



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**Al Muna Academy**

**January 2023**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Al Muna Academy			
<b>Address</b>	Al Muna Academy Zayed The First St Al Danah – Zone 1 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates			
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 2 501 4777			
<b>Email address</b>	pre@almunaacademy.sch.ae			
<b>Principal</b>	Miss Sarah Griffiths			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Aldar Education (UAE)			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Nisreen Eido			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	749			
	<b>Early years</b>	160	<b>Years 1 to 2</b>	209
	<b>Years 3 to 6</b>	380		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9 to 12 January 2023			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Al Muna Academy is an international co-educational day school located in the heart of the city of Abu Dhabi in the district of Hamdan, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The school opened in September 2009 on its present site. The school comprises three sections: early years, Years 1 to 2 and Years 3 to 6, all of which occupy the same campus. The school is overseen by Aldar Education (UAE), which forms the governing body.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a well-rounded British curriculum within an international multicultural setting where children feel happy, confident and well cared for. Additionally, the school encourages collaboration, creativity, excellence, passion and respect so that pupils are well-prepared for the next stage in their education.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Most pupils come from professional and business families living in the region. There are 43 nationalities represented in the school; almost a third of the school's population are from south-east Asia, with just over one sixth being from UAE. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared with other pupils taking the same tests internationally. The school has identified 74 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 55 of whom receive additional specialist help in the form of individual lessons and in-class support. The school identifies 450 pupils as having English as an additional language (EAL), 45 of whom require extra support. Data used by the school have identified 48 pupils as being the most able in its population, and they receive additional in-class support and through extra-curricular activities.

## 2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

**This is a COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas.** The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

**Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.**

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. This is the school's first BSO inspection by ISI.

## Key findings

- 2.1 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. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified.**

### Part 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education in paragraphs 2(1)(a) to 2(2)(c), 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(1), 3 and 4 are met. That relating to paragraph 2(2)(d) cannot be met because it is precluded by the host country's legislation.**
- 2.3 The curriculum is well balanced and enables pupils to experience a suitably broad education, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas of learning. Pupils develop a range of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills, and their understanding of English is good. Policies, plans and schemes of work in all subjects are suitably aligned to the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, including those with EAL and SEND. The curriculum enables the pupils to make good progress. It equips them to engage with and benefit from the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life outside of school and in the next stage in their education, underpinned by an understanding of fundamental values of British, UAE and other societies.
- 2.4 Children in the early years follow a programme covering the seven areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. The curriculum for older pupils is based on the English National Curriculum, with the addition of lessons in Arabic, UAE social studies and moral education. In their comments to the questionnaire, a very small minority of parents commented that they did not think that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. However, in the data analysis of the questionnaire, it emerged that the vast majority of parents agree that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 2.5 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) encourages respect for other people as far as is allowed by the laws of the host country. However, the curriculum and teaching are not permitted to include content and material relating to gender reassignment, civil partnership and same-sex unions, as they are not recognised by UAE law and the promotion of any such issues is precluded by UAE legislation. That stated, the curriculum and teaching effectively promote respect for the protected characteristics such as age, disability, maternity, pregnancy, race, religion and beliefs.
- 2.6 The teaching enables pupils to make good progress as they add to their knowledge, skills and understanding. This view is fully endorsed by most parents and almost all pupils in their responses to the questionnaires. Pupils with SEND receive effective specialist support to meet their needs. Throughout the school, teachers use assessment strategies to plan work well, using their knowledge of the pupils and their needs. They draw upon a range of effective teaching methods and of resources, usually providing suitable challenge for the most able. Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and manage the pupils' behaviour well.
- 2.7 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

### Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.8 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in sub-paragraphs 5(a), (b)(i) to (v) and (vii) are met. That in sub-paragraph 5(b)(vi) [encouraging respect for other people] cannot be met in full because it is precluded by the country's legislation.**
- 2.9 The school's core values of collaboration, creativity, excellence, passion and respect are at the heart of its assembly and PSHE programme. The school promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law,

liberty, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs which are fundamental to life in Britain, UAE and many other countries. It is successful in developing pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence, helping them to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.

