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Al Karamah School, Abu Dhabi

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent three days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be added to the register, 'Get information about schools'.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO) accreditation. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The DfE updated the standards in August 2023. The new standards aligned the BSO standards with the Independent School Standards (ISS) and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding applied to schools in England; clarified and reiterated the relationship between the UK and host country laws and reshaped staff recruitment standards to ensure international applicability.

The British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
Part 5. The premises and accommodation.
Part 6. The provision of information.
Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.
Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.
Part 9. The quality of provision for boarding.

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and carers and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	**Outstanding**
Grade 2	**Good**
Grade 3	**Satisfactory**
Grade 4	**Inadequate**

Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Information about the school

Al Karamah School opened in Abu Dhabi in 2019. It is the first school of its kind in the United Arab Emirates and provides education and therapies for Emirati pupils who have an autism spectrum condition. The school is owned by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and managed by Aspris Children's Services. There are currently 165 pupils between the ages of three and 14. The school also comprises the Al Karamah Training Institute (AKTI). 64 older students attend the AKTI in the age range 14 to 25 years and this part of the provision is outside the scope of this inspection. The school's leadership team comprises the principal and two vice-principals. There is a wider middle leadership team reflecting the school's commitment to a distributive leadership approach.

All pupils have low levels of attainment on entering the school. The majority have Arabic as a first language. Pupils join the school at different ages, with some progressing from the foundation stage through to key stages 1, 2, 3 and 4. As a result of the progress that they have made at Al Karamah, there is a growing trend of pupils transferring to specialist provision in mainstream schools.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three inspectors. During the inspection, they visited 47 lessons all of which were jointly observed with a member of the leadership team. There were approximately 20 meetings with leaders, teachers, therapists, pupils, parents and representatives of the governing body.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and in their books. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including safeguarding and health and safety policies. Inspectors evaluated the quality of assessment systems and curriculum planning and development programmes. Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff expressed in the BSO survey, which was sent out before the inspection visit.

Evaluation of the school

Al Karamah School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from 3 to 14 years.

The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Pupils make outstanding levels of attainment and progress in **English** from low starting points. There are no differences in the rates of progress made between boys and girls. Almost all meet or exceed the targets in their individual education plans (IEP) which form part of their education, health and care plans (EHCP) and then move to an increasingly higher level of challenge. In the early years foundation stage (EYFS) children develop confident communication skills, using sign, gesture or voice. Children learn the sounds that letters make in daily phonics lessons, and as they progress into key stage 1, a few begin to blend letters together to read and write words and short phrases. Pupils listen to age-appropriate stories and, using symbols as prompts, they demonstrate clear understanding of characters and events.

In key stage 2, pupils use visual cues very effectively to choose a learning activity, such as writing or finding key words on worksheets. Most pupils learn to sign and finger spell proficiently to express their needs and preferences. Pupils listen to letter and word pronunciation, and they repeat what they hear, so that they increase their vocabulary and extend the number of words they can read.

In key stage 3, pupils confidently recall what they have learned in previous lessons as a starting point for improving their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. They use sign and voice appropriately, demonstrating accurate comprehension of words and phrases. Pupils listen carefully to stories, sign key words and predict what will happen next.

In key stage 4, pupils make strong connections between their own experiences and the stories that they read. Pupils make realistic comparisons, such as the colour of London

buses compared with their school buses. Many pupils understand how to contribute to conversations; they listen carefully and wait their turn before answering questions.

In **mathematics**, all pupils enter school with skills, knowledge and understanding below that expected for their age, and make outstanding levels of attainment and progress from their starting points. Almost all meet or exceed the carefully planned targets that are set in their IEPs. There is no significant difference in the rates of progress of boys and girls.

In the EYFS, children benefit from well-planned, practical approaches, widening their experience to build their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Children make strong progress in achieving challenging targets in number, shape and measure. Children begin to use comparative language such as heavier and lighter and explore and develop an understanding of concepts such as empty and full.

In key stage 1, pupils build on previous learning, using manipulatives effectively, such as counters and 10 frames, to support understanding of arithmetic operations with numbers up to 50. Pupils further develop vocabulary, and they relate real-life experiences to mathematical knowledge and skills.

In key stage 2, pupils learn to handle data and use it to create pictograms. Pupils learn to use terms such as less than, equal to and greater than. Pupils build on their skills from measuring in non-standard units to measuring accurately in centimetres and metres.

