

# Al Salam Community School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 23 – 26 May 2022

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Team: Anne Yeomans, Robin Attfield

Age Group: 3-18

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent three days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education.

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

**To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on the UK Government's Get Information about Schools website.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

**The DfE issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.**

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information.
7. The manner in which complaints are handled.

## 8. The leadership and management of the school

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

### Key for inspection grades

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

### Proportions used in the report

90–100% Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all

75–90% Very large majority, most

65–74% Large majority

51–64% Majority

35–49% Minority

20–34% Small minority

4–19% Very small minority, few

0–3% Almost none/very few

## Information about the school

Al Salam Community School (ASCS) is an independent and fully inclusive school for pupils from age three years to age 18 years. It is situated in Twar 2 in Dubai. ASCS was founded for the purpose of providing a new and enriched home for its growing secondary school at Al Salam Private School (ASPS). Four hundred secondary students were transferred from ASPS to ASCS when it opened at the end of October 2019.

There are 1,533 pupils and 59 different nationalities. The school is bigger than average for its type. There are 213 children in early years, 656 pupils in primary and 664 pupils in secondary, of whom 88 students are in the new sixth form. The vast majority of students

in the sixth form are applying to, and being accepted by, prestigious universities in the UK as well as in the UAE, neighbouring and other countries.

Seven per cent of pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), for whom it makes additional or special provision. There are 1,433 pupils (93%) for whom English is not the principal language.

The school follows the national curriculum for England and an enhanced curriculum to meet the additional requirements of the United Arab Emirates. It offers a wide range of GCSE and IGCSE courses in key stage 4 and 26 A levels in key stage 5, as well as 6 BTEC (level 3) programmes.

In March 2020, the school employed a new head of secondary who initiated major changes in staffing, curriculum, systems and policies throughout the growing secondary school. This included recruitment of over 30 new teachers and a change in curriculum from Cambridge to Pearson for the 2020/2021 academic year.

The school's principal took up post in September 2021 along with fourteen middle leaders. Ninety new staff including teaching assistants were appointed in September 2021 as a result of the school continuing to grow with 587 new pupil enrolments.

The school's staff turnover has decreased from 40% in 2020/2021 to 15% in 2021/2022. This was partly related to COVID-19 with staff returning to their home countries and partly due to the fact that UK staff were able to secure roles with much higher salaries than ASCS was able to provide. Strategies have been firmly put in place to prevent this from recurring in the future.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school closed between March and July 2020. It ensured that all pupils had equal access to remote learning using an online platform. Attendance dropped from 97% to 93% as a result of the pandemic. The school is responding to the challenge it faces and has already increased the attendance in secondary to 96%. Rigorous processes to ensure that standards were maintained were put in place. Daily online coffee evenings with parents, weekly newsletters, webinars and tutorials were organised to ensure good communications with all stakeholders. Safeguarding arrangements were implemented well through online webinars and email communication. Following the school's forensic analysis to identify gaps in learning, academic support was put in place to enable a large majority of pupils to catch up.

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in April 2022 and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the inspection start date. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 61 lessons both in classes and live online. Seven lessons were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. Inspectors gave feedback to 24 members of staff. The team of inspectors was unable to observe lessons for Years 11, 12 and 13 as pupils were sitting their examinations during the BSO inspection.

There were 33 meetings with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and carers and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered by looking at survey results and in meetings with parents, pupil councils and teachers.

## Evaluation of the school

ASCS is a good school and provides a good quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

The school meets all the BSO standards except those which it is precluded from meeting because of legislation in the UAE. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are therefore specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Pupils' attainment in English is broadly in line with UK averages in the early years and primary and above average in secondary and post-16. Girls perform slightly better than boys. Attainment is strong by the time pupils take their IGCSE examinations, with over 95% obtaining grades 7 to 9. Progress is good across the school. Over 90% of pupils do not have English as their first language but make rapid progress in English. Pupils, including those who have SEND, make good progress in English throughout the school.

