

Al Karamah School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 6 – 9 June 2022

Lead Inspector: Robert Pugh
Team: Alan Sayles

Age Group: 3 - 18
Report Published: 6/7/2022
Report Reference Number: AK_07/20/2022



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 two inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

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

To be recognised by the Department for Education (DfE), a British School Overseas 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 registered on the UK Government's Get Information about Schools website. (see below)

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from September 2017. 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 issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.

This inspection followed all the requirements of the BSO inspection framework and guidance. However, it will not be subject to monitoring by Ofsted or published on the DfE website

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information.
7. Manner in which complaints are handled.
8. Leadership and management of the school

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 the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

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

Proportions used in the report

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

Information about the school

Al Karamah School opened in 2019 with 61 pupils. It is the first specialist school for pupils who have an autistic spectrum condition (ASC) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The school, which is a member of the Priory Aspris group, is located in a residential district near Abu Dhabi city centre. There are now 177 pupils on roll between the ages of three and 16 years. Fees for pupils to attend the school are paid by the UAE government. From 18 years upwards, students attend the Al Kamarah Training Institute, which is located on the same site. All pupils are from an Emirati background and all learn English as an additional language. School leadership comprises the principal, vice-principal, assistant headteachers and senior teachers. The principal has been in post since February 2022. All pupils have individual education plans and follow a modified English national curriculum. The Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum is followed in Arabic medium subjects.

The school moved to distance learning in line with UAE schools and ADEK guidance. On a rota basis, half of pupils attended school and the other half learned online. Attendance rates were high. School leaders and teachers maintained daily routines for pupils, including assembly and an online version of home-room or group activities. School leaders implemented all necessary health and safety measures. They supported families when pupils were preparing for vaccinations or were becoming anxious at the change of routines. School staff and parents maintained regular contact by means of social media and online meetings. All pupils are now in school for face-to-face learning.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by two Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in May and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 34 lessons in classes. All lessons were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff.

There were 27 meetings, which took place with leaders, teachers, therapists and health care and guidance staff. Inspectors met pupils, parents, carers and members of the school's governing board, including the chief operations officer in the Middle East. A meeting was held with a representative of the school's owner, the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK).

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and files and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were considered.

Evaluation of the school

Al Karamah School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils.

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

Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that of pupils in similar schools in the UK. Most make outstanding progress from their starting points in English, mathematics, science and other subjects and towards the personalised targets set out in their individual education plans (IEPs).

There is a sharp focus on helping pupils to develop as confident communicators in every key stage and in every subject. Teachers and therapists plan lessons and activities which stimulate pupils' interest and awareness of communication and help them develop an intention to communicate with others in ways in which they can be understood. They also provide pupils with communication skills which are necessary for staying safe, for example indicating when they are worried or confused. As a result, pupils make excellent progress with expressive and receptive skills.

In the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in **English**, children learn to understand visual cues, such as 'listen', 'look', 'work' to help them develop a sense of what they have to do in each part of the lesson. In key stage 1, pupils learn the sounds that letters make and begin to blend them together to read words. They learn to write by participating in finger-gym training, so that they develop good pencil grip and begin to connect letters. Almost all learn to write their own names. In key stage 2, pupils suggest their own words when given a starting letter. They build vocabulary by listening to stories. They present lively sketches about protecting the ocean, communicating their learning confidently and clearly. In key stage 3, pupils use their growing vocabulary to describe their work in other subjects, such as art, and they share ideas with others. By key stage 4, individuals have developed such confident speaking and listening skills that they are able to conduct tours of the school for visitors. In all key stages, reading aloud is effectively supported and monitored by individualised guidance and feedback. A minority of pupils do not develop oral skills. All pupils read or decode picture symbols to help them understand the sequence of the lesson. Most English teachers are native English language speakers, which ensures that pupils receive high-quality pronunciation and syntax models.

