



Inspection Report

The Pearl Academy

**Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates**

Date **31st October – 2nd November 2022**
Inspection number **20221031**

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers, and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health, and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit teaching was observed across the school. This included looking at pupils' work in books, work on display and talking to pupils. School documentation, teachers plan, and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Discussions were held with the staff, the school's board of governors, parents, and groups of pupils. The lead inspector was Nicola Walsh. The team members were Katherine Gilbert and Matthew Lee.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the Pearl Academy has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The Pearl Academy Abu Dhabi offers an outstanding quality of education to the pupils and families that it serves. The inquiry-based learning curriculum offered is creative and inspiring. Teaching is consistently good across the school and draws upon assessment information to plan lessons that are very closely matched to pupils needs. As a result, pupils enjoy school, learn well, and thrive. Pupils are supported to become independent, creative, and resourceful learners. The vision of the school; to promote innovative and inquiry-based learning through makers spaces, to inspire creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration and to put sustainability at the heart of the school community, is embedded across the school.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths across the school, including the following:

- Leaders who have an inspirational effect on the whole school community
- The actions of leaders to empower all staff to learn and grow
- The close attention that is paid to monitoring standards at all levels
- The strong links between planning, teaching and assessment that are embedded throughout the school
- Pupils who take responsibility for their own learning and have very positive attitudes towards school
- A stimulating environment that contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of their education
- The level of care, guidance, and support for pupils
- Communications with all stakeholders

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Further develop the inquiry-based learning curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to make links with other pupils internationally, and think like global citizens;
2. Ensure all pupils have a detailed understanding of where they are on their learning journey, with reference to age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics;
3. Consider enhancing the school's premises and accommodation by focusing on accessibility, modernisation, and increasing available space.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	The Pearl Academy		
Address	PO Box 129641 Between 9 th and 11 th Street Al Dhafrah Abu Dhabi UAE		
Main telephone #	+971 2 641 8887		
Website	https://www.thepearlacademy.sch.ae		
Email	principal@thepearlacademy.sch.ae		
Principal	Mrs Barbara Heaton		
Chair of board of governors/ proprietor	Mrs Dina Allaf		
Age range	3 years to 11 years		
Number of pupils	Total = 707	Boys = 361	Girls = 346
Pupil numbers by age on date of entry	(0-2 years) 0	(3-5 years) 269	(6-11 years) 438
	(12-16 years) 0	(17-18 years) 0	(18+ years) 0
Total number of part-time pupils	0		

The Pearl Academy is located within a residential district close to the centre of Abu Dhabi. The school's accommodation was previously a government school building and has been operating as The Pearl Academy from this site since 2007. The school was the first to join the Aldar group of schools, who oversee the school's financial and strategic direction.

Pupils at the school represent 59 different nationalities. Of these, the largest groups by nationality are Emirati 16%, Jordanian 16% and Indian 12%. There are 4% of British pupils on roll. Almost 40% of pupils speak English as a second language and where this is identified as impacting on pupils' progress, support is in place. The school is inclusive and accepts children into the school where pupils identified needs can be met. Currently 6% of pupils are identified as pupils of determination with school action at the highest level.

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Most teachers at the school are British expatriate with UK qualifications. The school's senior leadership team is British, as is the school's principal who was appointed to the school in January 2021. An active board of governors supports the school's leadership team. The Aldar group oversees the school's business. The school is a member of The British Schools of the Middle East.

4.1 British nature of the school

- The school delivers the English national curriculum (ENC)
- The school delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum in nursery and Foundation Stage (FS) 2 classes
- An UK approved phonics programme is taught to pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1
- Standardised assessments are sourced from the UK and results benchmarked against standards in schools in England and Wales.
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision, curriculum, teaching methods, extracurricular activities, and displays
- The school's board of governors is like that of a UK school
- The senior leadership at the school is British and replicates a British school structure
- Policies mirror those required by UK government schools
- The school is well resourced in materials that are in use in British schools
- Libraries are stocked with British literature and reading schemes are UK sourced
- The opportunities for pupils to be creative and explore contemporary issues such as sustainability reflect best practice in UK schools
- The opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles and to act democratically and influence the day-to-day running of the school
- The house system, rewards and sanctions replicate those in use in UK schools
- The inclusive admissions policy and procedures of the school
- The school celebrates aspects of British culture
- Most teaching staff are British, have UK qualifications and have recent experience of teaching the English national curriculum

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by The Pearl Academy meets the requirements of the BSO standards and is outstanding.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum meets the standard and is excellent.