By the end of the foundation stage, most children meet the English early years expectations for their age. They can explain their ideas clearly and read and write simple sentences. Year 1 pupils can create imaginative sentences using a range of connectives. This good start helps them to read and write with increasing fluency as they move up the school.

By the end of key stage 2 pupils demonstrate good research and comprehension skills, although a minority copy verbatim from the internet.

Key stage 3 pupils can analyse key features of narrative texts and use these in their own creative writing. Pupils enjoy discussing what they read and clearly articulate their opinions. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson, pupils analysed a playscript, formulating their opinions and explaining how characters use language to express their ideas. Pupils following the English as a second language programme can use formal language effectively in a report. Throughout the school, pupils engage confidently in discussion and develop their understanding of literature.

In the secondary phase, pupils make good progress and complete the two-year English literature course in one year. Students in the sixth form attain good standards in English literature at AS level. Of four students taking AS two gained grade A and two gained grade C. However, the number of students opting for AS English literature remains very low.

In mathematics, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with UK average in the early years and primary and good in secondary and post-16 provision. Overall progress is good but better in key stage 4 and in post-sixteen provision. Children start the school with low levels of English which impacts on their initial learning with many having had little or no nursery education. Attainment is, however, stronger by the time pupils take their IGCSE examinations with over 40% of pupils obtaining the two top grades of 8 or 9. Results in post-sixteen provision are even stronger with 69% gaining grades 7-9. Boys perform slightly better than girls in both sets of examinations, but differences are less distinct with younger pupils.

In the early years, children settle quickly, enjoy learning about numbers and shapes and make good progress. Most children reach age-related expectations by the time they enter the primary school. They count to 20 with confidence, complete simple subtractions and additions and can record these using mathematical symbols.

Pupils, including those who have SEND and those who are learning English as an additional language (EAL), make good progress in mathematics throughout the school. Levels of progress do, however, vary considerably in primary classes and between year groups.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are competent in using the four rules of number and the more able pupils can increasingly apply their learning to solve mathematical problems. The school has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' mental mathematics, which is weaker for many pupils. By the time they reach Year 6, nearly all pupils can interpret scaled drawings and are competent at completing calculations involving decimals. Able students perform well but are insufficiently challenged in some lessons.

In the secondary phase, pupils address increasingly complex problems. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, pupils were calculating various internal angles in a range of regular shapes, requiring the use of formulae and knowledge of several characteristics previously learned. The curriculum in the secondary school is planned very well so that pupils build on previous learning and develop as independent learners.

Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with UK averages at early years foundation stage (EYFS) and primary and good in secondary and post-16 provision. Progress is good across the school. Attainment is, however, stronger by the time pupils take their IGCSE examinations, with over 78% of pupils obtaining gaining grades 9 to 7 in biology, 88% in physics and 78% in chemistry. Results in post-sixteen provision are even stronger with 89% in biology, 88% in physics and 100% in chemistry gaining grades A\* to A.

Girls perform slightly better than boys in science, but this gap is closing over time. Science outcomes for pupils continue to improve. Pupils with SEND and those learning EAL make similar progress to that of other pupils.

In early years, children make at least good progress and achieve the UK early learning goals in Understanding the World. They practise early science skills through observations and predictions, learning how to make a volcano eruption with vinegar and soda and explaining why it happens.

As pupils progress through the primary phase, they develop their scientific skills and knowledge. For example, during the inspection, in a Year 6 class pupils recognised and used the idea that light travels in straight lines to explain that objects are seen because they give out or reflect light into the eye. As a result, they consolidated their scientific knowledge and investigative skills. By the end of Year 6 their attainment and progress are in line with UK averages.

Pupils' knowledge and scientific skills continue to improve throughout the secondary phase. For example, during the inspection, in a Year 10 class pupils conducted an experiment into investigating the density of different objects. They showed confidence in

measuring the mass of each object, recorded their findings and then discussed the possible errors and how the experiment could be improved.

By the end of secondary, a very large majority of pupils attain grades in their biology, chemistry and physics examinations which exceed UK and international benchmarking.

Attainment and progress in other subjects follow the same pattern as in the core subjects.

