

# Raffles International School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 24 to 27 February 2025

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Age Group: 3 to 18 years  
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four 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 (Ofsted).

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 (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its 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 added to the register, 'Get information about schools'.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO) accreditation. 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 updated the standards in August 2023. The new standards aligned the BSO standards with the Independent School Standards (ISS) and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding applied to schools in England; clarified and reiterated the relationship between the UK and host country laws and reshaped staff recruitment standards to ensure international applicability.**

The British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

- Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
- Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.

- Part 5. The premises and accommodation.  
Part 6. The provision of information.  
Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.  
Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.  
Part 9. The quality of provision for boarding.

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 carers 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

Raffles International School (RIS) is an inclusive, co-educational, British school, in Um Suqueim, Dubai. The school opened in 2008. It became part of the Innoventures

Education group of schools and early childhood centres in 2010. Children under three attend the Um Suqueim centre on site.

With an enrolment of 1,324 pupils aged 3 to 18 years, RIS is slightly smaller than many comparable international schools in Dubai. There are 131 pupils in the early years, 638 in the primary, 439 in the secondary phases and 109 in the sixth form. There are 84 different nationalities represented with 1,172 pupils speaking English as an additional language (EAL) of whom 89 require specialist intervention. RIS offers support for 171 pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) through tailored specialist provision on the basis of need.

The curriculum in the early years follows the UK's early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework. The primary and secondary curriculum is a blend of the national curriculum for England (NCfE), and UAE statutory requirements, aligning with British educational values. At the end of key stage 4, pupils can take BTEC level 2 assessments and IGCSE examinations. In the sixth form, students can study A levels and BTEC level 3 qualifications.

The school's vision is: 'To empower students with a holistic rigorous and international education for success in an ever-changing world.'

### **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 and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 63 part-lessons and conducted learning walks, looking at extra-curricular and other activities. Four of the lessons visited were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. There were 24 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and strategic plans. They inspected the school's safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also considered the views of parents and staff expressed in the BSO survey, which was sent just prior to the inspection.

## Evaluation of the school

**Raffles International School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.**

**The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. 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.**

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding. Almost all pupils achieve standards that are well above national averages in England. Boys and girls, including those with SEND and EAL needs, perform at consistently high levels with no significant differences in their rates of progress.

Children enter the early years with skills in English language and communication that are usually below those typical for their age. However, they quickly gain confidence and proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing and communication skills. As a result, they make outstanding progress from their starting points with a large majority exceeding the England average in all aspects of the Early Learning Goals (ELG).

Phonics is taught systematically throughout the early years and into Year 1, grouping pupils by ability to ensure targeted support. Although the proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 is below the England average, results have improved steadily over the previous two years. Leaders have implemented a new systematic synthetic phonics programme and introduced targeted interventions that have resulted in pupils making better progress in the current year.

Across the primary school, pupils make outstanding progress and by Year 6, they attain levels which are above global averages in external tests. Over the previous three years, attainment and progress have improved. Pupils engage with a variety of literary genres, expanding their vocabulary and technical subject-specific language. This depth of knowledge enables them to write extended, imaginative prose with creativity and precision. As they transition into key stage 3, pupils analyse complex themes such as justice, revenge and corruption. Pupils in Year 8 explore ethical dilemmas while studying Shakespeare's Hamlet.

By the end of the secondary phase, for the last three years, pupils have significantly outperformed England averages at grades 9 to 6 in IGCSE. Pupils develop excellent analytical skills, making connections across various literary works, evaluating how writers use figurative language and text structure to convey meaning.

In the sixth form, students sustain their impressive progress, attaining excellent results at A level. On average, they make better than expected progress and attain more than one grade higher than predicted. Results in 2024 were significantly above the England average at grades A\* to B. Students' ability to critically analyse and interpret complex texts ensures they are well prepared for their future studies and careers.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding across all phases.

On completion of the early years, almost all children reach standards above expectations, building a strong foundation for Year 1. Most develop a deep understanding of shape, confidently recognising and naming three-dimensional structures while creating their own models.