The school delivers the English national curriculum (ENC) to pupils in years 1-6 and the EYFS framework to pupils under the age of 5. These are both adapted very effectively to meet the requirements of the ministry. A written curriculum is in place.

The curriculum is broad in that pupils study English, maths, science, computing, history, geography, art, design and technology, PE, music, Arabic, and for pupils in primary, social studies, and Islamic education. There is more English timetabled for younger pupils, this includes phonics sessions in EYFS and year 1, and regular daily guided reading sessions in primary. Specialist teachers deliver PE, music, and the ministry of education subjects to a high standard using curriculum objectives that are well matched to the age and stage of pupils.

Curriculum planning is overseen by the heads of key stage and the head of curriculum. Year group teams work together with subject leaders to create detailed medium-term plans using ENC learning objectives or the EYFS learning goals. Planning is supported using published schemes in maths and an approved UK phonics scheme is used to deliver phonics across EYFS and Key Stage 1.

Teachers adapt medium-term plans to create short term plans to meet the needs of the pupils in their class. Teacher's formative assessment of pupils' understanding of the learning objectives directly feeds into short-term planning. Teachers' effectively plan and deliver different levels of stretch and challenge for the range of abilities in the class. This is due to the close relationship between regular assessment and planning. Clear learning objectives and success criteria are detailed in each teacher's short term lesson plans and ensures there is a consistency of approach across year groups.

Subjects are delivered creatively through imaginative project-based learning. The close attention to planning of project-based learning across year groups ensures coverage of the ENC learning objectives and EYFS and links together the subjects computing, history, geography, art, design, and technology. There is a strong focus on the innovative application of technology in lessons to deliver project-based learning, particularly in Key Stage 2. A wealth of resources enable technology to be used to enhance curriculum delivery and develop pupils' subject knowledge of the

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project. A year 6 class used editing software to create short film documentaries. Planned opportunities to incorporate visual reality headsets into lessons enable pupils to have access to a world of information beyond the school.

The approach to curriculum planning through project-based learning is supported by the creative use of shared spaces in-between classrooms of the same year groups. These are referred to as 'makers spaces' and contain a range of displays and information for pupils to access independently. The starting point for projects is based on books and props; in Key Stage 1 pupils listened to a story 'Lost and Found.' As a stimulus to the project pupils were presented with a box containing objects. This prompted pupils to consider what Pebbles the penguin would want to take on his trip and the reasons why.

Daily story sessions in EYFS develop pupils' vocabulary and their understanding of the world. These are shared appropriately, often chosen democratically and engage all pupils, even those who have difficulties accessing the curriculum. Weekly 'show and tell' sessions engage pupils and enable pupils to be involved in learning about others whilst developing skills in speaking and listening. A focus on enabling pupils to build a repertoire of nursery rhymes and traditional tales is embedded across the curriculum in EYFS.

The curriculum for personal, health, social, emotional, and economic education is planned and delivered through the social studies and moral studies curriculum, and through assemblies and class time. Weekly whole school assemblies enable pupils to present on topics such as eco schools and healthy eating. Within the ministry's moral studies curriculum pupils have opportunities to discuss topics such as fairness, equality, and gratitude. Through this, they develop an understanding of the world around them and their role within it.

The school environment very effectively supports the delivery of the curriculum. Learning walls are used very effectively by pupils to seek solutions to problems. This was observed in a maths class where a pupil independently sought information of the method displayed from the previous days learning. Pupils talked about referring to the learning wall as a source of information.

Information related to the subjects taught is displayed to support pupils in their learning. The use of interactive white boards, flip charts and display boards by teachers enhances the teaching and ensures pupils are clear in what they are learning to do.

A broad range of extra-curricular activities enhance the timetabled curriculum provision and expands pupils' interests and aspirations. The range of choice is based on information gathered from pupils and parents. At the time of the inspection after school clubs included rugby, football, swim squad, construction, Arabic art, art, and creative writing. In addition, pupils have opportunities to participate regularly in

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competitions through BSME and Aldar interschools. These include many team sports in the ADISSA sporting leagues and other creative competitions such as the BSME App design competition.

