



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

International British School Kuwait

March 2023

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School's Details

School	International British School Kuwait			
Address	Ibn Taimiya Street Block 9 Fahaheel Kuwait 64004			
Telephone number	+965 22219245			
Email address	info@ibskuwait.com			
Principal	Ms Delphine Vallier			
Chair of goverors	Ms Lana Al – Layar			
Proprietor	Al Rayan Holding Company			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	536			
	EYFS	112	Juniors	294
	Seniors	123	Sixth Form	7
Inspection dates	12 to 13 March 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The International British School in Kuwait is a privately owned English-speaking international primary and secondary school for day pupils. The school is located in the Fahaheel region to the south of Kuwait City. The school has specialist teaching rooms for information and communication technology (ICT), music, art, science and performing arts. The school has access to sports facilities, including several artificial pitches, a swimming pool and indoor hall. The strategic direction of the school is overseen by the Al Rayan Holding Company (ARHC) who are the proprietors of the school. Day-to-day governance is seen as a shared responsibility between the school's senior leaders and ARHC, who work in close collaboration with the chief executive officer who is the chair of the governing board.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to inspire, connect and engage with young minds through the highest standards of English-based education, developing character and ambition, and building a reputation for producing the leading lights of tomorrow.

About the pupils

- 1.3 The majority of pupils come from professional families living in or close to Fahaheel. The pupils represent a wide range of nationalities with the majority being from Egypt and Kuwait. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to others taking the same tests. The school has identified two pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, and they receive in-class support. There are 504 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) of whom 84 pupils currently receive support. The school has identified 22 pupils as being the most able in the school's population for whom the curriculum is modified. Enrichment opportunities are provided for them and for 11 other pupils because of their special talents in sport, languages and the creative arts.

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.

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

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 requirements relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 2(1)(a) and (b) and paragraphs 2(2)(a) to 2(2)(d)(i) and 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(i)], and that relating to teaching in sub-paragraphs 3(a) to 3(i) and 4 are met. Those relating to paragraph 2(2)(d)(ii) (curriculum) and sub-paragraph 3(i) (teaching in respect of protected characteristics) cannot be met because they are precluded by the host country's legislation.**
- 2.3 The school curriculum is balanced and provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. Pupils are enabled to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills and a good understanding of English. Policies, plans and schemes of work for all subjects take account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, including those with SEND. Subject planning reflects teachers' awareness of the needs of pupils and their prior learning, and schemes of work closely follow the English curriculum.
- 2.4 The majority of pupils do not have English as a first language; however, their spoken and written English enables them to cope well with a largely English curriculum taught in English. A small number of pupils with lower competency levels in English are offered specialist support in the form of extra lessons and in class support. Additionally, the academic programme consists of both Arabic and Islamic studies which is a requirement for all schools in Kuwait.
- 2.5 In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of parents did not think that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. However, this is mostly related to the curtailment of activities due to the pandemic, which are slowly opening up as restrictions decrease. A minority of pupils in the questionnaire felt that some lessons lacked challenge and interest. However, nearly all lessons visited during the inspection were well prepared, with a good range of suitable activities to both challenge and stimulate the pupils across the ability ranges and year groups.
- 2.6 The teaching overall enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress, a view endorsed by the majority of parents and pupils in their response to the questionnaires. Additional support, provided by the intervention team, is provided for the small number of pupils who join the school with SEND. Throughout the school, teaching is well planned in most lessons, including challenge for the most able, employing effective teaching methods, using a variety of resources, including projection facilities onto whiteboards. Pupils were highly responsive and engaged in lessons and pupil behaviour was of a high standard. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding, with effective behaviour management and they know their pupils well.
- 2.7 The curriculum is based on the English national curriculum and proactively encourages respect for other people in many regards. However, it cannot promote some protected characteristics such as gender reassignment, civil partnership and same sex unions, as they are not recognised in Kuwaiti law and the promotion of any such related issues is precluded by the country's legislation. Pupils' performance is measured through a variety of ways including termly and topic assessments, which although not benchmarked to United Kingdom (UK) standards, are evaluated in relation to the school's aims. Data show that at IGCSE and AS-level most pupils at the school make better than expected progress and that levels of attainment are above average when compared to pupils in the UK taking the same examinations. Early Years' assessment and monitoring shows similar levels of progress.