As pupils progress through the primary school, they strengthen their mathematical competence. They develop a strong understanding of numerical relationships, ensuring a secure transition into secondary. By Year 2, pupils grasp measurement concepts and apply them to real-life situations, demonstrating an understanding of units. In Year 4, they recognise the significance of decimals, while in Year 6 pupils solve mathematical problems using multiplication, enhancing their critical thinking skills.

In the secondary school, pupils refine their mathematical reasoning. They apply algebraic expressions to solve equations, and by Year 9, they confidently use Pythagoras' theorem and transpose formulae for complex problem solving. In Year 11, pupils apply mensuration techniques to challenging geometric shapes. In key stage 4, pupils demonstrate an advanced understanding of mechanical principles in mathematics, analysing how the application of force at different points affects a fixed object.

Pupils make progress slightly above their expected targets, contributing to around half of all pupils achieving grades 9 to 6 at IGCSE. Over the previous three years, IGCSE mathematics results have fluctuated, but the most recent outcomes show positive improvement, almost double the England averages. There is no significant variation between the rates of progress of different groups of pupils, including those with SEND.

The most recent A-level results were below the England averages, but with only 15 students in the cohort statistical analysis is unreliable. To improve students' performance, the school has implemented a robust and effective tracking framework,



monitored by senior leaders. Progress is evident in lessons and students are expected to exceed their targets in the current year.

Pupils' attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding. Early years, primary and IGCSE pupils performed stronger than A-level students in the previous year. A-level results declined in 2024 compared to the previous two years, falling well below England averages. The small cohort size makes statistical comparisons unreliable.

In the early years, children actively engage in a wealth of discovery and experimentation opportunities. This leads to almost all pupils reaching the expectations for their age, well above England averages for understanding the world. They have learned about the planets and can label them in order. Using dark tents and torches, they explore the concepts of night and day in different parts of the world. An external company provided an immersive dome experience, allowing children to explore and experience space virtually.

In primary, science progress test results continue to improve, surpassing world averages. The proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress has nearly doubled. Pupils with SEND progress at similar rates to their peers and while boys' progress is better than girls, the difference is insignificant. A strong focus on investigation and working scientifically makes it clear that pupils thoroughly enjoy science lessons. For example, in Year 4, pupils predicted and tested which material, chocolate, ice or butter, melted first. In Year 5, pupils investigated gravity by predicting and testing how different objects fall at varying speeds.

At key stage 3, external progress test results remain above world averages. Pupils' progress continues to be strong with no significant gender or ability gaps.

IGCSE science results were the best in the school last year, significantly improving on the previous year. Nearly all pupils met or exceeded their target grade in all sciences with an average achievement of over one grade higher than predicted. Pupils' achievement of the high grades of 9 to 6 significantly surpassed England averages. Boys generally outperformed girls except in biology. To remedy this, leaders have introduced several measures, including starting the syllabus in the third term of Year 9, moving to modular IGCSEs and offering a BTEC level 2 in science.

In the previous year, only 27 students took A-level sciences: 10 in physics, nine in chemistry and five in biology. Over half of the students in biology and physics met or exceeded their target grades while just under half did so in chemistry. After a full analysis, the school has implemented several strategies to improve results for the current year. These include reducing A-level subjects to three, increasing parental

meetings, providing university counsellor guidance and enforcing firm entry criteria. These measures are already making a positive impact with current results indicating that this cohort is on track to meet standards previously achieved in A-level sciences.

Pupils make excellent progress in a range of **other subjects** across the curriculum. Primary pupils benefit from specialist teachers in physical education (PE), art, computing, drama and modern foreign languages. Inspiring art lessons encourage creativity. Within secondary, pupils have a broad range of choice in IGCSE and BTEC level 2 subjects. There are 27 subject choices in key stage 4, including five BTEC options. Almost half the cohort achieved the top of grades 9 to 7 in line with their predicted expectations, exceeding the England average. Overall, girls made better progress than boys against their target grades. There is no significant gap between the rates of progress of pupils with SEND and the rest of the cohort. A-level results were lower than England averages overall, but slightly better in a range of subjects, including English, psychology and media studies.