In primary pupils make good progress, particularly in physical education (PE) and art. In secondary pupils attain standards above those of the UK and international schools in GCSE and A levels, most notably in art, computer science and humanities. All pupils demonstrate high levels of competence in how they use technology and this, coupled with improving learning skills, helps them make good progress in all subjects. The success in examinations in the sixth form is attracting more students. The number on roll has doubled for next academic year.

### **Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:**

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good.
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met.
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard.
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this standard.
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during March 2022, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas 2017 except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the United Arab Emirates. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.



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

The standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The curriculum is good. The school combines well its ability to meet the requirements of the English early years and national curriculums with the requirements of the UAE. It emphasises commitment to developing pupils as 'independent, confident, successful learners with high aspirations. This is particularly evident in upper-secondary classes and in the sixth form.

The curriculum offers breadth and balance with a variety of pathways in key stage 4 and in post-sixteen provision, providing suitable opportunities for pupils to follow academic routes, vocational routes or a combination of both. The school offers both IGCSE, AS, A level and BTEC qualifications in a wide and growing range of subjects. For pupils with SEND, alternative accredited courses are available. In the sixth form, there are expectations that students participate in community and work-related activity to widen their horizons and opportunities are provided to enable them to do this. There is good careers advice, especially on making option and post-school choices. Individual interviews are part of all applications for post-sixteen provision with parents fully involved. With the reduction in COVID-19 restrictions, the school looks forward to extending involvement with outside institutions and agencies.

The curriculum is kept under constant review. In the early years, good progress has been made in meeting the requirements of the revised English framework. There is growing provision for reading and early writing with a strong emphasis on the development of spoken English. This initiative continues into key stage 1. In the primary department, carefully planned schemes of work promote more opportunities for critical thinking and investigation.

Curriculum policies and plans encourage respect for all, with particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, race and religious belief. They cannot fully address marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation and gender assignment due to the laws of the UAE. British values such as democracy and the rule of law are strongly emphasised in moral education, history, English literature, sociology, computer science and business studies. The school teaches moral education and

addresses personal, social and health-related issues in assemblies, form periods and subject schemes of work. For example, it holds a yearly tolerance-enriched learning week when all pupils contribute to a compassion project and explore stories about differences. In tutor time, pupils examine what it is to be a good friend and team player. In a Year 9 tutor group, pupils assessed themselves and compared their own assessment with how others see them. Through student voice, secondary pupils learn how to represent the views of their peers in a democratic manner. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils wrote to the school principal to propose ideas to develop sustainability in the school. Older pupils participate in model United Nations conferences. The school is introducing a bespoke personal, social, health and careers programme in the forthcoming academic year.

British values and attributes of a British school and community are built into the curriculum policies and plans. Resources across the school are predominantly British. In the IGCSE PE course, pupils study Liverpool Football Club and, in sociology, the values and norms of British families. In the primary department, chosen authors are British. National and international events such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee are celebrated. Videos of London have been developed for children in the early years who used the 'queen's jewels' in subtraction and in a science investigation when they became locked in ice. In history lessons, pupils learn about the development of Britain and its institutions. British values are taught in the primary school through an array of different activities highlighting British society.

The school makes learning relevant through real-life applications such as in a secondary science lesson where pupils were asked why people float without effort in the Dead Sea. Links between subjects are developing. In a science fair, groups of pupils presented their findings to a large audience as part of a competition which developed scientific, teamworking and presentational skills. A history module on Elizabethan England prepared pupils for the study of Shakespeare in English.

The school's programme of extra-curricular activities and visits has been curtailed by restrictions arising from COVID-19 but is now reviving, with a strong sporting component. Homework successfully extends the curriculum.