The school organises competitions across the BSME network of schools in app design, which gives pupils the opportunity to build worlds based on sustainability using an online app. The creation of maker's spaces which include iPads, 3D printers, and VR goggles, enables technologies to be fully embedded across the curriculum.

Transition between key stages and into secondary school is smooth and supportive. Pupils entering the school into nursery and FS2 are offered a staggered start over time to enable the child to settle into school routines. A meet the teacher session is offered to parents of children in EYFS who are moving to Key Stage 1. Where the teacher has identified that the pupil may not yet be ready for the Key Stage 1 curriculum, plans in year 1 are put in place for the pupil to continue working towards achieving the early learning goals.

Transition to secondary schools within the Aldar group enable pupils to meet staff from the school and visit the school before the move. Teachers ensure that all assessment information is handed over to the secondary school so that transition is smooth and purposeful. Y6 pupils talked positively about the transition process to secondary school.

The curriculum for pupils of determination (POD) who have special educational needs is met by identifying the needs of each individual and creating an individual education plan that adapts the curriculum. Shadow teachers effectively support these pupils to access the curriculum at their own level. This was observed in FS2 where a shadow teacher effectively supported a pupil through timely and appropriate intervention to listen to a story with peers.

The curriculum provision for pupils who are using English as an additional language is met through intervention and in class support. Teachers are supported to identify pupils where levels of English maybe a barrier to learning and this is detailed on teachers' plans.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment meets the standard and is outstanding.

Teaching is consistently good across the school with no areas of weak teaching. Across the school the consistent use of learning objectives enables all pupils to know what they are learning to do. Teachers provide pupils with different levels of success criteria so that pupils can work towards a challenge that is matched to their level of ability. This was most evident in Key Stage 2 where pupils talked about the success criteria they were aiming to achieve and the reason for their choice. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to work independently, learn through making mistakes and investigation. Across the school effective deployment of teaching assistants ensures every adult is focussed on ensuring all pupils make progress.

Teaching in the early years' foundation stage is very well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers carefully plan provision based on detailed observations of pupils' abilities. Activities are enhanced using a wide range of high-quality resources and are very closely matched to the topic of study. For example, pupils listened to the story *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins. Teachers embedded the language in the story book through imaginative activities. Pupils manipulated small pieces of corn and counted the number of scoops to feed the animals, as detailed on a work card. Pupils painted using feathers and a fork to create an image of Rosie, and plastic eggs hidden in the sand tray further embedded vocabulary from the story. Two boys filled a pretend milk churn, whilst talking about characters in the story.

Adults in the classroom are fully engaged with supporting and prompting pupils to consider and investigate. A teaching assistant encouraged pupils to consider different sizes of balls as pupils played with a marble run. Both teacher and teaching assistants gather formative assessment to inform the day-to-day planning of activities and next steps for the pupils. Such that activities are very well matched to the age and stage of individual pupils; pupils were fully engaged in activities and progress was evident.

In KS1 the teachers plan tasks that are based around a topic. Teachers introduce the topic imaginatively to engage pupils from the outset. This was observed in an assembly with year 1 pupils where a box that had been delivered the previous week was opened. At the same time, a letter was delivered, and this resulted in high levels of excitement. Opportunities for pupils to ask and respond to questions further enhanced the experience and several pupils participated in reading the letter aloud to the assembled audience.

In Key Stage 1 creative continuous provision is used effectively to enhance learning for pupils of all abilities. When required, year 1 pupils may continue to work to achieve the early learning goals, before transferring over to the ENC objectives. In all lessons observed in Key Stage 1, teachers considered pupils' individual needs. Assessment for learning strategies were embedded. Another strong feature of Key

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Stage 1 was the fluidity of the groupings of pupils, so that pupils made progress in their learning at the rate appropriate to everyone, and not at the rate for the group. In many lessons teaching provides pupils with the skills to learn well and be successful. In Key Stage 2 pupils may develop their own success criteria with their teachers and use this to self-assess. Pupils know how to seek support so that no learning time is lost. Teachers encourage pupils to seek solutions to their problems, such as seeking support from peers, learning walls, or reviewing previous learning.