In **mathematics**, pupils add, subtract and multiply numbers with growing confidence and accuracy. In EYFS, children recognise the names of numbers and count by finger pointing. In key stage 1, the majority make rapid progress, from writing numbers with hand-over-hand support to adding and subtracting numbers. Most pupils can name the last number they have seen in a range. Pupils in key stage 2 use their growing English vocabulary to understand mathematical concepts of space. Pupils place themselves or objects correctly in position. They think critically about what they have to do before committing to an action. In key stage 3, pupils demonstrate secure skills in

counting. A minority learn to name currency notes and place them in order. Most pupils match objects and shapes to spaces correctly. The majority order numbers accurately, from highest to lowest. In key stage 4, pupils carry out long-multiplication tasks, placing numbers in the right order in sums, and show a very good understanding of the correct method for solving problems. They confidently use skills from different subjects to improve their learning in mathematics, for example questioning others about preferences before constructing a pictogram and tally chart. Very good use of opportunities for repeating learning contribute to pupils' outstanding progress. Most pupils demonstrate strong recall of what they learned in previous lessons. For example, pupils in key stage 3 with very limited oral communication skills confidently called out one-word answers correctly when subtracting one or two from nine because they remembered the take-away techniques learned in the previous lesson.

Most pupils make good use of practical learning experiences in **science** to improve their understanding of scientific concepts. For example, pupils in key stage 1 recognised the terms hot and cold when working in the food-technology room. They correctly associated hot with danger. In all key stages, pupils show secure understanding of how to classify familiar objects. Children in EYFS recognise different kinds of weather and in role play mimic the actions you might follow if it is windy or hot. Pupils in key stage 2 correctly classify fruit by colour in Arabic lessons and choose their favourite fruits. Key stage 3 pupils demonstrate very good understanding of different animal species. Most confidently say whether an animal is a reptile or not. In key stage 4, pupils with limited oral skills demonstrate skilful use of information and communication technology when they use the interactive whiteboard or a laptop to link animals and weather, for example camel and hot. Pupils organise their own resources successfully in science, because they fully understand teachers' expectations. They follow the prepared sequence strips in their workstations, which include information about what they might need to complete the task. Sometimes pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to try things out for themselves in science. As a result, at times they follow the teacher's lead, rather than experimenting with hands-on scientific exploration.

Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points in other subjects. In **Islamic education** key stage 3 pupils read individual words from the Holy Qur'an and accurately place them in order, to construct a short verse. In **physical education**, key stage 4 pupils enthusiastically take on leadership roles when they lead class calisthenic sessions. They show very good physical coordination skills. Pupils keenly examine the patterns they produce in **art**, because they understand which method to use for crumpling painted paper in different shapes to create new patterns. Pupils recognised and named stringed instruments in **music** when looking at pictures of different kinds of instruments.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Standard 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Standard 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during June 2022, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas 2017 except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the UAE. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

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

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. The school meets this BSO standard.

The quality of the curriculum is **outstanding**. Al Karamah School follows a British curriculum which is exceptionally well modified and highly personalised to meet the needs of its pupils. The MoE curriculum for Islamic education, Arabic and social studies has been similarly modified. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education as they move through the school and into the training institute. The promotion of the English language and comparison of geographical features and the weather in Britain with those of the UAE contribute to pupils' understanding of the UK. Pupils are very unlikely to enter the British educational system at any stage. However, they would be well prepared to do so. The curriculum they follow closely matches the carefully designed curriculum seen in similar schools in Britain, for example in the very close attention paid to developing useful number and classification skills in all of the phases in mathematics and science.

Curriculum policies and plans encourage respect for other people paying particular regard to all the applicable protected characteristics. For example, the curriculum contains a strong focus on getting along with people of different nationalities through the direct teaching of the importance of very good friendships and relationships among pupils and relationships between them and the multi-national staff group.

Classes are grouped as four phases or sections with a number of classes in each. There are usually between four and nine pupils in each class. Pupils are placed in a class with due consideration of age, ability, behaviour and individual need. Curriculum maps, which are specifically tailored to the individual needs of pupils, are created for each phase and used in the high-quality long and short-term planning and in daily planning. School leaders promote a 'blended curriculum', in which therapists and teachers plan very closely together, to give pupils access to the curriculum and enable them to make the exceptionally good progress shown in the school's assessment information. For example, therapists and teachers plan programmes which help pupils to develop fine motor skills so that their handwriting improves.

