Pearl British Academy

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 9 to 11 November 2025

Lead Inspector: Jeremy Barnes

Team: Dee Russell-Thomas,
Sally Lane

Age Group: 3 to 11

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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 xxx 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 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 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 BSO 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

Pearl British Academy is a co-educational primary school located in the city centre of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The school opened in 2007 as the first of over 30 schools now owned by Aldar Education, the school's proprietor. It is a standalone primary school with a strong family and community ethos. There are currently 746 pupils on roll from 3 years old in foundation stage (FS) 1 to 11 years old in Year 6.

The school is over-subscribed but not selective, and prides itself on a highly inclusive ethos. There are 34 pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A significant feature of the school is that 52% of all pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Pearl British Academy is currently organised in a similar way to a traditional English primary school. Six classes make up the nursery and reception year, named FS1 and FS2. These classes follow the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum. Pupils then study the national curriculum for England (NCfE) in key stages 1 and 2.

The school is very diverse, representing over 50 nationalities. The largest proportion at 42% is Arab. At just three per cent, the proportion of British pupils at the school is very small.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

Three inspectors carried out the inspection over three days. Beforehand, they considered a variety of documents from the school in addition to a range of other evidence. The lead inspector also organised a planning meeting with the principal.

On site, the inspectors made 35 visits to lessons, five of which were joint lesson visits with school leaders. They took part in 20 meetings with school leaders, teachers, members of the strategic board and governance group, a group of parents and several groups of pupils. They also scrutinised a range of documentation including programmes of study, policies, the school's development documentation, pupils' workbooks and information about pupils' progress.

Inspectors also took into account the responses to the staff and parent surveys distributed prior to the start of the inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Pearl British Academy is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 11 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.

The attainment and progress in English is outstanding. Children in the early years make rapid rates of progress and by the end of the phase almost all exceed expectations in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The school's phonics' programme is well executed and results in children competently applying blending and segmenting techniques. This continues through to Year 1 where phonics outcomes show a strong upward trend, improving from 80% to 87% over three years, exceeding English averages. It is a reflection of high-quality teaching, effective early intervention, and the consistent application of the school's systematic phonics' approach.

Data from Granada Learning (GL) Progress Tests in English demonstrates exceptional attainment across Years 2 to 6. Between 85% and 98% of pupils achieve at or above expected levels, with significant increases in those exceeding expectations. This indicates sustained high standards and effective progression in reading and writing.

Reading for pleasure is a notable strength. The addition of four new library areas and the development of inviting reading spaces have enhanced pupils' engagement in and fostered a culture of reading. Pupils confidently discuss their favourite authors and demonstrate deepening levels of comprehension and breadth of vocabulary.

Writing outcomes are equally strong. The introduction of a consistent cursive script has improved pupils' presentation and pride in their work. Pupils participate in writing competitions, leadership roles, and debates, developing both their confidence and eloquence.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. Pupils articulate their ideas clearly, collaborate effectively, and use subject-specific vocabulary with much confidence. Across key stages, pupils are articulate communicators who read and write with fluency, creativity, and purpose. Pupils in Year 1 use story maps to retell familiar tales. In Year 2, they apply higher

order thinking to distinguish fiction from non-fiction, and pupils in Year 3 use expanded noun phrases to describe a pearl diver from the past.

Pupils in Year 5 undertake research on British racing drivers during their English lessons and apply their findings in topic work to design logos and mottos. This cross-curricular approach strengthens their descriptive and persuasive writing skills while fostering creativity and real-world language application. In Year 6, pupils write persuasive texts using research, evidence, and emotive language. Work scrutiny confirms consistently high standards. Pupils take pride in their achievements and demonstrate excellent progress in all aspects of English.

Attainment and progress in mathematics are outstanding. Children in the EYFS get off to a flying start with understanding of number. In FS1, they are immersed in numbers through games and chanting, whilst also learning how to write the numerals. When arriving in FS2, pupils are able to reinforce their number awareness whilst also developing a varied mathematical language, for example, using positional words such as 'lower' 'behind' and 'through'. Teachers skilfully blend mathematical learning through other parts of the curriculum. Children make excellent rates of progress so that they are ready for the demands of the NCfE in Year 1.

Throughout key stage 1, teachers demonstrate a very strong fidelity to the chosen schemes and pedagogies in mathematics lessons. A relentless focus on the four rules of number leads to excellent progress for all children. There is equal ambition in other areas the curriculum, for example, in how pupils in Year 2 can confidently distinguish between hexagons and pentagons and describe how many vertices and sides they have.