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

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The Standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during February 2025, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. This judgement is



endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

## Part 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 quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

The curriculum has a clear rationale and is highly effective in balancing knowledge, skills and understanding. It integrates academic challenge, enrichment and pastoral care to support pupils' overall development. Through the NCfE, the EYFS framework, IGCSE, A Level and BTEC qualifications, the school fosters pupils' academic success and personal growth. It prepares pupils of all ages and attainment levels to transition smoothly into the British education system.

In the early years, a child-centred curriculum promotes independent learning. Close links to the Year 1 curriculum ensure a smooth transition and continuity in children's learning. As pupils progress through the primary phase, the curriculum continues to provide them with academic, social and personal skills that lay a solid foundation for the demands of the secondary curriculum.

In key stage 4, pupils can choose from a wide range of IGCSE subjects, including BTEC level 2 qualifications. Students receive guidance to choose A-level subjects and/or BTEC level 3 qualifications both of which are widely recognised by universities. A dedicated careers guidance counsellor very effectively supports students' applications to university, particularly through regular university fairs to which all secondary pupils are invited.

The curriculum undergoes regular review, informed by assessment data, to meet the needs of all pupils. Learning support assistants and the inclusion team ensure that pupils, including those with SEND and EAL needs, receive the necessary support to study the same curriculum as their peers. The most able pupils have advanced learning plans (ALP) and are appropriately challenged in lessons.

Teachers and the school counsellor provide effective pastoral guidance enabling pupils to make well-informed moral choices and develop respect for others, particularly regarding the protected characteristics within the laws permitted in the

UAE. The law precludes the school from addressing the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and sexual orientation. While the school does not have a relationships and sex education (RSE) policy, it offers sessions through the school's clinic for Years 5 and 6 pupils conducted by medical professionals. Parents have the option to withdraw their children from these sessions.

Moral, social and cultural studies, along with well-being sessions, help pupils become responsible global citizens, with a strong moral compass and a deep understanding of the world. The school celebrates cultural diversity through events such as International Day, Diwali and Eid. The school fosters a strong sense of cultural heritage and identity by offering native language lessons in Russian, Hindi, Spanish and French, through its 'Mother Tongue' programme.

The curriculum extends beyond the classroom, making effective use of local and wider community resources. Pupils visit Jumeirah beach for geography field work, participate in sports events and running clubs and engage in healthy eating initiatives through trips to local supermarkets. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities allows pupils to explore and pursue their talents and interests in, for example, art, music, drama and sports. The curriculum is further enhanced through residential educational trips, both locally and internationally, to destinations such as Singapore and Japan. Pupils eagerly participate in regular competitions within the Innoventures Education schools' network. Recent 'Innovents' include debates, talent shows, art exhibitions and sporting competitions.

British values are deeply embedded in school life. The democratically elected pupil council, along with the primary and secondary head boy and head girl, actively contribute to school and environmental projects. Pupils participate in decision making and engage in sustainability projects, including tree planting to address climate change. British cultural elements are integrated into the curriculum such as studying William Shakespeare in English. Additionally, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and school productions, including 'Alice in Wonderland' by Lewis Carroll, further reinforce these British values.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** in the school is outstanding

As a result of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment in all phases of the school, pupils make excellent progress across all subjects. Pupils with SEND, EAL and the most able receive strong support from teachers and teaching assistants who tailor lessons, resources and interventions to respond to their specific needs.

Highly qualified teachers with excellent subject knowledge provide clear explanations and engaging learning activities. Their well-planned lessons, using the Raffles framework, promote outstanding progress and encourage pupils' independent thinking skills. Pupils benefit from a wide range of learning experiences and resources that build confidence and develop their critical-thinking skills. Teachers integrate technology effectively, stimulating interest and enhancing learning across the curriculum.

