



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

Pearling Season International School

February 2023

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School's Details

School	Pearling Season International School			
Address	Al Mansoura Campus (PSIS) 46 Al Khudri St (810) Bin Dirham (25) Al Mansoura PO Box 47021 Qatar			
	Al Gharrafa Campus (PSIS) Zone No 51 Building 12 Al Oyoun St No 879			
Telephone number	Al Mansoura campus +97 4747 78989 Al Gharrafa campus +97 4660 16340			
Email address	info@psisg.sch.qa info@psisd.sch.qa			
Principals	Mr Ahmed Al-Talib (Al Mansoura) Mr Clive Shepherd (Al Gharrafa)			
Chief Executive Officer	Mr Albert Bambukian			
Proprietor	Mrs Sheikha Myriam Al Thani			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils Al Mansoura	732			
	EYFS	85	Primary	320
	Seniors	283	Sixth Form	44
Number of pupils Al Gharrafa	708			
	EYFS	99	Primary	300
	Seniors	286	Sixth Form	23
Inspection dates	22 to 23 February 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Pearling Season International School is an independent, co-educational day school consisting of two campuses in the city of Doha. The Al Mansoura campus opened in 2014 and the Al Gharrafa campus in 2021. Each campus is organised into four sections; a foundation stage for children aged between 3 and 5 years, a primary section for pupils in Years 1 to 6, a senior school for pupils in Years 7 to 11 and a sixth form. The Al Mansoura campus is fully co-educational throughout. The Al Gharrafa campus separates male and female pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- 1.2 The school has a sole proprietor and a Chief Executive Officer, who together form the executive board which is responsible for school governance. Each campus has a principal and a senior leadership team who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. This is the school's first inspection by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to support and develop its learners to be global citizens, leaders of tomorrow and 21st century individuals who think globally and act locally. It encourages pupils to display traditional values of empathy, discipline and respect within an English-speaking environment and to develop their intellectual and human potential.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils come from professional families living in Doha and its surroundings. There are 47 nationalities represented in the school with almost half of them coming from Qatar and Egypt and smaller numbers from elsewhere in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests worldwide.
- 1.5 The school has identified 99 pupils across the two campuses with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support either in mainstream or specialist classes. There are 159 pupils whom the school identifies as having English as an additional language (EAL) of whom 124 receive specialist language support. The school supports pupils it has identified as having high potential with a programme designed to develop their abilities within and beyond the curriculum.

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 ONLY inspection and as such 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 inspection.

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 3 and 4 and most aspects of paragraph 2 are met, but that relating to paragraph 2(2)(d)(ii) (personal, social, health and economic education) cannot be met because it is precluded by the host country's legislation.**
- 2.3 The curriculum is well planned and enables pupils to experience a suitably broad and balanced education, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas of learning. Pupils acquire a good understanding of English, and they develop a broad range of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Policies, planning and schemes of work for pupils of all ages are thorough and appropriate. They are suitably aligned to the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils with SEND needs are carefully assessed on entry. Those with more significant needs follow a separate specialised curriculum with one-to-one support and others receive support from teaching assistants within the mainstream curriculum.
- 2.4 Children in Kindergarten and Reception follow a programme covering the seven areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum; in the primary school the curriculum is based on the English national curriculum; secondary pupils work towards qualifications in IGSCSE and A Level. All pupils study Arabic, Islamic studies and the history of Qatar as required by Qatari law.
- 2.5 The curriculum includes personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and up-to-date careers guidance for those in the senior school. It prepares pupils effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life outside of school and is underpinned by a strong understanding of fundamental values of British, Qatari and other societies. The new PSHE programme, which is delivered as a timetabled lesson for all pupils, covers a wide range of topics and encourages respect for other people as far as is allowed by the laws of the host country. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of parents and pupils did not agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Recent COVID restrictions have limited the programme of school trips and visits, but these are now taking place more regularly. There is currently a suitable range of extra-curricular activities in place.
- 2.6 Teaching enables pupils to make good progress and to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons are well planned, and their delivery shows an understanding of the pupils' needs and abilities, demonstrates secure subject knowledge and effective use of resources. It uses a range of approaches to foster application and does not discriminate against pupils due to their gender, ability, beliefs, disability or race. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to deliver lessons which take account of a wide variety of ability in many cases, using previous assessment of pupils to inform their planning. In their questionnaire responses most pupils agreed that the school gives them the opportunity to learn and make progress and that teachers are supportive and helpful. In the most effective lessons pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and work independently, though a small minority of pupils in the senior school felt that lessons could be more interesting. Sixth-form pupils value individualised programmes of study which are effective in preparing them for tertiary studies in a wide variety of universities in Qatar and overseas. Strategies to manage behaviour are effective and the school has a suitable and detailed framework in place to track and report on pupils' progress.

