



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **Al Mamoura Academy**

**Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates**

Date: **9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023**  
Inspection number: **20230509**

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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, 77 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Edward Pearce. The team members were Andrew Williams, Lesley Birtwell, Andrew Dunlop and Gemma Watson.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school 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

Al Mamoura Academy (AMA) meets the standards required to be an accredited British School Overseas.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

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

- The relentless pursuit of excellence, led by the principal and her senior leadership team.
- The premises and facilities and how they support quality learning experiences for the pupils.
- The quality and high standards of maintenance across the whole campus.
- The positive relationships between the students and staff.
- The positive learning behaviours and attitudes of the students, leading to happy and engaged students.
- The middle leadership group are a particular strength of the school and ensure accountability at all levels.
- The support of governance and Aldar Education in providing challenge and support for the operational and educational outcomes of the school.
- The overarching sense of community and belonging that was expressed by all stakeholders during the visit.
- The focus on oracy and language development to support the needs of all learners at AMA.
- The accelerated rates of progress shown by students within the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly given their starting point.
- Newly formed industry links and their enrichment of student experiences and their preparedness for the future
- There are over 200 opportunities or positions of responsibility for pupils within the academy, ensuring that they are an active part of the community and that their voice is heard.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. To continue to develop curriculum expectations to ensure that opportunities for extended challenge are consistently applied and accessible for all students in all phases.
- ii. To ensure that levels of achievement and progress are consistently high across all phases.
- iii. To embed all current curriculum and pastoral initiatives to give them time to flourish and to ensure these are monitored effectively to track impact.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Al Mamoura Academy				
Address	Al Mamoura Area, Opposite Al Nahyan Camp – Abu Dhabi				
Telephone Number/s	+971 2 885 7100				
Fax Number	+971 2 885 7133				
Website Address	<a href="https://www.almamouraacademy.sch.ae/">https://www.almamouraacademy.sch.ae/</a>				
Key Email Address/s	<a href="mailto:principal@almamouraacademy.sch.ae">principal@almamouraacademy.sch.ae</a> <a href="mailto:headofprimary@almamouraacademy.sch.ae">headofprimary@almamouraacademy.sch.ae</a> <a href="mailto:headofsecondary@almamouraacademy.sch.ae">headofsecondary@almamouraacademy.sch.ae</a>				
Principal	Sarah Weaver				
Chair of Board of Governors	Holly Gibbs				
Age Range	3-18 years				
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>671</b>
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0		<i>12-16 years</i>	150
	<i>3-5 years</i>	305		<i>17-18 years</i>	17
	<i>6-11 years</i>	671		<i>18+ years</i>	6
Total number of part-time children	0				

AMA is a private, for-profit school under the Aldar Education branding. The academy attributes at least 81% of Emirati students to its population, making the demographic unique in a British international school. Families choose the school due to its excellent reputation within the community and the balance in provision between the Ministry of Education Curriculum and English National Curriculum subjects; this is considered important to families as they wish to uphold local and British traditions and values within their chosen education offer. The academy has a co-education primary school and then moves into a girls only secondary school, parent consultation is currently being sought over the continuation of this model and whether the school should become an all through co-educational provider.

In June 2022, Al Mamoura was inspected by ADEK, the local government regulatory body, under the UAE Unified framework. The school since 2016 had been rated as a Good school but was rated as “Very Good” as an outcome of the 2022 inspection.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

AMA has a strong British feel, augmenting its Emirati values and international context:

- The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum for England, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) programme and iGCSE, AS and A level public examination requirements.
- Consequently, students could enter schools in the UK without significant disruption.
- Styles of teaching and learning are informed by UK best practice, and staff professional development is used to develop consistency of approach in this area.
- The language of instruction in the academy is English. There are bright, creative displays around the academy, celebrating student’s achievement. There are regular assemblies and community events, a range of special interest days, class assemblies and other celebrations.
- The academy encourages all students to adopt a healthy lifestyle and confidently adopt practices that ensure their own safety.
- The academy has robust assessment procedures and policies that is based on the English assessment system.
- There are a wide variety of extracurricular activities for pupils in all phases of the academy. Parents are highly supportive of these opportunities.
- Teachers working at AMA have recognised UK qualifications. Parents cite this as a main reason for choosing the school for their child.
- The academy is organised into structures used in English schools. Classroom management displays of work, three term year and age-related year groups contribute to the British feel of the academy.
- Academy leaders effectively promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well, for students and for staff, so that the ethos and culture of the whole academy prevent any discriminatory behaviour.
- Students receive well-judged advice and effective support to make important choices, to prepare them well for the next stage in their lives.
- It is an inclusive community in which students report they feel safe and valued. The academy deals effectively with the rare instances of bullying behaviour and the use of any derogatory or aggressive language.

## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is overall good. The school meets the standards for BSO.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The quality of curriculum provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding

The youngest pupils benefit from long term planning which is well organised and informed by the non-statutory Development Matters (2021) guidance to support children making progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The academy has opted to teach phonics via the DfE approved phonics program, *Monster Phonics*. This has been successfully embedded and teaching demonstrates fidelity to the scheme. English writing lessons are underpinned by the *Talk4Writing* approach. Long term plans are effectively used to inform short term planning that is personalised by the effective use of assessment information, data and children's most recent interests. This successfully enables all aptitudes and needs to be met by providing challenge for all. The EYFS curriculum offering is enhanced with specialist Performing Arts, Arabic, PE and swimming. Planning for oracy and vocabulary development is a consistent feature in every planned lesson, meeting the needs of a cohort where the almost all pupils have English as an additional language. This was seen in multiple EYFS and Key Stage (KS) 1 lessons where the teacher modelled the pronunciation and explained the meaning of the 'star word' and played 'my turn – your turn'.