Classrooms are orderly and productive, creating an environment where pupils thrive. They enjoy working collaboratively and engaging in meaningful discussions with their peers. Their positive attitudes towards learning are evident in their ability to concentrate, listen and seek clarification or support when needed. Teachers and assistants model expected behaviours, fostering a respectful and supportive school culture. Relationships between staff and pupils reflect the highly positive ethos and values of the school.

Teachers use highly developed questioning techniques to challenge, check pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. For example, in Year 1, teachers help pupils distinguish between statements of fact and opinion, laying the foundation for reading and analysing non-fiction and fiction texts.

Teachers stay updated with best practices in UK teaching, sharing strategies for effective learning. They work closely with classroom assistants who provide targeted support for pupils and make a significant contribution to the strong progress that pupils demonstrate. Teachers demonstrate excellent classroom management skills, ensuring lessons run smoothly and efficiently. They structure lessons with a strong sense of pace and purpose, maximising learning time. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning, leading to sustained progress over time.

The school has robust policies and procedures in place for assessing learning. Teachers' feedback forms an integral part of the learning process. Teachers provide a mix of written and verbal feedback, helping pupils refine their work and take ownership of their learning. Pupils regularly assess their own work, using success criteria and sometimes engage in peer-assessment, responding thoughtfully to feedback from both teachers and their peers. Teachers use a combination of formative and summative assessments, including national curriculum benchmarks and standardised progress tests in core subjects. They analyse assessment data to identify trends and close gaps in learning at an individual level, enabling targeted intervention. Observations also play a crucial role in tracking progress, particularly in the early years,

where teachers document achievements on an educational platform to monitor children's changing needs.

School leaders are fully committed to continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The wealth of professional development opportunities equips teachers to refine their skills and knowledge. This, combined with a rigorous quality assurance system, secures consistently high standards across the school. A leader with a specific focus on teaching and learning would enhance this still further.

## Part 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). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010

The **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** (SMSC) development of pupils is outstanding

The school maintains a high attendance rate which contributes to pupils' significant progress and high attainment. Behaviour in the school is exemplary, with pupils demonstrating positive attitudes to learning. They confidently articulate their learning to teachers, visitors and peers.

Pupils take pride in the respectful, caring and supportive relationships at RIS. They explain the school values as: 'being kind' and 'treating each other equally'. The pupil well-being team is implementing 'gratitude boxes' to allow pupils and staff to express appreciation of others. Positive relationships exist across different year groups. For example, during transition events, pupils help each other to prepare for the next year group, easing their adjustment to new expectations.

Well-being is an integral part of school life. Pupils greatly appreciate the recent introduction of an application that enables them to record their current feelings. Their tutors, class teachers and counsellors review all entries, intervening and investigating further when necessary. Thematic analysis of these records informs the planning of future events and assemblies, strengthening pupils' welfare.

The school actively seeks pupils' opinions through planned surveys and regular meetings. The head boy, head girl and pupil council play an active role in sharing pupils' views to the senior leadership team, ensuring their voices are heard and valued, facilitating positive change. For example, the school recently changed its canteen supplier, with the head boy and head girl participating in the selection process and

surveying pupils to consider their preferences. Sustainability is embedded with an 'eco warriors' group leading initiatives such as repurposing recycled pallets to create furniture for the school's garden.

Pupils develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity at RIS. They attend assemblies designed to expand their awareness of different cultural traditions and beliefs. The school celebrates all religious festivals, fostering a cohesive environment. During International Day, pupils celebrate their own cultures while exploring different food and traditional dress. Parental involvement in such events strengthens the importance of diversity in the wider community. During Ramadan, the school places fridges at strategic locations, encouraging the local community to take food as gifts.

British values are embedded in daily school life. Corridor displays showcase British values and illustrate how they are practised in the school. The election of the head boy and head girl follows a democratic voting process. In lessons throughout the school, pupils respect others' opinions and understand their rights to individual liberty. The atrium features pupils' artwork, depicting their interpretations of British values, including representations of equality and the rule of law, exemplified by the Royal Courts of Justice. Pupils form strong, lasting friendships and support each other. Year 11 pupils expressed the view that the school's sense of community and acceptance is their favourite aspect of the school.

