



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection Report

Aspen Heights

British School

Abu Dhabi

United Arab Emirates

Date 31st May – 2nd June 2021
Inspection number 20210531

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

During the inspection visit, all teachers were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the senior staff, the management teams, a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. Two and a half school days were monitored.

The lead inspector, present at the school, was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Christine Walker (in school) and Colin Dyson (working remotely).

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

Aspen Heights British School (AHBS) meets all standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

AHBS is an ambitious school with many outstanding features. The school offers a high-quality British education that meets the needs of its pupils. There is excellent capacity for further development. The curriculum is rich and inspiring, which engages the pupils. Teachers make excellent use of the wide range of resources and creative outdoor spaces to deliver interesting lessons across all subject areas. The manner in which the school links with the local and regional community is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they enjoy school. As a result, they make good or excellent progress, becoming confident and articulate learners.

3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths which include:

- passionate, committed and highly effective leadership;
- high quality premises, which support excellent learning;
- a well-planned curriculum that supports a high level of interest and challenge for the pupils;
- excellent provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils;
- outstanding provision for inclusion of pupils of all abilities and aptitudes;
- a caring and nurturing environment;
- outstanding relationships between staff, pupils and parents.

3.2 Points for improvement

Whilst not required by regulations, the school may wish to consider the following points for development, all of which they are already aware:

- i. further develop the quality of learning and teaching in all lessons, to match that of the best, especially by sharing excellent practice in assessment and providing challenge for all students;
- ii. tighten the links between assessment data and lesson planning, including by extending the moderation already taking place with other schools, to include other outstanding schools;
- iii. share the exemplary work that the school does in terms of linking with and reacting to the local community.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	Aspen Heights British School				
Address	Al Bahja, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone number	+971 2 564 2229				
Website	www.ahbs.ae				
Email address	principal@ahbs.ae				
Head	Mrs. Emma Shanahan				
Chairman of Governors	Mr. Bharat Mansukhani				
Age range	3 – 18 years				
Total number of pupils	739	<i>Boys</i>	406	<i>Girls</i>	333
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	53	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	191	<i>17-18 years</i>	0	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	495	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

AHBS in Al Bayha, Abu Dhabi was founded in September 2017. It aims to offer a high-quality British curriculum to students in a personalised way, integrating the community and environment. It provides education for children aged 3 to 14 years old (Foundation Stage to Year 9). Year 9 opened in September 2020 and it will grow by an additional year group each year until it provides up to Year 13.

AHBS aims to embrace the individuality of every learner. The school believes that learning is about getting better, academically, socially and emotionally. Staff are keen on recognising and nurturing each student's gifts and talents, so that they amaze themselves and inspire others.

The school seeks to keep three core values at the centre of decision making. The school constantly strives to ensure teaching is exciting, interesting and varied. Staff are committed to personalising teaching in order to support children making remarkable progress. The school values community and ensures relationships between all are open, constructive and respectful.

4.1 British nature of the school

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum and follows the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance from the Department of Education in the UK.
- It is organised into key stages and year groups, as would be found in the UK.
- The school's assessments are UK sourced and benchmarked against British standards.
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision, curriculum activities, displays and events.
- The school is well resourced in materials that are commonly used in British schools.
- The school has a uniform policy, like many English schools.
- The school's house point and rewards system reflect those used in UK schools.
- The school has a very high proportion of teachers trained and experienced in British schools.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by AHBS fully meets the requirements of the BSO Framework.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum provided at Aspen Heights is outstanding. The school fully meets the standard for BSO. The school strives to be innovative, creative and even courageous in the subjects, topics and manner in which the curriculum is designed and delivered

There is full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age, meeting local regulations. The principal language of instruction is English. The school has a written curriculum policy which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. The policy is implemented effectively, enabling students to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The National Curriculum of England provides the framework for teaching and learning and is reflective of its being in Abu Dhabi and the school's international context.