This excellent progress continues into key stage 1, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where pupils work methodically, practising calculations accurately to solve multi-step problems. Pupils record their work with great precision, showing care and thought. Pupils take much pride in their achievements. When worksheets are used, teachers make adaptations to ensure that they meet all pupils' learning needs.

Teachers prepare pupils very thoroughly for end of year examinations and this helps them achieve high standards across all year groups, well above both England and international averages. As a result of the strong foundational skills that teachers embed in key stage 1, pupils are able to solve more complicated problems in key stage 2, such as how to multiply both improper and mixed fractions.

Pupils are adept at being able to explain their reasoning and are confident in selecting appropriate methods to solve complex problems. Teachers assess pupils in a timely way

during lessons to ensure that they can be challenged further. There is no significant difference in the performance of different groups of pupils. Pupils with EAL and SEND also make excellent rates of progress.

Attainment and progress in science are outstanding. Across all phases, pupils achieve outcomes well above England and international averages, and most make better than expected rates of progress from their starting points. All groups, including pupils with SEND and EAL, demonstrate outstanding rates of progress. Over a three-year period, external attainment data confirms a continuing upward trend in both internal and external assessments.

In the early years, children demonstrate curiosity and prediction skills through play-based enquiry such as planting seeds, building bridges, and caring for living things. Teachers provide opportunities for children to investigate practically through scientific experiments.

In Years 3 to 5, external test data shows that almost all pupils achieve results above expected levels. In Year 6, external data, although lower than internal assessments suggest, still indicates that most pupils achieve at or above age-related expectations. Teachers rigorously prepare pupils for tests and international assessments.

Lesson observations highlight how teachers consistently develop pupils' investigative skills through practical opportunities and enquiry-based learning. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils created food chains. The teacher used UK-based animal examples to introduce the concept, which led naturally into a discussion about climate and habitats. In Year 6, pupils planned an investigation into the effect of different exercises on pulse rates. They wrote structured plans focusing on hypothesis, method and variables, thinking carefully about these aspects rather than rushing into the practical experiment.

Every year, pupils participate in a science fair and a few represent the school in the science Olympiad alongside other Aldar Education schools. The eco club remains a popular extra-curricular activity and pupils proudly celebrate their recent achievement of gaining the eco green flag award.

Pupils' attainment and progress across a wide range of other subjects are good. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music and physical education (PE). For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils practised performing 'Ode to Joy' on the keyboard, engaging with different levels of challenge that encouraged musical precision.

Pupils also study Arabic, Islamic studies, social studies, national identity, moral education and personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) development in EYFS and Year 1, ensuring a balanced curriculum that reflects both local and UK priorities.

Teachers integrate history, geography, design technology (DT) and art into topic-based learning, creating meaningful cross curricular connections. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils explored sustainability by comparing buildings in the UK and UAE. They analysed how each design responded to environmental needs, allowing them to create their own sustainable school designs. The project encouraged pupils'creativity, critical thinking, and an understanding of global responsibility.

- 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 in November 2025, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. 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 quality of the curriculum is outstanding

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.

Pearl British Academy delivers a coherent, inclusive, and enriched curriculum that meets the requirements of the NCfE and the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE). Leaders ensure progression across all phases, with clear mapping from EYFS through to upper primary. In the EYFS, teachers balance structured teaching with purposeful play, focusing on communication, physical development, and exploration. Shared planning and schemes of work, covering all seven early years' areas of learning, support children's smooth transition into Year 1.

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL. Leaders use internal and external assessments to monitor progress and adapt provision. Teachers continue to evolve provision and increasingly embed vocabulary acquisition and step-by-step language development into lessons. Pupils with SEND benefit from targeted interventions, effective teaching assistant (TA) support and differentiated levels of planning to respond to their needs.

The curriculum satisfies all statutory requirements and reflects the school's British ethos. Britishness is woven through the curriculum. In the early years, children learn British stories, songs and nursery rhymes. In Year 2, pupils explore life cycles through engaging examples of UK-based animals. Teachers integrate British cultural references, such as Stonehenge, British flora and fauna, UK authors, and World Book Day, into the curriculum. Pupils vote for Pearl Parliament representatives, reinforcing democratic principles. The House system, rewards, and sanctions replicate those used in British schools, reinforcing positive behaviour and community spirit. The curriculum promotes British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect.