Pupils recognise key British institutions and landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and the Millennium Wheel. Sixth-form students recently compared the national airlines of the UAE and UK as part of a travel and tourism BTEC assignment, promoting discussions about the importance of tourism in both countries.

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

The **welfare, health and safety** of pupils and staff are outstanding.

The school fully complies with the safeguarding and welfare regulations of the host country and best practices in the UK. It has a health and safety policy and specific risk assessment policies both of which are closely monitored for necessary updates.

Upon entering the school pupils feel welcomed. A thorough induction programme for new pupils includes tours with parents and opportunities to meet teachers and key staff. This helps them to familiarise themselves with the strong academic and pastoral support available. A productive and supportive relationship exists between the school and home, which has contributed to an outstanding attendance of 96%, well above

the England average. Most pupils are punctual to lessons, and rare instances of lateness are effectively managed by teachers.

The school has comprehensive policies on behaviour and attendance. Pupils' behaviour is excellent with instances of bullying being extremely rare. Behavioural expectations are clearly communicated and understood by pupils who show the utmost respect for their teachers and peers.

Governors and the senior leadership team actively promote and facilitate a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The robust policies on safeguarding and child protection detail the procedures to be followed to ensure pupils' safety. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and understand the policies and vigilant reporting mechanisms expected. The role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are clear to both staff and pupils with information displayed in every classroom. All staff have received safeguarding training appropriate to their role. Pupils know how to report any concerns by disclosing to a staff member or DSL. Parents and pupils share their views on safeguarding through termly surveys and face-to-face meetings.

Pupils' safety is effectively managed in all areas of the school, supported by clear written policies and risk assessments, outlining key individual responsibilities. Classrooms are safe with strict controls on the access to chemicals and other hazardous substances. Electrical equipment is regularly checked for safety. School trips undergo comprehensive risk assessments, considering all potential risks to protect pupils from harm.

The school has a large team of trained first aiders, covering all areas of the school. Pupils are aware of the location of the fully equipped clinic on site, which is appropriately staffed. First aid kits are fully stocked with the necessary equipment and are always taken on trips and to external sporting events.

The school has well developed fire evacuation procedures which all pupils understand. Fire drills are conducted each term and fire-fighting equipment is regularly tested and compliant with regulations.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The human resources (HR) team and school manager maintain a single central register (SCR) for all employed staff, governors, supply staff and contracted personnel. The principal regularly checks these registers for compliance.



All necessary checks are in place, including start dates, identity verification, right to work in the UAE, attested qualifications, medical checks and references. The team verifies references and follows each up with telephone conversations with previous employers. UK nationals must provide an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC). All staff require Dubai police checks from the previous three months. Additionally, all staff must receive approval from Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) to teach in the UAE.

The new principal has thoroughly reviewed safeguarding practices in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and has re-written all policies. He has strengthened staff awareness and vigilance to report all concerns regarding safeguarding. Governors have all completed safeguarding training and all staff undergo annual training. Facilities staff receive training in Hindi when appropriate. All involved in interviewing new staff have completed safer recruitment training.

The school recruits highly qualified staff with experience of the NCfE, mainly from the UK.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school provides a positive learning environment for all pupils. Toilets for staff and pupils are separate, clearly marked with signage, and sufficient for the school's population. Facilities are also available for individuals with physical disabilities. Drinking water stations are on every floor and most pupils bring their own bottles to refill. The school clinic offers privacy for medical examinations, designated recovery spaces with beds, washing and toilet facilities.

The school is fully accessible, ensuring all pupils, including those with physical disabilities, can navigate the campus with ease. Lifts and ramps provide access to all areas. Classrooms offer reasonably spacious learning environments, while some do not benefit directly from natural light, the lighting is adequate. The extensive library serves as both a learning area for lessons and a space for sixth-form independent study. Open spaces throughout the school display pupils' artwork and provide social spaces for pupils to interact.