- 2.10 Pupils willingly take opportunities to contribute to the lives of others. They gain knowledge of and respect for public institutions in England, as well as respect for the responsibilities of UAE citizenship. The school encourages respect for other people whose characteristics are protected in law as set out in the UK Equality Act 2010, in so far as is allowed by the laws of the host country, as outlined in Part 1. Staff maintain a proper balance in their presentation to pupils of political issues and carefully avoid bringing their personal views into their teaching. In the questionnaires, most parents and almost all pupils reported that the school treats pupils fairly, supports their personal development and promotes tolerance and respect for others. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 2.11 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

### **Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

#### **2.12 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.**

- 2.13 Suitable arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. Leaders comply with the regional requirements of the Abu Dhabi Education and Knowledge (ADEK) education monitoring service and pay due regard to the latest statutory and non-statutory guidance provided for schools in England. Staff are trained thoroughly in the school's safeguarding procedures, not only when they take up post but through regular update sessions throughout the year. In their responses to the questionnaire, all staff expressed confidence in the school's safeguarding procedures and the training, as well as for the support and guidance they receive. The child protection and safeguarding policy covers all the areas required of schools in England and is implemented effectively. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL are both members of the senior leadership team, giving safeguarding issues due prominence across the school as a whole. The DSL works closely with the safeguarding governor and also ADEK representatives to ensure effective oversight of safeguarding procedures, monitoring of the implementation of the policy and that an annual review of policy and procedures is undertaken. The school maintains confidential records of all child protection concerns. Pupils are made fully aware of issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through assemblies and topics covered in the school's PSHE programme.
- 2.14 Good behaviour is promoted effectively. The school follows ADEK's comprehensive guidelines for managing pupils' behaviour, which promote suitable initiatives to educate pupils about bullying and about how to deal with any incidents they may become involved in. All pupils replying to the questionnaire said that the school expects them to behave well, and the very large majority felt that the school does everything it can to prevent bullying. Records scrutinised and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that bullying is a very rare occurrence. Exemplary behaviour was observed by inspectors during their visit.
- 2.15 The school complies with the relevant health and safety laws and fire standards as required by Aldar Education, ADEK and of schools in the UK. Documentation related to these areas is detailed and comprehensive, reflecting a pro-active and rigorous approach. Arrangements to ensure pupils on site are secure are effective, and pupils say that the school provides a safe environment in which to learn. Hazardous materials, such as those used by cleaners and swimming pool technicians, are stored securely. The school has suitable risk assessment guidance and ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated. In response to their questionnaires, most parents and almost all pupils agree that the school provides a safe and healthy environment.

- 2.16 The school has sound policies in place for first aid and provides appropriate care for pupils who are ill or injured that meet the required standards. The medical room is staffed by two suitably qualified nurses and an assistant who are on duty whenever pupils are on site. In addition, many staff are trained in first aid. Detailed records are kept of any medical incidents or consultations. Medicines are stored securely. First-aid kits are readily available in different locations around the school and are provided for school sports events and trips.
- 2.17 Rotas provide for members of staff to be on duty at breaks and lunchtimes at various key locations around the school site, and pupils are supervised appropriately throughout the school day. Admission and attendance registers meet local and UK requirements. They are backed up electronically every day and are maintained for the requisite period of time.

#### **Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.18 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.19 The suitability of staff, including proprietors and governors, to work with children is checked in line with both national requirements and, as far as reasonably possible, guidance issued to UK schools. Through ADEK's clearance procedures, the school verifies each person's identity, qualifications and previous employment history, carrying out a criminal record check with the UAE authorities and, where relevant, overseas authorities. In addition, each person's medical fitness and their right to work in the UAE are also checked. Further checks are conducted to ensure that staff appointees from the UK have not been barred from working with children, prohibited from teaching or from managing a school. All checks are accurately recorded on a single central register of appointments. The register meets the standard required, contains all the necessary information and reflects that recorded in staff files.

