



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report**

**Knowledge Gate  
International School**

**Muscat  
Oman**

Date **14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023**  
Inspection number **20230514**

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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, nearly 70 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Karen Hanratty. The team members were Sharon Barr, Nick Fawcett and Stephanie Oldridge.

## 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

Knowledge Gate International School provides students with a wealth of opportunities to develop academically, socially and physically. A broad curriculum which allows students to develop skills, interests and talents, is underpinned by a focus on achieving high standards academically. Care is taken to ensure students develop into global citizens aware of their responsibilities in society. They are extremely well cared for and all procedures related to health and safety are rigorous. Effective communications with parents keep them well informed and involved. School leaders are forward looking and focused on achieving excellence.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- Students, who are well-behaved, respectful and have mature attitudes to learning and a quiet self-confidence;
- Clear direction set by the principal and passion of the leadership team as a whole;
- Teachers, who create supportive learning environments which encourage students to take risks in their learning;
- Relationships across the school, evident in warmth and mutual respect;
- Focus on improving students' overall literacy skills and specific disciplinary literacy;
- 'KGIS teaching and learning essentials' which provide a consistent framework for lesson planning and delivery;
- Range and breadth of curriculum offer, including an emphasis on sports and performing arts, through the formal and extra-curricular programmes;
- Standards achieved by students, particularly considering the young age at which they sit external examinations;
- Recent developments to the school campus and facilities, including the EYFS and grade 1 building and play areas, and newly refurbished library and outdoor sports facilities;
- Displays in classrooms and around the school, which support learning and celebrate students' work and achievements;
- Robust policies and procedures related to health and safety and the attention to welfare and safeguarding of students.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Consolidate, review and embed recent initiatives in teaching and assessment, including ensuring that:
  - The application of the accelerated learning cycle and disciplinary literacy are consistent across age groups and subjects;
  - The full range of assessment data is utilised to inform planning, teaching and learning, so that lessons meet the needs of individual students;
  - There is sufficient challenge to adequately stretch the most able students;
  - Marking and feedback provide individualised guidance to students which clearly identifies next steps in learning, and to which they respond;
  - Students are active participants in lessons, developing effective learning skills, critical thinking, problem-solving and innovation;
  - Additional adults in classrooms are consistently used effectively to support learning throughout the lesson.
2. Promote the school's new vision – “Every child has the confidence to be pioneers of their own future” – so that it is known and understood by all stakeholders and will guide the school forward;
3. Further develop initiatives for encouraging high levels of student attendance and punctuality.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Knowledge Gate International School				
Address	Way 2947, Al Marafah Street, Al Hail, Muscat, PC 111 – Sultanate of Oman				
Telephone Number/s	+968 2407 3500				
Website Address	www.kgis.edu.om				
Key Email Address	executiveprincipal@kgis-edu.com				
Headteacher/ Principal	Liz Stanley				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Nicholas Wergan (Inspired Education Group)				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	<b>765</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>325</b>
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	207	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	153	<i>17-18 years</i>	22	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	383	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Knowledge Gate International School (KGIS) is a co-educational school for students between the ages of 3 and 18 located in the Al Hail area of Muscat, in the Sultanate of Oman. The school opened in 2012 under local ownership. In September 2019 the school was acquired by the Inspired Education Group, a multinational group with head offices in London, now comprising over 80 schools. The executive principal was appointed by Inspired at the time the school joined the group, to ease the transition and start the school on a journey of development and improvement.

There are currently 765 students on roll, an increase of 28% since the school's rebranding. The school's demographic is also undergoing a period of change, with a shift towards greater numbers of expatriate students, including a growing British contingent.

The school delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum to the youngest students, the Cambridge International Curriculum to Key Stages (KS) 1 to 3 and Pearson iGCSE, AS and A levels to KS 4 and 5 respectively. The British curriculum runs alongside the requirements of the Omani Ministry of Education (MoE), relating to Arabic, Islamic education and social studies, culminating in the Oman Bilingual General Education Diploma (GED). Compulsory schooling in Oman begins in grade 1, at age 5, equivalent to year 1 in the British system. All schools in Oman, including those delivering a British-style curriculum must operate within a grade 1 to 12 system. The impact of this is that students receive one year less in school than their international peers, sitting external exams a year early.