Although some areas of the school show signs of wear, the facilities team maintains the school at an exceptional level of cleanliness. Pupils benefit from outside recreational areas during break times, although some spaces are crowded. The school is actively exploring additional space to ease congestion during busy periods. The sixth

form has grown extensively and will continue to do so, and while students currently use a small common room, plans are in place to enlarge this space.

Pupils benefit from high quality indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Large open spaces accommodate team games, with separate areas designated for primary and secondary pupils. The school recently upgraded its changing facilities, ensuring they remain clean and provide sufficient privacy for pupils to change and shower after activities. Science laboratories are well resourced and the school has specialist facilities for design technology and drama.

A dedicated security team rigorously manages the arrival and departure of all pupils, staff and visitors. All visitors undergo identify checks and all staff, visitors and parents wear lanyards for identification. The security team maintains a strong presence throughout the school, alongside closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, ensuring a safe environment for all.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The website provides clear and comprehensive information about school life, admissions, inclusion and facilities. It also has policies and procedures, including safeguarding, complaints, curriculum, assessment and co-curricular activities. Regular updates through social media ensure that parents, carers and other stakeholders stay informed about all aspects of the school, including the latest news. As part of the admissions process, all new families receive a parent handbook containing key information about both the primary and secondary school.

Parents appreciate the wide range of information the school provides in various formats. They find the regular newsletters which highlight upcoming events and celebrations particularly useful. The class Dojo system also serves as an effective communication tool, keeping parents informed of their children's achievements and maintaining an open dialogue between home and school.

Parents are active partners in their child's education and receive timely updates on their child's progress through the parent portal. In the primary school, they receive regular, comprehensive reports outlining their child's progress and attainment in line with curriculum standards. In the secondary school, parents receive examination result reports alongside termly academic reports. Parents greatly value the consultation

meetings which provide a comprehensive overview of their child's development. As well as these formal meetings, teachers are accessible to discuss any concerns. Parents report that appointments with teachers or senior staff are arranged without delay. The class or form teacher serves as the first point of contact for any queries. Parents know where to gain access to the formal complaints policy.

Parents overwhelmingly support the school as reflected in the regular parent surveys. A meeting between parents and an inspection team member and the BSO survey confirmed these positive views. The school values and acts on parental feedback. For example, leaders recently adjusted the secondary Year 10 English timetable to improve teaching continuity. Parents appreciate that their suggestions and concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

Parents report that their children are happy at school, feeling both challenged and safe, while enjoying good relationships. Every morning, staff and senior leaders warmly welcome parents and their children at the school gate, reinforcing a strong sense of community. Parents commend the school for its high academic standards and equally value the opportunities for their children to develop artistic, sporting and musical talents. They describe the school as a 'harmonious global community' where everyone feels valued.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

A very thorough and clear complaints policy is available to parents on the school's website. At the start of the academic year, meetings inform parents about the complaints procedure, ensuring that they understand how to raise concerns and the steps for resolution. The principal reviews the policy every two years.

The policy outlines a staged procedure, beginning with informal concerns that the class teacher typically deals with. If a concern remains unresolved, parents can submit a written complaint for investigation by senior leaders and /or the principal. The school communicates the outcome in writing. If parents remain unsatisfied, they can submit a second appeal to the board. In such cases the board invites them to a hearing with at least three individuals not directly involved, including one independent member. The panel completes its report within 14 working days and communicates its findings in writing to all parties.

The school logs all complaints, maintaining records of the complaint, response and outcome with confidentiality. If an external resolution becomes necessary, the KHDA ensures resolution in accordance with its procedures.

In the current year, the school internally resolved 13 minor complaints and two were handled quickly by KHDA. The principal maintains strong relationships with parents and meets with the parent lead weekly. The school views complaints as opportunities to learn and make improvements.

## Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

**Leadership and management** of the school are outstanding. Leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are fully met.