The curriculum is enriched through a range of over 30 teacher-led and well attended after school activities. Pupils engage in sustainability projects, enterprise activities, and creative showcases; examples include sustainable architecture in Year 3 and deforestation

documentaries in Year 6. These experiences foster pupils' innovation, collaboration, and responsible citizenship.

The curriculum prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of their education, including transition to a UK school. Transition arrangements to a range of local schools include parent events, handover meetings, and extended support for pupils with SEND. Careers education begins early, with themed topics such as 'People Who Help Us' in early years, guest speakers, and enterprise projects. Pupils in Year 5 make their own chocolate to sell, and in Year 6, they present their findings of inspirational leadership research projects to parents. These activities develop pupils' communication, teamwork, and entrepreneurial skills.

Curriculum policies and plans actively promote respect for the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. While the school cannot deliver sex education due to local laws, it provides age-appropriate PSHE through a UK-based programme and moral education lessons. Pupils learn about empathy, respect, and diversity. Teachers embed cultural understanding across subjects, using local contexts such as desert habitats and Emirati literature to deepen relevance. In line with UAE law the school does not promote marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation.

The curriculum makes effective use of the local environment. Day trips link to topics studied in the curriculum. Pupils visit 'snow parks', the National Geographic centre and explore UAE heritage through cross-curricular links. Leaders monitor curriculum implementation well, for example, through lesson observations and book reviews, ensuring that it remains inclusive and aligned with UK and UAE standards.

The curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to thrive in British society and Emirati contexts.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school is outstanding

Teaching, learning, and assessment across the school are of a high quality. A very structured focus on the teaching of core knowledge and skills means that teaching over time helps pupils to reach very high standards of attainment across the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Many teaching practices and pedagogies reflect those typically seen in England, helping pupils progress very well across the NCfE.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and high expectations for pupils' achievement. Lessons are well-structured, purposeful, and clearly linked to curriculum objectives. Teachers plan precisely, ensuring that concepts are modelled clearly and that pupils are guided through a sequence of learning activities which enables them to acquire

skills, knowledge, and understanding effectively. Lessons are calm, productive, and characterised by mutual respect between staff and pupils, supported by a systematic focus on skills' development and conceptual understanding. Pupils are attentive, motivated, and able to articulate their learning confidently. In English lessons, for example, pupils analyse texts, work collaboratively and apply blending and segmenting skills. In science, pupils demonstrate secure understanding of key concepts such as the water cycle, food chains, and scientific variables.

The school's teaching philosophy is underpinned by a shared framework which supports a consistent approach across phases. This structure has been particularly effective in maintaining continuity and stability during a period of high staff turnover. As a result, new teachers quickly adopt the school's expectations, ensuring that pupils experience a uniform approach to teaching and assessment. This consistency contributes significantly to the high levels of attainment and progress evident in both internal and external data.

Assessment is rigorous and systematic. Teachers use formative and summative assessment strategies effectively to identify strengths and next steps in pupils' learning. Learning ladders, GL assessments, and Cognitive Abilities Tests (CAT)4 data are triangulated to ensure accuracy and to benchmark against UK standards. The outcomes of assessment are used to plan targeted interventions, including in-class support and out of lesson sessions for pupils with EAL and SEND. Teachers and leaders monitor progress closely, and pupils who are at risk of falling behind are swiftly supported to make accelerated progress, often supported by well-trained classroom assistants.

The adaptation of tasks is thoughtfully embedded through the 'Preparing to Dive' formative assessment framework that supports pupils with SEND and EAL needs while extending challenge for the most able.

Teachers integrate digital tools and multimedia resources to promote pupils' engagement and enable greater reflection. All teachers have achieved certification in using applications in teaching and, as a result, technology is used purposefully to consolidate pupils' understanding rather than replace direct instruction. The school also promotes safe and ethical use of technology.

While the quality of teaching is strong, leaders acknowledge that the current approach is sometimes overly structured. This model, while ensuring consistency, at times restricts creative exploration and limits opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended, enquiry-based learning. Leaders are aware of this and have already begun to adapt their 'INSPIRE' curriculum to encourage more innovation, creativity, and pupil-led investigation. Evidence

from English and cross-curricular projects shows that this shift is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' engagement and depth of learning.