KGIS is an inclusive school and accommodates children of all abilities and children with a variety of additional learning needs. 98% of students are learning English as an additional language (EAL). Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and EAL are supported by a full-time SENDCo and two full time support teachers.

The teaching body comprises 60 full time teachers. 63% of teachers are British or Irish. A further 8% are native English speakers who qualified in countries equivalent to the UK, and who have previous experience of delivering the National Curriculum for England.

KGIS prides itself on its broad and balanced curriculum, including subjects not commonly offered in Oman such as drama, Spanish and psychology. The school provides a diverse programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities (ECAs), including sports, performing arts and Model United Nations (MUN). The Duke of Edinburgh International Award has recently been introduced. Students have many opportunities to engage in events and competitions with other students locally and globally. KGIS students gain places at local and international universities, including those in the UK.

The school is a member of British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) and holds the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) Patron's Accreditation, awarded in March 2022

The school identifies some challenges:

- Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements for Arabic subjects, particularly in EYFS and KS1, which impact on curriculum time;
- The Omani grade 1 to 12 system generates a “missing year” of education, as a result, students enter external examinations a year earlier than their international peers;
- 98% of students are learning English as an additional language.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The school has a distinct British feel and appearance, in many aspects:

- The school delivers a curriculum based on the requirements on the National Curriculum for England, through the EYFS programme, the Cambridge International Curriculum and a range of iGCSE, AS and A level courses;
- Assessments are based on national standards from the UK;
- The majority of teachers are British or were trained in the UK;
- Styles of teaching and learning are informed by UK best practice, and staff professional development is used to develop consistency of approach;
- The academic year follows a British pattern, commencing in the autumn, with major holidays mid-winter, spring and summer;
- The school structure of key stages and grades are equivalent to UK age groups;
- The timetable and subject time allocation resemble those in the UK;
- The school has a house system, which gives a sense of belonging and a framework for competition in a range of academic, sporting and other events;
- Students wear an age-appropriate school uniform. The physical education (PE) kit is linked to house colours;
- Student leadership roles include head boy and girl, house captains and both primary and secondary student councils;
- British practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting, annual review meetings, etc.;
- All communications from the school to families and students are provided in English, including all school publications, reports, letters and the website;
- The importance of extra-curricular provision including clubs and school trips are in line with British best practice;
- There is high importance placed on pastoral care, with dedicated staff positions created to foster and support students' welfare and well-being;
- The school's values of excellence, integrity, trust, support, gratitude, solidarity, equality, benevolence, accountability and courage reflect British values;
- The school campus and facilities support the curriculum and provide appropriate areas for learning, socialising and recreation. The school is maintained to high levels of safety and cleanliness;
- The school is an accredited member of COBIS.



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

Through a rich and relevant curriculum and teaching which is overwhelmingly good or better, KGIS provides a good level of education for students. Students have opportunities to develop interests and talents and to grow academically, socially, emotionally, creatively and physically.

### 5.1 Curriculum

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a range of opportunities for students to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and sciences, as well as social, physical, creative and aesthetic domains. The quality of the curriculum is good and fully meets the standard for BSO.

The school offers appropriate frameworks for EYFS to KS3. Pearson iGCSE, AS and A levels are offered to KS4 and 5. The Cambridge International Curriculum is implemented for core subjects in KS1 through to KS3, while curricula for foundation subjects are enhanced with the National Curriculum for England. The principal language of instruction is English. The Omani MoE requirements are seamlessly included in the curriculum. Cross-curricular links are embedded within the core subjects to ensure students experience a wide range of topics. Teachers' short-term planning is detailed and effective; comprehensive long- and medium-term plans are also in place and reviewed regularly.