The curriculum has been enhanced to support the students with effective distant learning during the Covid restrictions. Provision has included both full curriculum support as well as online extracurricular activities (French, Arabic, PE), and a range of international collaboration projects such as the ISP Athletics competition and the Junior Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

The EYFS curriculum provides well for the academic, moral, physical, creative, and social development of students. There is an appropriate focus on communication and language: giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, develop their confidence and skill in expressing themselves, and speak and listen in a range of situations. The physical development focus provides opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, develop their co-ordination, control, and movement, understand the importance of physical activity, and make healthy choices about food. The provision of personal, social and emotional development within the EYFS curriculum helps children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, form positive relationships and respect others, develop social skills and learn

how to manage their feelings, understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Learning is appropriately cross-curricular, links being made between subjects to give relevant contexts. Teachers aim to ensure that the curriculum provides a platform to provide learning that is engaging, appropriately challenging, and well supported. Wherever possible the curriculum has a strong focus on developing from children's interest such as the talent show opportunities and exploration of dinosaurs.

To plan for successful learning, early years practitioners observe the children to identify their interests, explore how they learn, and monitor their progress in each area of learning and development through the use of "Evidence Me". Reflecting on these observations enables staff to successfully shape learning experiences for individual children. As part of the assessment process, parents are encouraged to share their own observations of their child's progress. This has been a significant development during the distance learning provision, highly appreciated by parents.

In the primary years, children build on the excellent experience of their early years learning. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is age appropriate, which has been appropriately modified to reflect the history and culture of the United Arab Emirates including Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies. Students study four core subjects - mathematics, science, English and computing, together with the foundation subjects of history, geography, art, design and technology, music, physical education (PE), swimming, French (from year 3) and moral education. A framework of transferable life skills is promoted. The use of thematic learning units supports students to be effective enquiry-based learners who can be self-directed and challenged to achieve their best. Global citizenship and circle times support each student's wellbeing. The curriculum is normally supported by a range of extra-curricular activities and local visits of increasing length and challenge.

Students have opportunities to build their confidence by participating in weekly assemblies, drama productions, dance and musicals. The students also use laptops, appropriate digital resources and iPads in their lessons as part of their learning as well as a wide range of technology-based learning tools. High expectations of reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting are consistently applied, and attainment and progress is high as a result. Throughout the primary year's teachers have developed "Talk for Writing" to tackle the identified need to provide interesting and stimulating approaches to literacy. This strong focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening to raise

standards for full access to the curriculum is appreciated and highly regarded by the parents.

Middle leaders work alongside members of the senior leadership team, ensuring the key skills of the curriculum and schemes of work are monitored and that progression takes place. Literacy skills are strongly evident throughout the curriculum and there are many enrichment opportunities to enhance it. During distance learning activities, a range of literacy support materials have further enhanced student learning such as 'Pickatale'. Staff also ensured the curriculum was enlivened by a range of virtual visits and trips.

The school has implemented a number of highly effective intervention strategies for students who have difficulty accessing the curriculum. The development of the support centre Oasis and detailed use of individual educational programmes ensure students are able to maximise their progress.

AHBS Key Stage 3 opened with Years 7 and 8 in the 2019/20 academic year and will grow by one additional year group per academic year. The school has a written curriculum policy for Key Stage 3 which is supported by long, medium and short term plans within all departments. Short term planning takes into consideration the learning needs of students, with particular focus on the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, literacy and numeracy, as well as the support and challenge for those who are identified as requiring it. There is a strong emphasis placed on transition with middle leaders planning well for this at each key stage. Evidence shows there is a smooth transition, particularly pastorally, from one key stage to the next and there are established links between the primary and secondary school that benefit the students, undergoing careful review each year.

There are extensive extra-curricular activities (ECAs) provided for students. Opportunities take into consideration the international nature of the students. Activities include participation in sporting and academic competitions both national and international. Performance is another aspect of the school's curriculum that gives the students opportunities to present and perform in each year group with class activities, assemblies and then larger group productions. This further enhances the school's commitment to developing high order literacy skills. There is a strong and supportive pastoral structure which complements the core curriculum. This outlook is further enhanced with the delivery of an adaption of the UK's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and citizenship programmes of study. The ISP Buddy Exchange Programme enhances the international and cultural learning experience further.

5.2 *Teaching and assessment*

The school meets the BSO standard. The quality of teaching across the school is good and often outstanding practice is evident in classrooms across the school.