#### **Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.20 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.21 Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for pupils of all ages, including those who are disabled. There is appropriate changing accommodation for all pupils and a well-equipped medical room which caters for the needs of pupils who are ill or injured. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety requirements, including those required by UAE law. Acoustic conditions and both internal and external lighting are suitable. The provision of drinking water meets the required standards. There is sufficient outdoor space available for physical education and recreation, including separate outside play areas for children in the early years.

#### **Part 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.22 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**
- 2.23 All the required information to comply with the relevant standard is published and provided or made available to parents, the local and regional authorities and inspection providers. The information includes details about the proprietors and governors, the school's aims and ethos and the curriculum offered. Arrangements and policies for the following areas are available on the school's website: admissions; behaviour and exclusions; anti-bullying; child protection and safeguarding; complaints; first aid; health and safety; and provision for pupils with SEND and those with EAL. Details of the school's previous ADEK inspection report are published on the school's website. Pupils do not take UK National Curriculum tests, but the results of their academic performance as assessed by standardised tests are published on the school's website.



- 2.24 In the questionnaires, a very small minority of parents reported that they do not feel that they receive enough information about their children's performance and progress. Inspection evidence confirms that the school fulfils requirements by providing a full written report three times per year on each child's attainment and progress, as well as holding three parent-teacher consultation meetings annually. In addition, further progress update reports are issued to parents throughout the year.

## **Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

### **2.25 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

- 2.26 The school's complaints policy is published on its website. Complaints are first discussed on an informal basis. If parents remain dissatisfied, there follows a formal procedure to address the complaint which will, at this stage, be made in writing. This formal process involves a hearing before a panel, which includes an independent member, and allows for parents to be accompanied. The panel will then report findings and make recommendations. A confidential written record is kept on the findings and outcomes, including the action taken by the school, whether or not the complaint is upheld. The policy provides clear timescales for each stage of the complaints process.
- 2.27 The school's records show that complaints are handled promptly and in accordance with its published policy and that all were resolved at the informal stage in the preceding school year. The overwhelming majority of parents replying to the questionnaire said they receive timely and helpful responses to their questions, concerns and complaints.

## **Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

### **2.28 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

- 2.29 The leadership and management of the school, including the board of governors, have the skills and knowledge required to undertake their roles. They meet their responsibilities effectively so that the BSO standards are consistently met, and the well-being of the pupils is actively promoted.
- 2.30 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the pupils' learning, achievement and personal development.

### 3. Inspection of Educational Quality

#### Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development;

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on 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;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

The report refers to year groups in accordance with the system most commonly used in England.

#### Key findings

**3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.**

**3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

#### Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Disseminate the existing excellent practice to ensure that all lessons maximise progress by providing sufficient pace, challenge, scope and opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative.

#### The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

**3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.**

3.5 Pupils of all ages achieve high academic standards, and the school meets its aim of promoting academic excellence. Children in the early years make rapid progress and achieve extremely well, with most reaching or exceeding expected levels in relation to UK averages. When they leave at the end of Year 6, all pupils are successful in gaining places at senior schools. The school's own assessment, through standardised tests, indicates that the achievement of pupils of all ages and abilities is excellent. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve very well because of the effective and timely support they receive in study skills and examination techniques. During the pandemic, progress in reading dipped slightly. In response to this, leaders introduced a booster programme to help pupils catch up. This initiative has ensured that pupils' progress in reading has improved so that it is in line with their other skills. Across the school, the most able make rapid progress because teaching approaches usually challenge their thinking and raise their aspirations. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school enables their children to make progress.