A strong emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills, all teachers are aware that whatever their subject specialism they are also teachers of literacy. Disciplinary literacy has recently been introduced across the school to equip students with the specific language required in order to access the content in each subject. 'Read, Write Inc.' is effectively used in EYFS and KS1 to build students' phonic skills, while Accelerated Reader is implemented for the older grades. The school's rigorous approach to literacy allows the 98% of students who are EAL to quickly develop their language skills, an acknowledged weakness for most students on enrolment to KGIS.

In EYFS, the Development Matters guidance is followed, with Reggio Emilia principles incorporated. The EYFS department ensures the local requirement, that 50% of the curriculum is delivered in Arabic, supports the learning in the English proportion of the curriculum. The teachers complement each other's themes, for example the English teacher may be focusing on 'by the sea', while the Arabic teacher is studying 'creatures under the sea'. The ARC pathway has been introduced this year, offering a holistic approach to assessment which links to the child-centred approach taken in EYFS. Carefully planned continuous provision allows children to take ownership of their learning.

Staff are mindful of the Omani and international population of the school, and plan schemes of work which ensure that subject content is relevant, whilst incorporating the development of essential skills in preparation for iGCSE. An example of this is the history curriculum in KS3, where students study 'The Golden Age of Islam' rather than more Eurocentric themes. As a result, the content is more relevant to students in Oman, but careful planning ensures the necessary historical skills are acquired.

Students in KS4 study for Pearson iGCSEs. There is a broad range of subjects on offer alongside core subjects, including drama, design and technology, and psychology. In KS5, students have a choice of educational pathways. They can either study for Pearson AS and A levels or opt for the Omani GED. Students are offered relevant careers and university guidance from grade 8, and subsequent support with applications through 'Unifrog'. KGIS students progress to universities in Oman, the UK, USA and other international destinations.

Because of local requirements, whereby the curriculum operates within a grade 1 to grade 12 system and compulsory education begins in grade 1, students receive one year less education than would be expected in the British system. Staff have ensured that all necessary curriculum content and skills are covered by 'backward mapping' the curriculum from grade 10 to grade 1.

KGIS offers an extensive range of extracurricular activities. These range from phonics to school drama productions, as well as sporting ECAs. Students are able to participate in competitions such as the recent BSME games in Abu Dhabi and a BSME writing competition, as well as sporting leagues which exist in Oman, one of which was set up by PE staff at KGIS. Students have access to instrumental tuition and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) qualifications. Further curriculum enhancement is provided through special events, focus weeks, visits and trips, including international expeditions. Students are encouraged to take on positions of leadership within the school and local community, organising events such as Iftar evenings and Eid giftboxes for local workers.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

Over the last two years, the school has introduced a number of innovative strategies in teaching and learning. As a result, most lessons are good or better. A focus on the analysis of attainment and progress data is having an impact on planning and individual support. Overall, the quality of teaching and assessment is good.

In the EYFS and grade 1, children's social, physical and language development are the key focus. Children receive structured teaching inputs followed by blocks of continuous provision with a range of teacher or teaching assistant (TA) led and child-initiated activities. Children's creativity is developed and they express themselves freely and confidently. For example, in a grade 1 art lesson, the development of fine motor skills, creativity and science vocabulary were combined in an activity linked to 'Where the Wild Things Are'. The children enjoyed trying different techniques to make spikes and bumps, then moved on to make playdough versions of their own 'wild thing'. In a KG1 class, the continuous provision activities were engaging and purposeful and allowed children to lead their own learning, linked to the theme of 'on the beach.' Where best practice was observed, TAs are proactive throughout the lesson, helping children to focus, engage and develop knowledge and skills.