In the early years phase, pupils follow a very well-planned programme of learning which is closely aligned to the English Early Learning Goals. From the very start, the importance of meaningful communication is prioritised in every subject. Common approaches are used in all lessons, with clear visual prompts to alert pupils to what they will learn, what they will need and how they will achieve targets. Visual prompts appear in the form of pictures or words, depending on the needs of individuals. As a result, pupils demonstrate very keen understanding of what they will do in lessons and most follow their personal schedules diligently.

Pupils of all ages who face the most severe difficulties in learning are grouped in different classes in 'Little Champions'. They are in the age range 5 to 17 years. The curriculum in this phase provides an extremely well-planned activity-based learning approach covering specific themes and topics, for example learning about the weather. The development of useful life skills, including communication, is a key feature of curriculum delivery in this section and underpins teachers' planning in all subjects.

In the Transitions phase, where pupils are between seven and 14 years old, pupils are encouraged to become more independent and to find things out for themselves through the reduction in adult support. There is a strong focus in all subjects on sensory regulation to assist pupils as they learn to tolerate and respond positively to the presence of others or to accept the guidance of teachers. Teachers introduce age-appropriate learning activity, such as making choices of foods or expressing preference of leisure activities to help in the development of independence.

The curriculum in the Explorers phase, for pupils in the age range eight to 16 years, prepares pupils exceptionally well for more formal academic and vocational learning, including further education and the world of work. Curriculum planning includes very good links with the local community, such as the civil-defence services. Service members attend the school to talk to groups of pupils about their work in the community and how pupils can stay safe. The focus on highly appropriate functional and independence skills seen in teachers' planning prepares pupils for further education and employment, though formal careers guidance is not included in planning because of the specific needs of pupils at the school.

Before COVID-19 restrictions were implemented, the curriculum offered extra-curricular extension activities in music and art during and at the end of the school day. The school plans to reintroduce its programme of extra-curricular activities in the autumn term. Parents express the wish that the full range of extra-curricular activities will resume at the earliest opportunity.

The quality of **teaching and assessment** across the school is outstanding.

Teachers' thorough understanding of best practice in teaching pupils who have autism is almost always evident in their planning and implementation of the curriculum. In EYFS, children make an excellent start to their education. All staff know their children extremely well and provide well-pitched support to each one to promote confident learning and enjoyment of all activities. Teachers maintain comprehensive learning journals which are shared with parents and therapists. These chart the progress which children make in the core curriculum and in life skills. For example, in English, teachers provide many examples of the first letters of words then challenge children to find pictures of familiar objects which begin with the letter. Children improve speaking skills because they learn to make sound blends to form words and short phrases. Teachers skilfully record each stage of pupils' development through close observation, working alongside individuals and photographing or filming their work.

In the Transitions phase, teachers encourage pupils to make strong links between mathematics and everyday life, for example by introducing pupils to money and helping them make the connection between using money and purchasing items they need. In all phases, teachers help pupils to make links between subjects. They expertly weave together science and social studies themes to exploit pupils' awareness of their environments by challenging them to think about where different animals live, in the desert, in the water or in their homes. As a result, pupils are motivated to communicate their understanding by calling out accurate answers or reasonable guesses about habitat.

In all phases, teachers make very good use of new technologies to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils make very good use of laptops and computers to improve their understanding of topics, for example of number values in mathematics. At times, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning by finding things out for themselves through enquiry or trial and error.

The school's approach to tracking and assessing pupils' achievements against curriculum standards provides extremely reliable information about how well each pupil is performing. Effective systems enable school leaders to compare pupils' progress within the school and with pupils in similar schools in England. Therapists contribute to assessing and benchmarking achievement by means of diagnostic testing which provides age-related comparative information.

School leaders and teachers establish baseline attainment levels for every pupil when they enter the school. To gain as comprehensive a picture as possible, teachers discuss strengths and learning needs with parents, observing pupils and recording their activities from the very start. Teachers carefully measure progress against curriculum standards and IEP targets over short and longer periods of time. School leaders rigorously interrogate assessment information. Teachers use a variety of highly effective methods to intervene where they detect that pupils are not making expected progress. Teachers and therapists work very closely together to review and revise IEPs, so that pupils regain skills which might have been lost or overcome barriers that stand in the way of progress. For example, older pupils who were anxious about returning to school at the end of the period of closure followed programmes designed by therapists and teachers which emphasised how safety measures were in place and the importance of attendance at school. As a result, their attendance improved.