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

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

Across all phases, pupils demonstrate excellent standards of behaviour, strong moral values, and highly positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is outstanding. Pupils are confident, resilient, and motivated learners who engage purposefully with both academic and personal growth opportunities. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm, respectful, and purposeful, reflecting clear expectations and well-established routines. Instances of bullying are extremely rare due to the proactive teaching of values and the consistent promotion of kindness, empathy, and respect through assemblies, pastoral programmes, and moral education lessons where pupils learn the importance of teamwork when trying to problem-solve a given task.

Relationships between pupils and staff are exceptionally strong, built on mutual trust, care, and respect. Pupils describe their school as a welcoming and compassionate community where everyone is valued and included. This ethos is reinforced by daily greetings from leaders, visible pastoral presence, and a culture where pupils feel safe and known. Peer mediators and play leaders in Phases 1 and 2 model these values by supporting younger pupils, promoting fair play, and fostering positive relationships at break-times. The conflict resolution model of: Greet, Listen, Identify, Decide, End (GLIDE) empowers pupils to resolve disagreements independently and maturely, promoting accountability and restorative thinking.

Pupils' self-esteem and self-awareness are highly developed. They take pride in their achievements and show a strong sense of belonging to the school's community. Pupils understand their strengths and areas for development, responding positively to feedback and using reflection to improve their learning and relationships. Their empathy and compassion are evident in charitable and community initiatives such as Pink Day, Ramadan Fridge and food and clothing charity events. Pupils' environmental and social responsibility is

particularly impressive. Eco representatives lead sustainability projects including recycling, composting, and aeroponics. The school has achieved Green Flag status for environmental excellence.

The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles and pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a balanced diet, regular exercise and sufficient sleep. The pupils' voice is a notable strength. Through the School Parliament, Eco Committee, and class councils, pupils confidently share their ideas and opinions. Their feedback has led to tangible improvements, such as enhanced environmental practices and playground initiatives. Pupils report feeling listened to and respected by teachers and leaders, contributing to a strong sense of democratic participation and belonging.

The curriculum, assemblies, and enrichment programme deepen pupils' understanding of public institutions and services in both the UK and the UAE. Pupils learn about democracy through class elections and leadership structures, the rule of law through the school's Code of Conduct, and individual liberty through opportunities to make choices in learning and leadership. Respect and tolerance for others are embedded across the curriculum, underpinned by the moral education programme, International Day events, and partnerships with local and global organisations. Pupils show an excellent understanding of British values and relate them to their own experiences, for example, through writing about David Attenborough and environmental protection, and discussing King Charles's speech at Conference of Parties (COP) 28.

Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs is regularly reinforced. A school assembly to promote anti-bullying week focused on the power of being kind and celebrating difference. Through curriculum themes and global sustainability campaigns, pupils develop a deep appreciation of cultural diversity and the importance of global citizenship.

Overall, SMSC provision is a key strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate outstanding personal development, empathy, and moral integrity. They are articulate, reflective, and respectful young people who value learning, diversity, and the community. The inclusive and nurturing environment enables every pupil to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally, ensuring that they are exceptionally well-prepared to contribute positively to society within their own country and beyond.

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

The welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff is outstanding.

Leaders foster a strong culture of care, vigilance, and mutual respect ensuring that pupils feel safe, supported and valued. Pupils settle into school quickly and benefit from a close-knit community where staff understand pupils' social and emotional needs. Staff build trusting relationships and respond sensitively to individuals. The 'team around the child' meetings enable timely, coordinated interventions. The highly visible head of pastoral care consistently reinforces the school's ethos, making it clear to pupils that trusted adults are always there for them and available to listen.

Leaders maintain a healthy and safe environment. A dedicated health and safety officer oversees compliance, supported by the medical team, to meet or exceed Aldar Education's and the host country's standards. Fire safety procedures align with UAE safety codes and the school's fire policy. Staff conduct weekly alarm tests, monthly inspections and termly fire drills, including one annual drill with the local Civil Defence. Lockdown drills take place annually.

Aldar Education updates all policies regularly and ensures all staff have access to these on the internal online platform. Leaders embed risk assessment into daily practice and act swiftly to mitigate identified risks. Two qualified nurses deliver first aid in line with the school's first aid policy, ensuring prompt and competent care.

Behaviour across the school is excellent. Staff implement a clear behaviour policy and record sanctions for serious incidents. Anti-bullying strategies are proactive, supported by assemblies, peer mediators, and visible designated safeguarding leads (DSLs). Pupils report feeling safe and respected.