Students have good attitudes to learning; they are engaged and ask for support when needed. This reflects an overarching positive learning atmosphere which leads to good progress being made. A variety of learning technologies are used in school, and in places these are effectively employed by staff to support students' learning. Across the school, teachers typically use a wide range of teaching techniques: group work, paired work, individual work and whole class learning. Students communicate confidently with each other and the adults in the room. In the best lessons, students are active learners, teacher voice is kept to a minimum, and classroom time is well managed. However, pace and challenge for the most able students needs to become more consistent as the embedding of strategies drives the school forward.

A clear focus on the 'KGIS teaching and learning essentials' in conjunction with the recently introduced 'Accelerated Learning Cycle' helps teachers plan lessons that are focused on and support students' progress. Lessons promote interest, creativity and independence, supported by classroom displays that are bright and relevant to the curriculum being taught, and celebrate students' work. The development of 'disciplinary literacy' across the school is improving students' understanding of key subject specific vocabulary, which supports learning across all subjects. This is evident in biology, where etymology is being used in lessons and displays to develop understanding and independence in working out the meanings of terms. Students are exposed to high quality literature which is used to inspire their own writing, for example, in grade 4, students wrote fantasy stories based on a book by Brian Patten. Drama activities, with specialist teachers, enhance student's language skills and build confidence.

It is clear from the lessons observed that teachers know their students well; strong, warm relationships are evident across the school, both in and out of lessons. In a grade 3 English lesson there was an open discussion around the word 'trust' and what that meant to the teacher and the students. In a grade 9 mathematics lesson, where mutual trust and respect was visible, students reviewed the work of others on the board and gave sensitive feedback, allowing them to consolidate their understanding with support from the teacher and their peers.

A whole school focus on questioning is supporting the ongoing language development of students. In the best lessons, students are given opportunities to apply new learning and check their understanding of concepts. This is enhanced by the questioning of teachers, for example, in a grade 1 poetry lesson, following an input on shape poems, the teacher displayed and read a new poem and asked students to decide if it was a shape poem or not. After expressing their opinions, the teacher asked students to explain their reasoning. Targeted questioning is used effectively by teachers to move learning forward and assess understanding. For example, in a grade 6 drama lesson, after students performed their piece, they were asked to analyse the skills and techniques they had used.

Students learn most effectively in lessons where they are given choice in the learning method and difficulty of challenge. For example, in a grade 7 Spanish lesson, students creating a dialogue were able to write a script, make notes, use technology or speak without prompts, depending on their ability, confidence and preference. In this way, all students were able to complete the task successfully and build their self-esteem. In the best lessons, students are given ownership and lead the learning. For example, in a grade 9 history lesson about Rosa Parks, students carried out independent research on assigned areas, shared this with a partner, then cross referenced their learning with others to support a clear understanding of the events.

KGIS prides itself on being an inclusive school, and staff strive to differentiate lessons for all students. SEND and EAL students are identified on admission, or through an in-house referral system. The SEND team support staff regarding the requirements for all students, delivered through quality first teaching, or individual education plans (IEPs) outlining specific interventions where appropriate.

A clear assessment framework is in place; cycle testing and regular feedback ensures that students are supported in their learning journey in both the medium and long term. When fully embedded, standardized feedback for students has the potential to further engage students in their learning. Termly tracking and review of assessment data across the school allows classroom teachers, departments and year groups to review the attainment of cohorts regularly, put in place strategies to support students, and guide them towards fulfilling their potential. As these systems become embedded teachers will be able to effectively monitor progress over a greater time span to ensure consistently good progress is made over time.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The Standards achieved by students at KGIS are good.

Across the school the students' behaviour is excellent, they move around the school courteously and politely, are keen to support each other and to do well in their education. Attendance has improved, students are keen to attend school, whilst punctuality is an ongoing area of focus.

Overall, students make good progress which culminates in the attainment of strong results in the external examinations at KS4 and 5; this is particularly impressive because, in line with the country's requirements, students sit their examinations a calendar year earlier than their peers around the world.