Assessment information is used very effectively at all levels. Teachers use assessment information routinely to identify pupils where there may be misconceptions. Teachers quickly identified pupils and supported them through revisiting aspects of misunderstanding in small groups in year 5 and 6 maths classes. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective and self-assess, 'Thumbs up' was used in music lessons and a tower of red, orange, green cubes were on tables to show understanding i.e., the colour on top demonstrated their understanding. In EYFS, classes both the teacher and teaching assistant were continually observing pupils. Teaching assistants were familiar with, and annotated pupil's attainment of aspects of the early learning goals. Such that all pupils make strong progress against the learning objectives, and this is continually checked by teachers, teaching assistants and pupils using self-assessment techniques.

An online assessment system is integrated into the teaching and assists teachers in deciding the next steps with pupils. Teachers closely track pupils' attainment of the learning objectives and each half term this information is used to inform teachers' planning and monitor progress.

The school's leaders set challenging targets for pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils' performances at cohort and whole school level are analysed and compared with regional and international benchmarks, so that leaders understand how well the teaching is impacting on pupils' performances and the outcomes for pupils.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by pupils are outstanding.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional, as is their attendance in school indicating high levels of enjoyment. In lessons pupils are highly engaged and demonstrate excellent learning skills. Pupils talked very positively of the school's systems around teaching and learning, rewards and sanctions and the welfare of everyone in the school. Pupils collaborated very effectively where they were required to work together and demonstrated strong learning skills in resilience and reflection when working independently.

The school's internal assessment data indicates that the percentage of pupils' attaining in line with UK standards at the end of key stages, well exceeds those of UK schools in reading, writing and maths separately, and combined. Where pupils are working at a higher level at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2022, these pupils attained a higher level of attainment than pupils in UK schools in reading, writing and maths combined. Where pupils are working at a level below expectations timely and purposeful intervention supports pupils to make progress against the targets set such that all pupils make strong progress.

Pupils in early years are working at the expected standard. FS2 pupils talked about what they were learning to do and were confident and fluent in English. Pupils followed an approved UK phonics scheme at an appropriate level. There were aspects of pupils' use of English which indicated a level of vocabulary as to be expected with pupils who are using English as a second language. This was evident in hearing pupils read, where pupils were fluent, but understanding was not always accurate. Particularly where pupils were working at a high level of attainment in reading. Across the seven areas of the EYFS standards on entry to Nursery demonstrate lower than expected levels of attainment in physical development and communication and language. Due to careful planning of activities and teachers' close attention, pupils make good progress in Nursery and across FS2. By the time pupils enter year 1 most pupils are meeting the early learning goals across all areas.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, standards in pupils' workbooks indicate that most pupils are working at and above age-related expectations. Pupils attainment in year 1 phonics tests are above the UK standards. In Key Stage 1 pupils read at the level expected, with some errors in understanding where pupils are using English as a second language. Although pupils have a good command of spelling, punctuation, and grammar in English, handwriting was an area that fell below expected standards, particularly in Key Stage 2.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development meets the standard and is excellent.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is met through a carefully considered approach by the school's leaders. They ensure pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, have choices, and can influence decisions about the business of the school. Such that pupils are proud of what they have achieved and talk confidently. They take responsibility for their own actions and make decision about their future. Relationships are excellent and all stakeholders are focused on ensuring that pupils at the school in every aspect of their development thrive.

The spiritual development of pupils is met through opportunities for pupils to reflect and consider. These are embedded across the school in curriculum and class activities. Show and tell, circle time and speaking about their weekend activities encourages pupils to reflect on and discuss their own experiences. The provision of prayer rooms allows Muslim pupils to access quiet, reflective spaces of worship. The makers spaces enable pupils to consider questions where there may be no readily available answer and promotes a sense of awe and wonder about the world. Learning through discovery encourages pupils to think deeply and consider. A tank of giant African snails in EYFS enabled pupils to actively learn about caring for animals and life cycles.

Pupils' moral development is embedded through a consistently applied behaviour policy and systems related to rewards and sanctions that are age appropriate. Pupils were engaged and worked well independently and collaboratively, confident in their knowledge that there were systems of support available and that their efforts would be recognised. Positive praise and house points were used consistently to reinforce this. Pupils interacted appropriately at break times with minimal supervision from available adults. Pupils elected to positions of leadership as play leaders monitored games at break times and promoted fair play and respect. Prefects support the making of right choices. Consequently, most pupils are aware of right and wrong. Stories are used to raise issues around moral dilemmas, and these are discussed at an age-appropriate level through careful questioning by teachers.