In key stage 3, pupils improve their number manipulation skills and take many opportunities to apply them practically, for example, matching numbers to bus routes with their destinations and learning about telephone numbers to make calls. Pupils extend mathematical learning while improving science understanding and English language speaking skills. A strong example of this was seen when in a project on healthy living, pupils improved their understanding and use of weight and capacity through collecting, analysing and discussing data from other pupils and staff. .

In key stage 4, pupils improve their understanding of money and value, and, as a result, they can successfully budget for items when visiting the school's café. Pupils learn how mathematical skills are needed in different occupations such as horticulture, when counting and measuring the distance between seeds when planting.

In **science**, pupils make outstanding rates of attainment and progress from their starting points. All pupils meet or exceed their IEP targets for science. Pupils enter school with scientific skills, knowledge and understanding which are below expectations for their age. The well-planned science curriculum, thoughtfully adapted and personalised in its delivery, develops pupils' verbal reasoning through visual and structured tasks, including opportunities for sensory, social and interactive activities.

In the EYFS, children participate in clear structures and routines in science, including the lively Attention Autism Bucket approach. Pupils build confidence in sorting and handling items to compare and contrast them visually. In one lesson, children correctly predicted that the next item to emerge from the bucket would be very loud by covering their ears.

In key stage 1, pupils learn to identify, classify, compare and contrast a range of items. They learn about body parts, animals and plants and begin to explore their functions. In key stage 2, pupils learn to identify changes and recognise differences, for example when comparing and contrasting fruits and vegetables. Pupils use suitable terminology to describe taste.

In key stage 3, pupils recognise and describe simple food chains, learning key vocabulary such as predator and carnivore. Pupils develop further practical science skills through cooking, learning about healthy eating and preparing different snacks from different recipes.

Pupils build their prediction and recording skills from EYFS onwards. Where appropriate, they confidently use modern learning technologies and alternative and augmentative communication devices to express themselves and record their findings.

In key stage 4, pupils look at science in a global context. They learn about and understand topics such as sustainability and recycling. They compare and contrast when seeds can be successfully planted outside in the UAE compared to the UK.

Pupils make outstanding levels of attainment and progress in **other subjects** because they combine the skills they have gained in English, mathematics and science to improve their understanding of, for example, rhythm and tempo in music or colour contrasts in art. All pupils meet or exceed the personalised targets set out in their IEPs. Teachers and teaching assistants (TA) continually reinforce pupils' communication,

thinking and problem-solving skills, such as challenging pupils to pot the ball in the hole in a game of golf in physical education (PE). Pupils make very effective use of all available resources to enhance their skills, such as microphones when singing to improve their pronunciation.

Pupils make outstanding levels of attainment and progress in **Arabic** from their low starting points. In the EYFS most children recognise letters and common words. Children make effective use of a range of resources including signing and symbols for reading. At this stage, pupils confidently match letters to familiar objects in their environment, and they break words into parts to improve pronunciation.

In key stage 1, pupils read short texts with increasing fluency by using symbols to break down the text into manageable parts. Pupils recognise the main points in a single-paragraph text and confidently share their responses during group discussions. Almost all pupils apply their vocabulary in real life situations, for example, by discussing ways they can help fellow Muslims. In key stage 2, pupils use expressive language engagingly in conversations, for example, when articulating their appreciation of Emirati culture, festivals and celebrations.

Pupils improve their use of standard Arabic when speaking as they progress through the school. Pupils learn to identify the main points when reading a story and communicate their answers clearly when asked questions about characters.

In key stage 3, pupils develop increasingly independent reading and writing skills. They follow clear instructions to carry out simple research using modern technology to improve their use of descriptive language and their conversational skills.

In key stage 4, pupils confidently talk about their favourite sport using standard Arabic, demonstrating successful communication skills and cultural awareness. When writing, a few older pupils use punctuation marks accurately.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).

- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The Standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during June 2025, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2(2)(d)(ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding. The curriculum is extremely broad, balanced and highly relevant to the diverse needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. School leaders and teachers thoroughly review all aspects of the curriculum using their own 'understand, adapt, exceed' approach to ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and skills that they require. The curriculum promotes achievement, independence and happiness across all subjects. The very effective contribution of therapists to curriculum planning is seen in the highly personalised and child-centred strategies which motivate pupils to improve their communication skills and fine and gross motor skills.