Teachers encourage pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts and to show interest in their work. There is also good emphasis on supporting pupils to think and learn for themselves. Teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability. They increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. Teaching encourages pupils to behave responsibly, and in many lessons, the pupils take a lot of responsibility for their learning.

Lessons throughout the school are well planned, suitable activities are organised and class time is managed wisely. Teachers show a detailed understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account when planning lessons. Teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. Classroom resources of a very good quality, quantity and range and in general, they are used very effectively.

The curriculum programme ensures reading, writing, and maths skills are a priority both in specific literacy and mathematics lessons, but across the curriculum. Phonics is taught well across all phases of the EYFS and primary school, where appropriate, ensuring a sound foundation for reading and writing. The EYFS classrooms facilitate all areas of the EYFS curriculum, for example there are writing implements everywhere, which encourage meaningful mark-making during play.

The pupils are excited about new challenges. A recent request for play leaders garnered many applicants, with carefully designed games to ensure maximum fun and minimum contact. When they have the opportunity, they are curious, interested and reflective learners. At all levels of the secondary part of the school, students are provided with opportunities to explore environmental issues, health awareness, religion and study skills that are required for them to become highly effective learners. Throughout the school, there are numerous examples of how the teaching and curriculum is enhanced by the visual pictures and examples of students' work.

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Overall, the styles of teaching, learning and assessment equip pupils very well indeed with the knowledge and skills: they could easily enter, or re-enter the UK educational system at an appropriate level. The ethos and high levels of pupils' engagement in their learning, established in the primary years continues through to the secondary school. Teaching is often focused on ensuring each student is able to develop resilience, approach challenges positively and work collaboratively.

In the best lessons, there is an excellent learning environment and strong relationships. For example in many Year 5 English and mathematics lessons, the teachers were lively and animated: the pupils were excited to learn. Strategies such as using 'mini-teachers' supported all pupils and added variety to the lesson. Similarly, in some Year 7, 8 and 9 lessons, there was excellent use of digital technology, both in terms of the preparation by the teacher and in one Year 8 English lesson there was excellent inclusion of students who were at home, studying online. All the best lessons were characterised by very high expectations and a notable variety of teaching techniques, which ensured pace and excitement. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, there was outstanding inclusion of the online students, as the teacher juggled between distance and face-to-face teaching. In a Year 9 Biology lesson, the girls were enthralled by the 'Treasure hunt of the Digestive System', which meant they excitedly roamed the corridors of the building looking for clues, left before by the teacher.

Even in lessons which have been affected by Covid-19 restrictions, such as physical education, there was excellent learning evident. In one such lesson, Year 3 pupils were gradually clear about the small differences that make a successful or unsuccessful squat jump: limited by space, because the class was taught inside and socially distanced.

AHBS has an excellent framework in place to assess pupils' work. It is used regularly and thoroughly: information from these assessments are used to plan teaching, maximising pupils' progress. The feedback, marking and assessment policy is well established ensuring pupils know where they need to improve, and are usually given the opportunity to act on feedback they receive.

5.3 *Standards achieved by pupils*

Standards achieved by pupils at AHBS are good; progress is often excellent.

Baseline data suggests an academic starting point for many of the pupils which is below average. Progress data indicates that pupils are learning quickly. Across all current year groups and in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, current pupils are making consistently good or better progress. They are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills.

Effective systems are being implemented to monitor and track pupils' progress. Due to the relatively short history of AHBS, a range of data is now being collated that is having a positive impact on the planning and delivery of effective and appropriate learning opportunities.

The school is implementing procedures for monitoring, which are becoming highly effective in ensuring all pupils make good progress based on their starting point, which is often below age-related expectations on arrival. Pupils read widely and often with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.

From different starting points, all pupils across the school in the academic year 2019/2020 made better than expected progress. The school has successfully addressed an identified need to provide support for raising the reading abilities of pupils.

Each half term teachers use ongoing summative assessments and results from formative assessments in order to track the pupils. This data is submitted and analysed to ensure all pupils are making at least expected progress. Pupils entering Key Stage 3 complete the CAT 4 assessment as part of the admissions procedure. Data from this provides teachers with important information relating to the style of teaching and learning most suited to individual pupils. Pupils across the school have the opportunity to learn in different ways, including to learn creatively with hands-on experiences and real-life contexts, for example in mathematics and science investigations.