The school offers opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles in the school as part of teams or individually and are democratically elected to these positions by their peers. These include the Pearl Parliament, cultural and eco ambassadors, playleaders, prefects and a head boy and girl. The Pearl Parliament are active in the school, passing acts of parliament which impact on school life and monitoring their subsequent implementation. This ensures pupils are understanding of British institutions, such as the houses of Parliament. Eco ambassadors have collaborated with the Pearl Parliament to develop the Sustainability Act which embeds sustainability issues across the school. Other acts in which pupils directly influence the day-to-day business of the school are the healthy living act, the kindness act, the playtime act, the

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e-learning act, the use of plastic act. These are widely promoted by pupils and displayed prominently around the school.

Pupils talked passionately about the work of the Pearl Parliament, particularly around the work on sustainability. All pupils understand their responsibility in upholding the work of their elected leaders. Pupils had reusable water bottles and talked about the importance of recycling. The school is the leading recycling school in the Aldar group of schools regarding % of waste recycled. Displays around the school reinforce the messages around sustainability. Pupils have engaged in activities which support the local community associated with positive contributions which demonstrate the school values; one of which was participation in 'One Billion meals' which engendered a sense of giving and respect for others who may be less fortunate. Pupils also can contribute to the Red Crescent charity through collection tins. The pupil leadership team are also involved in the community Helping Hands project.

Pupils' cultural development is met through events hosted by the school to celebrate international day, UAE national day, and flag day. Cultural differences are celebrated and highlighted using stories and in the curriculum. The school's population constitutes almost 60 different nationalities, through show and tell and sharing of news, pupils celebrate and acknowledge cultural diversity. This could be expanded further to enable pupils to make links with other cultures beyond the parameters of the school.

The school promotes a general knowledge and understanding of modern British life by sharing events such as the recent assembly on the funeral of the HRH Queen Elizabeth II. This focused on the respect the late Queen held for peace and the strong enduring relationships with the leaders of the UAE.

7. *Standard 3*

The welfare, health, and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare health and safety meets the standard and is excellent.

Pupils are well cared for across the school. A range of policies related to keeping children safe are in place, and rigorously monitored and implemented. Unannounced external inspections from the Aldar group and the local authorities further check on the implementation of policies at the school and ensure compliance with local requirements.

The school's safeguarding policy meets international and local requirements. Safeguarding procedures are robust and training needs and audits are overseen by the Aldar group. A designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead ensure implementation of the policy and manage training. The Aldar Child protection policy is shared with all staff annually and in the language the staff best understand, so barriers to understanding are removed. All staff, at all levels are expected to sign to say they have read and understood the policy. Termly reviews are led by the designated safeguarding lead, recently appointed staff are required to complete training on arrival and mandatory online training courses are in place for all staff.

There is strong reporting ethos in the school. Clear procedures ensure all staff, visitors, and children to know who to report if they have a concern. Where concerns are raised case notes are kept in a locked and secure cabinet and only accessible by the designated senior person. Lanyards, worn by all staff and visitors to the school contain information regarding the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead. Posters are visible around the school so that it is clear who to report concerns. As a result, pupils reported that they felt safe in school and knew who to talk to if they had any concerns.

The perimeter of the school's site is secure and monitored by security guards 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At busy times teachers also stand by the gates to meet pupils on entry to school. The procedures for pupils who use the school's buses are smooth and safe. Buses use a turning circle within the school's site and at busy times this is supervised closely by security staff. The school has ensured three-way seat belts and bus nannies are present on all buses.

Healthy diet and lifestyles are promoted throughout all year groups, for example in Year 3 where children learn about eating a balanced diet. There is a cooking club held every Thursday, introduced at pupils' request. The Pearl Parliament passed a healthy eating act in September 2021. This is prominently displayed around the school and one aspect specifies the desired food to put into lunch boxes. Items such as fizzy drinks and processed foods are on a red list, and pupils are not allowed to eat red list items at lunch times. The healthy eating act was also shared with parents. Pupils talked about the red list items and were clear about what was healthy. All pupils are timetabled PE sessions weekly and swimming sessions. Pupils recently requested for more active extra-curricular clubs. The school acted swiftly to increase more opportunities for pupils to start weekly football or netball and increasing the number of teams in year 3.