Attendance for the previous year was 97.5%, substantially above UK averages. Daily monitoring and recognition systems promote pupils' excellent punctuality and engagement. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through health education, well-being campaigns, and supervised activities. Initiatives such as the 'Healthy Eating Act' where pupils help to monitor the quality and variety of food, encourage pupils to make healthy and responsible lifestyle choices.

The safeguarding team takes a proactive approach. All staff complete annual face-to-face child protection training led by the DSL and understand their responsibilities. Pupils know whom to approach with concerns, and safeguarding information is clearly displayed. Leaders

align procedures with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance while meeting Abu Dhabi Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and ALDAR Education expectations. Annual audits, network meetings and collaboration with the ALDAR Education safeguarding lead keep the team informed and alert. Parents and pupils express high levels of confidence in the school's safeguarding culture.

The school's welfare, health, and safety provision is highly effective. Safeguarding is robust, behaviour and attendance are excellent, and pupils thrive in a nurturing, safe environment.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

School leaders receive expert support from staff at the head office of Aldar Education to ensure that all procedures for the recruitment of staff are robust. Aldar Education provides an extra level of oversight and regulation in addition to expertise and guidance. Recruitment procedures regularly take several months, with separate interviews from the school as well as from the human resources department. A range of documentation is required before staff are cleared for work, such as qualification certificates, identity checks, references and police clearances received within the previous three months in order to establish that they are safe to work with children. Key leaders have received suitable safer recruitment training.

Induction procedures are similarly detailed with an initial three-month probation period. Leaders pay much attention to helping staff acclimatise to the new school and culture with a wide range of training and support.

All records are kept centrally by Aldar Education with access limited to executive leaders, ensuring confidentiality. Compliance checks and audits are conducted regularly. A strict system of coloured lanyards ensures that visitors' access to the school is tightly controlled.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The premises provide a safe, and well-maintained environment. Leaders prioritise health, safety, and welfare by conducting regular inspections and acting swiftly on findings. Monthly health and safety committee meetings, regular site walks, and external compliance checks consistently confirm the site's security, hygiene, and suitability for learning.

Although the building is old, leaders manage ongoing maintenance and upgrades effectively. Strategic capital planning drives continuous improvement with recent upgrades, including nursery outdoor refurbishment, new fire doors, and enhanced security entrances.

Teaching spaces offer suitable acoustics and lighting and support learning well, contributing to pupils' outstanding rates of progress. Classrooms are adequate for class sizes, and year groups benefit from central breakout areas. These shared spaces often include well-stocked libraries with age-appropriate books. Resources are of high quality and well-distributed across the school with every classroom equipped with smart whiteboards and advanced technology.

Specialist facilities, such as the sports hall, artificial pitch, swimming pool, music room, and therapy spaces, enhance both curricular and extracurricular experiences. Outdoor learning areas in EYFS and key stage 1 encourage play-based exploration and physical development that assist the development of children's gross motor skills.

The school has appropriate toilet and washing facilities, with separate provision for boys, girls and adults. Clearly labelled drinking water is readily available, and hot and cold water supplies meet safety standards.

Two qualified nurses run the medical clinic, which includes space for examination, treatment, and short-term care. The clinic has a toilet and washing areas. Staff benefit from secure access to care plans and medical information to support pupils with medical needs.

Leaders implement preventative maintenance schedules, maintain detailed records and train staff in first aid and fire safety. They conduct evacuation and lockdown drills and use feedback from these events to refine procedures.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school promotes a culture of openness, accessibility, and partnership, ensuring parents are well informed and engaged in their children's education. Communication is a major strength and consistently praised by parents, who describe it as open, responsive, and immediate. Daily contact with teachers, alongside digital platforms, ensures parents are kept fully updated about their child's progress and well-being. Leaders and staff are approachable and visible, contributing to the strong sense of trust and community that defines the school.

The school's website, maintained through the central offices at Aldar Education, is comprehensive and transparent. It includes all key information expected, including safeguarding, admissions, curriculum, SEND and EAL arrangements, behaviour and sanctions, anti-bullying, health and safety, first aid, and complaints. It also features the school's aims and ethos, contact details of leaders and governors, and the latest inspection report. Admissions and transition arrangements are clearly explained, with detailed guidance, supporting families new to the school.

