



Inspection report

Al Basma British School

**Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates**

Date 3rd – 5th February 2019
Inspection number 20190203

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

During the inspection visit, the whole of the first day and much of the second day were spent in classrooms with the students and teachers. All teachers were observed and many learning walks took place during the visit. School documentation and policies were analysed and academic data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the head, the senior staff, teachers, other school staff, representatives of the school council, parents and groups of students. Interviews with key members of the King's Group board and administration team took place before and during the visit. The team was in school on three days.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Kylie Cleworth, Karen Hanratty, David Holgate and Fahd Kahlaoui.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

Al Basma British School meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Al Basma British School (ABBS), Abu Dhabi, is a good school with many outstanding features. It has made remarkable progress since the previous BSO report in 2016. It is already well on the way to providing the excellent quality British education that it aims to do. Many aspects of the school are already good and some are excellent. It easily meets the requirements for accreditation under the UK government's scheme for British Schools Overseas. Under the current leadership and governance, it has huge potential and a great capacity to improve even more. It provides a high quality of care. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. There is a real ethos of tolerance and respect. Parents and students are very supportive of the school. The accommodation and facilities are good.

3.1 What the school does well

ABBS has many strengths.

- The hard work, energy and passion of the principal has had significant positive impact.
- Ably supported by her senior leadership team, she has been very successful in promoting continuous improvement in all aspects of school life.
- The provision for the health, welfare and safety of students is a strength.
- The role and impact of the school's managing director and board is very positive.
- There is a strong and effective focus on pastoral care and on knowing each student well.
- Teaching is mainly good or better: a significant number of lessons were excellent.
- The best teaching is exciting, engaging and moves at a brisk pace, focussing on developing skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriately challenging level for all students.
- Child protection is strong: students are safe and well cared for.
- The information given to parents and carers is excellent: families feel well informed and 'connected' to the school.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Improve the quality of learning and teaching further, for example by:
 - ✓ focussing more strongly on the provision for students who speak English as an additional language
 - ✓ ensuring the main focus in lessons is on learning, not activity
 - ✓ strengthening the in-class support for students who have special educational needs
2. Raise attainment and progress further, for example by
 - ✓ Seeking ways to maximise learning time
3. Extending the range of external assessments used across the school, including for non-core subjects, for Arabic language and for learners of English as an Additional Language.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Al Basma British School				
Address	Al Basma British School Al Bahia, Behind Deerfields Mall PO Box 45994 Abu Dhabi, UAE				
Telephone number	+44 2 562 3454				
Fax number	+44 2 563 9895				
Website	www.albasmaschool.ae				
Email address	reception@albasmaschool.ae; vikki.k@albasmaschool.ae; allison@albasmaschool.ae				
Head	Allison McDonald				
Chairman of Board of Governors	KK Ashraf				
Age range	3 - 16 years				
Total number of students	1,487	Boys	796	Girls	689
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	234	
	3-5 years	344	17-18 years	6	
	6-11 years	903	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	n/a				

Al Basma British School was established in 1980 as Giggles English School, located in six villas in Abu Dhabi. In 2014, it changed its name to Al Basma (the Arabic word for 'smile') British School, and relocated to its current location in Al Bahya, on the outskirts of the city of Abu Dhabi.

Local Ministry of Education requirements are fully met and the school was judged 100% compliant by the Ministry's inspectors in February 2019.

The school believes in ‘creating future citizens with high values, excelling in all dimensions of life, with full co-operation, transparency and support from parents.’

The school has continued to expand rapidly in the last three years and now provides for some 1,500 students. About half of the students are Emirati; this is an increase compared to the last BSO inspection. The other groupings are Egyptian with 8.99%, Pakistani 8.79%, Jordanian and Indian 5.38% each, Palestinian 2.38% and Syrian 1.91%.

4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of Al Basma is clear.

- The language of instruction is English; signage and much communication amongst students, is also in English.
- The school uses the National Curriculum (NC) of England which ensures that students can join/re-join the UK education system without disadvantage, at any stage.
- A range of assessments and student progress checks are based on national standards from the UK.
- ABBS has worked hard to create a clear British ethos, with the Board of Governors and senior staff adopting many of the most recent strategies and practices from the UK.
- Teachers are actively recruited from the UK to strengthen the effectiveness of curriculum delivery.
- The organisation of the day, classroom management practices, key resources, the three-term year, the house system and the formal school uniform, adapted to the age and activity of the students, all contribute to the British feel.
- Pastoral systems mirror those found in British private schools.
- Parents receive all the school’s letters, reports and its other publications in English.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is well developed, in line with best UK practice.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided at ABBS meets the standard required for BSO accreditation.