The school made considerable efforts to provide meaningful learning during lockdown periods, including creating a website for access by pupils. Practical aspects of the curriculum were inevitably reduced and opportunities for writing at length diminished. School staff have been analysing resultant learning gaps and have increased provision through revision classes before examinations and additional maths classes in the primary department, for example.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Throughout the school, teachers' relationships with pupils and strong subject knowledge form a solid basis for effective learning. Pupils trust their teachers and behaviour is good. The vast majority of teachers work hard. Teaching is at least consistently good in key stage 4 and in post-sixteen provision, where teachers are skilful at planning lessons which meet the needs of all pupils. Within the early years and primary departments, there is some variability in teachers' pedagogical knowledge and experience but teaching and learning are good overall. Middle leaders and senior leaders have focused continued professional development on the quality of teachers' feedback and lesson planning.

Teachers work well in teams. As classes in the early years and primary departments are of mixed ability, they develop shared lesson plans and personalise strategies to address pupils' needs in considerable detail. Experienced teachers are skilful at modifying plans during lessons to respond to the emerging needs of their pupils, for example by providing extra practice for some or all pupils, before moving on to more complex work.

Pupils learn best when engaged in lessons, responding to opportunities to develop and share ideas and to challenge each other. In a drama lesson, for example, pupils planned and prepared freeze frames and short narratives based on 'Bugsy Malone' to a high level.

Opportunities for group work have been restricted due to COVID-19, but are being restored in many lessons, helping pupils who are less confident to speak in front of a whole class.

Teachers are skilled at preparing independent tasks for pupils of differing abilities. In English for example, younger pupils may use writing frames to develop creative writing and secondary pupils have access to model answers or guidelines to enable them to develop their own work.

In primary lessons, teachers use different types of grouping to promote oracy. Teaching-support assistants are deployed to work with specific pupils or groups of pupils enabling them to make good progress. Teachers' precise and tailored questioning ensures that pupils engage well with their learning. As a result of useful training provided by school leaders, teachers are able to give precise feedback to pupils so that they know what they are doing well and what needs to be better.

Pupils with SEND are generally very well supported in lessons. Increasingly, teachers address the language needs of pupils who are developing subject-specific vocabulary so that they can engage in conversations and record their ideas with increasing confidence and accuracy. A small minority of pupils who arrive with little English benefit from intensive support for a period of time.

From the early years onwards, pupils are helped to understand how well they are learning. There is growing use of peer and self-assessment. After unit tests in secondary history lessons, for example, pupils assess their own work after teachers have marked it and determine what they have done well and what they need to improve. In many lessons, teachers provide activities with differing levels of difficulty so that pupils assess them and choose those which meet their needs best. Consequently, they understand their strengths and weaknesses and become more independent learners. Targets for achievement are set for all pupils and progress is carefully monitored. In the primary department, systems to streamline the use of assessment information are under consideration.

The school provided good remote learning during the time of the lockdown. Pupils adapted well to the new routines but particularly missed the opportunity to work collaboratively in groups face to face with their peers so that they could develop and share ideas. Many pupils learned and consolidated technological skills through regular use, benefiting from a range of different sites made available to them by teachers.

## **Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi) of the UK Equality Act 2010 that cannot be met due to the laws of the host country. The school's provision promotes respect for all people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief and pregnancy and maternity. Those characteristics which UAE law precludes the school from addressing are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation.

The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.

Pupils have responsible attitudes to the school and to each other, behave well and are warmly welcoming to new pupils. Parents confirm that almost all pupils are happy to come to school.

The school is inclusive and effective in promoting British values, including an awareness of and respect for diversity in race, religion, and gender. The multicultural nature of the staff and pupils promotes awareness of diversity, so that pupils learn to live comfortably with others who are in some respects different from them. Pupils develop tolerance, respect for others and a sense of what it means to be an effective citizen through a programme of weekly assemblies, incentives to promote social responsibility and

education in healthy eating and healthy living. They follow healthy meal plans, which are communicated to parents and all exercise regularly. They learn fair play and British values by being part of a community in which everyone has a voice and is encouraged to use it and where everyone's views are respected. They provide feedback through the student-voice survey and see that their views have a real impact on school policy, for example in the improvement of the option system. The student leadership team has real influence and provides further experience of accepting responsibility within a democratic community, for example when it led the Model United Nations conference while preparing for examinations. Pupils learn about public institutions in the UAE and in the UK. Students enjoy making comparisons between how countries are governed and organised, for example the impact of the leadership of the royal families in the UK and the UAE.