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

- 2.7 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in sub-paragraphs 5(a) and (b)(i)–(v) and (vii) are met but that in sub-paragraph 5(b)(vi) (encouraging respect for other people) cannot be met because it is precluded by the country’s legislation.**
- 2.8 The school identifies and actively promotes values which support the personal development of pupils such as perseverance, independence, and curiosity thus enabling pupils to develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence. The school promotes values of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance for those of different faiths or beliefs which are fundamental to life in Britain and many other countries. Pupils come from nearly 50 different nationalities and many different faiths and in this truly international community pupils gain a strong understanding and appreciation of each other’s cultures and backgrounds. The school puts values of care, respect, co-operation, integrity and responsibility at the centre of its education and these are emphasized visually around the school, in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils accept responsibility for their behaviour and can distinguish between right and wrong. They take up opportunities to contribute to their school community and to the lives of others and they gain knowledge of and respect for public institutions in England, as well as respect for the responsibilities of being a Qatari citizen. The school precludes the presentation of partisan political views.
- 2.9 Many opportunities are provided to learn about outstanding humans across the world who demonstrate particular attributes, such as curiosity and perseverance. School houses are named after these famous role models and pupils are encouraged to develop such qualities themselves. The school encourages respect for other people whose characteristics are protected in law as set out in the UK Equality Act 2010; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in so far as is allowed by the laws of the host country. Pupils’ respect for democratic processes and understanding of each other is enhanced through their participation in the school council.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. It takes into account both local requirements and guidance provided for schools in England and applies these in the local context. There is a suitable safeguarding policy which is appropriately implemented. The school liaises with local agencies providing children’s services and refers as necessary. It also provides an effective level of support within school, including counselling services. Senior leaders have appropriate advanced level training in safeguarding, and staff are suitably trained when they join the school and then through annual training and regular updates. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) maintains appropriate oversight of safeguarding policies and procedures and undertakes an effective annual review. The designated safeguarding leads (DSL) at each campus maintain effective records of any child protection concerns, and the wider safeguarding teams are readily available as a source of support for pupils and staff. Pupils are made fully aware of issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety, through assemblies and topics covered within the PSHE programme.
- 2.12 Procedures to promote good behaviour are well known and understood by pupils of all ages and they are implemented effectively. A suitable system of rewards for good behaviour is in place, and sanctions are applied appropriately when the need arises. Records are kept of all behavioural issues, and these are monitored effectively by senior staff to identify any trends. Pupils involved in any behavioural incidents all receive appropriate ongoing support. Suitable measures are in place to reduce the risk of bullying, and pupils have been educated through assemblies and the PSHE programme about how to recognise and respond to any incidents. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils in the senior schools disagreed that bullying incidents are responded to effectively. The school has recently trained all staff and pupils in anti-bullying, and

inspection evidence including written records, shows a swift and appropriate response to any incidents. Good behaviour is the norm for most pupils. School leaders continue to review their arrangements in order to give pupils further confidence to 'speak up'.