5.1 Curriculum

The school's curriculum is good and meets the BSO standard.

It is a broad and balanced curriculum firmly based on the English national curriculum whilst complying with local UAE and Abu Dhabi requirements. There is an appropriate written policy, supported by suitable plans and schemes of work. These support students' experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. They also take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of students, including those students with special educational needs (SEN). They are fully supportive of the values of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty. Within the context of the UAE, for example in the moral education programme, the plans and schemes show support, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages students to pay respect to one another and to other people. It is effective preparation for British education, should a child chose or need to go to the UK.

In the early years, the design and layout of the building does not always lend itself to continuous flow of provision between indoors and outdoors. The FS section has one shared indoor play area which provides opportunities for the students to explore and learn using a range of equipment which encourages creative play. The school has been imaginative in adapting lessons to fully utilise this space. Activities are age appropriate. The play-based learning is most effective when it is guided by a member of staff using rich vocabulary and modelling learning opportunities. Mathematics and English are a focus and students receive a good introduction to initial letter sounds, phonic blends and number. A programme of activities, which is appropriate to the students' educational needs, is offered in relation to personal, social, emotional, physical development, communication and language skills.

In Years 2 to 6, the children make good progress in core subjects and enjoy studying the foundation subjects which are delivered through a range of topics and themes. Theme days have been introduced to enrich the curriculum and the learning. The students are grouped by attainment for mathematics and English.

The planning and delivery of English is a strength of the school. Mathematics planning and teaching is most effective when manipulatives are used to create and develop learning strategies. Curriculum planning is thorough and is monitored by subject leaders and team leaders who have been appointed in each year group. Subject leaders also update policy, develop planning and work alongside their colleagues to provide training and support. Staff

are familiar with the concept of mastery and are introducing this into planning and curriculum.

The curriculum is narrower in Year 10 to 13 due to the lower numbers of students in this section of the school. At the end of Year 11, students complete GCSEs and then A levels at the end of Year 13. In mathematics, the learning and progress of students is less consistent in the upper phase than in the younger years. The AS and GCSE courses offered do not always match the ability of all students which, as a result, impacts upon the progress made during lessons.

Plans are in place to offer a more diverse curriculum and cater for greater numbers of students as larger cohorts move from into KS4 and 5. The senior leadership team are currently exploring the feasibility of running additional courses and are also researching alternative learning pathways. The school takes great care to personalise the learning of its oldest students, supporting them in their preparations for further education or life beyond school.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities (ECAs) which enrich the students' learning. These are offered on one day after school and are very popular. Transport home after ECAs is a barrier and reduces participation.

Strategies and policies are in place to support children with learning difficulties and or disabilities. These enable all students to access the curriculum.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, with some outstanding aspects.

The majority of lessons are at least good, a significant number are outstanding. Students across the school acquire and often make rapid progress in knowledge, skills and understanding. There is a strong emphasis on the acquisition of English language skills; teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum is a particular strength. This emphasis is also evident in other subject lessons where the correct use of technical English vocabulary is strongly encouraged. Other core subject areas of mathematics and science are generally taught effectively and are the focus of continuing development. In the best lessons, teachers encourage intellectual, physical and creative effort. Teaching strategies and classroom management encourage self-reliance. The majority of lessons start with a brief recap of previous learning and learning intentions and success criteria are shared with students in almost all lessons. Students are proactively engaged and visibly enjoy their learning. Teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. On the contrary, diversity is celebrated within the school. Teaching does not discriminate against any students.