Leaders and teachers acknowledge the significance of the Prime Areas of the EYFS. The successful implementation of 'Exploration Time' throughout the day and 'Continuous Provision' provides sustained time and resources for children to practice, consolidate and refine their early language, PSED and physical development. Topic choices such as "people who help us" and "traditional tales" are representative of those found in UK as are the choice of choice texts, such as *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* and *Dear Zoo*.

The academy has successfully implemented innovative curriculum approaches, such as *Talk for Writing* and *White Rose Mathematics*, based on an internal audit of student learning. These approaches have had a positive impact on student progress. Furthermore, there is a moral education program in place that supports student development, which is reinforced in assemblies and through pastoral team-led activities. Although the observed planning showed progression across the age range, its implementation was not always consistent, with differentiation being unevenly applied in practice. However, the best lessons had appropriate levels of challenge, clear learning objectives, and significant support for lesson direction. Despite over 85% of students being identified as English as an additional language (EAL), the support frameworks for special educational needs are robust, but more could be done to explicitly support second language learners, particularly new starters. Students have



access to a wide range of extra curricular activities, including swimming and creative subjects, which are well attended. The learning environments throughout the academy are exceptional, with age-appropriate displays across the academy.

The secondary school curriculum at AMA meets the requirements of the BSO standards and is good.

The school has a clear curriculum policy, within which the curriculum is mapped across the key stages demonstrating the progress in knowledge and skills the pupils will make in a comprehensive range of subjects. The curriculum is broad and balanced.

The school is compliant with lesson time allocated to the core and foundation subjects and in some subjects exceeds this. The curriculum provides exceptionally well for pupils to enter or re-enter the UK educational system at the appropriate level.

In KS3, the curriculum, based on the English National Curriculum, is designed to meet the diverse needs of most pupils. All subjects are compulsory and, as well as the core subjects, include: social studies, drama, design and technology, music and French. Pupils also study Arabic, Islamic Studies and Moral Education.

Middle leaders and teachers effectively plan for the delivery of the curriculum. Schemes of work are thorough and lesson plans detailed. Those plans endeavour to differentiate work and to maintain challenge for all students. Given that almost 90 per cent of Al Mamoura students have needs and they speak English as an additional language (EAL), this is important.

The main tool for differentiation is the tagging of material as bronze, silver or gold (BSG) – where all bronze material is the standard expectation. In the best lessons this system worked well, allowing for differentiation, but also for choice and self-assessment as pupils themselves choose their level. When thoroughly, correctly and consistently embedded across the secondary school, the 'BSG' system has the potential to ensure that all students are meeting the basic standards whilst the more able are appropriately stretched and challenged.

Choice in the curriculum is introduced in KS 4. Pupils are offered a compulsory core curriculum, which includes English language, mathematics and science. Optional subjects include: history, psychology, economics, business studies, food and nutrition and design and technology. The range of options is good, allowing pupils to study a minimum of seven and maximum of eleven subjects to IGCSE.

Currently, KS4 pupils also have the option of following a US pathway as an alternative to IGCSEs. The school plans shortly to introduce a new vocational pathway: BTEC. This will give more choice and opportunities to pupils. Most students follow a programme of three A levels taken from, what is for a small school, a commendably wide choice. It includes: mathematics, English language and literature, history, economics, the three sciences and photography.

Throughout the secondary school the curriculum admirably delivers breadth. As part of the A level programme pupils have the option to pursue an extended project (EPQ). Lower down the school pupils would also benefit from similar opportunities or from the chance to take their studies into subject-based societies. In many secondary classrooms, there appeared to be room for the curriculum to be pitched at a slightly more challenging level for everyone. This could be achieved through a more adaptable approach to the 'BSG' system, such as making the 'silver' level the baseline and allowing more differentiation around it (up and down).

The use of technology is common across the secondary school curriculum, but not embedded. Most pupils have access to a device, the extent to which they were called upon varied from lesson to lesson. Where they were used, the impact was also mixed. In the better classes they were used for research or allowed some differentiation, in others the device served as an online textbook.

The provision of a curriculum matched to the needs of pupils who require extra support is provided by the additional learning needs team. Pupils who have significant and diagnosed needs are defined as pupils of determination (PoD). More effective and consistent classroom differentiation would help these pupils.

There is a clear procedure for identifying pupils who struggle with English language and where this impacts upon their access to the curriculum. They are identified early, and a register is maintained of all pupils with English as an additional language. Where the lack of English impacts upon progress then provisions are made either within or outside the classroom.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The teaching and assessment in EYFS is good with outstanding features.

Teaching approaches and styles enable most children to be prepared for reintegration to UK education system or the next stage in learning. The set-up of the classrooms and shared spaces into designated learning areas with continuous provision enhanced by linked provision to support the learning of discreet skills are reflective of those in UK based settings.