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Healthcare provided by the school clinic was exemplary in every aspect. Monthly checks on first aid boxes recorded, and an up-to-date list of staff with first aid training displayed in all shared areas. The clinic, managed by a qualified school nurse, contains appropriate resources and facilities. Secured cabinets and refrigeration facilities provided suitable storage of medicines and pupils medical records.

The school was awarded the Carnegie School mental health award in February 2021, which involved a rigorous examination of the work the school promotes around mental health. Pupil well-being ambassadors are active in leading well-being initiatives. They recently led the 50-50 project where pupils were invited to complete 50 different well-being activities in 50 minutes, to raise awareness of the breadth of well-being activities available.

Pupils are taught about e-safety through the curriculum, pupils also lead and attend regular assemblies on internet safety and cyberbullying. At the start of each computing topic pupils are reminded of how to stay safe online. Pupils talked about staying safe online, and how to keep passwords safe. They talked specifically about iPad safety and how the school helps them to stay safe, pupils talked about restrictions on certain apps.

Pupils behave well. They monitor their own behaviours and understand the responsibility they have in ensuring they and others are behaving well. All members of the school community are encouraged to make the right choice, and this is a message that is conveyed across the school. Staff set high expectations and as a result behaviour is exemplary across the school. Pupils learn about bullying in anti-bullying week and parents' workshops further support all stakeholders to be able to promote the antibullying message at the school. Pupils talked about arguments happening and sometimes 'they might be asked by teachers to write a letter to resolve it.'

Annual surveys and pupil attitude surveys are used by the school to monitor pupils' welfare, health, and safety. The Aldar academies parent survey in June 2021 stated that 99% of parents were satisfied with safety, health, and security of their children at the school. Pupils talked about feeling safe and stated that, 'everything is under control here'.

There is clear provision for fire safety evident across the school. The school has in place evacuation chairs on upper floors, clearly marked fire prevention tools and exit routes, and details about the fire marshals shared across the school. External authorities visit the school and complete fire risk assessment to ensure that the school is compliant. Evacuation drills take place regularly and are documented. Pupils and staff know what to do in the event of a fire. Evacuation of the swimming pool area is rehearsed regularly with pupils.

Careful thought has been given to managing pupils' health and safety in the school's environment. Risk assessments are in place for areas of increased risk. Washroom facilities were maintained to a high standard. Supervision is appropriate. Sufficient shade is in place in most areas. In areas where there is no shade such as the outdoor Astro turf area it is recommended that pupils wear sun caps for PE sessions.

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Use of the swimming pool is risk assessed and has procedures in place governing its use. A trained lifeguard must be present when pupils are using the pool and maintain high levels of adult: pupil ratios. The pool is securely locked when not in use.

The school site is accessible for its current pupil profile but has limitations around its use by people with disabilities. Although evacuation chairs are sited at the tops of staircases to move people with limited mobility up and down the stairs, this requires staff to be trained and time taken to move people. A lift would ensure that people with restricted mobility would be able to access the upper floor easily. There was no access available for people with restricted mobility to the swimming pool area.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at The Pearl Academy meets the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school's proprietor represented by Aldar education group ensure all standards regarding the suitability of staff and keeping children safe in the school are met. Policies regarding safeguarding, recruitment and behaviour are determined centrally and shared with all Aldar schools to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and suitability of staff are met. Training is provided by the central office for staff at all levels.

Within the school 2 designated safeguarding governors supports the school's designated safeguarding leads. The school's head of HR ensures checks are made on all staff who are employed by the school or who have worked at the school in the last three years. This includes checks on the board of governors, support staff, staff on contract to the school, and visitors to the school. There are no supply staff or volunteers employed by the school.

Identity, medical, qualifications and police or DBS checks and references were in place for all staff appointed to the school. This includes teachers, administration staff and teaching assistants. These are held in individual files and on a single central record held centrally and by the HR manager in the school. Information regarding staff who have left the school in the past 3 years, the board of governors and contractors are also detailed on this record. All information is stored securely and confidentially.

For staff recruited from overseas visa details are stored centrally on the single central record. Checks are made by the head of HR against the references, of which one must be from the most recent place of work. Gaps in service are checked and copies of passports, original copies of qualifications are checked and either a DBS certificate or police certificate is also sought as evidence of the person's suitability to work with children.