Across EYFS and the primary grades, students make good progress and develop appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in English and mathematics from their starting points. 'Learning Ladders' combined with SATs tests in KS1 and Cambridge Progress Tests in KS2, are used to triangulate attainment and progress. Primary teacher assessments show that most students are working at or above age-related expectations. In secondary, at KS3, the recent introduction of Cambridge Assessments will provide reliable data and international benchmarking for core subjects. Current internal data shows that most students are meeting the expected levels in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

At iGCSE the trend of attainment is improving with 76% of all entries graded 9 - 4 in 2022, slightly above the outcomes of 73% in the UK. These results are to be considered in light of the age of the cohort; in 2022 the average age of students sitting iGCSE exam at KGIS was 15 years and 2 months, one year younger on average than their peers in the UK.

At A level, due to the size of the cohort, entry numbers are small. Attainment has increased from 52% of grades at A\* - C in 2019 to 79% in 2022, moving closer to the average attained in the UK. Again, it is relevant to note the early entry, with the average age of students being 17 years and 3 months in May 2022. Students taking the Omani GED perform well, with all meeting or exceeding their expected grades.

More recent developments in the creation and use of data at all levels within the school demonstrate a clear priority for staff on raising the attainment of students across the year groups and throughout the school. The implementation of effective monitoring and tracking is enabling staff to ensure all students are appropriately supported and challenged. As these systems become embedded teachers will be able to demonstrate and consolidate progress over a greater time.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students provided by Knowledge Gate International School is outstanding. It is a key strength of the school and fully meets the standard for BSO.

Students' attitudes to school are exemplary, this is reflected in their behaviour and attendance. They clearly know right from wrong and actively self-regulate to follow school rules. Bullying is rare, and students understand what to do should they feel unsafe. In lessons, students are engaged and eager to learn. Very positive relationships between teachers and students are visible across all sections of the school. Students are kind and considerate towards each other. They are enthusiastic about the newly introduced house system and are keen to earn house points for their team.

Through the curriculum, students grow in their sense of themselves, they develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Short yoga or mindfulness sessions are used as brain breaks, and students are encouraged to think about themselves and their place and responsibilities in the world. The use of imagination and creativity in learning supports students' well-being, fascination for the world around them and consequently their spiritual development. A range of ECAs provide further opportunities for students to develop a sense of spirituality, including yoga and meditation, and Arabic calligraphy.

A programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is delivered across the school. Grades 1 to 8 follow the recently introduced 'Confident Me' programme, which includes 'Confident Mini' for EYFS. The PSHE Association programme is used in grades 9 to 12. PSHE is delivered during homeroom time and assemblies. The KGIS values, which are promoted around the school, are based on Universal Islamic values and British values. These are part of the everyday fabric of school life. For example, in a grade 3 English lesson there was an open discussion around the word 'trust' and what that meant to the teacher and the students.

Students are encouraged to consider the needs of others, particularly those less fortunate than themselves. They help to organise and join in various charitable activities such as beach clean ups and collections for construction workers. Students have participated in a diabetes awareness day, and some students visited children with additional needs in a local hospital.

KGIS provides students with a wealth of opportunities to develop leadership skills. Students in the secondary school can apply for roles of responsibility such as head boy and girl, house captain and student council member, which are elected by their peers. Other opportunities include academic or pastoral peer mentoring and UK sports leaders. Some primary children are elected as primary school council members, another initiative valued by the children. School council members felt that staff were receptive to their ideas and have many plans for future projects. They have recently planned and organised a beach clean up and

charity collections. Students are increasingly taking on areas of responsibility within the school, for example in producing and presenting the weekly 'house mail', a video production watched in all classes which shares weekly notices, news, competition results, and an update on house points, as well as supporting understanding of the monthly focus value – 'trust' at the time of the visit.