Behaviour for learning was exemplary across the EYFS. All adults have high expectations and implement school behaviour strategies well, including dojo points and stickers for 'Exploration Time' passports to reinforce positive choices in learning. Pupils are given opportunities to work independently during focused lessons in 'linked provision' and exploration time. Teacher interactions encouraged pupils to reflect on their learning and achievements. Pupils demonstrated a high degree of learning confidence and resilience when making their own choices in learning, trying new skills and collaborating with their peers.

The majority of teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge and assessment for learning to address misconceptions and extend learning. These teachers successfully applied this to adapt questioning, dialogue and challenge children. This led to deeper thinking and accelerated progress in the children. This was seen in a nursery phonics lesson where children were looking at rhyming CVC words and the homophone 'bat' as in cricket and as in the animal provided a basis for explanation and vocabulary development.

Inspirational learning hooks were a feature of almost all lessons. A praiseworthy example of this was an FS2 science lesson where children were tasked with predicting and finding the fastest way to melt the chocolate the mischievous troll had frozen in order to decorate their biscuits.

The provision of care was exemplary. Children were observed reaching out to adults for guidance and support both emotionally and academically. Teachers know their children well and as a result build strong positive relationships. Verbal feedback and praise were features in all lessons, although in a few cases this was not as effective in enhancing learning. Across the EYFS passionate and enthusiastic adults ensured children are engaged and motivated pupils. In the most effective lessons teaching assistants were well deployed in and informed about the expected outcomes and were able to scaffold pupils learning to greater effect. To support those with identified complex needs, individual assistants are in place, although the quality of provision and interactions is variable and would benefit from further development.

Teaching and assessment in KS1 and KS2 are good. In all lessons, the high focus on language development ensures pupils acquire new knowledge and make good

progress. Teachers use, model and explain technical language and correct terminology. Pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas through extended talk and explanations. This helps them to develop vocabulary and deepens their understanding. In year 5 science the vocabulary of solvent, solution and solute was reinforced through explanations and matching activities. In year 6 science, pupils were asked to explain friction by using the context of stopping and changing direction whilst ice skating. In a year 6 English starter, pupils practised using the parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective etc) correctly.

In the best lessons, the current focus on developing pedagogy through the articulation of the teacher and learner DNA is clearly evident. Effective planning, teaching strategies and resources were well used to reinforce learning, extend thinking, deepen understanding and build confidence. For example, pupils were asked to recall and clarify previous learning, had opportunities for paired talk and collaborative learning. Teachers used some open questions. The effective deployment and communication between teachers and teaching assistants supported learning in the classroom and with small groups. ICT was used to engage and motivate. The use of devices provided pupils and teachers with instant feedback, enabling lessons to be adapted to meet individual needs. Pupils were able to develop their computer skills including research, photography and composition in music. The engaging activities in the KS1 shared spaced enabled pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills independently. Pupils describe lessons as fun. Year 2 were buzzing about the dragon eggs that were hatching in the classroom. In a year 5 ICT lesson exploring camera techniques and angles, pupils were laughing as they explored the images created. Parents also spoke about their children being excited to come to school.

In the best lessons, differentiation to support the needs of individual pupils is provided through the bronze, silver and gold challenges. In year 4, the gold challenge, which was to use alliteration in a poem about colour, helped pupils understand how their writing could be improved. In another lesson, the bronze scaffold allowed less confident writers to successfully add a relative clause to a diary entry. In ICT, maths, science and music the sequential challenges enable pupils to progress through the learning steps. In a year 4 maths lesson, the teacher used the outcomes of a starter activity to signpost pupils to the most appropriate challenge, thus maximising progress. Pupils explain they have opportunities to choose their own level of challenge which encourages them to aim high. They also say that support is available if they are too aspirational. The approach supports the pupils in understanding their learning, enables teachers to move pupils forward and provides challenge for the more able.

Although not fully embedded, assessment strategies are used to promote progress. Feedback marking was evident and pupils have opportunities to respond to evaluative comments. Specific verbal feedback, mid lesson plenaries and peer evaluation enabled pupils to clarify and extend learning. For example, in year 4 writing, the teacher said: "I like the imagery you have used, can you also add alliteration?" In year

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5 English and Year 6 humanities ‘exit tickets’ were used for pupils to self-assess learning.

The majority of behaviour observed in classrooms was good. The opportunities for pupils to lead lessons and provide peer feedback encourages them to act responsibly and develop mutual respect. For example, in PE in year 5, pupils were asked to plan and explain an activity. They listened carefully to their peers and at the end of the session gave honest, but respectful, feedback.

Teaching across the secondary school at AMA is generally good. In all subjects, teachers displayed strong subject knowledge and the planning produced was at least good. In every case the learning objective was displayed on the white board – in some cases it was copied into exercise books, which was often time-consuming. Variation arose in the delivery of lessons.