In the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes, active learning is a feature in the majority of lessons, for example in an FS1 Arabic lesson where puppets were used to introduce new sounds and words. In less successful lessons, teachers rely too heavily on a series of worksheets for the children to complete. Some teachers address misconceptions well and challenge children's thinking. The majority of EYFS teachers use questioning well to assess the children's understanding. The behaviour of children within lessons is outstanding, even when there are times when they are asked to wait quietly for the next steps in a lesson. The use of teaching assistants within lessons varies between classes, the most impactful being those where the teaching assistant is at the children's physical level supporting them in their learning. In the best lessons, learning time is maximised with relevant activities taking place continuously throughout the day. This is not always the case however, and time is lost in some EYFS classes where holding activities occupy the last 30 minutes of the school day.

Schemes of learning and individual lesson plans are detailed. Levels of differentiation suitable to meet the needs of almost all groups of learners are well documented and evident in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson students accessed different texts and utilised a range of writing frames to help them research the life of Shakespeare at a level appropriate to their ability. From Year 2, students are set by ability for English and mathematics. This ensures an even closer match between the learning activities planned and students' ability levels. Lesson plans and work in students' books show clear progress over time. In most lessons, pace is lively with a range of challenging activities that engage learners. In lessons which are less successful the effective use of time is often an underdeveloped area. Learning technologies, particularly interactive whiteboards enhance lessons and are used to reinforce teacher input. In some lessons, links are made to real life

situations, for example in a Year 5 lesson where children were using their developing knowledge of percentages to calculate the discounted price of training shoes. In many lessons, particularly mathematics, students are encouraged to use mental strategies rather than concrete manipulatives to solve problems. Whilst for older students this strategy can build self-reliance it may not be best suited to the needs of younger learners.

Students are assessed regularly and assessment data is used effectively to identify gaps in learning and inform planning. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of their students' strengths and areas for development and offer support appropriately. Learning is scaffolded; reference is made to previous learning. When used well, open and probing questions promote reflection and higher order thinking. Scrutiny of students' books show that many teachers are applying the school's assessment and marking policy consistently. This is a particular strength in English lessons where self-assessment, peer-assessment and teacher assessment is clearly linked to learning intentions and success criteria. Students are encouraged to respond to written feedback in their books, and are regularly challenged towards their next steps in learning. In some areas of the school, good practice around feedback to students needs further embedding. Teachers' own subject knowledge is generally strong and secure. Many students are aware of their own level and work in a mature fashion to further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. A good example of this was a Year 5 English lesson where students were using up-levelling strategies to independently improve their writing.

In the best lessons, students communicate together well to mutually develop ideas and learning. Talking partners are used to good effect and students of all ages respond to this strategy in a mature manner. Appropriate use of praise builds self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Students are confident to express their ideas in class and many are willing to take risks in their learning. Classroom relationships are positive, and a purposeful atmosphere characterises most lessons. Students' behaviour is a strength of many lessons across the school, teachers expect students to be on task and show respect to adults and their peers. In some instances, in the middle grades however, the motivation and attitudes to learning of boys in single sex classes is impacted by the poor behaviour of some members of the class.

The classroom environment supports teaching and learning. In the most effective classrooms, working walls, and their use by teachers, support students' developing concepts as they move through a topic or sequence of learning. Aspects of students' personal and social education are also well supported through display, with a particular emphasis on the notion of growth mindset evident in many classrooms.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

Attainment and progress are good. The academic standards achieved by students are strong. The assessment systems put in place to gather data, track progress and measure attainment are effective and closely linked to the English national curriculum. '2 Simple' software is used in the early years to track progress and levels of development. NFER reading tests and Vernon spelling tests are being used to measure attainment. GCSEs and A levels are then offered in the secondary school. CAT4 testing has been introduced in the secondary school and there are plans to be developed into the Primary school.

Most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards: a majority attain levels that are above curriculum standards. The school has not yet completed Ministry of Education external examinations as they only have Year 12 in 2018/19.

In lessons and in their recent work, the majority of students demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with curriculum standards; again a majority demonstrating levels above curriculum standards.

Data suggests that over the past three years, the attainment of a majority of students has been improving and is now above national standards.

The school's internal assessment information indicates that most students make expected progress, whilst a majority make better than expected progress in relation to individual starting points and the curriculum standards. In lessons, most students make expected progress in relation to learning objectives which are aligned with curriculum standards. Many make better than expected progress.

2018 is the first year that students have completed GCSE examinations. Results were encouraging given that students had only progressed through the school for a relatively short period of time. The percentage of students gaining A*-A and A*-C were high: for example in physics, 38% and 62%, English literature 32% and 89% and in mathematics 31% and 79%.