6. Standard 2

Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. It is a significant strength of the school.

AHBS teaches all pupils to be respectful to others and show care and compassion for all. Pupils themselves say, for example, 'we get to know each other and to respect where everyone comes from. We know that not everyone comes from the same background or has the same qualities'. Pupils can reference and explain the 4Cs - *Courtesy, Consideration, Co-operation* and *Common Sense* - which are on display and referenced throughout school by staff and students younger than themselves. This helps to ensure that relationships across the school are positive. Pupils are keen to learn, arrive promptly at lessons and benefit from regular attendance at school. In lessons, they are resilient and increasingly reflective learners, determined to succeed. Personal success, though, is not at the expense of others. Pupils are encouraged to support and teach each other. Older students refer to supporting younger children, reporting being 'like older siblings on the school buses.'

Priority is placed on nurturing pupils' leadership skills and they take their responsibilities seriously. There are opportunities for both secondary and primary school pupils to be part of the voice of the whole school. School leaders believe that cross-cultural tolerance, understanding and diplomacy are just as important as any classroom subject. Secondary students have the opportunity to participate in the International Schools Partnership's 'Future Global Leaders' conference where they are able to debate some of society's most pressing issues. The conference helps students to improve their debating and research skills, as well as develop their leadership qualities and public speaking confidence.

School leaders recognise the importance of promoting respect for diversity, inclusion and equality and feel that respect for all is part of the DNA of Aspen Heights. Staff and students speak about 'modelling the behaviour you want to see.' The leaders also ensure that pupils are attuned to the history and culture of both the host country, the United Kingdom and their home countries: this happens through regular discussions, debates and assemblies, as well as numerous displays in the reception area and around school. Assemblies are celebrated each week in school and online in both English and Arabic, to

share successes. The school values and promotes integration between English and Arabic languages.

Annual planning grids show a close relationship between Arabic and other subject areas. The school has a strong partnership with parents via newsletters, half-termly community events, social media and they have tried to replicate as much as possible with virtual events.

A bespoke programme of study, based on personal, health and social education, is followed throughout the school. This assists in structuring regular opportunities for learning around such subjects as diversity, rights, responsibilities. Students speak proudly about AHBS and how they enjoy being part of a community that welcomes opportunities to celebrate successes.

There are clear processes for all who join the school so that the vision, ethos and values of the school is made clear. Mechanisms are in place to support challenge and train all.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The school meets the requirements of the BSO standard, as well as the regulatory requirements of the host country.

Pupils in all phases feel safe, cared for and valued. The school makes excellent provision for the health, safety and welfare of all pupils and for their protection, including rigorous online protection. The school's core values (the 4Cs) give great importance to these matters.

The pupils say that they feel safe and value the care they are given. Their behaviour is excellent, and bullying is rare. They are able to identify adult support readily and with confidence. The outstanding relations among pupils and between pupils and staff promote a welcoming environment where learners feel confident to seek support from, and offer it to, others. They understand how to keep themselves safe and to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Healthy food choices help pupils develop healthy habits for life.

There are excellent procedures for the induction of children into school when they join in the EYFS and for transition between key stages. These procedures help children to settle quickly, feel valued and know where to seek support should it be needed

The school pays meticulous attention to issues of health and safety. All necessary risk assessments are carefully carried out and specialist areas such as laboratories and sporting facilities are maintained in an exemplary manner. Key times such as arrival and departure from school are vigilantly supervised in all areas. If pupils are found to need extra support for their well-being, the school team are alert and provide guidance. Child protection and safeguarding are high priorities for all staff. The designated safeguarding leaders are trained to a high standard and other staff are suitably trained and vigilant. They know what to do if they have any concerns.

The EYFS has rigorous procedures for the safeguarding and protection of all children. It provides a very safe physical environment that is fit for purpose for all. It promotes safe and healthy living and provides opportunities for children to participate in free flow activities in areas specially designated for them.

Liaison with parents over welfare issues is excellent and parents reported that they have full confidence in the school's procedures.