While the majority of the students are Omani, there is significant representation of other nationalities. This ensures a multicultural aspect to the school which underpins understanding of cultural diversity. Local culture and heritage are respected and celebrated. Oman National Day is a key event in the school calendar, while an Iftar evening organised by students brings the school together with the wider community. Students experience and learn about other cultures. ECAs include African drumming and percussion, Spanish and French, and MUN. International trips offer a first-hand experience of other places and cultures, while the Cambridge global perspectives programme widens students' horizons further. The school has recently introduced the Duke of Edinburgh International Award as an ECA and plans to undertake the overnight expedition next year. The school takes part in the many Inspired Education Group competitions, curriculum projects, summer camps and exchange programmes that are offered. KGIS students sit on the Inspired global student steering group and thus are able to share in decision making about such activities.

Students speak enthusiastically about their school. Primary students said, "Teachers are nice and kind, and help you when you get stuck." A senior student commented, "I feel proud to go to KGIS. Students here look after each other and are humble." Students said that they felt safe in school, and that they had many adults in school who they felt they could trust and would approach if they were worried.



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

The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding and fully meet the standard for BSO.

Staff know that the most crucial part of their role is to ensure that all students are safe, properly supervised and well cared for. Regular safeguarding training is provided for all members of staff and offered with interpretation for staff for whom English is not their native language. Clear reporting procedures and record keeping are in place for any concern or disclosure. PASS data is used to identify students at risk, and the school's counsellor, appointed this academic year, works effectively with individuals and small groups of students.

Students' behaviour is excellent, underpinned by clear policies and consistent behaviour management practices. Movement around the school is controlled and calm. Students feel confident that an adult will help them resolve issues, should they arise. Robust systems are in place to ensure students have appropriate and safe access to the internet. Attendance has improved over recent years. Registers are taken at the start of the day and in every lesson in secondary. There are clear procedures in place for students who fail to attend and therefore do not reach the 94% attendance target.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged across the school, promoted through events such as house sports competitions and healthier eating options in the canteens. Kitchens are maintained to very hygienic standards. Student Care Plans, detailing any health conditions and medications are maintained by the school nurse and shared with relevant staff. Throughout the school, 17 members of staff are qualified in first aid.

The school has a range of robust policies around all aspects of health and safety, with senior staff and managers allocated specific responsibilities. Risk assessments are rigorous and include all school activities, including excursions and on-site events. Access to the school site is carefully managed, a system of coloured lanyards identifies staff, parents and visitors. An electronic access control system is in place within the campus, further maintaining security and safety. Perimeter lighting and CCTV have been installed. Cameras cover all external doors and perimeter gates, as well as internal communal areas and every classroom.

Procedures for fire evacuation and lockdowns, which are well rehearsed and reviewed regularly, meet Omani and UK expectations. Evacuation routes are displayed throughout and systems are in place to ensure students are safe and accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation. Fire extinguishers are in abundance throughout the school and maintained correctly. There are sufficient fire alarms, which are serviced every 6 months. The swimming pool has a Normal Operating Procedure and the Emergency Action Plan in place. All PE staff are trained lifeguards and qualified first aiders. The school premises are clean and well maintained, with clear systems for reporting any issues, which are dealt with promptly.



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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO; it is good.

The school has developed a range of stringent procedures related to the employment of staff, in line with safer recruitment best practice. These include robust interviews and referencing; written references are sought from a minimum of two previous employers and are followed up with a telephone call. The school has its own application and reference forms to ensure the information required is provided. A range of background checks are conducted including the checking of qualifications and identify, police clearance, medical history and right to work in Oman. A robust induction programme including a comprehensive staff handbook quickly familiarises new staff with the school and local culture. A sixth month probationary period is in place for new teaching staff. All staff have a clear job description.

Systems are in place to monitor standards of teaching and learning and provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on and develop their practice, including lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny. A new system of performance management is currently being rolled out, utilising an online platform, that will link teacher targets with school development priorities. This will streamline the current performance cycle process.

The school maintains a comprehensive single central register of all staff, including those who have left the school's employment, containing details of all checks conducted and showing the dates they commenced, and where applicable ceased, employment. This was made available to the inspection team.