A small group of students completed the PISA mock examinations in 2017 and in 2018. Results were again encouraging – well above Abu Dhabi averages, for example in reading 74% against 66%, in mathematics 60% against 53%, and overall, 63% against 55%. These 2017 results place the school in the top 25% of Abu Dhabi schools.

The results were even better in 2018: 68% against 57%, overall.

6. Standard 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Behaviour of the students in classes and around school is generally excellent. They are polite and respectful to both the adults in school and their peers, regardless of age, gender, race or disability. This was for example, evident in a Year 9 girls Islamic studies lesson where the students were respectful of the opinions and ideas of their peers.

Students have good self-awareness and are encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour. They are increasingly involved in deciding their own solutions and consequences when issues arise. Parents noted that when behaviour issues do occur the school deals with them effectively and students are made to work through their problems with the support of staff in school. Initiatives such as *dojo* points for the younger students, golden time and certificates for progress and achievement in specific subjects help to ensure that students follow the school rules and try their hardest. Golden time is popular with both the students and parents who deem it a great motivator. Students value their education and are usually on time and well-prepared for lessons, this is more evident in the primary school than the secondary school. Attendance to date for this term is 96%.

Most students display high levels of confidence and are proud of their school. Students feel that they are encouraged to say what is on their mind as long as what they say does not hurt others. One initiative the Year 10 students worked on was to create compliment posters with tear off compliments that could be passed on to others, to promote mental health and self-esteem. Students in Year 11 commented that they valued that all students had an assigned tutor who could support them with any issues they had, whether these were academic, social or at a personal level.

The school actively promotes tolerance of and respect for human differences, through whole school themed value assemblies that are planned for and related to class circle time. Students show respect for the local culture of the UAE, standing for the national anthem each morning and through following the UAE social studies curriculum. The school follows the UAE moral education framework from Year 2 up which teaches students to build character, instil an ethical outlook, foster community and teaches students about the culture in the UAE and the wider world. These lessons also support students to be able to make informed choices. This year the school has begun to report on student's attainment and effort in moral education to families in their termly reports. Islamic studies lessons for Muslim students further embed the principles of right and wrong.

Whole school events and themed weeks such as: International Day, National Day, Tolerance Day, "We are one at Al Basma" events and an anti-bullying week ensure that there is mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is a clear strength, given the demographic of the school is diverse with students from 48 nationalities.

Students contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality, and in the society more widely. Examples of recent charity events include collections for labourers in a local labour camp after a fire, 'Sharing is Caring' week initiatives where students bring in donations from home for workers and termly named charities. The class with the highest attendance for the term also wins a monetary amount which is awarded to a charity of their choice on their behalf.

There are a good number of leadership roles and groups within the school, including student council, sports leaders, young leaders, eco leaders and Emirati ambassadors, all with the idea of allowing students to demonstrate freedom of expression. It also allows them to make democratic decisions which impact on the school community. A notable one for the students was the student council's decision to increase the length of break time by five minutes. The oldest students in the school (current Year 12s) are also working on an initiative where they mentor students in Year 7.

Students are able to take part in a range of enrichment activities (ECAs) after school. Students from Year 10 and below value the opportunity to choose their activities. The older students expressed the view that they sometimes missed out on enrichment activities as they were encouraged to attend revision sessions instead. Parents spoke positively about the choice of enrichment activities but felt that due to the sporting facilities in school these were somewhat limited.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of students in all phases is good and all standards have been met. The health and safety officer carefully monitors students on regular basis ensuring the safety of students at all times and this is further supported by the facilities manager and regular health and safety meetings take place throughout the year and are recorded.

Security is a strength in the school, with all staff and visitors needing ID and passes to enter the building. Procedures are in place to ensure no one can leave or enter without passing through security. Procedures are in place to ensure play areas are monitored, controlled and fair access is given to all students due to the limitation of certain play areas. The use of CCTV footage is used to highlight key areas and are used as a further develop procedures and policies and minimise bullying.

Despite the increase in student numbers, movement along corridors and stairs is safe, all students keep to the left and a thorough duty schedule ensures there is efficient supervision during break times and lesson transition although doors in 1st floor restrict movement of students coming down from the 2nd floor.