During the period of COVID-19 restrictions, very successful arrangements were put in place to ensure that pupils continued learning at home. These included one-to-one teaching sessions, attended by pupils, their parents and teachers. School leaders ensured that online assemblies were held weekly to encourage a sense of school community and shared participation. Parents state that their children were keen to join in all online activities at home, including the singing of the national anthem in the morning.

Standard 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.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding.

The school aims to be aspirational, positive, enjoyable, friendly, courageous and innovative. These aspirations permeate every aspect of school life and encourage staff and pupils to respect and tolerate others. The school is fully inclusive, given the parameters within which it is commissioned to operate. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, discussions with pupils, staff and parents and examination of curriculum plans, confirms that the school encourages respect for others. It pays due regard to the protected characteristics but is unable to promote all of them due to UAE laws. Those precluded are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation. The school has a comprehensive SMSC programme which helps pupils to work together harmoniously in a safe and calm learning environment where the contribution of each one is valued and celebrated. Pupils say that they like being at school and learn more here than they have learned at other schools. All pupils are from families which follow the Islamic faith. Pupils learn about the religious beliefs of others when different national and religious celebrations are celebrated, such as Christmas and Diwali. Older pupils participate in daily prayer in the mosque, accompanied and led by teachers and their assistants. Younger pupils recite prayers and verses from the Holy Qur'an in class and before COVID-19 restrictions were introduced did so in assembly. Older pupils gain immense satisfaction from their good recitation skills and successfully

participate in national recitation competitions. Most pupils learn to follow Islamic etiquette, for example removing shoes when entering the school's mosque. In lessons, pupils make good connections between Qur'anic ayah (verses) and their everyday lives, for example good hygiene.

Pupils take great pride in their achievements and celebrate the achievements of others. For example, they admire the pictures that others paint in art lessons. They learn how to work alongside each other in small groups, for example sharing ideas about how to mix ingredients in food-technology lessons. As a result of effective teaching about understanding how they are feeling at a particular time, they quickly gain an understanding of the zones of regulation system, which is a way of identifying and managing emotions. For example, they learn how to self-regulate by holding up emotional-state cards and moving to other parts of the room or to different activities. This has led to a marked decrease in incidents of challenging behaviour in school over time.

Pupils develop very good social skills, including leadership skills and they learn to value the importance of working together. They demonstrate an acute awareness of local environmental concerns, for example recycling and different sources of energy. They present considered ideas on how we can work together to protect the local and wider environment. Leadership and cooperation skills were seen in a particularly successful drama presentation organised by key stage 2 pupils, when pupils demonstrated a keen understanding of the need to protect the oceans. Pupils learn about British values such as democracy through the elections which are held to the student council. They consider the views of others and report to school leaders. For example, pupils initiated a school recycling campaign and created a student council bulletin board to share their ideas with others. They are aware that their ideas and suggestions have been acted upon, such as in the provision of different foods at lunchtime.

Pupils gain a very clear understanding of UAE culture and heritage, including the country's public institutions such as the civil-defence services, and of the country's leaders. There is a strong engagement in 'My Identity' learning. They listen to and join in the national anthem each day. Older pupils recognise and name UAE leaders. Pupils eagerly participate in national celebrations such as National Day, Flag Day and Martyrs' Day by wearing national dress and participating in music, dance and recitation. Parents and families enthusiastically help with planning of such events and share in their children's activities on these days.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is outstanding.

School procedures for admitting pupils and welcoming them are excellent. Parents say that their children settle very quickly when they join the school. This was true even during the period of COVID-19 restrictions, as a result of sensitive, individualised planning by staff. During the pandemic, school leaders ensured that pupils' well-being, including their mental health, was supported by means of daily contact online. They also ensured that pupils were able to return to school in a well-organised manner as soon as restrictions were eased. Therapists and guidance staff design tailored 'return-to-school' programmes for those students identified as needing particular help to resume the routines and rigours of daily attendance. The school provides pupils with highly effective, individually planned guidance on how to keep themselves safe, including helping them to develop an understanding of how to relate to others, when and how to ask for help and how to use the internet safely. Parents and pupils themselves are equally positive about teachers' work to ensure that transitions within the school between phases and sections are smooth and free of stress. The school family liaison officer provides support and guidance for pupils. Pupils say that more people help them at this school than in other schools because teachers help them to learn how to ask for help. Pupils and staff work in a very healthy and safe environment.

