an outdoor area. Many sinks at an age-appropriate height are sited in the central corridors. Suitable washrooms are positioned close classrooms and outdoor areas. The area is secure and well-resourced to meet the requirements of EYFS curriculum.

Toilets and washrooms are located throughout the school with appropriate requirements. Facilities for changing and showering are provided in the PE and school sports facilities and there are separate accommodations for sole use of staff and pupils.

Learning resources support the curriculum well and provision for ICT is very well resourced with interactive whiteboards in every classroom. Classroom furniture is appropriate to the size and age of pupils and promotes high quality learning opportunities. Lockers for secondary pupils are in corridors which allows the safe storage of personal items without taking up classroom space.

## 10. Standard 6 Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others fully meets and exceeds the standards.

Parents feel part of the school community and are proud of the school and its heritage. Many are Alumni of the school and are keen to support its development. One parent commented, in relation to the school relocating to its new site, that ‘they were pleased with the school’s ongoing efforts to maintain the school’s community ethos and continue to develop its place in the community at the new location.’

Parents are very satisfied with the quality of information provided by the school. Communication is frequent and relevant and is delivered via email, Google Classroom, the website, the school application, and handbooks. The website is current, informative, and detailed, providing a wealth of information regarding the school and the curriculum.

The school has worked hard to develop and communicate procedures for parents to follow when contacting the school. Parents report that the school responds to emails and other communications in a prompt fashion. Parents feel listened to and supported by the school. Their opinions are sought through parental surveys and feedback sent through a range of channels, where appropriate, is acted upon. Parents know that there is a complaints procedure and report that any reported issues are dealt with swiftly.

Pupils’ written reports are age appropriate, detailed, and informative. Parents receive information regarding their child’s attainment and engagement at three points during the academic year either via the written report or progress meetings with teachers. During the COVID pandemic, Parent-Teacher meetings moved online allowing the meetings to continue.

Pre COVID pandemic, parents enjoyed more access to school and were able to visit classrooms to enjoy being in school with their child, discussing ‘exit’ points in learning, attending assemblies, providing expert input for older pupils, and supporting younger pupils with their reading.

Parents also are appreciative of the workshops and information sessions that the school delivers, including recent ones to support parents and pupils during the time of the COVID pandemic. The school’s doctor is available to advise parents and has become a

valuable source of trusted information for parents during the recent pandemic. The parents and school hope to be able to reinstate workshops and information sessions face to face soon.

Parents reported that their children are happy at the school and that the teachers know their children well. They feel well informed about their child's attainment, progress, and engagement in school.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets BSO standards.

A parental complaints policy is available on the school's website, in the parent's handbook and on request to the school. The aim and objectives of the parental complaints policy is clearly stated. The procedures to be followed are detailed and ensure that concerns or complaints raised with the school are dealt with at first informally. In the event of a complaint or concern not being resolved, the final level is formal and involves the complaint or concern being raised with the directors of the school.

All formal complaints should first be raised with the principal in writing and if this fails to be resolved, then in writing to the directors. The directors were very clear that they only get involved with complaints by parents who follow this procedure. This ensures that complaints are dealt with fairly.

Once the matters are raised at a formal level, clear timescales are stated for the school to respond. A meeting will be arranged, and the complainant invited to attend a panel meeting. At this meeting there will be present at least three people who were not directly involved in the matter raised and a separate person who is independent of the management and running of the school. The complainant may be accompanied to this panel meeting.

The school maintains written records of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the informal stage, and whether they proceeded to a panel meeting. The policy states that correspondence, statements, and records of complaints are to be kept confidential, except in cases where legal requirements permit access by local authorities. The school reported that complaints unresolved at the preliminary stage are rare.

Overall parents and pupils felt that complaints were dealt with very effectively and resolved quickly.

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

The quality of leadership and management of the school meets the standard.

The school is led by a board of three directors who are owners of the school. The directors are involved at a strategic level and meet weekly with the principals of both the American and British schools and the administrative staff. They have an office in the school in the central administration building and have considerable direct contact with broad sections of the school community.

The directors are very well informed about the school's strengths and areas of development and consequently lead the school's strategic development very well. They are knowledgeable and supportive to the senior leadership teams in the school, offering an appropriate level of guidance and challenge. They delegate their authority effectively and retain a hands-on approach to matters regarding health and safety and recruitment.

The principal is new to role, appointed January 2020, but appointed from the position of secondary head teacher. Therefore, he knows the school well. He has made a significant contribution to raising standards and improving the consistency and lines of communication across the school.

The school's development plan and extremely detailed self-evaluation document references the areas of strength and the priorities. The school's self-evaluation draws upon a range of evidence to secure an accurate self-evaluation of the school and the journey it is on. The school improvement plan is divided into four areas: our learning, our curriculum, our team, and our financial management. Each section has clear priorities, and these are shared with the school's senior leaders. All teaching staff have a performance management target that is related to one of the priorities. This ensures that decisions made at a strategic level are actioned in the classrooms. However, the recent pandemic and changes to working practices have impacted on these plans to have an impact.

The school's executive leadership team consists of the principal, head of primary and head of secondary. They work alongside colleagues at the American school to ensure smooth running of the campus on a day-to-day basis. They also meet regularly with the school directors.

The established head of primary and a newly appointed head of secondary (March 2020) lead teams that are focussed on developing teaching and learning across the school. Heads of teaching and learning and lead practitioners in both primary and

secondary phases have recently been appointed and are developing their roles. They are not yet developed sufficiently to demonstrate an impact.

The school has moved forward significantly since the last inspection. The leadership and management across the school is now aligned and focussed on achieving the school's vision and mission. Teachers are professional in their conduct and know what is expected of them. A clear lesson observation grading system is in place at the school so that teachers are clear in understanding the expectations around teaching and learning. Pupils' attainment particularly that of pupils who are not making progress, is tracked to ensure all pupils are working at the level expected.

The school is further supported by attendance at BSME conferences and working with external providers and trainers. There is also close collaboration with other local international schools. The school principal leads BSME in Egypt and staff attend conferences throughout the middle east and in the UK.

The school has a determined and patient approach to recruitment and retention of staff. Induction processes for staff are well established and purposeful. Teaching staff report that they enjoy working at the school and feel supported. The school's policy to 'grow your own' staff is supported by external training providers and key members of the school's leadership teams are completing professional development courses such as NPQH and NPQSL. The school has invested in using external providers from the UK to enable teachers in the school to complete international postgraduate certificates in education. Staff felt very well supported through the recent pandemic and working online. They felt that their welfare and that of the pupils was a high priority for the school.

The school was very quick to act during the move to online teaching. Following the restrictions imposed on face-to-face teaching during the pandemic, no lesson time was lost. The school quickly revised systems, trained staff and communicated with pupils and parents to move to an online learning format.