Fire safety meets the local Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) requirements and termly fire drills and the fire alarms are tested weekly. In the event of a fire alarm, all fire exits automatically unlock to ensure student can exit the building immediately. Previous fire drill was supervised by the Ministry of Education and satisfied ADEK requirements.

Attendance is good and the school management system is used to record attendance and any incidences. Behaviour policies and reward programs are in place to increase attendance and behaviour. In the event of an absence, the home is contacted and in the event of serious absence home visits have been made.

Child protection and safeguarding officers are clear and visible around the school. An anti-bullying policy is in place, and duty supervisors along with CCTV coverage is used to minimise bullying outside of the classroom. All policies are up to date and risk assessment policies have been updated to ensure the health and safety of all students during school hours and on trips and visits meet all standards.

The school promotes healthy eating, and encourages students to bring in healthy lunch boxes. In PE, students are encouraged to keep a food diary of what they eat and teachers discuss healthy food choices with students and parents.

School transport services are good, all buses meet standards and there is a robust system in place to ensure quick and efficient pick up and drop offs. Since the last inspection there was an increase in outdoor shading to ensure sufficient areas are covered to reduce sun exposure during summer seasons.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is good. The school is owned by Al Mustaqbal Education LLC who oversee a number of schools and have an excellent understanding of the educational field.

The procedure for recruitment ensures adequate staff are appointed and meet the ADEK requirements and BSO standards. All staff undergo medical checks and police checks in both their home country and in the UAE, and this is renewed on a yearly basis.

All international and local hires are approved by ADEK and have the appropriate qualifications in their field. In the middle and upper phases, the school has appointed specialist teachers to ensure adequate delivery of the IGCSE and AS/A level curriculum. The inclusion department is highly qualified, and all support staff meet the needs of the students. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are provided by parents and are approved by ADEK. The school supports and provides professional development for the LSAs to help ensure their provision meets the needs of their students.

Despite the significant growth in the school, it has ensured staffing meets the needs and rising demands. There is a 1:10 adult to student ratio to help support the progress of students in lessons. Staff retention is good.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation at ABBS is good and meets the needs of the students. The school is maintained well and the facilities manager ensures that all furniture is to a good standard and every effort is made to repair or replace damaged furniture when reported.

The toilet facilities are adequate and meet the needs of students and there are plans in place to improve the quality of toilets for students and staff. Changing facilities are a good size and meet the needs of students, and a staggered timetable is in effect to accommodate the increase in student numbers.

Teaching rooms are well resourced and the furniture is generally to a high standard. The science labs, computer suites, art and DT rooms are large and meet the needs of all age groups and curriculum requirements. There is adequate storage space in all classrooms, and the AC units, lighting, flooring and decorations are to a good standard across the school. The library is well equipped and is to a high standard with spaces allocated for study, reading and digital learning.

The school is at full capacity and the building adequately accommodates student numbers during lessons. At the end of the day movement around the school is controlled and monitored by teachers due to the student population. Outdoor space and play areas are limited. A staggered timetable is in effect to accommodate student numbers at break times and a rota ensures all children have access to the different play areas throughout the week.

There are disabled toilets on all floors. A lift accesses all floors for those who are unable to use the stairs. In the event of a fire all doors automatically unlock and lifts are disabled and will open on the ground floor. There is an evacuation chair on all floors for those who are unable to use the stairs. Security is to a high standard and there is CCTV coverage all over the building.

Due to the increase in demand for student places at the school, there are plans in place to further expand the school to meet the needs of the community.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided to parents, carers, prospective parents and others is outstanding.

The school has a comprehensive website which features an ample amount of information for current and prospective parents. The website contains the names and contact details for the school, principal and chair of the board of governors. The website has a policies page which features a number of school policies including the school's behaviour, admissions, SEN and health and safety policies. The school's mission, values and goals are shared on the school website along with an overview of the curriculum followed in the three areas of the school - EYFS, primary and secondary - which contain links to the English National Curriculum documents for these phases. The school has copies of the parent handbook available in English and in Arabic at reception along with leaflets on why attendance matters.

Parents are pleased with the amount of information the school provides them with to support their children at home. They receive weekly overviews for their child's year group and monthly curriculum guides which support families to know what and how their child is being taught. Parents also have access to an online platform where teachers upload homework and revision documents.