In the better lessons, teachers showed an excellent understanding of how pupils learn. Their lessons enabled pupils to enjoy learning and to make progress. The planned tasks were engaging, and pupils were clearly enjoying their learning. In the better lessons, questioning was excellent; it was targeted at individual pupils to stretch and challenge. Teachers were giving useful, immediate verbal feedback in class and clearly good relationships and strong bonds were being developed between teacher and pupils. In these classes exercise books were marked and feedback was positive and constructive. Feedback also made good use of the DIRT initiative to encourage pupil self-reflection. Examples of the better lessons included a drama class in which the pupils were discussing stage lighting, colours and moods and feelings. The lesson content encouraged pupils to think about light, but also to associate their feelings and well-being with colours. The ‘BSG’ system was effectively employed to ensure some differentiation. Pupils were engaged, working together (with coloured pencils) and enjoying their learning. The teacher was circulating between groups to stimulate, question and challenge. Similarly, an outstanding mathematics lesson contained a relatively brief teacher exposition, after which pupils worked on problems – selected by themselves from the piles of bronze, silver and gold challenges. The pupils were busy and focused on the tasks at hand. They helped each other. The class atmosphere (neither silent nor loud) was buzzing with activity and learning.

Where teaching was less strong, pupil engagement was variable. Sometimes disengagement was the result of the lesson being pitched at the incorrect level or at an incorrect pace. Similarly, in the less successful lessons, questioning tended to be undirected and answered by those volunteering answers.

In KS4 the better lessons were closely tied to the needs of the IGCSE examination. Teachers had shared marking rubrics, objectives or schemes and were working through work with pupils. In some cases, pupils were encouraged to evaluate their own work, in others peer marking was being used very effectively. This applied to lessons in English literature, economics and business studies. In the better pre-

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examination lessons expectations were high and the pace pressing, without being frantic. Pupils reported that in A level classes teaching was also very much focused on the needs of the examination. In this way they felt that they were learning new skills, as well as the subject.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved in EYFS are outstanding

The large majority of pupils in EYFS enter below age related expectations and make accelerated progress over the two-year learning program with the majority achieving a Good Level of Development, outperforming the most recent GLD national average data from DfE. This year the school have introduced CEM BASE to measure progress against international benchmarks however it is too early to comment on the impact of this.

Teachers use a variety of evidence sources to collate assessment information including weekly observations on Target Tracker for English, Maths and Science lessons and WOW Moments and English Books for writing and communication and language development. This enables teachers to make secure judgements on attainment. These judgements and evidence are moderated by other EYFS departments in the Aldar group of schools. The school also benefits from a link with a school in London which enables international moderation to take place.

The curriculum and teaching underpin a secure foundation that encourages children to fulfil their potential and prepares them exceptionally well for their experiences in KS1.

Standards in KS1 and KS2 are good. When compared with the English National Curriculum, attainment at the end of KS2 is broadly in line with the UK average for mathematics and slightly above in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG). For example, in 2022 the average scaled score for reading was 106.2, mathematics 104.1 and SPAG 108.2 compared to a UK average scaled score of reading 105, mathematics 104 and SPAG 106. At KS1 and KS2, the pitch of learning observed in classrooms and books suggests that pupils are working at age related expectations with some opportunities to extend their learning beyond age related expectations. In year 1 pupils' attainment in the phonics test in 2022, 85%, was above the UK average, 75%. Annual baseline testing matched to a specific year group curriculum and internal tracking data suggests that pupils are making substantial progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and science.

The majority of pupils in KS1 and KS2 demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour when moving around school or during unstructured times. They are polite and have good relationships with their peers and adults. They are attentive and behave well in lessons. They are resilient and willing to challenge themselves. When asked why they chose the gold challenge in class, their response was always "I want to push myself". The school is successfully encouraging a 'shoot for the stars' culture among the primary pupils. A year 4 pupil explained that if she always tried her best, she could do whatever she wanted and 'could even go to Harvard'. The school is building on these positive attitudes by encouraging pupils to take a greater pride in their handwriting and presentation.

The standards in secondary are good.

Data collection and analysis have been significantly improved since the last inspection. This has enabled the school to improve targeted intervention and, support teachers with their planning.

All students are EAL. In the good and outstanding lessons teachers clearly plan to meet their needs.

Standards at KS3 are in line with expectations, based on the school's data, observations and student work in their exercise books. Regular moderation within the school and the other Aldar Academies, following the English National Curriculum, are used for quality assurance and training purposes.

At KS4 and KS5, there are a small number of students that take external examinations at IGCSE and A level. Data trends are in their infancy due to the small numbers and external examinations only starting at the school in 2019.

The IGCSE exams taken in 2022 are roughly meeting the student's minimum expected grade. The early entry data from the IGCSE exams is positive in English and Mathematics, however less so in science. As more data becomes available, the full impact of the early entry, and the justification why, should be looked at in more detail.

Pupils spoke positively about the support that they received from their teachers when preparing for assessment or examinations.



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

The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding.

The vision of the school to ‘nurture learners through collaboration, leadership and creativity’ is evident in lessons and opportunities beyond the classroom. In a recent pupil council driven survey, the very large majority of respondents report that ‘staff encourage me to be the best version of myself’. In lessons children commented they were happy and enjoyed school. Parents reported that their children are ‘buzzing’ to come to school. Attitudes to learning in lessons are positive. Pupils are ambitious in their aspirations and report that “learning is fun” at the Academy.

Pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong in their immediate context and the wider community. Behaviour was observed to be exemplary in lessons in the primary school and the very large majority of lessons in the middle and senior school. The behaviour and rewards systems are plentiful and those persevering and achieving are celebrated. In primary lessons house points were observed as a consistent rewards strategy for children demonstrating the values of the school: middle and senior school pupils could explain how the system is operated in their part of the school. Primary pupils were able to explain why they had been awarded house points.