Staff benefit from many opportunities for continued professional development (CPD) focused on school priorities, both internally and from external sources. Teaching assistants receive relevant training to enable them to support students' learning. Inspired Education Group offers extensive CPD provision, including middle and senior leadership training. All staff are required to complete specific units of training including safeguarding every year. Safeguarding training is provided face to face for non-native English speakers in their own mother tongue.

The Inspired Education Group regional and senior leadership teams board provide a balance of support and challenge to school leaders, including administrative functions. They ensure financial stability and support strategic school developments, including campus and facilities initiatives.

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

The premises and accommodation at Knowledge Gate International School are good, with some outstanding features. They fully meet the standard for BSO.

The school premises and facilities provide a good physical learning environment which meets the needs of students, including those with SEND. Since joining the Inspired Education Group in 2019, KGIS has implemented a long-term plan to enhance the site which has already seen a new early learning centre for EYFS and grade 1 and black-box drama studio, a redesigned library, as well as upgrading to numerous facilities including the swimming pool, and outdoor play and sports areas, suitable for all age groups. A three-year plan for development includes a sports hall with changing rooms, canteen, science rooms and roof-top playground.

This ongoing commitment by the senior leadership team (SLT) to developing the campus includes upgrading furniture and equipment, following a budgeted, phased-in approach. Currently, resources, fixtures, fittings and furniture match the ages and educational needs of students, and are of good quality. High quality displays throughout the school demonstrate and celebrate learning.

Appropriate security arrangements have been established, providing a safe environment for students. The buildings fully comply with local regulations and are well-maintained. Classrooms are well lit, adequately sound-proofed and suitably cooled in hot weather. The school sub-contracts two full-time technicians to monitor and maintain the air conditioning units. Suitable toilet facilities are provided for the sole use of students, including those with disabilities. All toilet facilities are well maintained with a dedicated cleaner assigned to each toilet block. There is an adequate supply of cold water to these facilities, and hot water is turned off to prevent any risk of scalding to users. Fresh drinking water is available at many points around the campus. An elevator is available for the use of pupils, staff and visitors who require it. A well-equipped clinic accommodates the treatment of sick or injured pupils.

The school has sufficient outdoor space to support the curriculum, play and recreation, with separate outdoor areas provided for different aged students and staggered lunch breaks optimising use of the canteen and play areas. Much of the outdoor area is well shaded, with plans in place to further extend this.

A one-way traffic system operates in the mornings for school drop-off. The 'drop and go' system ensures that traffic blockages are minimised. There are separate student entrances for EYFS, primary and secondary students. Staggered finishing times at the end of the school day help to minimise traffic congestion. Due to the fact that the school is located in a highly residential area, the surrounding infrastructure does not easily allow for parent pick up. As a result, the school has worked hard to acquire an adjacent plot of land that is used as a car

park space for parent pick up and has put in place robust procedures to ensure the safety of students and parents.

## 10. Standard 6

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

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

Communications are comprehensive and clear. Policies and information provided to parents and applicants to the school through the website are easily accessed. New parents are invited to a meeting with a member of the SLT to support the transition into school. Emails are quickly responded to and appointments made promptly if there is a request. Regular interactive newsletters give information and reminders to ensure parents are updated; they are a particular strength of school communications. Social media is used to celebrate school events, as well as students' achievements. Platforms such as *Class Dojo*, *ARC Pathway* and *Google Classroom* allow direct involvement for parents, as well as helping them to understand where the children are academically.

Academic review meetings, regular information sessions, reports and opportunities to contact subject teachers and members of the SLT, allow parents to feel fully supported in their understanding of their child's learning. Reporting procedures are clear, with three reports produced a year across the school. Academic review meetings in terms 1 and 3 are well attended, with an additional meeting in term 2 for parents of students in grades 10 to 12. Parents feel that the reports are personalised, informative, encouraging for students and foster parents' understanding. Communications from the school allows for a two-way dialogue that the parents feel supports the development of students, particularly for those children with additional needs or in need of pastoral support.