The school nurses provide excellent advice to pupils and their families and ensure that all necessary health checks are undertaken. Exemplary systems are in place for storing medicines and recording how and when they are dispensed.

All necessary security checks are undertaken before anyone is admitted to the premises. Temperature checks are carried out on everyone. Entry to different phases is regulated by electronic passes. There is a good emphasis on healthy lifestyles and exercise. The school is very well maintained and hygienic. There are meticulous, up-to-date written risk assessments for all activities, which are signed by staff and school leaders. There is a culture of risk assessment throughout the school. For example, staff predict possible behavioural outcomes and make suitable adjustments when pupils become anxious or confused, using the zones of regulation systems. Fire and other evacuation drills occur regularly.

School leaders have worked hard to ensure good attendance levels following the period of COVID-19 restrictions. Almost all pupils now attend school every day. Pupils almost always arrive on time in the morning.

There are very effective systems in place for safeguarding and protecting pupils. There are six trained and designated safeguarding teachers with up-to-date training to meet British and UAE requirements. They are fully aware of their safeguarding duties and responsibilities because they are very familiar with the requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. School leaders adopt a '7 Minute Briefings' approach in which staff are alerted to typical scenarios. They discuss and consider the correct response and procedures to follow in each case. Safeguarding policies contain detailed information about procedures to follow and are shared with and understood by staff and parents. There are very regular training sessions to highlight the importance of vigilance, safeguarding and child protection, including online workshops for parents. Training effectively addresses the particular needs of pupils who have ASC and includes an online module for staff which they must complete within three months of appointment.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Rigorous recruitment checks are in place for all staff. The school's human resources (HR) department includes a specialist officer who scrupulously manages and maintains the single central record (SCR) for all staff, including governors. The proprietor is ADEK. Its representative is an ADEK officer who has undergone all necessary checks. There are no agency or supply staff in the school. In addition to British Disclosure and Barring Service checks, all staff and visitors need to obtain special clearance from the civil authorities and from ADEK before they are allowed to move freely around the school. Scrutiny of the SCR and of a sample of HR files indicates that all necessary checks have been made and that staff do not begin work at the school until all clearances are received. These include verification of qualifications, medical fitness and right to work in the UAE.

Staff turnover is low. All staff undergo a suitable period of probation, the length of which depends on their post. Their contracts specify the necessity of successfully passing the probationary period before permanent employment can be confirmed. Staff and governors who have appointment responsibilities have undergone suitable UK based recruitment training.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements for this BSO standard.

The school is exceptionally well resourced. School leaders have ensured that classrooms, therapy and medical areas and specialist rooms and facilities contain state-of-the-art equipment which promotes high levels of academic and personal development for pupils. There is a constant-depth swimming pool, attended by a trained lifeguard, to provide exercise and therapy for pupils. Classrooms and corridors are sensitively decorated with examples of pupils' work and advice on staying safe. Almost all outdoor areas are fully shaded so that pupils can enjoy the wide range of play and leisure equipment to be found in the 'oasis' courtyard. Classrooms are well equipped with age-appropriate resources which help pupils to maximise their achievement, for example individual workstations with personal schedules to guide them through the timetable.

The clinics are very suitably equipped, including with resources on following healthy lifestyles.

There are very good external and internal security arrangements, including patrolled entrances and appropriate CCTV coverage. There are very effective systems in place for reporting breakages or other maintenance issues. Problems which occur are dealt with swiftly, either by school maintenance staff or by specialist contractors. There are very clear emergency response plans, which contain advice about COVID-19 protocols and actions to be taken when an alarm sounds. There are ramps and elevators which facilitate equal access to all areas of the premises for everyone, regardless of disability. There are suitable arrangements for breaktimes and mealtimes. Toilet and bathroom facilities are sensitive to the needs of pupils who have ASC and appropriate arrangements have been made for privacy and supervision. There are adapted bathroom facilities for people who have a physical disability.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

There are excellent systems in place for providing information for parents. Parents are particularly pleased that information is sent to them in their preferred format, for example via social media or as an email. The contact details of school directors and the principal are included on the website with further information about how to contact governors and the Priory Aspris chief operations officer at the school. Relevant background information about the principal and governors is also included on the website. School leaders have taken care to ensure that important policies and documents, such as the health and safety policies, are available in Arabic as well as English.