The academy promotes self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence extremely well. Weekly assemblies are a melting pot of celebrations, affirmations, encouragement and community enjoyment. In the assembly attended, pupils were confident to receive awards in front of a large audience, EYFS pupils were given an opportunity to perform and did so with pride and confidence. Age-appropriate acknowledgments and celebrations of achievement and effort are visible through the school, these include whole school ‘Principal Awards’, ‘star of the week’ and ‘golden ticket’ achievers in primary and ‘employee of the week’ in the Business department in upper school.

The newly introduced Al Mamoura Values DNA is very closely aligned to British Values, and this sets the tone through the entire school. Teachers, pupils and parents felt consulted in the creation of these values that include Trust, Respect, Aspiration, Courage and Kindness. Whilst newly implemented, pupils are increasingly demonstrating these in action. In the strongest lessons teachers refer to these values and reward with praise, encouragement or house points. Initiatives such as ‘kindness week’ have provided a platform for values to be highlighted and celebrated.

The academy effectively promotes mutual respect and tolerance between all stakeholders, which has created a sense of community belonging. Around the campus staff and pupils greet one another cordially and welcome visitors with pride. In a recent school survey almost all respondents agreed with the statement ‘I care about others and treat them in the same way’.

The inclusion of ‘Culture and Community’ into the school Key Drivers, ensures that there is a consistent strategic focus on this. Tolerance and harmony between different cultures in the community is promoted well. The school has 42 nationalities of pupil and 12 nationalities of

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teacher that work to ether to provide a welcoming and warm community. In a year 9 English class, pupils were able to demonstrate empathy, tolerance and understanding of right and wrong in a debate that challenged racial injustice and prejudice. Special events and focused weeks are planned into the calendar to support pupils understanding of and provide exposure to contemporary events, culture and traditions beyond their own. This includes the celebration of international day, black history month, international women’s day. Teachers ensure this is featured throughout their planning such as EYFS celebrating King Charles III’s coronation in their play and KS1 studying the topic “Adventure Africa”. Pupils are active and reliable members of their community. The pupils are regularly involved in charitable and community events which enables them to contribute positively to the local and wider community including UNICEF, Zayed Humanitarian Foundation in the UAE and Hope for Girls and Woman in Tanzania. A recent whole school initiative enterprise week saw the school community raise over 30000 AED for good causes.

Pupil council minutes show that pupil feedback is taken and responded to, enabling pupils to be heard, understood and experience democratic practices. The “you said, we listened...” initiative promises an increase in swimming lessons and the request for more rewards for things we do well has resulted in an attendance incentive initiative for term 3. Since the last inspection pupils feel there are plenty of ways their voice can be heard and appreciate that they are listened to.

An impressive number of extracurricular offerings and leadership opportunities provide enrichment that encompasses experiences for everyone. The school has developed a system of pupil leadership that offers over 200 positions, from EYFS to Post 16, including pupil council, sustainability committee, house captains and reading ambassadors. There is a balance of opportunities that are inclusive to all and those that are selected via democratic practices. Leadership is encouraged within the curriculum, pupil led lessons are a developing practice that promote enthusiasm and reflective practice in their own learning. This was observed in a year 7 PE lesson with pupils researching, designing and explaining their games and reflecting on what they need to do to improve. The senior school curriculum choices in history and politics make clear links to democratic processes and events in British life. In the lower school topics that include ‘Roman Britain’ and ‘People who help Us’ make links to historical and contemporary Britain. EYFS children were able to talk about the jobs and role of people familiar to them in their local context but also of a British postman and the purpose of a post office.

The house system is well embedded and events are held that promote sportsmanship, creativity and embraces the unique talents and interest of the whole community. There are opportunities for everyone to engage in and be successful in something of their choosing. These events include spelling bees, science quizzes, cookery competition, family fitness challenges and talent shows. Performing arts is a specialist subject offered in lower and middle schools. Freedom of expression is encouraged, and most recently celebrated with the launch of the Al Mamoura Talks, a school led version of TED Talks. This event had a positive uptake and has been scheduled to run again.

The Moral Education curriculum is well planned to simultaneously meet the needs of pupils PSHEE development. Examples of this can be seen from year 1 pupils, talking about their

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feelings and explaining how they can cope with sadness. In year 4 pupils explored miscommunication which led to conversations around mutual respect and empathy. The school counsellor is available to all pupils supporting with emotional, social and mental health needs.

In the middle and senior school, the school's promotion of 'successful women' in industry and history is expanding to include their own alumni, inspiring aspirations and informing the girls on their future opportunities. Whilst in its early stages feedback from girls in year 9 is highly positive and the careers counsellor and pastoral team have a clear vision on the expansion of this. Pupils in year 10-13 are supported in their future preparations through their participation in a work experience programme placing them into industry for one-week placements.

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

The welfare, health, and safety of the pupils at AMA meets the requirements of the BSO standards and are outstanding.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils is a high priority for the school. The interpretation of welfare is wide, stretching beyond the pupils on roll to the whole AMA community. The Academy's Values DNA is displayed prominently around the school and appears to have been borne of daily practice as much as it now shapes it.