- 3.6 Pupils' achievement beyond the classroom is excellent. They do especially well in sport and performing arts. Pupils' non-academic achievement results largely from the confidence and experience they gain in a very wide range of clubs. Around 50 clubs meet each week, ranging from choir to coding, and debating to drama. Just over a third of primary-aged pupils take part in at least two extra-curricular clubs each week, which make a significant contribution to their learning. Experience of taking part in school productions, such as the *Winter Showcase*, helps pupils to develop both confidence and self-discipline. For example, two pupils have been selected to join the Abu Dhabi National Orchestra. Participation in sport is a strong feature of the school with just over 100 fixtures taking place every year. A number of pupils have successfully competed in athletics, football, netball and swimming at the World School Games. Some have also competed successfully at Emirates-wide level in football and rugby. Pupils are successful at the national mathematics challenge and several pupils have won prizes in the UAE competition for reading of the Quran. Leaders and governors have designed a stimulating curriculum that gives all pupils the chance to fulfil their potential, both academically and beyond the classroom. Those who have SEND and EAL are as keen to take advantage of the broad range of opportunities as their peers, and their achievement is greatly enhanced as a result.
- 3.7 Pupils develop excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They successfully use ICT to enrich their learning across the curriculum. For example, in a science session, children in the early years showed good development of fine-motor skills in activating confidently a virtual reality device and investigating successfully the habitats of different animals. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 skilfully used tablets to scan quick response codes and so to access tasks set by their teacher. Pupils know how to use technology safely. In a Year 1 ICT lesson, pupils accurately evaluated the dangers of using different forms of technology for a variety of purposes. Older pupils were producing a digital documentary on the Vikings. They clearly evaluated the necessary ethical and practical considerations in obtaining consent to use an individual's image. Pupils have well-developed coding expertise. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 skilfully wrote programs that enabled a robot to navigate to a location on a grid. In a different class, older pupils proficiently set a background, inserted and deleted animated images and ran other specific scripts in an online platform.
- 3.8 Pupils acquire and develop highly sophisticated study skills as they move through the school. For example, children in the early years were able to analyse conservation issues confidently when studying photographs of a beach. They compared enthusiastically a photograph of litter with one of seaweed on the seashore. This allowed them to use effectively their knowledge of both man-made and natural problems in the environment. In a history lesson, pupils in Year 1 successfully analysed the similarities and differences between the monarchs of the UK and the UAE. The pupils worked enthusiastically with their partners and used the information well to identify solutions to a given problem, for example a natural disaster. Pupils' ability to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise continues to develop well during their time in the school. In discussion with inspectors, older pupils were able to explain clearly what guidance they had been given on the next steps needed to advance their learning. In an English lesson, pupils in Year 1 worked collaboratively to draft their advertisements about dragons. Their well-developed knowledge of vocabulary enabled them to select the best adjectives such as 'red', 'spiky' and 'scary' to describe their dragon.
- 3.9 During their time at the school, pupils become confident and engaging communicators. This is even more notable as English is an additional language for almost two-thirds of pupils in the school. They develop effective strategies for improving oracy as a result of support from teaching and support staff. Children in the early years expressed themselves eloquently after listening to some musical extracts. Here they commented readily on the key features using Italian musical terms such as 'largo' (slow) and 'allegro' (fast). Pupils are self-assured communicators in Arabic. For example, in a social studies lesson for older native Arabic speakers, pupils used their well-honed listening skills to respond successfully in Arabic, both orally and in writing, as they discussed the climates in different regions. In a music lesson, pupils in Year 3 demonstrated excellent reading and memory skills in re-ordering different lines of text to form a new song. In a reading lesson, older pupils were secure in reading and discussing key information from *A Natural History of the Unmentionable* by Nicola Davies. They then wrote well-structured answers on

the digestive functions of different animals. Pupils develop high levels of proficiency in writing largely because of very focused teaching. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils successfully enhanced their writing techniques by learning how adverbials could be used to describe the time, place and manner of an event.

- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate an extensive range of skills, knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. Children in the early years correctly identified different parts of the body while singing their good morning song: *Hello what do you know?* In a practical science lesson, pupils in Year 2 demonstrated very good recall of their previous knowledge in naming accurately the four main parts of a plant: stem, flower, roots and leaves. Older pupils demonstrated excellent hand-eye co-ordination in a physical education lesson when honing their catching and throwing skills. In English, older pupils made rapid progress in understanding as they used persuasive and non-persuasive techniques when discussing why palm oil might be harmful to the environment. Occasionally, in other lessons the pace of learning does not maximise the pupils' learning. Activities are not always consistently challenging, and opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning are sometimes limited in scope.
- 3.11 Pupils have strong numeracy skills and are successful in applying them in other subjects when dealing with mathematical reasoning and solving word problems. Children in the early years enthusiastically helped their teacher to take the register. Here they counted the number of their friends in the class who were present and then, by using a number-line, they were able to work out how many were absent. In a science lesson, older pupils successfully recalled the definition of 'reflection', which they had learned when measuring the angles of mirror reflections in their mathematics lessons. During a Year 6 music lesson, pupils listened carefully to each other when playing the djembe drums, maintaining a steady beat. Next, they successfully used their mathematical knowledge and problem-solving skills to work out accurately the different rhythmical patterns consisting of crotchets (one-beat notes), quavers (half-beat notes) and semi-quavers (quarter-beat notes).
- 3.12 Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning can be seen in classrooms and beyond. At all ages they develop a love of learning, wanting to find out as much as possible and to embrace new challenges. For example, children in the early years demonstrated excellent initiative and independence when they correctly identified the numerical symbol for the number eight. In a social studies lesson, pupils in Year 5 successfully worked out strategies for resolving conflict: initiate conversation and find common ground; know when to forgive and forget; and understand that it is fine to feel emotions, but it is how we use them that matters. In a football fixture against another school, older pupils showed excellent leadership skills in their end-ball game, dynamically developing tactics to enable the game to flow better and produce more opportunities to score.

## **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

### **3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

- 3.14 Pupils have an excellent understanding of being healthy, and they feel safe in school. This is as a result of leaders and governors placing a high priority on pupils' well-being. Pupils enjoy taking part in yoga, swimming and cycling proficiency. Participation in these activities enables them to gain a secure understanding of how to use the equipment and spaces, including the swimming pool, safely. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of personal and oral hygiene by washing their hands before and brushing their teeth after meals. This is enhanced by regular visits from dentists and doctors. Pupils articulate what healthy eating choices look like, an area which is well embedded in the curriculum from the early years onwards. Regular online safety workshops for parents ensure that the entire community is well advised. Pupils display excellent awareness of the issues. This is reflected in the pupil survey, in which most report they know how to stay safe online. They show a mature appreciation of how to maintain their mental health. Purposeful leadership from the well-being ambassadors supports pupils and the school community to lead a balanced, healthy and happy lifestyle.

- 3.15 Pupils develop their self-knowledge and self-awareness well as they move through the school. They grow in confidence, both within and beyond the classroom, because of leaders' encouragement and promotion of a 'can-do' ethos. For example, in a numeracy session, children in the early years demonstrated self-belief and confidently interpreted verbal clues in order to identify the number being described. They showed initiative and the resilience to persevere with the task, even when they made small slips. Across the school, pupils are taught a variety of strategies to help them to learn. For example, older pupils displayed attentive attitudes by working independently on their research project, using dictionaries, textbooks, tablets and each other for support. Pupils develop increasing proficiency in improving their own learning and in giving feedback on each other's work. In response to the questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that the school promotes and successfully supports their children's personal development.
- 3.16 Pupils make wise and sensible decisions. They demonstrate the ability to make balanced choices about everyday life by organising themselves well during the school day. For example, in the majority of lessons, pupils independently select from five different levels of work to match their current self-assessed levels of skill and understanding. Similarly, early years children were able to choose from a range of activities, such as making things using sand, water, building blocks or other materials. During interviews with inspectors, Year 6 pupils commented that the teachers had prepared them very well for their next schools. Older pupils also stated that they learn valuable life skills about how to make sound decisions in stressful situations. For example, they know what to do if people are rude to them online or on social media. At a practical level, they understand what they should do in the event of a fire breaking out.
- 3.17 Pupils show an excellent appreciation and awareness of the non-material aspects of life and know what matters to them, for example friendships at school. Older pupils described with passion the effects of deforestation on the world and how it makes them feel angry and frustrated. In an Islamic studies lesson, pupils in Year 2 were discussing what kindness is. Here they considered the merits of being kind and showing compassion towards animals. They then reflected on the Hadith and how different acts could be interpreted as good or bad, as demonstrated in the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) (Peace be upon him) teaching that a good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being. Many pupils enjoy the strong sense of fulfilment gained from performance, whether it be through drama or music. Pupils are able to explore and express their deeper emotions in the performing arts and to reflect on how to control emotions that can be experienced in performance such as nervousness and elation. They recognise that at times learning can be tiring and demanding. They regularly use yoga to help them to restore and refocus their concentration so that they can return to their learning invigorated. In a mindfulness session, pupils in Year 4 successfully learned useful strategies that help to calm the mind and body and sustain their mental health. Children in early years have regular quiet times in which they are enabled to reflect usefully on their feelings during the school day.
- 3.18 Pupils' moral understanding and acceptance of responsibility for their behaviour towards others are excellent. They demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong and show considerable care for one another. For example, in a PSHE lesson, older pupils confidently discussed and debated the moral dilemma of whether it was more important to be right or nice. They willingly voiced their opinions and were self-assured in explaining that the context was important when giving an answer and that the opinions of others should be taken into consideration. Children in the early years clearly understood the importance of being truthful and taking responsibility for their actions. In a PSHE lesson about respect, pupils in Year 2 were considering what it was like to be a new pupil joining their class. Here they discussed the power of words in being disrespectful and hurtful. Pupils used a paper cut-out of a human being to illuminate their thinking. For example, when they made personal remarks about someone's shoes, they would then tear off the foot of the paper human. After saying sorry, they then stuck the foot back with sticky tape. When they compared the original version with the repaired one, they noticed that even after an apology, someone can still be hurting and there might be emotional scarring. Pupils