The curriculum has been expertly modified so that significant emphasis is placed on teaching about life in the United Kingdom at a level which engages and motivates pupils. This is seen in reading lessons when pupils listen to stories or read books about lifestyles in Britain. The curriculum promotes British values such as democracy when

preparing pupils to vote for those they wish to represent them on the students' council. As a result, older pupils demonstrate a real curiosity about life in Britain when chatting in the school's café.

School leaders review curriculum provision through frequent learning walks and observations in lessons. Their insightful conclusions help them to make improvements to curriculum planning. A rich example of this is the strengthening of planning in English and Arabic schemes of work so that more time and resources are devoted to teaching and learning of phonics to enhance pupils' skills in reading and writing in both languages. At each key stage, the influence of the national curriculum for England (NCfE) is evident, for example learning about animals and their habitat in science in key stages 1 and 2. Each element of learning is adapted expertly to cater for pupils' individual needs and to incorporate their understanding of their own environments as a starting point for learning.

Curriculum policy and planning promotes respect for all people at levels which are appropriate to pupils' levels of understanding. The curriculum pays particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. Pupils' personal, social and health education needs are very well met as a result of effective personalised planning. Pupils learn about themselves, relationships and their bodies in science lessons. Most pupils develop important practical skills through the systematic promotion of hygiene, for example, before and after meals or self-care in the bathroom. Further detailed evidence of individualised academic and personal skills planning and review is seen in pupils' EHCP. This includes valuable guidance about future work for older pupils and improving their English language speaking skills when relating memorable events such as holidays from their everyday lives. Pupils strengthen their social skills when visiting popular landmarks and facilities in the local community.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** in the school is outstanding. Teachers effectively adapt the methods and strategies they use to promote pupils' achievement as they have a secure understanding of their pupils' strengths and the areas in which they need to improve. As a result, pupils make exceptionally strong progress towards the targets set out in their EHCP, which include their IEP, and towards suitable curriculum objectives. Teachers' secure knowledge of the best practices in teaching and learning is seen in their skilful use of specialist teaching techniques, such as signing and the design of individual sequence strips so that pupils understand the order of the day and what will happen next. There is very effective use of teaching strategies such as social stories to enable pupils to express their needs and emotions

efficiently and to prepare them for new experiences, such as visits to a café or shopping mall.

In all subjects, teachers place a strong focus on improving pupils' communication skills through the use of sign, the accurate modelling of pronunciation, and relevant symbols to promote literacy. Lessons proceed in a very orderly manner, transitions within lessons, for example, from group work to individual workstations, are almost always smoothly managed because everyone knows exactly what they have to do. TAs make a very valuable contribution to the quality of teaching through their well-pitched support for individuals and groups because they have undertaken purposeful training which provides them with very clear insights into how pupils learn.

Teachers organise their classrooms efficiently and they make the best use of time and resources. They ensure that pupils understand what they have to do in lessons and that they have the resources they need to improve their achievement, including modern learning technologies to promote literacy, numeracy and communication skills.

Teachers' detailed planning is closely informed by their secure understanding of pupils' existing skills. Classroom teams, including therapists, continuously assess pupils' development in all subjects through working alongside, very focused questioning and by using photographic evidence to demonstrate their attainment and progress. They rigorously track their achievements over time so that they are able to quickly intervene when they notice that a pupil is not making the expected rate of progress. Tracking involves precisely measuring pupils' progress from their initial engagement with a new task, through to their development of and mastery of skills. Review of pupils' tracking indicates that almost all pupils make progress, with the large majority making very good or outstanding progress from their starting points across the curriculum and towards IEP objectives. Teachers skilfully plan work which enables pupils to review and revise areas or to develop new skills based on their assessment outcomes.

Teachers and school leaders have identified the need to consolidate the different assessment approaches used so that an even clearer, overall picture emerges of pupils' individual strengths and improvement needs.

Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is outstanding.

The standards relating to the spiritual moral social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5(b)(vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The exceptionally strong relationships across all phases of the school, between all stakeholders are based on trust and respect. Leaders at all levels consistently show respect for all. They make their positive expectations of pupils clear and explicit. As a result, pupils learn to introduce themselves and respectfully ask for visitors' names. In lessons, moving around school, at mealtimes and breaktimes, pupils were observed to cooperate and listen to each other respectfully.