During the COVID-19 restrictions, parents were kept particularly well informed by teachers about the arrangements for providing online lessons.

Parents are well informed about their child's academic and personal achievements. They are confident that their views are taken into consideration when important decisions are being made. They are particularly appreciative of the information provided by the school, which helps them to improve their children's communication skills and to ease their concerns when they have to deal with medical issues. They receive termly written reports and more regular reports in electronic format. They describe these as 'detailed' and 'jargon free'. Parents who completed the inspection online survey demonstrated overwhelming support for the school, especially in answer to the questions about their child's enjoyment of being at school and their feelings of being safe. No issues of concern were raised. The school surveys parents regularly to gather their views on school

developments and reports that the responses received are similarly positive to the inspection survey response. School leaders have very recently strengthened the manner in which they work with parents by appointing a full-time parent liaison officer to work alongside the school's social worker and nurses.

The school is helping parents transform the previous mothers' council into a parents' forum and is working to find ways in which parents can be directly involved in school governance.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The complaints policy is available to parents on the website and is updated annually. It sets out clear lines of communication with information about how complaints may be escalated. The policy underlines the confidentiality of the process and the timelines within which complaints must be addressed. It sets out the people involved at each stage, including the role of the independent review panel should this be necessary. The policy sets out the duties of ADEK as proprietor. The school's complaints file is very well maintained. There have been two complaints to the school during the current academic year. Both were responded to appropriately and both were resolved satisfactorily at the first stage through discussion with key staff.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

The BSO Standard is met.

School leaders have a remarkably clear vision which they put into practice through their close attention to detail, their promotion of the highest standards and their fostering of very good relationships throughout the school and with parents and the wider community. There is one overarching aim: to promote achievement and independence for all pupils. The school development plan is shared with all stakeholders, including pupils, who review the plan at school-council meetings.

Governance of the school is well structured, taking the form of a board of directors, a chief operating officer and representatives of the parent company and the owner. There are currently no parent governors. There is an advisory parents' council. School leaders and governors understand their separate functions and responsibilities. This leads to purposeful working arrangements at all levels. Governors ensure that the school fulfils all statutory requirements and has a firm financial footing and clear financial and audit policies. They are held to account by ADEK for their mode of operation.

Governors are experienced and highly qualified to undertake their monitoring role and to hold school leaders to account. They review school performance at monthly meetings, analyse data, commission reports, gather information about staff performance and assess the impact of all resources on pupils' achievements.

The school leadership team (SLT) has recently been strengthened following the arrival of the new principal in February 2022. School leaders create very effective teams with knowledgeable leaders who are clear about their roles and responsibilities. All staff are successfully deployed to promote high levels of pupil academic and personal achievement. The vice-principal has operational responsibility for the curriculum and assessment. There are newly appointed assistant heads and senior teachers to ensure that leadership is suitably dispersed and responsive to the needs of pupils. Therapists are represented on the leadership team. The SLT draws together

comprehensive one-year plans which communicate their ambition for the school and provide operational direction, as the school works through the five-year strategic plan established by governors.

Leadership in the EYFS is very effective, because school leaders ensure that the necessary early learning goals are very suitably adapted to meet the needs of young children who have ASC. They place a particular focus on communication and life-skills development so that children learn to express themselves and relate positively to others.

Systems for self-evaluation are very effective. School leaders carry out regular lesson observations, referred to as 'learning walks'. They monitor teachers' performance, in particular the impact that their planning has on pupils' achievement. Formal and effective performance review of all staff is in place, including of the school leadership team. School leaders thoroughly review information from assessments at regular intervals. They ensure that the information they receive through monitoring and reviews is analysed so that necessary improvements can be made. School leaders unhesitatingly address any areas which do not meet expectations. The large majority of staff who completed the inspection questionnaire were positive about all aspects of the school's performance including their own contribution.