The new principal has introduced renewed rigour and a strong commitment to continuous improvement, making an immediate impact across the school. His previous involvement in the school means that he embraces the school's values and continues to model them with high levels of respect. He demonstrates this by shaking hands with every pupil he meets in the corridor. In turn, both pupils and staff respect him for his strong values and high standards. Pupils who embody the core values receive praise, certificates and awards, reinforcing a culture where values are embraced and experienced daily.

The principal has updated all the school policies and strengthened safeguarding and health and safety. Committed to staff members' well-being, he has met with every member of staff individually. Morale among staff is high, and teachers feel empowered to contribute meaningfully to the school, while serving as positive role models for pupils. A strong culture of support ensures teachers feel valued. All staff in the BSO survey expressed pride in being part of the school.

Leaders at different levels provide strong support but their effectiveness is limited by their broad range of duties. For example, the school lacks designated teaching and learning or professional development leads in the senior team. Without clear responsibility for initiating and driving targeted improvements, based on research, substantial growth remains untapped.

Professional development has improved through investment in the National College platform, enabling staff to engage training in UK best practice. Innoventures Education facilitates professional development across its schools through the 'Learning Lab' which has supported many staff in completing national professional qualification (NPQ) courses.

Performance management is well structured. Staff set aspirational targets based on teaching observations and personal development goals. The principal has increased the frequency of lesson observations and staff welcome feedback from leaders and peers. As a result, teaching quality remains excellent.

Now in its third year of a five-year cycle, the school's improvement plan (SIP) continues to focus on five key drivers: teaching and learning, well-being, leadership at all levels, groups of pupils and the development of the curriculum. The principal has added a significant number of specific actions for leaders with clear timescales and heightened expectations, driving improvement at a faster pace. In April 2025, he will review the plan again incorporating feedback from staff, pupils and parents. Distributing leadership responsibilities strategically across these key areas would enhance overall impact. Departmental action plans align with the SIP to ensure a unified approach. Middle leaders play a crucial role in translating strategic goals into actionable steps in their departments and year groups.

Governance operates at two levels: the Innoventures board of directors, consisting of private shareholders; and an advisory council. The board ensures financial stability and legal compliance while the advisory council, led by a board member, holds school leaders accountable. This group acts as a critical friend and includes expert advisors such as the chief operating officer of the University of Birmingham in Dubai and parental representatives. The advisory council actively engages pupils of all ages by inviting them to discuss key topics, such as the use of technology in school. Teachers also contribute suggestions through direct invitations and surveys, while parents provide feedback through twice-yearly surveys. All governors have completed safeguarding training and the safeguarding governor regularly meets with the DSL, ensuring safeguarding remains a standing agenda item at every meeting.

The principal meets weekly with the chief executive officer (CEO) of Innoventures Education and submits a weekly progress report. These regular meetings and the collaborative approach ensure school resources align with strategic goals. The CEO appraises the principal who genuinely values her support.

Leaders and governors actively promote equality and inclusion. The principal has written a diversity, equity and inclusion policy to strengthen the school's strongly inclusive culture. The school reflects this commitment in its admissions policy and daily practices. Pupils take pride in their diverse school community. Recently Innoventures Education schools set a Guinness World Record, bringing together pupils from 109 nationalities to plant seeds together.

## EYFS provision

In the foundation stage, children make excellent progress, often from low starting points. They quickly settle in and gain in confidence due to high quality teaching, well-established classroom routines and a well-devised curriculum. Boys and girls achieve similar rates of progress and attainment with no significant differences between them. Children with SEND and EAL keenly participate in all activities, receiving tailored support that effectively meets their needs. By the end of early years, 85% of children achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) significantly surpassing England averages.

Teachers carefully plan lessons by following the EYFS curriculum, paying due regard to the guidance in the Development Matters document. Their deep understanding of how children learn across the seven key areas enables them to use assessments effectively. By continuously evaluating what children know and can do, teachers make refinements to maximise children's learning. They skilfully balance child-initiated exploration with purposeful teaching, fostering curiosity and independence.

Teachers and support staff create a nurturing environment where children feel valued and listened to. Warm, supportive and purposeful relationships between adults and children contribute to their social and emotional development from an early age. Children behave well, guided by the excellent role models around them. Adults actively teach them to take turns, share and treat others with kindness and respect.