Kindness is part of the Values DNA and it is apparent across the school. Levels of bullying are low, which reflects the school's on-going efforts to eliminate it. Pupils were well aware of the dangers of online bullying and strategies to effectively combat it.

In the primary school, student welfare is the responsibility of class teachers; in the secondary school the role is taken by the Form Tutor. In the latter case, form periods were observed to be times for pupils to catch-up with each other rather than to engage in meaningful discussions or learning around pastoral care issues.

The school counsellor (who joined the school in the first term of this academic year) is actively building rapport with both primary and secondary pupils to provide support for mental health issues. She is supported by staff members who are trained as Mental Health First Aiders – able to spot signs of difficulty in pupils and colleagues. Supported by members of the executive leadership team (ELT), the counsellor is taking the school toward the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in School bronze award. The counsellor also works with members of staff who are experiencing mental health challenges at times of especially high pressure in the school.

The academy extends its sense of responsibility for welfare into its own parent community. The school counsellor has initiated parent workshops, which have been slow to take off, but will be continued.

For pupils and staff feeling unwell or for accidents that take place during the school day, two clinics operate on site. The main clinic is open to both primary and secondary pupils staffed by two full-time, qualified nurses. The clinic is divided into a facility for boys and another for girls. A second clinic operates for EYFS pupils specifically.

The school has an appropriate first aid policy. Both nurses were familiar with it, and with the procedures to be followed following a pupil reporting to the clinic.

Both clinics are operated in a professional manner, adhering to UK standards. Medicines are not dispensed without parental consent, which is sought by phone and followed-up by email or text message. A small stock of medicines is stored on site securely in a locked cabinet. Logs are maintained for pupil visits and medicines dispensed. The clinics hold central records of pupils with allergies or on-going conditions. This information is also circulated confidentially to teachers via the *EvoTix* software.

The clinics are clean and well-maintained. Bed sheets are disposable and changed after each visit – of which there are around 30-40 per day. The nurses are aware of frequent pupil visitors to the clinic and follow-up with parents and class/form tutors.

To date the academy's nurses have assisted in delivering vaccination roll outs, and they have the intention to extend their activities with both pupils and parents.

The school has a safeguarding policy and a safeguarding committee. Members of the committee are all qualified to level 3. There are multiple safeguarding leads. The Assistant Principals lead the safeguarding committee, which reflects the priority given to safeguarding. The school counsellor is also a member of the committee. The committee meets on, at least, a monthly basis to review reports and to review cases and determine further courses of action. A safeguarding log is maintained. The safeguarding committee shared their view that they would make every effort to ensure that safeguarding issues were resolved within the school community, where possible. They do so by working closely with pupils, parents, school counsellor and outside practitioners.

The school's child protection policy is thorough and includes provision for addressing radicalisation, female genital mutilation, grooming and social media. It also includes details of procedures for staff. External support for safeguarding is available through the Aldar head office and the Abu Dhabi Family Care Authority. Also, the Academy has recently become part of the new Abu Dhabi safeguarding support group, under the aegis of the BSME, which includes a WhatsApp group for safeguarding leads.

Safeguarding training is mandatory for any staff member coming on to school premises. Ancillary staff, outside contractors and extra-curricular coaches all need to undertake the school's own safeguarding training prior to working with the school. Safeguarding training is part of the induction process for new staff. Training is refreshed for all on an annual basis. In addition, reminders are given in staff meetings as and when necessary.

Within the teaching community the safeguarding systems enable primary and secondary teachers to communicate promptly any concerns they may have about pupils. Information regarding safeguarding is recorded using CPOMS software, which also enables effective recording of follow-up. The CPOMS software is also used to record behavioural incidents. This ensures that the behavioural policy is followed, and that staff are aware of infractions.

Classroom behaviour in the primary school was excellent and reflected the pupils' enthusiasm for learning: "school is for learning" said one young pupil. In the senior school, behaviour for learning, in the best lessons, was exemplary. Where pupils experienced some agency and challenge in their learning, they responded with enthusiasm and focus. In other lessons, which were either too teacher-dominated and/or the pitch of the material underestimated students, the behaviour for learning tended to deteriorate as focus was lost.

The behaviour of students moving around the school was largely excellent, although the transitions into break and lunch time were observed to be a little disorderly. During those break times and at home time pupils were effectively supervised, with sufficient members of

the teaching staff on duty in play areas, in the dining hall and on critical corridors. Indeed, some corridors were supervised throughout the day, as the 'Bus Nannies' 'day-job'. Movement around the school was further secured by access to the both the primary and secondary corridors being restricted by automatically locking doors. Access was by appropriate pass card only.

All staff wear a lanyard with photo identification. Visitors to the school have different coloured lanyards so that visitors and staff can easily be identified. Parents who come onto site at the start and end of the school day wear lanyards. Parents without lanyards are not allowed to enter. Lanyards are generally limited to three per family.

The school promotes the safety of its pupils through regular fire drills and evacuation procedures. Pupils are reminded of the actions to follow regarding evacuation drills or lockdowns and know what to do. Regular drills take place each term and a log of the time it takes for the school to be evacuated is maintained. Attendance registers are completed at the start of every lesson in secondary and at the start of the day in primary.