Parents benefit from a wide range of communication channels, including the weekly principal's newsletter, class updates, social media reminders, apps that connect the school with parents, and email access to staff. Bilingual communication in English and Arabic supports accessibility for all. Reports to parents clearly outline academic and personal progress with Arabic reports for Arabic subjects. A few parents suggested that end-of-term summaries could be made easier to interpret, and leaders are already refining these formats. The 'You Said, We Did' initiative demonstrates how parental feedback directly contributes to development planning.

Parental engagement is exceptional and a defining feature of the school's ethos. Parent representatives meet regularly with the principal, while coffee mornings, information workshops, and open events encourage dialogue. Parents influence priorities such as enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, feeling that their contributions are genuinely valued.

The 'Join Our Learning' sessions in FS1 and FS2 are particularly successful, allowing parents to engage directly in classroom activities. Participation is high, including many fathers, and parents describe the sessions as a 'marvellous opportunity' to understand their child's learning and celebrate the school's inclusive ethos.

Parents express very high levels of satisfaction through surveys and informal discussions. They state that their children are happy, safe, and thriving, and that leadership is visible, caring, and responsive. Inspectors' findings fully align with these views.

The previous recommendations of enhancing report clarity and involving parents more in the school's development have been effectively tackled. Leaders remain committed to continuous improvement through transparency and parental engagement.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

A detailed complaints policy is available for parents through the school's website. It is updated annually and is sufficiently clear in helping parents understand the process.

Leaders and teachers pride themselves in being visible and present, particularly at the beginning and the end of the school day. As a result, almost all queries are dealt with satisfactorily at the first stage of the complaints procedure and resolved informally.

For those complaints that become more formal, parents receive information so that the expectations of all parties are met within clearly defined timescales. The school keeps records of concerns and complaints and their resolution. In the previous academic year, there were four complaints that required a more formal response, and these were dealt with by the school at second stage. If complaints need to go further, the school brings in an independent

Education Committee through Aldar Education to conduct a more objective investigation. In line with the policy, at least one member is fully independent of the school's management and operations.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

Leaders have worked tirelessly to provide their pupils with an excellent education that allows them to reach their full potential and be very ready for the next stage of their education. The offer for pupils is unmistakably British in character, meaning that pupils would readily be able to integrate into a UK school. Leaders are rightly proud of the family feel at the school, a view shared by pupils and parents. They speak of how they see the school as a special and unique place, with pupils saying that 'it makes us feel that this is our second home'.

The principal has been in post for just over a year and has overseen significant change, in particular improvements in the curriculum. There is a high degree of detail in the current improvement plans that are building on this positive change. Self-evaluation documents are accurate and highly detailed, setting out how each area of the school performs against measurable and timely targets. Support from the quality assurance part of Aldar Education also adds to the accuracy of information about the school. The school's improvement plan is linked to the school's appraisal cycle, ensuring that there is consistency and commonality. One area of particular strength is the ability of leaders to use data to inform their practice and to make informed decisions that benefit pupils' outcomes, such as the rigorous analysis of pupils' test results.

There is very good oversight of the school's work from a Strategic Governance Group (SGG) that offers both appropriate challenge as well as regular support for leaders. The second part of governance sits with Aldar Education which oversees a wealth of central services and support that assists in ensuring buildings are in a good condition and that the safety of pupils is paramount. It also assists the principal and her team to make sound financial decisions, helping with significant improvements to the school's learning environment over the past year. Representatives of Aldar Education also sit on the SGG, ensuring that there is regular exchange of information between the two parts of governance. The partnership between school leaders and officers at Aldar Education contributes to the outstanding culture of safeguarding at the school.

Leaders ensure a systematic and consistent approach to teaching and learning throughout the school. It is particularly focused on very high outcomes in annual examinations and international benchmarking tests. This drive for academic excellence means results are very strong in English, mathematics and science. These ambitious objectives are reflected in appraisal targets for all teachers, including the principal who has challenging key performance indicators (KPI) that are set by Aldar Education. Leaders assist in the

development of teaching staff, for example, through the acquisition of Master's-level qualifications and the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL).

The school's systematic approach to teaching and learning also supports the induction of new teachers each year, many of whom come from different educational systems and curriculums, bringing with them different teaching styles and expectations. This can lead to some early inconsistencies in their teaching that have been recognised in the school's development plan. Leaders are using the further development of the 'INSPIRE' curriculum to improve teaching, particularly in providing more opportunities for pupils to think critically and work independently. A plentiful ratio of teaching assistants and non-teaching staff also helps to provide the extra support and guidance for pupils, and this is particularly the case for pupils with SEND. Leaders have expanded the range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for all pupils, further enriching the curriculum offer.