Written reports are produced on a termly basis which highlight an attainment and effort grade for the subjects taught and a form teacher comment which includes comments about the students learning in core values. Parents are invited to meet their child's teachers after receiving the reports to discuss them in more detail and to be informed of their child's targets. Parents are happy with the amount of detail in the reports and find the parent teacher meetings helpful to find out how they can support their children at home.

Parents spoke positively about the school and staff and commented that the form teachers were easily accessible if they had a concern either by email, phone or message and that the principal hosted monthly coffee mornings alongside the PTA where they could ask general questions. The provision of information at the start of an academic year and when a student starts the school is good, with meet the teacher events and induction sessions for the students. Buddy systems are also put in place for students who start during the academic year which the parents felt was a great initiative.

The school's website contains copies of the last two published ADEK inspection reports and the previous BSO inspection report. The school had its first Key Stage 4 students who sat their GCSE exams in the summer of 2018, the results of these are displayed on the school's website.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

ABBS has a clear policy that establishes a procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints relating to any aspect of school life. It is transparent, open and effective. It pays due heed to local regulatory requirements and circumstances. It aims to ensure any concerns are dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence. The procedure confirms that all concerns and complaints are looked into thoroughly, fairly and in a timely manner.

There is a permanent complaints committee that considers all written complaints made against the school and its operations, and attempts to resolve these, in line with the school's policies, regulations, policies and requirements.

Complaints are resolved at the school level if possible, and if necessary, with the help of the principal. All complaints are to be directed to the class teacher in the first instance or the Year Leader. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they can refer it to the vice principal or the assistant vice principal. If they are still not satisfied with the response, they can refer it to the principal. If the complaint is about the principal, it can be referred to the managing director.

In case the complaining party is dissatisfied with the principal's proposed solution, the complainant can refer the complaint, in writing, to the school complaints committee.

This is made up of a parent governor, a teacher governor, a non-teaching staff governor, the Arabic coordinator, the administration manager, and a member of the leadership team not involved with the complaint previously. It is chaired by the principal. If a complaint has been made against the principal, then s/he is excluded from the committee and replaced with the managing director who is also chair of the board of governors. The complainant can ask an independent representative to accompany, if so desired.

All written complaints are acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt. The school complaints committee then reviews and responds in writing, within ten working days. A report detailing the committee's findings is sent to the complainant, the principal, the managing director and the person against whom the complaint was made.

The school keeps a confidential written record of the committee meeting and presents the same to the board and required.

12. *Standard 8* Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good, with many outstanding features.

The principal has had excellent impact on the quality of the education being provided at ABBS. Supported by her able and enthusiastic senior leadership team, she has brought about further significant improvements since the last inspection report. They work with dedication, drive and passion. From a sound baseline, they have spared no effort in moving the school from its earlier stage of development to the thriving and successful school it is today. The school's motto, 'Striving to be the Best', accurately reflects the ethos of the school and leaders at all levels.

The proprietors, represented by the managing director and governing body, ensure that the school is well staffed and resourced, through robust financial management. The governing body acts as a partner to the school leadership team, with representatives from different key stakeholders. The governing body is both proactive and responsive, but does not interfere in the day to day running of the school. The managing director acts as a critical friend to the principal and her team, providing both challenge and appropriate support. He is ambitious for the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and ongoing areas of development.

Strong relationships characterise the leadership team, being both professional and warm. These strong relationships extend outwards, into the rest of the staff, students and the parent body. An open doors policy ensures any parental concerns are dealt with rapidly and no barriers are created. The school also has links to other schools in the group and provides them with professional support.

The senior leadership team have a clear focus on school improvement. All recommendations from the previous inspection report have been implemented in full. Significant steps have been taken to further improve teaching, learning and assessment with tangible results. The school's performance management structure and programme of continuous professional development have been instrumental in these improvements. As the school has grown so have procedures to ensure each child is treated as an individual. The school development plan is ambitious, centred around student outcomes. Leaders at all levels contribute to the creation of the development plan and to its fulfilment.

The school runs efficiently on a day to day basis, with procedures and routines which are well embedded. The welfare, health and safety of students is at the centre of all management policies.

13. *Standard 9* The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.