8. Standard 4

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standards required for BSO.

The school is owned by the International Schools Partnership (ISP), a London-based company with schools in the UAE and around the world. The school principal is line-managed by the regional director of ISP, and supported by an ISP School Improvement partner. ISP holds the school to account, but empowers senior leaders to make the right decision for AHBS learning community. ISP invests 100% of revenue back into school projects. A 'Covid-19 budget' was made available at very short notice, to ensure that all aspects required for safety and compliance could be procured, including thermal scanners and additional Chromebooks.

The governors have a clear and accurate understanding of AHBS strengths and of areas they wish to develop further. They have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding and welfare of the pupils. They discharge these duties effectively.

All AHBS school staff, including external outsourced staff, are registered with the local regulator and meet the stringent educational and academic requirements. CPD for all staff is central to the school's continued fast-paced improvements over time. Each phase of the school plans and delivers weekly training based on whole school priorities and on the outcomes of monitoring/learning walks. All members of teaching staff undergo appropriate checks to ensure their suitability for the role when they are appointed to the school. Identity, medical, qualifications and police checks and references were in place for teaching staff appointed to the school and these are held in individual files.

More than 87% of the teaching staff for the English national curriculum are UK trained and/or experienced; those that do not have direct experience of UK schools are up-skilled through the school's mentoring and coaching programme, using the skills of line managers and peers. Colleagues are also invited to take part in UK accredited training.

A single central register is in place containing all essential information. This includes permanent and volunteer staff, and the board of governors. It shows when they started and stopped working in the school. There are no unsupervised volunteers.

Two senior staff have undertaken NPQSL. The Oasis class (for students with specific learning needs), is staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced colleagues with specific qualifications for SEN. Teaching assistants are well supported and trained to

impact positively on learning and teaching. School staff including outsourced staff, receive annual and termly safeguarding and health and safety training.

9. Standard 5

The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent and meet BSO standards. As a brand new school in 2017, the values and high expectations of the school are evident in the physical environment.

Facilities management (FM) and maintenance is outsourced to an accredited third party provider, who ensure full compliance, and provide a sustainable workforce to ensure continuity and high standards of health and safety.

Classrooms are airy and spacious with high quality furniture and resources. There is an attractive shaded playground with Astro-turf facilities and a hardcourt for secondary students. Internal and external spaces are sufficient to enable all students to attend school every day, whilst still adhering to local spacing guidelines and regulations.

Sports facilities include an indoor 25m swimming pool with changing room cubicles for all pupils, a multifunction sports hall with suitable flooring, lighting and padding around the walls. There is also a multipurpose hall and stage that is used for performances, assemblies and family community events.

The science and computing labs are well resourced and support achievement in all 3 sciences as well as in IT. There is also a range of technology available in classrooms to support and enhance learning opportunities for pupils. There are specialist music classrooms in all phases, which are soundproofed, light and airy with a range of high quality instruments to facilitate teaching and learning.

Displays are used widely and effectively, as celebrations of learning. Students reported that they have ownership of the learning environment; there is dual language in many displays demonstrating a commitment to ensuring Arabic has high status.

10. *Standard 6*

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, prospective parents and its wider community is excellent.

A range of communication systems keeps parents fully informed about their child's education and all that is happening in the school. These include newsletters, emails, and parent-and-carer information meetings. The school's website provides a range of easily accessible information concerning all aspects of school life. This includes basic information, contact details, admissions processes, selected policies, examination results, events calendar, and news.

Parents receive regular and detailed reports as well as formal and informal updates about their child's academic and personal progress. Written reports are sent to them through the year and there are regular parent-teacher-student consultations across the school year. Students' learning targets and predicted grades are shared to allow parents, teachers and students to work together and enable further improvement.

Parents have readily available access to teachers and can email or arrange additional meetings to discuss their child as needed. The school regularly runs workshops, and the Friends of Aspen encourages two way dialogue on aspects of the curriculum and specialist topics. Workshops are welcomed by parents. Parents greatly value the English curriculum that promotes British standards and expectations. The school actively seeks the views of parents through regular surveys and discussion groups and acts on suggestions when appropriate. Parents suggested that they chose the school especially for its English system of education and the family feel that is embracing, welcoming and inclusive.