The leadership of early years is outstanding, a key feature of which is the identification and support for all children with EAL needs. The strong focus on early intervention and support is a key feature of the school's success. The experienced inclusion team is central to the school's work, providing timely advice for teachers and parents. It is proactive and has high ambition for all pupils.

Leaders know the value of the strong parental partnerships and how this assists staff in gaining a deeper knowledge about each child. There is quick support put in place for those pupils with SEND and EAL and leaders are proactive in reaching out to parents and other agencies to harmonise personal plans and interventions. Leaders commit to a plethora of workshops, assemblies, information meetings and parent and child progress meetings. In the survey conducted during the inspection, 94% of parents shared a highly positive view of the leadership and management of the school, stating that it was 'well led' or 'very well led'.

A culture of safety and mutual respect is in evidence in all parts of the school, supported by outstanding standards of behaviour and attitudes. Leaders promote a strong culture of equal opportunity and respect for cultural diversity. Everyone is valued for their uniqueness summed up by pupils saying, 'We are all treated with kindness'.

EYFS provision

The quality of early years' provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a high-quality early education across all areas of learning, supported by an outstanding learning environment full of purposeful and well-resourced activities that support the development of children's fine and gross motor skills.

Leaders maintain outstanding provision that allows all pupils to flourish with particular attention paid to those pupils with EAL and SEND. Leaders look to the best practice in England to facilitate teachers' high quality professional development that helps all staff to have a very good understanding of how children learn and develop. A relentless commitment to the

teaching and practice of foundational skills enables all children, including those with SEND and EAL, to make rapid rates of progress into key stage 1 and beyond.

Teaching is highly effective. Teachers skilfully transfer knowledge between different areas of learning. For example, they introduce positional language through the sequencing of the story 'Rosie's Walk' alongside songs and rhymes. The resulting performance, recorded for parents, showed how the children recalled the story and performed with energy and enthusiasm. This focus on introducing adventurous and varied language is particularly beneficial for those pupils with EAL, many of whom were delighted to recall the word 'oblivious'.

The early identification of need happens before the children begin the FS2 class through a range of transition activities. This helps to ensure that timely intervention is organised for those pupils with EAL and/or SEND. The comprehensive use of pictures and Arabic translation alongside words is one such example, linked to rhymes, songs and present in each activity area. The strong focus on language development is further strengthened by the systematic teaching of an approved phonics' scheme. Teaching assistants make very valuable contributions to this daily practice.

Teachers ensure that all areas of learning are present in the classroom and in attractive outdoor areas that are spacious and shaded. Pupils demonstrate a very good awareness of routines and how to learn alongside each other. Children's learning is displayed with pride, such as precise and decorative art work emanating from the book 'Giraffes Can Dance'.

The development of children's personal, social, health and emotional is excellent. Children consistently follow the mantra of 'listening ears, inside voice, hands to self, looking eyes, and walking feet'. They play alongside each other with care and respect. Routines are well-established and behaviour is excellent.

Teachers welcome parents to regular information sessions or to join in with learning, such as cooking and reading. Children's learning is shared with parents through a secure online software application. This close partnership helps contribute to the excellent rates of progress that children make.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Pearl British Academy 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). The 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:

1. In some lessons, the planned activities and strategies restrict pupils' opportunities to think deeply and critically, preventing them from reaching their full potential. To remedy this, teachers should show greater adaptability in their lesson planning, designing tasks, based on assessment information, that actively promote pupils' critical thinking, enquiry-based learning, and problem-solving. By creating space for exploration and intellectual challenge, teachers can better support pupils in developing greater independence, curiosity and deeper thinking, leading to high levels of success for all groups of pupils across the curriculum.

Summary of inspection judgements

The quality of education

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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	Pearl British Academy
Type of school	Primary
Date school opened	August 2007
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	746
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	FS1: 44,480 AED FS2 – Y6: 46,030 AED
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Muroor Road, Al Danah Zone 1 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Telephone number	02 641 887
Email address	principal@thepearlacademy.sch.ae
Headteacher	Mrs Amy Coleman
Proprietor	Aldar Education

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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Education Development Trust
16-18 Duke Street
Reading
RG1 4RU
UK

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