School attendance is, on average 92 per cent – on the cusp of acceptable by the standards of ADEK. The ELT is aware that this could be improved and are taking steps with parents and with individual students to work on their attendance and punctuality. The school makes calls to parents on the first day a pupil is absent. After two days Class/Form Tutors follow-up with families. Recent changes to the working week in the UAE have had a negative impact on attendance on Fridays (half day), with an average of 10% less students being in school than the other four days of the week.

Most pupils come to school in private cars. Arrivals and departures were generally orderly – being supervised by security guards/traffic wardens and by members of the SLT. In the afternoon, primary pupils were dismissed from the gym, under supervision of their class teachers. This also offered parents an opportunity to chat to their child's teacher and good relationships of this kind were observed.

Some of the pupils use the school buses to come to and leave school. The school has eleven buses. Each bus was well-equipped to appropriate safety standards, all pupils were observed to be wearing seatbelts and, in every case, a 'Bus Nanny' was on duty.

Security guards monitor entrance points to the school's site throughout the school day. There are two gates which are closely monitored at the start and end of the school day – including by members of the SLT. The school management maintained a clear record of people on the premises – for security and in case of an emergency. Staff entering and leaving the school were monitored electronically. Processes for monitoring and recording of visitors entering the school were thorough.

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

The quality of governance at AMA is effectively developed, and the proprietor and staff are highly suitable for their roles.

The parent company, Aldar, provides effective oversight of the academy, ensuring the maintenance of high educational standards and the suitability of the principal as the academy leader. Aldar also provides support in administrative, HR, and IT areas, while operational support and policies related to HR and health and safety are the responsibility of the academy's senior leaders. Effective financial planning has resulted in investments in excellent accommodation and generous staff provisions, which allow for effective teaching of the curriculum and wide-ranging opportunities for all students.

The board of management plays a key role in ensuring that the academy's strategic plans accurately reflect the views of the wider community and provides leaders with necessary support for fulfilling the academy's strategic goals and bringing further improvements.

Policies and practices are in place to support the welfare and safety of all students, including a 'safer recruitment' policy that involves appropriate checks for staff appointments.

The academy maintains a central register of all staff, and staffing levels are generous to ensure successful curriculum delivery. All teaching staff have qualifications appropriate to their role, and many have additional qualifications that enhance academy development.

The board is developing its effectiveness in implementing its monitoring role and holding staff accountable for the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, with an overall aim of promoting stronger academic outcomes across all phases of the school.

## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are outstanding.

The school building and facilities provide a high-quality environment for the students to safely engage in their learning. The new swimming pool, robotics lab and environmental corridor are examples of the school's commitment to enhance the already impressive facilities. The school has acted upon the recommendations in their BSO report from 2020 to develop a new play area for KS1. This area has further enhanced the play opportunities available to the students.

The school site is well managed by the operations and support services manager. He line manages an external facilities management team to ensure that high levels of cleaning and maintenance are the norm. Any issues raised are investigated and addressed promptly. Monthly reports related to the facilities and the management of the facilities are produced and shared with the senior leadership team and Aldar Academies head office. The school fully complies with the Ministry of Education requirements, this was evidenced in the recent report.

The safety of the students is further enhanced by staff on duty at break and lunchtime, a fully staffed team of nurses, a security team and CCTV. Emergency exit plans and routes are well displayed. The latest fire drill was well documented and met the requirements of the Ministry.

Students arrive and leave the site in an orderly and safe manner. They are well supervised by the leadership and security teams. The school buses are regularly serviced, and bus assistants support the children on their journey to and from school.

Entrance to the school for parents and visitors is well organised, with ID badges and different coloured lanyards issued for easy identification. Security cameras cover the whole site and are monitored 24 hours per day.

The premises, accommodation and environment, at the school, significantly contributes to the student learning experience, enjoyment and engagement.



## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others at AMA is judged to be outstanding. The school meets the standards for BSO.

AMA uses a variety of means to communicate with parents including website, emails, face to face meetings (both planned and by appointment), use of social media platforms, newsletters, parents' workshops, coffee mornings and celebration events. The school has an open-door policy and actively encourages parent involvement. Parents are very happy with the approachability of staff, the presence of senior leaders at the start and end of the day, and the level of information received. They feel there is an abundance of information, but they are not overwhelmed. Parents feel listened to and explained that they see changes happen as a result of suggestions they make; for example, the timing of sports day.

The school's website, the Aldar website, the Parent Portal and comprehensive parent brochures provide parents with information about the school. All the information required by BSO is easily accessible on the two websites. This includes contact information for the school, key personnel, headteacher and the owner, the previous inspection report, and safeguarding and welfare arrangements. Arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and details of the complaints procedure are also readily available. A policy area includes the bullying, behaviour, health and safety and first aid policies. A comprehensive curriculum area and parent welcome pack provides information and policies about the curriculum, inclusion, provision for pupils of determination, gifted and talented pupils and those with English as an additional language. Academic attainment is celebrated on social media and communicated to parents through newsletters.

Displays in the school ensure all stakeholders are well informed about key personnel, the school's vision, aims and values. The aims and ethos of the school is summed up by the recently developed Values DNA.

Parents receive regular reports about pupils' progress through written reports, meetings with teachers and opportunities to share end of topic presentations. Throughout the school teachers regularly share learning with parents through TEAMS and class newsletters. In the EYFS midterm reports contain a summary comment and next steps with a more detailed report at the end of the year covering all the areas of learning. From year 1 reports include grades for attainment and learning behaviours, detailed curriculum comments and next steps. From year 5 pupils' self-assessments are included in the reports.