Due to the complex needs of pupils, they may become dysregulated and exhibit behaviours that challenge. The school's well-considered and planned approach is proactive, person-centred and trauma informed. Leaders make excellent use of social communication, emotional regulation and transitional support (SCERTS) and approaches from the Autism Education Trust, to provide proactive systems to keep pupils and staff safer by understanding pupils' strengths, abilities needs and triggers. This is complemented by the team teach approach to deescalate situations. Approaches are shared with parents as partners in learning and support. As a result of these approaches, teaching and learning, as opposed to managing pupils' behaviour, have prominence at Al Karamah.

Leaders have developed carefully adapted physical environments and routines to inform but not to overwhelm pupils. Pupils have learned to use proactive and reactive sensory and movement breaks to ensure that they are ready to learn and interact with fellow pupils and staff. Parents stated that they were highly appreciative of the school's approach to developing their children's social skills. Many parents could not believe the positive change in their child. A few older pupils relaxed in their breaktime in Café Gaya, which is open to the public, and unobtrusively supervised by staff. They eloquently and collectively praised their school experience and enthusiastically shared their high aspirations for their life after school.

Staff clearly value parents as partners. The parent reference group gives parents a collective voice alongside their personal contact with the school. School leaders use their personalised knowledge and positive relationships with families together with useful information from the child protection online monitoring system (CPOMS) data management system to offer help and support with pupils' attendance, behaviour and

achievement. This includes informative workshops and monthly parent training sessions.

Pupils develop a very strong moral compass. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to help each other. Older pupils complete tasks which support the everyday running of the school. For example, older pupils deliver items around school. Pupils help out in reception, answering the telephone. Pupils make valued contributions, beginning in the early years, for example, by promoting a range of good deeds during Ramadan, and leads to older pupils being fully involved in packing and shipping donated humanitarian supplies to the Red Crescent.

The students' council takes its responsibilities seriously by supporting the school's improvement. Members' suggestions have helped the school to modify the food offered in the canteen. Their ideas about increasing sporting activities for boys and girls has resulted in ADEK providing coaching in football, table tennis and golf.

The school promotes the celebration of UAE culture including, Mawlid, Flag Day, Martyrs' Day and Mothers' Day. Pupils practise music and songs to complement an art exhibition to celebrate the 2031 UAE vision.

The school clearly demonstrates core British values of equality, diversity, respect and tolerance. On world book day, pupils experienced story telling in English and Arabic by staff dressed in traditional costumes in the library and in the school's majiles, a sitting or meeting room based on traditional Arabic designs. The school shares its attitudes, expertise and values for pupils with autism across the wider Abu Dhabi school system to support improved outcomes for all.

Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are outstanding and lead to a safe and secure working and learning environment. There are comprehensive policies in place for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection, which are regularly reviewed and amended.

There are excellent arrangements for settling pupils into school when they first arrive, including home visits, meeting with parents and other professionals, as well as helpful induction visits for the pupils. There are similar, strong arrangements when pupils leave the school, either to proceed to work or to continue their education elsewhere.

Teachers, therapists and parents work closely together to devise effective EHCPs which form the basis of the pupils' personal and academic programme on entry. Suitable assessments are carried out to ascertain the level and type of support a pupil requires. As a result, school leaders ensure that their provision precisely matches pupils' requirements.

School leaders ensure that all policies meet and exceed UAE and British requirements and that they are followed in school. The detailed safeguarding policy is available to all staff and parents, and staff sign to confirm that they have read it. A member of the governing board efficiently carries out their responsibilities for monitoring safeguarding arrangements. There are seven members of the lead safeguarding team, including Arabic speaking staff, to facilitate clear communication and to manage CPOMS efficiently. There are regular training and awareness-raising sessions for all staff, to ensure that staff are alert to any changes and maintain careful vigilance. Highly effective and regular safeguarding workshops are available for parents. The safeguarding policy makes suitable reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education. It describes clearly the procedures to be followed locally when safeguarding concerns occur.

There are comprehensive records maintained in relation to behaviour incidents and the very rare occurrence of bullying. Almost all parents report in surveys that their children feel very safe in school and the overwhelming majority of staff support this view. Good behaviour is successfully promoted in lessons and around the school through strong role modelling, social stories and positive communication.