Advertisements to recruit staff to the school promote safer recruitment practices. This is then followed up with a question to all referees about the person's suitability to work with children. Induction processes are clear and structured. Expatriate staff who were recently new to the school talked very positively about the support they had from the school on arrival into the country.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The school premises and accommodation meet the standards required for BSO and are good. The premises and accommodation at the school are used creatively to make use of available space and deliver an inspiring curriculum which meets the school's vision. Such that the school premises become a place where pupils want to learn and play. The site is clean, tidy, and well maintained.

The school is well equipped for outdoor and physical education with an appropriately sized swimming pool, basketball AstroTurf court, and shaded outdoor spaces. A central courtyard area is used by pupils at break times. Outdoor access is available to all ground floor classrooms, and this is used effectively for free flow in EYFS classrooms. However, the area is narrow in places and the seamless flow between the classroom and outdoor areas is restricted. A large auditorium is used for PE activities, assemblies, and school productions. The acoustics in the auditorium could be improved so that the space is more conducive to learning.

A library offers a quiet space and is well provided with a range of books in English and Arabic, although books are also available in classrooms and makers spaces. Specialist areas for music and intervention support are available and used well. Prayer rooms area available and used by staff and pupils.

Classrooms are suitable for learning, enhanced by informative displays and examples of pupils' work. Pupils take responsibility for their own belongings, and as a result classrooms are tidy and safe. Each classroom has access to the shared areas, makers spaces and these are used to as an extension to the classroom.

Pupils' washrooms are situated close to classrooms and in most cases are matched to the age of the pupils who use them. Drinking water is freely available. Pupils eat their lunches in the classroom or when the weather is cooler in the large outdoor courtyard areas. These are cleaned by maintenance staff regularly.

The school is continually reviewing and adapting aspects of its accommodation. The buildings have been in use for approximately 25 years as a school. This is evident in the fabric of the building which in a few areas shows excessive use, such as the stairways. The premises staff are regularly involved in work to maintain the fabric of the buildings to a good standard. The buildings have been risk assessed and in high-risk areas padding and rubber flooring is in place. There are plans to replace the few remaining hard surfaces with softer play areas and improving the aesthetic by replacing older flooring with modern flooring. The recent addition of two staircases has improved the ability of the school to evacuate safely.

Security arrangements are to a high standard, and ensure the grounds and buildings remain secure. CCTV coverage provides coverage of every key area of the school. The swimming pool has an exclusive external entrance and has immediate access to the clinic from the pool area. There are routine checks throughout the day on the chlorine level with the pool, and the

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lifeguard is trained and certified with an up-to-date certificate displayed at the pool. The school rents out this facility for use by the community.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers, and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others meets the standard.

Parents have a wealth of information provided to them by the school and from the school's central head office. Parents reported that they were informed and knew where to find relevant information regarding the business of the school.

The school website contains relevant information and is managed through Aldar. There are several policies available on the website which provide information regarding inclusion, anti-bullying, complaints and concerns and attendance. A school prospectus is available, and this is published on the website. This contains relevant information regarding school's organisation and campus. Recent inspection documents are also available for viewing. The admissions process is clearly explained on the website and reference is made to consideration of the individual needs of all pupils and the school's commitment to inclusion.

Prior to their child starting school, parents are invited to induction events and new pupils are invited to meet their teacher and visit their classroom. Towards the end of the academic year, transition plans are in place to enable a successful and comfortable move into subsequent year groups, and these vary according to the year group of the pupils.

Parents can contact teachers via a variety of online apps, email and informally at the end of the school day. A parents' Microsoft teams channel provides recordings of parent workshops and a useful bank of resources for parents. Parents consider communication to be particularly strong, with parents reporting that, 'We are spoilt here with communication'.

A weekly newsletter is available via the school's online platform 'Engage', by email and via class teachers. Reminders are also communicated through a social media app. The newsletters provide detailed and wide-ranging information and include 'Pearls of Wisdom', a letter from the principal, information from governors, the school development plan priorities, and images of learning across year groups.

Parent representatives for each class are invited to meet with the principal on a half termly basis and all parents are invited to half termly open coffee mornings. Actions which arise from these meetings are subsequently managed and parents are informed of progress through the 'You said, we did' documents. Parents of the school greatly appreciate these opportunities to share their ideas, are keen to attend and are happy with the responses provided to them.