Parents feel well informed about their child's progress and especially appreciate the regular feedback from teachers. For parents of the younger pupils, they feel it helps them talk to their child about their learning. Based on feedback, there may be opportunities in the future to support parents in understanding the pupil progress information included in reports.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

AMA has a transparent and effective procedure for handling complaints that complies with local laws and regulations, meeting BSO standards.

Feedback from parents indicates high satisfaction with the academy's speed of response and the outcome of any concern or complaint. The academy values good relationships with parents, students, and the wider community and takes informal concerns seriously. In most cases, an individual member of staff will receive the first approach concerning any issues and will work to resolve the issue through agreed-upon actions. If the matter is not resolved informally, or parents are not satisfied with the response, the complaint will be passed to a member of the management team. If the matter remains unresolved, parents may choose to take the matter to the formal complaints procedure.

To do so, the complainant can write to the academy principal, who will either take the case forward or appoint a senior colleague who has no prior involvement. If the complainant is not satisfied with the principal's decision, they can write to the Educational Director at Aldar Academies. The complaint will then be reviewed by a panel, and the panel's findings and recommendations will be documented in a report and shared with the person concerned. The complainant also has the option, under host country law, to pursue the matter through ADEK.

All details of the complaints procedure are available through the academy and on the parent portal, including the process, timetable of events, and anticipated time. During the inspection, the academy's records and documents showed that concerns were heard properly and treated with care and consideration in line with the stated policy.

## 12. Standard 8

### Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of AMA meets the requirements of the BSO standards and is outstanding.

The school's senior leadership team and board of governors have a sound understanding of where the school is on its journey. They, as well as staff members, talk openly and honestly about that seven-year journey. There is a keen awareness of where the school is coming from, how it has progressed and where it is going to. This understanding was clearly illustrated by the Aldar Education Director's stated belief that "everything is in place" for the next steps towards higher pupil achievement.

The governing board is impressive in its support for the Academy, its leadership team, teachers and pupils. This is reflected in the commitment to the Al Mamoura community through the policy of "you said, we listened", exemplified by the significant voice given to parents on the board of governors. The parent governor acts as a conduit for parent feedback, follows-up on their concerns and, in some cases, helps to put remedies in place.

The board of governors seek balance in their work. This is seen in various elements of their work. They seek to support, to add value as well as to challenge everyone to be better. The composition of the board balances the interests of all stakeholders (operations, parents and independence).

Strategic and school improvement planning is purposeful and relevant (an ambitious annual development plan is in place). The school self-evaluation of its performance is accurate and evaluated against the BSO standards. There are clear lines of evidence to support the judgments made. This accurate self-evaluation enables the school to make targeted school improvement plans based upon a wide range of evidence gathered. This includes the schools internal and external data of pupil's academic performances. The school also seeks the views of parents and pupils through questionnaires which influence the decisions the school makes.

The school's leadership displays breadth and depth. At senior levels leadership finds breadth in the incorporation of senior figures from the administrative support team (including the principal's PA). The team adds depth in its extensive layers of middle leadership. These characteristics allow the vision and mission of the school to penetrate deeply into the fabric of the school as well as providing the robust structure required to sustain the comprehensive, diverse and potentially overwhelming range of strategies employed across the school. The extensive team also allows for the dispersal leadership across the school, creating openings and space for staff initiatives as well as opportunities for advancement.

The most senior team of principal, head of primary and head of secondary is strong. Together they articulate a clear vision and mission for the school and show "relentless drive" to see it delivered. The team acknowledges a contingent approach to leadership that is in line with the school's journey. Whilst perhaps once a prescriptive style of leadership was required, today that has been replaced by a more dispersed leadership style allows for the vision to be

delivered in a more cooperative manner, incorporating creative contributions from across the school.

The principal of the school has passion and ambition: she is inspiring and motivating AMA to even greater heights.

The academy's middle leaders are strong, and potentially a great strength of the school. Within its ranks, in both the primary and secondary schools, there are some outstanding practitioners and leaders. Often it is in their classrooms that the very best of the school is seen, showing where the whole school has the potential to be. In the secondary school, the leaders of the mathematics and English departments were especially compelling: this is already reflected in pupil performance data, which with stronger supporting casts, could be improved still further.

School leaders undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' academic performance through learning walks, book scrutiny and lesson observations.

Data is analysed by the senior leadership team. It is not easy to use this to inform school improvement planning because of its complexity. It lacks clarity and ease of interpretation. This hampers forensic analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses – especially in the secondary school. A streamlined approach may be further opportunity to develop the skills of middle leaders in the analysis of the school's data so that decisions can be informed and acted upon quickly.

Teachers are committed to the school and passionate about their work. They talked of their part in the journey that the school is undertaking and their desire to see it through to a conclusion, or at least to the next milestone. They talked about the high quality of support they receive from the school regarding their wellbeing and professional development.

The school's monitoring, evaluating and reviewing processes are robust, creating a sound framework of accountability at every level, as well as serving as a training needs analysis to ensure that staff members receive the support and professional development that they need.

The school's structures, policies and procedures are in place and documented. Policies are reviewed regularly by the ELT and the board of governors.