- 2.13 The school's approach to health and safety is rigorous; policies and practice meet the requirements of the Qatari authorities and are in accordance with expectations for schools in England. Detailed records are kept of all health and safety checks, many of which are carried out by external providers. Fire drills are carried out regularly and suitably recorded, and all fire infrastructure is regularly inspected by an external provider so that risks are appropriately managed. Hazardous materials are stored securely. Security checks for those entering the premises are vigilant and effective. There is a suitable risk assessment policy, and appropriate risk assessments are completed for trips and visits. Staff have recently been trained in completing the new written risk assessments for school premises which are now in place. The CEO oversees all matters of health and safety with appropriate knowledge and due diligence.
- 2.14 Pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school day, and there are appropriate numbers of staff on duty at breaks and lunchtimes. Supervision levels for pupils in the foundation setting are sufficient at all times. Admission and attendance registers meet local and English requirements and are retained for the requisite period of time.
- 2.15 The school has an appropriate first aid policy which is implemented effectively and ensures that pupils are cared for in a timely manner if they are ill or injured. The school has a qualified nurse on duty whenever pupils are on site. Adequate numbers of staff are trained in first aid. Records of any accidents or injuries are kept and all medicines are stored securely.

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

- 2.16 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.17 The school carries out appropriate checks on staff, senior leaders and the proprietor's representative. Appropriate checks in line with Qatari law are carried out to ensure right to work in Qatar. These include relevant police and medical checks as well as identity. For all those who have worked overseas, checks are made on employment history and good conduct in home or host countries. The school can no longer make checks through the UK's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) but mitigates the risk through other checks, including references. Those teachers and managers who have worked in the UK are checked for prohibition from teaching. The school keeps a suitable single central register of appointments which records the dates on which all checks are made. Staff files include all required documentation.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.18 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.19 The school occupies two sites and in both cases the premises are appropriate, well maintained and are checked regularly for any issues that might compromise health and safety. The buildings are modern, spacious and well appointed and they fully meet the needs of educating pupils. Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical needs are provided. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate, and drinking water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education within and beyond the curriculum and for outdoor play. The early years children have secure outside areas for play. Suitable shaded areas provide effectively for pupils' needs during extreme hot weather.

Part 6 – Provision of information

2.20 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

2.21 The requisite range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents. Contact details for the school and its principal, as well as a statement of the school's ethos, are provided to parents. This information includes details about the proprietor, the aims of the school and the curriculum offered. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. Arrangements and policies for admissions, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year are made available, as are details of the provision for pupils with SEND and EAL. Particulars of pupils' achievements in standardised tests and results at GCSE, AS and A level are published on the school's website, and parents are provided with reports outlining their children's progress each term.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.22 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

2.23 The school's complaints procedure is published on the school's website. It provides for a three-stage process with clear timescales, including an initial informal stage. If concerns are not resolved informally, parents are able to proceed to a formal stage by submitting a complaint in writing to the school's principal. If the concerns still remain unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel which includes at least one person independent of the management and running of the school and which parents may attend, accompanied if they wish. The panel will then make findings and recommendations. A confidential and comprehensive record is kept of all complaints and findings. There have been no recent formal complaints.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

2.25 The proprietor's representative ensures that leadership and management of the school have sufficient knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The school's leadership has a clear structure for managing both the school's campuses, providing consistency but also implementing some differences, such as the gender separation in Year 7 to 9 at Al Gharrafa. This takes account of differences in the cultural and religious backgrounds of pupils. The school's leadership and management know the pupils in their care and they actively promote their well-being.

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the Chief Executive Officer, who represents the proprietor. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and form meetings and assemblies. 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

Mrs Kate McCarey	Reporting inspector
Mr Brian Oppenheim	Assistant reporting inspector
Mrs Heidi Berry	Team inspector (Deputy head, BSO school, Qatar)
Mrs Emma Parsons	Team inspector (Pastoral deputy head, HMC school, United Kingdom)