Parents welcome the opportunity to be involved in, and influence the direction of school developments. Parents opinions are taken into consideration over key developments, for example the selection of a new caterer for school meals and arrangements for the dropping off and collection of children. Annual parent surveys are conducted and feedback from these helps to shape future initiatives. Parent Ambassadors enhance the involvement of parents and create a centralised link to school, whilst supporting the organisation of events for the school community, and engagement sessions for academic purposes. Events such as the book week story and hot chocolate evening are well attended.

Parents are very passionate and positive about the school. There is a strong sense that they belong to a community that is supportive in aspects of school life and beyond, and they feel that the students and their families are known as individuals; recognised in the car park and approached in a genuine manner. Specifically, the open-door policy of leaders in both primary and secondary was identified as a positive element of the school. The impression of parents interviewed was one of support and genuine care. One parent commented, "It feels like the teachers have been handpicked for our children".

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

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

A clear policy outlining the procedure by which a parent or other stakeholder can raise a complaint is on the school's website.

It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally, through open dialogue. A parent's first course of action, should they have a concern, is to speak directly to the member of staff concerned. If after discussion, the problem remains unresolved then it should be escalated to a more senior member of staff, up to the assistant principal. At this point, a parent may choose to raise their concern in writing to the head of school, who will investigate and report back to parents within five working days. Written records are kept of all meetings and actions taken.

Following feedback from the head of school, any parents who are still not satisfied should proceed to stage two of the procedure within 14 days, which involves raising the complaint to the executive principal who will investigate the matter further.

Stage three, following a failure to reach a resolution with the executive principal, involves parents writing directly to the board of directors who will call a panel hearing. The complaints panel will meet to consider the issue within 10 working days. The parents may choose to be accompanied to the hearing by one other adult. The panel will consider the evidence and put into action any required next steps, before making a decision and communicating this in writing to the parents. The decision of the panel is final.

Any complaints which might be raised concerning the head of school or principal are dealt with by their line managers.

Formal complaints are very rare, there has only been one during the last four years. There are no common themes for concerns raised, previous issues such as the quality of school meals have been resolved through the raising of standards.

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

The leadership and management of the school are good, some aspects are outstanding. They fully meet the standards for BSO. School leaders are keen to identify and develop talent within the staff body. Teachers and middle leaders are given autonomy to develop initiatives.

Under the inspirational leadership of the principal, the senior and middle leadership teams have worked tirelessly to make wide sweeping changes across the school in all aspects of school life. They have brought the school community together through strong communications and created an ethos of reflection which focuses on student outcomes. Leaders are held to account formally and through their own personal reflection. One senior leader commented, "Every day, I am accountable to every student, every member of staff and every parent in this school".

Initiatives in teaching and learning have helped to raise academic standards. The development of sports and performing arts has led to greater opportunities for students to find and develop new interests and talents. Interactions and competitions with other schools locally and internationally have widened students' horizons. Developments to the school campus and facilities have further enhanced the range of opportunities on offer.

School leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and further improvement needs. They have created detailed improvement plans, which are linked to internal reflection and external validation. Following a period of rapid development, leaders are aware of the need to consolidate, review and embed initiatives to ensure they are applied consistently and are having the desired impact.

The school has a clear set of values which are a focus of PSHE lessons and assemblies. These are clearly linked to Islamic and British values. Leaders have created a new vision for the school – "Every child has the confidence to be pioneers of their own future" – which will help to frame further developments.

Across the school, leaders place high importance on student wellbeing; high standards of care and safeguarding are in evidence. This extends to the wellbeing of staff, who appreciate the often-personalised support which they receive. There is an atmosphere of collegiality and staff morale is high. Communications with parents are a strength of the school. There is a palpable sense of community, where parents, children and staff come together to celebrate events and enjoy social occasions.

The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Clear systems are in place, supported by guidance from the Inspired Education Group regional head office. Finances are well managed, ensuring that the school is well resourced and has a long-term financial plan for significant future developments.