The great majority of pupils have a good sense of well-being, safety and comfort in the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and have confidence in their ability to learn and to be self-sufficient learners. They celebrate diversity of ethnicity, belief, gender and view and have a strong sense of what is right and wrong.

The school supports the development of pupils in many well-considered and effective ways. The ethos of the school is open and relaxed, as is the atmosphere in classrooms. Debate is encouraged and pupils learn the value of mutual support in learning, including through peer assessment. An active pastoral team provides excellent support for pupils, who speak highly of the help they receive. Parents are fully informed and consulted.

House activities promote team spirit and encourage healthy competition. Themed weeks and visits encourage knowledge of the local area and issues of local and wider relevance. These are not one-off activities, but fully incorporated into the learning. Daily form-tutor sessions focus strongly on developing pupils' self-confidence and will be supplemented next term by a personal, social, health and economic programme. Form tutors, heads of year and the school counsellors work together as an effective team and closely monitor pupils' academic and pastoral progress. Pupils feel that the school knows and values them and they know where to seek help should the need arise.

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

The school meets the requirements of the standard and the regulatory requirements and cultural obligations of the UAE.

The school's care for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Pupils are well protected and cared for. They settle in quickly and feel, and are, safe and understand how to remain safe and healthy. The great majority of parents agree with their children's views that leaders make sure that the school is a safe environment for everyone.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet UK and UAE requirements. Training of all staff takes place at the beginning of the school year and at periodic intervals and is continually updated. There is a designated safeguarding leader and three other staff are level 3 trained. The safeguarding team and school doctor collaborate closely and share information. During the inspection, a safeguarding incident was witnessed by inspectors and all procedures were immediately put into action.

In lessons, dedicated sessions and assemblies, pupils are shown what to do if they have concerns about threats, bullying or abuse. They understand the procedures and have confidence in using them and in discussions gave examples of when they or others sought help and how their concerns were resolved. There is little bullying or misbehaviour and it is effectively dealt with when it occurs. The pastoral team is well organised, alert and responsive to pupils' needs.

The school prioritises the well-being and mental health of pupils and has a range of measures to raise awareness of its importance and advice on strategies to enhance it. During the period of lockdown, timetables were altered, sometimes to fit parental schedules, so that all pupils received tuition. Counsellors maintained regular online contact with pupils and closely monitored situations which gave rise for concern.

The school has good safer recruitment procedures applying to all staff. Access to the site is carefully controlled and security is improving further with the installation of more cameras throughout the school. Key staff are trained in first aid, including the helpers who accompany pupils on the buses. Bus safety and fire regulations are as stringent as those in the UK and fully meet the regulatory requirements of the UAE.

Incidents of poor behaviour are carefully logged and analysed for any policy changes that may be required. The pastoral team conducts regular 'walkabouts' to monitor behaviour and attitudes and recommend where practice needs to be improved.

Pupils understand and support the systems for reporting misbehaviour such as cyberbullying and confide in staff. An internet search tool gives a warning of misuse and when pupils search for inappropriate content immediate action is taken to speak to the pupil and inform parents. Punctuality and attendance are now approaching their pre-

pandemic levels and are in line with UK averages. A healthy living programme teaches pupils how to care for their health through exercise and healthy eating.

The school provided effective guidance to both pupils and families during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example it gave them advice on online safety.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The human resources (HR) team keeps an up to date, comprehensive central record of all staff working in the school and the checks that have been made. Scrutiny of available records confirms that members of staff have the right to work in Dubai and that they are suitably qualified to work with children. All the staff are Ministry of Education and Knowledge and Human Development Authority licenced. All required checks on current and new staff members are in line with UAE and UK requirements. Checks are conducted on visitors, parent helpers, supply staff and proprietors. The school confirms that all the required employment documents have been received from contractors. The single central record is checked by one governor on a regular basis.