The school development plan is firmly based on school leaders' effective evaluation of school performance. There are rigorous systems in place for monitoring pupil's progress and the quality and impact of teaching. For example, school leaders have identified necessary improvements to align pupils' IEPs with IEPs commonly used in England, so that a multi-disciplinary approach is seen in planning and review. Advanced arrangements are in place for including this improvement in the one-year plan.

Early years provision

The early years provision caters for children from three to five years. Their speaking and communication skills are at a much lower level than is typical for their age and very few speak English. Detailed assessments are carried out before children enter the school and soon after they have started. Assessment outcomes lead to the development of the IEP which is closely aligned with the requirements of the English Early Learning Goals. Teachers and therapists track children's progress towards IEP objectives and make suitable necessary revisions. Parents are fully involved at every stage. As a result, children are very well prepared to move to the next phase in their education.

Teachers have very high expectations and plan activities which promote communication and language development and personal and social development. Children's behaviour is very good. Teachers plan the use of time and resources exceptionally well, so that they learn routines and strategies which enable them to undertake new learning. For example, they learn to follow the symbolic sequence cards which help them to understand what they are learning now and what they will do next and later. They accept the need to move to new environments, such as the swimming pool, because they know what is next in their programme. They become familiar with staff and other children because they use photographs to introduce people, including visitors.

The strong, effective leadership of the early years provision promotes outstanding achievement. There are very successful strategies in place for monitoring and evaluating performance. This includes shared planning and self-evaluation, including rigorous analysis of how to overcome barriers that stand in the way of children's progress. Highly effective programmes are in place for introducing children to the classroom environment and the expectations on their return to school following COVID-19 restrictions. For many children, this has been the first term that they have

attended school. Very good arrangements are in place to ensure that parents are fully consulted and informed about their child's progress.

Training Institute

The Al Karamah Training Institute (AKTI) provides further and vocational education for students between the ages of 14 and 25 years. All students have an autism spectrum condition, with associated learning and communication disabilities. There are currently thirty students on roll, organised into five classes. There is a well-constructed development plan which provides a clear strategic plan for the facility. Students from Al Karamah School normally transfer to AKTI at age 16, other students come from other specialist centres. The AKTI capacity is 64 students. AKTI is housed in a purpose-built environment adjacent to the school, which promotes ease of access and shared learning and working experiences in both settings. Students and their parents say that they are very suitably prepared for the move to AKTI.

All students work towards National Open College Network (NOCN) awards in English and mathematics. AKTI provides very well-equipped workshops for culinary skills, gaming, media, hydroponics, electronics, printing and sport. All facilities are fully resourced for delivering learning modules and to replicate and provide real-life work experience. Students follow courses in the workshops which lead to employability or independent-living skills awards, aligned with specific units of the NOCN framework. Students' assessment outcomes on entry, either P-level attainment or classroom-monitor band levels, determine the level of support they will be offered to complete workshop assignments. Currently, the large majority of students are on target to gain NOCN accreditation in English, mathematics and independent-living skills. The majority are on target to gain accreditation in employability skills.

Almost all students successfully complete work experience modules including working in the AKTI café which runs on a commercial basis in partnership with a national company.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Al Karamah School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country's laws.

It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010.

2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;

5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

What the school could do to improve further

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

At times, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop independence in learning. Teachers should plan more activities which allow pupils to direct their own learning, so that, by trial and error, they find out things for themselves.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
--	---	--	--	--

Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			
--	---	--	--	--

School details

Name of school

Al Karamah School

Type of school

Specialist Special Educational Needs
School

Date school opened

January 2019

Age range of pupils

3-18 years

Gender of pupils

Mixed

Number on roll (full-time pupils)

177

Number on roll (part-time pupils)

0

Annual fees (day pupils)

Not Applicable

Address of school

Al Karamah School
Al Rowda
Abu Dhabi

Telephone number

056 2678 356

Email address

info@alkaramahschool.ae

Headteacher

Allison Hope-West

Proprietor

Abu Dhabi Committee for Education
and Knowledge

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 Her 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 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

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. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim 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.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

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

Report reference no: AK_07/20/2022