The indoor and outdoor learning environments are extremely well organised and equipped with high-quality resources. These spaces encourage children to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge across both the prime and specific areas of learning. In this safe and stimulating environment, children make independent choices, explore and challenge their understanding. For example, children in the Reception Year eagerly investigate the world around them, using a curiosity cube, independently exploring how the earth orbits and identifying planets. The high-quality early years provision ensures children are well prepared for the academic and social challenges of Year 1.

The early years team fosters strong, professional relationships with parents and carers. Through regular reports, newsletters and meetings staff maintain open communication and actively involve parents in their child's education.



## Post-16 provision

The sixth form currently has 109 students. Almost all students continue from Year 11 with a few joining from other schools with high retention from Year 12 into Year 13.

Students can choose from 21 different A-level and six BTEC courses. Vocational courses effectively meet the needs of students who achieve 100% success rates, providing a strong alternative to academic courses. The school now enforces strict entry requirements for all courses. Students can retake IGCSE English and mathematics, if needed, with bespoke timetables to accommodate their individual needs.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available, including competitive sports, chess club, arts clubs, academic support, inter-school competitions and the Model United Nations. Students can also participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award or study global perspectives. Many choose to complete an extended project qualification. The school strongly encourages work experience with support from the guidance counsellor. Some arrange their own placements, while others volunteer to assist with reading or mathematics in the primary school. Leadership meetings and governor invitations provide students with opportunities to express their views.

Careers advice and guidance are highly effective. The counsellor holds one-to-one meetings and ensures students meet strict application timelines. So far students have received 73 university offers, including 43 from the UK, 12 from the Russell Group of universities and one from Stanford in the USA. Typically, around 70% of students attend university in the UK with 80% securing their first choice in the previous year. Innoventures Education hosts multiple university events, lectures and workshops open to all secondary pupils. Students appreciate the high-quality support they receive.

Heads of Years 12 and 13 monitor students' personal development. Students participate in 'Well-being Fridays' similar to the rest of the school. Most students' concerns relate to examination stress. Behaviour in lessons is excellent with students highly focused on their learning. Staff track and tackle any low-level behavioural concerns. Students exhibit much happiness in being part of this diverse school's community.

Students praise their teachers, noting their strong engagement with individuals. They feel comfortable seeking support at any time. Higher-ability students report that they are challenged to achieve their full potential.

The leadership structure includes a head of Year 12 and a head of Year 13, a model the school prefers. Their current main focus is the analysis of the January examination results to determine necessary interventions.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

Raffles International School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws. The requirements of the host country take precedence.

It cannot fully meet the standards that relate to 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5(b)(vi). Raffles International School encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; pregnancy and maternity; race and religion or belief, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

Leadership capacity is currently stretched as a result of leaders' broad range of additional responsibilities, limiting the potential for the further, aspirational school developments that are planned. To remedy this, leaders should refine accountability structures at all levels and distribute responsibilities more evenly, ensuring leaders focus on key strategic areas where they can secure the greatest impact. With leaders able to dedicate more time and expertise to specific areas, they can implement targeted improvements, provide stronger support to pupils and staff and ensure consistently high standards across the school.

## 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>	Raffles International school
<b>Type of school</b>	Private. For profit
<b>Date school opened</b>	2010
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1339
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED 33,273 to AED 88,799
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	n/a
<b>Address of school</b>	Al Baghla Street Umm Suqeim 3 Dubai UAE PO Box 122900
<b>Telephone number</b>	+9714 427 1200
<b>Email address</b>	matthewb@rafflesis.com
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Matthew Barrett
<b>Proprietor</b>	Innoventures Education Group

## 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 His 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 50 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust's vision is a world in which all lives are transformed through excellent education. We strive to improve education for learners globally, grounding our work in research and evidence. We support leaders to raise standards, improve school performance, develop great teachers and open career pathways.

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.

We have built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services. One of our main aims 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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