The school follows safer recruitment practices for all employees. Fifty-three per cent of teachers have a British qualification. All early years teachers are early years trained, including the specialist teachers. Currently two senior leaders and an HR officer are certified for their safer recruitment training and three further senior leaders have enrolled to complete it.

Staff complete the safeguarding and child protection training at the beginning of each academic year or when they join the school. There are regular updates and refresher courses.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

ASCS is a modern welcoming school for pupils, parents, staff and visitors. Signage across the school is good.

Buildings are fully compliant with construction, safety and hygiene standards. COVID-19 protocols and high standards of sanitisation are maintained throughout the day.

The school is based in a new purpose-built building and provides a safe, modern and attractive learning environment with seven science laboratories, 'freezone' areas in early years, a cultural heritage centre, outdoor learning spaces and many sporting facilities such as a football pitch, basketball courts and a swimming pool. As a result, learning is facilitated well.

Classrooms across the school are of a good size and equipped with electronic boards and resources with which pupils can work well independently or collaboratively during lessons. There is a primary phase library and a secondary phase library. Both are well organised and accessible, encouraging pupils to spend time reading.

The facilities in the building ensure access for all with lifts and ramps in all three areas of the school. Evacuation chairs are present at staircases providing an emergency exit for children who may require assistance. A dedicated clinic where one doctor and three nurses are employed full time provides short-term care for staff and pupils. Drinking and water facilities are available throughout the school. Recreation areas have shading to protect them from the sun. Pupils are able to play outside at breaktimes and during designated PE periods.

Office space ensures that all teachers have designated areas where they can plan their work and relax. Plans are in place for a new dedicated sixth-form study and relaxation room to replace a former staff room. This is because the number of students in the sixth form is increasing rapidly.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school opened four gates instead of two. Dedicated subject areas are now in place for each of the core subjects.

## **Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others**

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Parents are well informed about their child's education. The school website contains all required policies and information about school life, admissions and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, complaints, curriculum and behaviour. Parents confirm that they know how to contact staff and leaders.



The school communicates well with parents. Parents' meetings are always scheduled after the school sends the termly report to parents, who say that the school is very accommodating as: 'If you miss your appointment, you can book an appointment again.'

Parents feel that the school keeps them informed about what is happening. They also appreciate receiving the newsletter twice a month with a video from the principal. The school has a strong presence on many social media.

Parents value the British curriculum and say that the school is focused on progress.

There is a parents' council, 'Friends of Al Salam' and two meetings have taken place so far, which act as a bridge between the parents and the school. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the parents' council sent a list of websites to all parents so that they could provide more help for their children.

The school runs regular workshops and webinars. For example, parents speak very highly of the online webinars that they attended at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, on topics such as how to use the video-conferencing facility for live lessons, transition from foundation stage 2 to Year 1 and phonics.

The school frequently consults parents through surveys and requests for verbal feedback. A large majority of parents feel that their views are taken into account and acted upon. Parents, for example, have been less than happy with aspects of the school uniform, particularly with access, quality and design. The school has sourced a new uniform supplier and is currently in the process of designing the new uniform for primary and secondary.

A large majority of parents say they receive regular updates about the progress of their children. The school has looked at enhancing this by sending a weekly summary through an online platform on their child's progress, termly report cards with more detail in the data, academic and pastoral review days and attendance-and-punctuality reports and reminders.

Parents feel very proud that when students leave ASCS, they remain alumni and are invited to contribute to current pupils' experiences through presentations, discussions and the provision of internships. The aim is to form a bridge from ASCS to the world of work and opportunity beyond school. The stories shared by former students showcase the essence of lifelong learning.

Parents unanimously state that the school has done a great job during the COVID-19 pandemic. A typical comment was: 'The way the school planned the timetable was easy for parents to follow. The support from teachers was amazing.'

## **Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Its complaints policy is published on the school's website and is part of the Parent Communication Policy. It incorporates a staged system which seeks to resolve matters informally wherever possible at the level of the teacher. As parents have ready access to both teachers and school leaders, any matters of concern are speedily resolved and there has been no need to trigger the formal process. The school dealt effectively and fairly with a range of concerns to the satisfaction of all parents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Leadership and management across the school are good and ensure that the BSO standards are consistently met.