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

- 2.8 The requirements relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in sub-paragraphs 5 (a), (b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(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.**
- 2.9 The school promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It promotes principles which enable pupils to develop self-knowledge, esteem and confidence; distinguish right from wrong; accept responsibility for their behaviour; contribute to the lives of others; and gain knowledge and respect for public institutions in England and for responsibilities of Kuwaiti citizenship. Further, it encourages tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions and a balanced presentation of political views and preclusion of partisan political views. The school encourages respect for other people with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the UK Equality Act 2010, except when precluded by the country's legislation.
- 2.10 In discussion with pupils, across all age groups, they confirmed that they are encouraged to contribute views on the operation of the school and are able to raise concerns and complaints. Some were able to indicate changes that had been made in response to their concerns. The need to formally listen to the views of pupils is increasingly being recognised. In discussion pupils made positive reference to their involvement with student council meetings and house meetings as a means of ensuring that their views were taken into account. Pupils feel that the school promotes high levels of mutual respect and support between each other, and this was evident from pupil discussions. Pupils show high levels of adherence to the school rules, and they show a pride in being a member of a recognised British school community in Kuwait.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.**
- 2.12 Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements take account of Kuwait law and have regard to guidance statutory in the UK. The school ensures that staff training, including that for governors, enables pupils to be listened to and provided with early help. The particular vulnerability of the very small number of pupils with SEND is acknowledged and allowances are made for them. The school has a counsellor who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is assisted by deputies (DDSLs), one of whom has responsibility for the Early Years. All have up-to-date level of training for their roles. All teaching and the majority of auxiliary staff, receive annual training from the DSL appropriate to their roles, supplemented by regular on-line training. There is an appropriate safeguarding governor in place and the school adheres to the *2015 Kuwait Child Rights Law State Child Protection Regulations*.
- 2.13 New staff receive appropriate induction training which includes understanding the school safeguarding policy and procedures, information about the identity and role of the DSL's, the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures and acceptable use of technologies. Pupils receive suitable guidance relating to issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes, assemblies and tutor time.
- 2.14 Procedures to promote good behaviour are known and understood by pupils and are effectively implemented by staff. A small minority of pupils in the questionnaire felt they would be reluctant to approach members of staff if they had a concern or worry, on the basis that their culture was to talk to a family member first. Pupils in discussion unanimously expressed the view that, although they might go to a family member first, they would always feel confident to approach their teachers and be confident that the matter raised would be resolved. A suitable system of rewards celebrates pupils' success, efforts and achievements, and appropriate sanctions are applied if the need arises. In the

primary section a weekly celebration assembly, seen during the visit, focused on the successes of the younger age groups and a keenly contested house points system operates across all school sections. Records are appropriately kept of the very few behavioural incidents that occur, and these are effectively monitored in order to identify any trends. Bullying, including cyber bullying, is prevented as far as is reasonably practical. Matters involving cyber bullying are virtually non-existent in the school as the Ministry in Kuwait ensures that use of social media and inappropriate internet sites is strictly controlled. Pupil behaviour observed is of a high standard and records indicate that sanctions are applied consistently. The school values include empathy and kindness and this is well reflected in the school culture. Pupil discussions indicated that they felt well looked after in the school, that they found the school culture to be friendly and welcoming and that there is a clear sense of pride in being a member of the school community.

- 2.15 The school complies with relevant health and safety laws and fire safety standards including those which apply under the Kuwait law. The school is subject to spot checks from the Ministry. Record keeping is thorough and shows that there is an effective overview of health and safety procedures. Fire drills are carried out regularly for all sections of the school and are suitably recorded. There is a suitable system for the provision and maintenance of emergency routes and exits and effective maintenance programme for fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers. The premises are maintained to a suitable level of safety and hygiene.
- 2.16 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and their effective implementation. A small minority of pupils in the questionnaire stated that first aid treatment was not always prompt; however, pupil discussions and records showed that pupils who are ill or injured are almost always treated in a timely and appropriate manner. The school has an arrangement with a nearby local hospital to provide emergency assistance when required and a school nurse is always in attendance during the school day. A satisfactory programme of risk assessments, has been drawn up for most areas of the school and any related activities pupils undertake. However, these vary in quality and currently do not follow a common protocol. Currently senior leaders are working with Al Rayan to ensure that all risk assessments will follow the same methodology and rigour when assessing potential risk. There is a constant security guard presence on the school site to ensure that there is effective monitoring of all school entrances and exits, creating a secure and safe environment for both pupils and staff.
- 2.17 Pupils are appropriately supervised throughout the school day and on trips. Appropriate supervision rotas cover all sections of the school, including in Early Years where children are in sight and hearing distance of teachers at all times. Rotas appropriately require staff to be on duty at break and lunchtimes and when pupils are arriving or departing from the school during the day. As part of the school's duty of care to the pupils, appropriate extra precautions are taken during the summer period when outside temperatures can reach in excess of 40 degrees centigrade. During this period, pupils wear sunhats, and outdoor sports activities are appropriately restricted. Admission and attendance registers meet Kuwait and UK local requirements and are backed up and stored 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 school carries out the required checks on staff, proprietors and any other adults working at the school to ensure suitability to work with children, in line with Kuwaiti local requirements and guidance issued to schools in the UK. ARHC is responsible for carrying out and maintaining checks on all staff working in their schools and records of these are held centrally at head office. All staff are required to obtain an appropriate visa to work in Kuwait which results in the issue of a right to work directive from the Ministry once suitable checks are completed. In addition, all UK nationals are required to go through international child protection certificate (ICPC) checks. All staff are required to be in