The health and safety policy clearly outlines the responsibilities of all staff and contains explicit written guidance on risk assessment procedures for onsite and offsite activities. There is a written fire safety policy which outlines clearly the evacuation procedures. These procedures were seen to operate efficiently during the inspection when a fire alarm was raised in the school. There are strong and beneficial links with local civil defence agencies to ensure that statutory checks on health and safety procedures are carried out.

The school's medical centre operates efficiently with suitably trained staff. There is an appropriate number of first aid trained staff and all medicines are stored and administered safely. The school is clean, hygienic and well-maintained.

At 89%, pupils' attendance levels are better than the average for UK special schools, but below the overall school average in the UK in 2024.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The highly effective partnerships between the school, the Aspris organisation and ADEK result in rigorous and comprehensive checks to ensure that all staff who join the school are appropriately qualified and that they meet all suitability criteria for working with children. These include checks on professional qualifications and references, medical and police checks. All staff require ADEK certification before their employment is confirmed.

The school maintains a comprehensive single central record (SCR) which is efficiently and confidentially managed by the human resources team and regularly monitored by the governors. The SCR contains all staff who work at the school, including contractors, catering and site and security staff, and governors. Appropriate checks are carried out on all visitors, who are always accompanied whilst on site. Other relevant records, such as staff members' attendance at child protection training are carefully maintained and updated.

There are effective induction programmes in place for all staff, which include common themes such as safeguarding, and more specific training relevant to their role. Staff are confirmed in post once they have successfully completed a probationary period. There are good support procedures in place for staff whose performance does not reach the high standards expected. All staff follow well-organised professional development to strengthen their understanding of their roles and their capacity to fulfil them effectively.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The school is equipped with outstanding facilities and specialised resources tailored to meet the diverse and complex needs of all pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). All classrooms are purposefully designed to maximise pupils' engagement and to provide purposeful learning experiences to help pupils achieve the goals contained in their IEPs. Teachers have thoughtfully designed and arranged their classrooms to take account of pupils' particular needs, for example, by providing soft lighting and sound management devices such as ear defenders, where these are necessary.

Classrooms are very well-equipped with interactive digital technologies and relevant resources to promote enquiry and problem solving, effective communication and positive personal development. Most classrooms have spaces where pupils regulate their behaviour when the need occurs. The vocational education rooms in the AKTI are particularly well-geared to promoting work and life skills for older pupils and students. Staff and pupils attend the school's mosques which helps to prepare pupils for religious and social activities in their community.

Outdoor areas are thoughtfully designed with rubber flooring and artificial grass, providing a safe and sensory-friendly surface that supports both pupils' physical activity and play. The swimming pool is equipped with automated monitoring and operational systems to maintain the highest standards of hygiene, safety, and functionality. The pool and the indoor spaces for PE are fully adapted to promote therapy, skills' development and physical education and well-being. The school effectively promotes active and healthy lifestyles through exercise.

There are well-maintained toilet, bathroom and hygiene areas attached to most classrooms and around the school, for the sole use of pupils, although many pupils require adult support when using these facilities. There is plenty of fresh water available for washing and for drinking. The medical clinic is suitably staffed and equipped to provide short term care for sick or injured pupils. Staff are well trained in the use of specialist equipment such as epilepsy treatments.

Part 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Leaders ensure that up-to-date information is available through regular revision of communication channels such as the school's website. School leaders meet parents regularly to review their child's progress and discuss concerns.

The website contains an interactive, designated area for parents with information about how they can make their views known. There is relevant information about important school details, such as contact arrangements for the proprietor and governors. The names and contact details of school leaders are also included. The school's aims and its ethos are provided. There are links to all key policies, including safeguarding, health and safety and complaints. The school's specific approaches to

working with children who have autism are set out with supporting information on therapies and the role of the special education needs coordinator.

Parents benefit from comprehensive access to information about their children's achievements and progress. Parents attend meetings with staff where they help to design and review IEPs. They receive written and oral information on baseline and ongoing assessments as well as updates on lesson and curriculum plans. Parents' views are incorporated in IEP documents. Parents confirm that they know how to obtain information from the school and that their views are acted upon.