Leaders are fully committed to providing a high-quality education to enrich the lives of every child in their community. They live by the maxim that 'Every Child is Special'. Leaders have developed a culture of high expectations that starts with themselves. They are reflective practitioners always looking for ways to improve. As leaders of learning, they take pride in supporting the growth of all pupils and staff.

Middle leaders, senior leaders and staff work well together to develop strategies to continue to raise standards by contributing to the writing of the new school improvement plan. Senior leaders are keen to listen to ideas and empower staff to be innovators and risk takers. A vast majority of staff strongly agree that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for pupils.

Staff know that leaders listen to their views and consider their workload. The school frequently collects feedback from all stakeholders using surveys and 'touch-point insights' to ensure that their views are taken into account in the decision-making process. The vast majority of staff agree that they are proud to work at the school.

Middle leaders and senior leaders are encouraged to gain leadership qualifications and link their research projects to specific areas of development in the school. One senior leader on the national professional qualification for senior leaders programme has used his research project to improve student attendance.

The leadership of the early years is good. There is a clear sense of direction and vision for supporting staff in implementing successfully the new EYFS curriculum.

Governors are key in driving the school forward. The executive management team at ASCS are the main decision makers of the governing body, ably supported by four non-executive members who advise and participate in key strategic discussions, add an objective view and are ready to challenge when necessary. Governors are focused on 'the quality of the dialogue' with leaders. An executive calendar ensures that governors get the right level of feedback through direct observations and learning-environment walks. School performance conversations are reviewed termly. Governors have focused on retention and as a result staff turnover has decreased from 40% to 15% this academic year. Succession planning with risk assessment is in place. The board has clear financial policies and ensures that the school operates legally and is compliant with all requirements.

Governors hold the school's principal to account with clear performance management targets. Performance management and staff training provide good opportunities to develop and enhance capacity. Leaders have the determination and capacity to improve the school further. A very large majority of staff agree that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers.

The school has already appointed 14 new teachers for September 2022, 12 of whom are British. This is as a result of 176 new pupils enrolling at the school.

Governance structure is effective with three school committees: education; school strategy and development; and health and safety, operations and facilities. Delegation is very clear. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective and that all pupils are safe and happy. The vast majority of staff strongly agree that pupils are safe at school. Safeguarding training is carried out annually and as a result teachers know how to report concerns about pupils' well-being and act promptly.

Leaders and governors take their responsibilities for equality of opportunity seriously by creating working conditions in which staff are treated fairly. For example, female staff are given breastfeeding time and a dedicated well-being space. Governors are proud that ASCS is a highly inclusive multi-national, multicultural, multi-abled community and intend this diversity to continue. Diversity is deeply reflective of the school's core values: tolerance, inclusion and diversity. Governors support leaders well in promoting equality and tackling discrimination and are fully committed to providing equitable provision.

Leaders have put in place a self-evaluation, a school improvement plan and 23 action plans. They understand that the complexity of these strategic documents affects the clear communication of policies and processes to staff and that this in turn makes the quality-assurance process more difficult than it need be.

The school responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic. The creation of a dedicated website was a helpful reference point for pupils and parents as teachers worked hard to ensure that high academic standards were maintained. Leaders continued to monitor closely the quality of the learning. They focused on the safety and well-being of all stakeholders to support the school community.

## Early years provision

Provision in the early years is good.

Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points with most meeting the expectations for their age in all areas of learning. Very few children have English as their first language and during the pandemic they had little exposure to English and few opportunities to interact with others. Careful attention is given to settling the children in and providing a safe and secure environment in which they thrive. Progress has been particularly strong in developing children's personal and social skills and in language and communication. Parents are warmly welcomed and kept very well informed about their child's progress

In English, most children can identify letter names and sounds and write simple words and sentences. In mathematics, they are becoming familiar with the concept of numbers and can recognise numbers to 20 and complete simple addition and subtraction to 10. In science, they can make predictions and observe and describe what is happening, for example when they are experimenting with ways of extracting the 'crown jewels' frozen in ice.