possession of a national identity card before commencing work and both ARHC and the Ministry carry out a range of checks on all employees to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children. A suitable single central register appointments is maintained which details the recruitment checks undertaken. Staff files include all of the required documentation, they are well maintained and reflect good practice in recruiting all categories of staff, meeting both UK and Kuwait requirements.

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. There is appropriate changing accommodation for all pupils and a medical room, with an adjacent toilet facility, is located within the school site 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 Kuwait law, which allows for spot checks by health and safety representatives from the Ministry. Identified issues which may present a risk are rectified quickly. Acoustic conditions and both internal and external lighting are suitable. The provision of drinking water is suitable as water dispenser units are available on every floor level and there is provision of handwashing stations throughout the school to meet covid hygiene requirements.
- 2.22 There is good provision of spaces available for physical education, including a hall, recreation room, an outdoor artificial surface sport and recreation area and a swimming pool. Although recreation space and sports areas are shared facilities across year groups, appropriate timetabling enables separate use of these facilities between the primary, secondary and early years sections of the school. The large centrally located play and recreation space is suitably shaded to protect pupils from the intense heat which direct sunlight can create in the summer months.

Part 6 – Provision of information

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

- 2.24 All of the required information to comply with standards is provided or made available to current parents and parents of prospective pupils. The contact details for the school, the principal, the chair of the board of management and a statement of the school's aims and ethos are published on the school's website. Policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for pupils with SEND and those with EAL; the procedure for complaints; the curriculum; arrangements to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying; health and safety and the schools' provision for first aid are also made available to parents. The school's policy on safeguarding pupils is published on the school's website and the school provides a written report on each pupil's progress and attainment at least termly and there are two parental meetings held each year to allow parents to discuss their child's progress. Curriculum information sheets are sent home every half-term and there is an online parental portal that facilitates communication between the home and school.

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 procedures are available on the school's website. It provides for concerns and complaints to be considered on an informal basis; a formal procedure for complaints to be made in writing; and a hearing before a panel which includes an independent member should parents remain dissatisfied. The procedure allows for parents to be accompanied; for the panel to make findings and recommendations; and for a confidential record to be kept on the findings, including action taken by the school, whether or not the complaint is upheld. A further process is available for parents who wish

to take their complaint to the Ministry, who will respond with an appropriate recommendation. The majority of parents replying to the questionnaire said that they receive timely and helpful responses to their questions, concerns or complaints and the school's records indicate prompt responses to any concerns or complaints received, almost all of which are resolved informally.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

2.28 The leadership and management of the school, including members of the board of management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities so that the BSO standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of the pupils is promoted. Members of the Al Rayan board of management are regular visitors to the school and the chair of the board convenes periodic operational meetings to ensure they are kept fully informed on school matters. In addition, individual members of the management board have a focused overview of safeguarding, health and safety and staff recruitment and board members are required to undertake appropriate training. This arrangement ensures that there is effective oversight and monitoring of the school's policies and procedures, including an annual review of safeguarding procedures. Members of the board of management, are well informed and have a clear understanding, as do the school staff, of how to safeguard children and promote their well-being. The school is adequately resourced to support the curriculum and pupils' welfare is given a high priority alongside academic achievement. There is an increasing management focus on well-being and the school counsellor plays an important role in the school well-being programme which is having a positive impact on the pupil morale.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended 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

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