The parents' reference group has representatives from all key stages. The group plays a vital role in facilitating effective communication. Almost all of the parents who responded to the inspection survey agreed that the school provides helpful information about their children's progress. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's provision in their responses and, in particular, the successful teamwork which exists to help their children develop new and useful communication and life skills.

School leaders and the governing body regularly seek the views of parents through their own surveys. They meet parents at social occasions and at more formal gatherings, such as pupils' graduation days. They act upon the responses they receive, for example, they broadened the range of online and electronic communication strategies in response to parental requests.

Parents' workshops and coffee mornings are valued and well-attended. They provide formal and informal opportunities for parents to gain an understanding of their children's school experiences as well as to exchange ideas. Parents value such opportunities at the school which enable them to support each other.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard. There is a written complaints policy accessed through the school's website. It clearly sets out procedures and responsibilities for all involved in the complaint with timescales for completion. The policy establishes the principle of confidentiality and demonstrates how complaints

can be escalated to ADEK if agreement cannot be reached through the school's procedures.

The policy underpins the school's active approach to establishing and maintaining strong relationships and effective partnerships with parents. There is a very suitable emphasis on promoting dialogue so that staff and governors clearly understand any concerns so that problems can be efficiently addressed at an early stage. The recently implemented CPOMS system further clarifies procedures so that school leaders can rapidly investigate and resolve problems.

Currently there are no complaints in the system as the result of the positive relationships and mutual trust and respect which is evident in all aspects of the school's work.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The school's proprietor and the governing body ensure that all leaders carry out their responsibilities effectively so that BSO standards are consistently met. School leaders, the proprietor and governors understand their different responsibilities for improving the school and they operate in an atmosphere of professional respect and trust.

The principal and school leaders set out a clear vision for the school which emphasises that they will create a 'world of possibilities' based on pupils' high-quality achievement and enjoyment. The positive and productive learning culture and the very high morale displayed in all areas confirm that the vision is shared by all members of the school's community. There is a strong sense of common purpose in all departments and a keenness to improve provision even further.

School leaders have been particularly successful in promoting achievement to enable an increased rate of managed transfers to less restrictive environments. More older students now participate in work experience and increasingly students' success in work placements lead to offers of employment. Equally, the incremental changes which parents report in their children's social skills confirm that teaching, learning and partnerships are highly effective.

Leaders at all levels are fully aware of their responsibilities and hold themselves accountable for the impact of their work on pupils' achievements at regular leadership review meetings. The recent introduction of a school best practice network has strengthened middle leaders' understanding of their own roles in improving achievement. School leaders report to the governors and oversight committee on all aspects of provision and provide insightful evaluations of new initiatives. As a result, governors have a clear insight into the strengths of provision and contribute well to informed discussions on, for example, new approaches to teaching phonics.

There are highly effective internal arrangements for quality assurance, comprising lesson visits, learning walks and peer observation. Staff make excellent use of opportunities for reflecting on their work and sharing concerns at departmental meetings and in individual sessions with leaders.

Constructive feedback is provided for teachers following quality assurance exercises, with useful opportunities for teachers to reflect upon how they can improve their own performance. There are highly effective systems in place for school leaders to intervene where they have concerns that staff performance falls below expectations. The highly focused professional development programmes enhance staff members' skills further, for example, in ensuring that almost all staff now use signing consistently to enhance pupils' communication skills.

The school's development plan builds on the school's vision and clearly communicates school leaders' ambitions to improve the school as much as possible. It is based on the improvement areas identified in the previous inspection report and leaders' own evaluation of the school. The views of parents and staff expressed in surveys and at formal and informal meetings are taken into account. The students' council is given the regular opportunity to influence the school's development. As a result, the plan is strategic, regularly reviewed and contains suitable goals, such as strengthening and consolidating pupils' assessment processes. There are very clear guidelines on how the actions in the development plan will be measured and who will hold responsibility for improvements and how they will be monitored.

The governing body and school leaders ensure that all regulatory, financial and statutory requirements are met. They carefully bring together aspects of best practice from similar British schools with respectful acknowledgement of UAE traditions, culture and society to create a school which succeeds as a result of its unfailing commitment to improving the lives of pupils.

EYFS provision

The EYFS provides education and care for children in the age range of three to five years. All children are referred to the school by the ADEK specialist admissions panel. The school takes full account of the information provided by the panel, by parents and a range of other professionals, and invites all to participate in constructing children's ECHPs which contains the IEPs.