The leader of the early years team provides a clear sense of direction and vision for supporting staff in implementing the new EYFS curriculum. Teachers understand how children learn and develop and provide them with opportunities to become independent learners and think critically and creatively.

The recent extension of the outdoor environment has increased opportunities for children to choose their own activities. Similar teaching methods, particularly in the teaching of phonics, are used across the foundation stage and Year 1 to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the Reception Year. Assessments are carried out mainly through observations and are recorded on an online tracking system, forming a holistic picture of children's progress. This enables monitoring of progress against the early years learning goals.

Behaviour is good. Children cooperate well and have increasing skills in self-regulation.

Staff gave pupils and parents high levels of support during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included webinars on online learning for parents, for example on phonics and reading.

## Sixth-form provision

Post-16 provision is good.

The school offers a wide range of courses and flexible pathways enabling students to pursue their individual talents, interests and academic aspirations. They select accreditation from A and AS level programmes and from BTEC qualifications in an academic, vocational or blended pathway. Standards are high with students obtaining very good examination results in all subjects. Post-sixteen provision is expanding quickly and next year will be housed in specially converted rooms, giving students space to become independent learners with access to both study and recreational areas.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The head of post-sixteen provision works closely with her predecessor and is building on established good practice. Careful preparation and support, including detailed personal interviews and parental involvement, ensure that students make good option choices and are clear about the school's expectations and how their options may affect future career and life choices. An induction day, in June, offers Year 11 students the opportunity to sample lessons and understand the tutoring system and encourages a positive start to their sixth-form experience.

As inspection took place during the examination period it was not possible to observe lessons directly but from records and results it is apparent that teachers have good subject knowledge and are familiar with the requirements of all relevant examinations. They enjoy highly positive relationships with students. They track progress carefully and work with students to ensure that all share high expectations which contribute to excellent student attitudes and outcomes.

In addition to wide educational opportunities, many students take on leadership roles in the school and serve as role models for younger pupils, some of whom they mentor to become the school's senior student leaders of the future. This year, for example, they led the Model United Conference successfully while preparing for their own examinations. The vision for the sixth form is not only for academic excellence, which is being achieved, but increasingly to prepare students for their futures through developing their personal skills by volunteering, accessing the workplace and preparing for higher education. More students are applying to, and being accepted by, prestigious universities in the UK as well as in the UAE, neighbouring and other countries.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

ASCS meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country's laws.

It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010:

- 2(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010
- 5(b)(vi) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in EYFS and primary is sometimes inconsistent. Leaders should widen the range of teaching strategies to ensure that the

school meets the learning needs of all pupils, accelerates progress and improves standards.

Leaders have developed too many overlong strategic documents. This negatively affects the clear communication of policies and processes and makes quality assurance difficult. Leaders should simplify how they present strategic planning and policy so that they are more clearly communicated to staff and so that quality assurance can be focused more specifically on improving pupils' outcomes.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		x		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		x		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		x		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		x		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		x		
The behaviour of pupils		x		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		x		
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		x		
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	Al Salam Community School
<b>Type of school</b>	Private
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2019
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-18
<b>Number of roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1534
<b>Number of roll (part-time pupils)</b>	N/A
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	from 22,000 AED to 38,000 AED
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	N/A
<b>Address of school</b>	Al Quds Street 18th Street, Al Twar 2 Dubai, UAE
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 42215554
<b>Email address</b>	info@alsalamcommunity.ae
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kifaya Khan
<b>Proprietor</b>	Al Salam Education

## GLOSSARY

**Achievement** – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

**Accreditation** – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust.

**Assessment** – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

**Attainment** – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

**British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO)** – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

**Central Support Team** – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

**Combined or Joint Visit** – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

**Cycle of Inspection** – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

**Curriculum** – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB)** – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

**Leadership** – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

**Learning** – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

**Management** – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

**Ofsted** – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

**Progress** – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

**School self-evaluation** – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

**Standards** –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

**Teaching** – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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