gained an excellent understanding of how words can be as hurtful as physical actions through this well-planned, thought-provoking activity.

- 3.19 Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of social development which reflect the school's aims and ethos, so that they have a keen sense of the value of collaboration and of contributing to the community. They embrace responsibility from an early age with infectious enthusiasm and understanding, taking on leadership roles willingly and successfully. Their responsibilities enable them to make a positive contribution to the wider life of the school and include elected roles such as head boy and girl, sport and house captains, eco-warrior, school councillor, librarian and cultural ambassadors. Younger pupils are very aware of their social responsibilities beyond home and school; they actively sort their recyclable waste using conveniently located recycling bins around the school. Older pupils make an effective contribution to the school's wider society by performing in music recitals before school to parents and peers. Pupils' work on behalf of others, the school and the community is excellent. They take much pride in choosing and raising funds for several charities, some based in the UAE and some overseas. This demonstrates a strong sense of duty and service as well as much thoughtfulness and empathy with others, particularly those less fortunate than themselves. They do well in an environment that inspires them to make a positive contribution to their community and to their own personal development. For example, during visits to classrooms and in discussion with inspectors, pupils demonstrated how well they remain engaged and motivated by the school's rewards system.
- 3.20 Pupils develop a mature appreciation of diversity and cultures other than their own. For example, in an English lesson, older pupils confidently discussed, from the perspectives of both men and women, the fairness and unfairness of women in ancient Greece not being allowed to act in or watch theatre. In discussion with inspectors, pupils spoke animatedly about the many celebratory events such as Ramadan and Diwali that represent the different cultures within the school. Pupils' cultural awareness is further broadened by visits to live theatre and sports performances. They come to appreciate British culture by reading, seeing and hearing literature, art and music. During group discussions with inspectors, pupils demonstrated that they are extremely tolerant of each other's cultures and faiths. In an Islamic studies lesson, older pupils demonstrated a deep understanding of tolerance as reflected in their high-quality discussion about the video by Sheikh Zayed. Pupils were confident in creating words that express the meaning of tolerance, such as kindness, acceptance, respect and charity and they unanimously expressed the opinion that tolerance should apply to everyone regardless of race, gender, age, disability or religion. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence supports this view.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff, a proprietor and the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and form meetings and an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr David Scott	Reporting inspector
Mr Kristian Cejka	Team inspector (Vice principal, BSA school, Alexandria)
Mrs Kate Hurley	Team inspector (Former assistant headteacher, IAPS school, UK)
Ms Amanda Lidgard	Team inspector (Director of studies, BSO school, UAE)