Each ECHP demonstrates strong links with the Early Learning Goals for England. They are highly personalised so that teachers, therapists and teaching assistants have reliable information which they use skilfully to plan teaching and therapy programmes. Teachers' and therapists' own observations of children's strengths and improvement needs are used to provide additional focus for each area of the plan. Each EHCP contains smart targets, with responsibilities and time limits clearly identified. Teachers regularly review each EHCP with the full involvement of parents.

Parents are very well informed about their children's progress on a daily basis through the use of interactive teaching platforms and electronic communication channels. Parents receive comprehensive termly reports from teachers. Parents willingly take up the many opportunities available for visiting the EYFS area to view their children's work and discuss their achievements and next steps.

Highly effective curriculum planning promotes the strong development of children's communication, numeracy, personal and physical skills. The inclusion of Arabic teaching strengthens children's understanding of their home language and their everyday lives. The curriculum embraces art and music and offsite visits to provide enrichment and to enable children to consolidate skills in different environments.

Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers plan lessons very carefully and they use resources proficiently to promote children's individual progress and social skills within the group. As a result, children make outstanding rates of progress from the very start of their school careers.

Post-16 provision

Post-16 provision is provided at AKTI, located on the same site as the school. Many pupils who have attended Al Karamah transfer to AKTI, with some beginning learning programmes there at the age of 14. The leadership of AKTI is highly effective, and the provision is remarkably well-resourced to provide wide-ranging teaching and training facilities. The curriculum in AKTI promotes the strong development of students' communication and numeracy, personal and social skills, with a particular focus on life skills, independence and vocational learning. The highly individualised approach seen in the school continues in curriculum planning in AKTI so that individual pathways are planned for each student. An increasing number of students participate in work experience with the appropriate levels of challenge, and a higher proportion each year take up job offers at the end of their time in AKTI.

Where appropriate, students' achievements are assessed through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the National Open College Network (NOCN), ensuring that students receive accreditation for their work which matches that seen in similar types of provision in England. Teachers and trainers make excellent use of their employment tracker to assess students' skills in relation to work so that there is a clear view of when students are ready to take on new challenges in different settings.

The importance of students developing independence skills permeates teaching and learning in AKTI. All students follow well-designed programmes which build incrementally on their existing skills to take on the challenges of adulthood. Those students who are unable to attend work placements benefit from rich learning experiences in community facilities. They use their observations, for example, from a visit to a café, to think about the different jobs that people do and to recall their experiences through engaging role play on their return to school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Al Karamah School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws. The requirements of the host country take precedence.

It cannot fully meet the standards that relate to 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5(b)(vi). Al Karamah School encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected

characteristics of age; disability; pregnancy and maternity; race and religion or belief, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

What the school could do to improve further

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

Currently, the many assessment systems in use do not provide a coherent overview of pupils' strengths and areas for development. Leaders should consolidate pupils' assessment by combining the different systems in use so that they provide a clearer overview of pupils' progress and attainment levels. As a result, pupils' strengths and the next steps that they should take to improve will be more precise, leading to even better outcomes.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
The quality of education				
Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development				
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			
Welfare, health and safety of pupils				
The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
Leadership and management				
Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			

School Details

Name of school	Al Karamah School
Type of school	Specialist provision for children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions
Date school opened	January 2019
Age range of pupils	3 to 14 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	165 (plus 64 in the Al Karamah Training Institute)
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	Not applicable
Address of school	Al Karamah School Al Manhal Abu Dhabi
Telephone number	056 2678 356
Email address	info@alkaramahschool.ae
Headteacher	Michelle Farr
Proprietor	Abu Dhabi Committee for Education and Knowledge (ADEK)

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

Accreditation – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

Accreditation Board – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

Assessment – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

Attainment – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO) – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

Education Development Trust – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

Central Support Team – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

Combined or Joint Visit – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards

against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

Cycle of Inspection – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

Curriculum – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Management – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

Progress – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

School self-evaluation – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

Standards –
(1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
(2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

Teaching – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

With 50 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust's vision is a world in which all lives are transformed through excellent education. We strive to improve education for learners globally, grounding our work in research and evidence. We support leaders to raise standards, improve school performance, develop great teachers and open career pathways.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train.

We have built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services. One of our main aims is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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