The vast majority of parents are incredibly positive about the school. They value the fact that school staff balance care and guidance with high expectations for academic excellence. One parent explained, 'My daughter loves going to school. She is supported by caring and excellent teachers who understand and cater for her individual needs.'

The vast majority of parents say that they are well informed about all that is happening in the school and the progress their children are making. Indeed, regular written reports from teachers are highly informative. Parents say that the school and staff are open and very accessible and that the school responds effectively to all

reasonable requests for information and to any concerns they may have. They feel that they are listened to and that their views are valued. Parents say, 'The principal's door is always open to us'. The school actively seeks parents' views through regular questionnaires and outcomes demonstrate very high levels of parental satisfaction. The parents felt the school and staff had worked extremely hard during the period of Covid-19 restrictions to ensure that when children were in school, they were kept safe, and their wellbeing provided for. During periods of distance learning, they felt lessons and activities were highly effective and that teachers maintained excellent relationships with their sons and daughters.

11. *Standard 7*

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meets BSO standards.

The procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of this standard. A well-considered and detailed policy gives parents clear guidance about how to raise any concern. Parents are informed of the process through the website and prospectus. Appropriate written records of any complaints are maintained, and confidentiality assured.

School leaders are keen to listen to any concerns and resolve any questions before they escalate into formal complaints. The handling of complaints mirrors the management structure of the school. The class or subject teacher is consulted first, but if an issue is not resolved, it can be raised with the subject, year and then senior leaders.

The board has established systems to support the complaints procedure in line with the policy if required. The policy allows for an external panel to review the most serious complaints by providing impartial guidance and resolution

Parents and students are very positive about leaders' responsiveness to any concerns.

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

The quality of leadership and management of the school meets the standard. The principal and her senior team are passionate about the school and its pupils. They provide outstanding leadership.

AHBS is an ambitious school with many outstanding features. The school offers a high-quality British education that fully meets the needs of its pupils. There is excellent capacity for further development. The senior leadership team are highly effective in providing a clear educational direction. This is amply reflected in the high quality of education, the excellent care of pupils, and the evident fulfilment of the school's aims and ethos. There is an excellent and positive relationship between the principal and the school's governing body.

The board is made up of family community members, ISP directors and senior leaders in the school. There are termly governors meetings, at which progress on the AHBS improvement plan is shared, plus details of any initiatives that are having a positive impact in the school. Before the pandemic, this was followed by a governor's learning walk to see the initiatives in action.

The proprietor and board are highly successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality teaching and other staff for the school. They ensure the correct checks are in place to ensure their suitability to work with children.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place; the board reviews them regularly for continued effectiveness, and to ensure sufficiency of resources through robust financial management. The school growth and expansion, and the manner in which the senior team are successfully navigating the issues around Covid-19, demonstrate the importance and value of this.

The school has developed and grown in a short period of time, even through the pandemic. The manner in which it has been led and governed through this crisis has turned a challenging time into a positive one. Enrolment has increased. There is high staff retention and any last minute changes required by distance learning are very well organised.

Senior management, with the board and middle leaders, have successfully identified priorities for improvement, and planning to meet those priorities is firmly in place. Learning walks and monitoring are daily activities and staff are comfortable with the professional reflections and discussions that occur afterwards. There is an

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open-minded and ambitious approach to continuous improvement. The school improvement planning process is rigorous and involves all members of the community. The annual school improvement plan is evolved with and delivered by a variety of stakeholders. It is reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year.

Leaders at all levels are aligned in the commitment to continuous improvement and have had a significant impact on practices throughout the school. One of the strengths of AHBS leadership is the consistency of approach: staff, pupils and families feel confident that their views are heard. They also report that they feel secure that change is managed well, communicated clearly, and usually follows an appropriate consultation. AHBS is a harmonious and happy place. The administrative team are aligned with the core purpose.

There is a well-established performance management system that enables teachers to focus on improving outcomes for their classes. It also enables them to develop professionally and impact on the practice of classes other than their own. This has enabled the senior leadership to identify new and emerging talent: these constitute the newer middle and senior leaders, in place to plan for succession and continued improvement throughout the school.