The school has a 'no homework' policy up to year 5, and parents strongly support this. They are comfortable with the online activities and games which are provided by the school as optional and understand the expectation to read with their children daily. A home school agreement is in place, printed in Arabic and English, establishes the strong working partnerships between parents, pupils, and the school.

The school reports to parents regarding student attainment and progress on a termly basis. In termly parent teacher meetings, teachers also share the pupil attainment summaries which detail the

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objectives taught and the pupil's attainment. Parents again, were extremely satisfied with the clarity of the information shared, and the 15-minute time allowed for meetings to take place.

Parents are regularly invited to support the learning journey of their child. During book week parents who were authors, journalists and lawyers provided online workshops for pupils. An active parent committee supports school events and is fully supportive of the work of the school.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints at The Pearl Academy meets the requirements of the BSO standards.

Complaints to the school are rare and are resolved swiftly. This is due to the many lines of communication that parents have available to them and the approachable, listening ethos of the school. Parents reported that where any concerns are raised, they are dealt with very efficiently and leaders and teachers take time to keep them updated and informed of the actions taken.

A parents' complaints procedure is published on the school's website and available upon request from the school's office and central headquarters. The policy details the 6-stage procedure to be taken by parents in the event of a complaint. The policy states that all complaints should be seen as important. Clear timescales are written for each stage of the procedure.

The school's central office is part of the procedure in dealing with complaints that are unresolved beyond stage 4. Once the matter is raised at a formal level a hearing before a panel will be arranged. The panel hearing will include 3 people who have not been directly involved in the matters raised. This ensures a fair hearing. In the event of the matter remaining unresolved by the final stage, the complainant may raise the matter with the ministry.

The appointment of the parent relations executive who is based at the school ensures that where parents have concerns and complaints they are dealt with at an early stage. These should be resolved within 48 hours. As a result, complaints that reach a formal stage are rare.

The way the school deals with complaints is fair and transparent. Parents and governors spoke highly of the proactive approach of the school's leaders to listen and respond to the needs of parents. Parent surveys and regular meetings with parent representatives are used to gather information regarding areas of the school's business that parents perceive to be less strong. This enables the school to deal with issues before they become complaints or concerns.

12. Standard 8

The leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of The Pearl Academy are excellent and meets the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school's vision, mission and values are evident across everything the school does. In policies, assemblies, communications and in the actions of teachers and pupils. The shared values of empathy, agility, hard work, and high-powered learning are demonstrated in pupils' behaviours in lessons and at playtimes. Sustainability is at the heart of how the school is managed day-to-day and is informally monitored by passionate and committed pupils. Inquiry based learning threads through all curriculum areas.

The school's leaders share the school's vision with all stakeholders. The actions to achieve the vision are determined through a quarterly quality assurance process. The leadership team seek evidence of stakeholder views, reviews of the school's development plan targets and action plans. This informs new targets for school improvement planning, which is organised around 6 priorities of areas of the schools' performance. Clear SMART targets are detailed within each priority. This directly becomes the focus for staff performance management targets and professional development objectives, so that the school is continually striving to achieve the vision that is shared.

The school seeks assurances on its actions using external audits by the Aldar group and inspections by the ministry and BSO. This further informs the schools actions regarding school improvement. The school's self-evaluation of its performance against the BSO standards is accurate and evidence based.

The school's leadership team includes the support of an active board of governors. The board meets regularly in sub committees matched to the 6 areas of priority, and quarterly as a full governing body. They are fully involved in supporting the school's leaders to improve the school's performance in all areas. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions of the school's leaders regarding the information that is shared with them. Governors have received training and make routine visits to the school to ensure they are able to act as a critical friend and analyse the school's performance against the targets set.

The school's leaders conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' academic performance through learning walks, work book and lesson plan scrutinies and observations. The information gathered informs training needs. Teachers are committed to the school and talked about the high quality of support they receive from the school regarding their wellbeing and professional development.

The school benefits from training provided by Aldar training academy. Training is delivered through a variety of approaches, self-directed, webinars or face to face and may be offered in English or Arabic. The school is actively involved in BSME and the Aldar group of school's

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networks. This further enables the school to remain updated with the latest ideas in educational research.

Relationships across the school and particularly within the senior management team and board of governors, are strong and based upon high expectations. There is an ethos of trust and empowering people to succeed. As a result, all aspects of the school's day to day business run smoothly. Teachers reported feeling valued by leaders and talked about a clear chain of command that is approachable and supportive.