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British International School Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter campus

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 04 to 06 October 2026

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Age Group: 3 to 18 years

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. Education Development Trust (EDT) is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

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

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

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

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

The BSO standards are as follows:

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment).

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

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

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation.

Part 6. The provision of information.

Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.

Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.

Part 9. The quality of provision for boarding.

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

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

Key for inspection grades

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

Information about the school

British International School Riyadh (BISR) Diplomatic Quarter (DQ) campus is an inclusive, co-educational, not-for-profit British school, located in Riyadh, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It is the second largest of seven BISR campuses serving the expatriate community. The school opened in 2020 as a two-form entry primary school. It is now an all-through school and continues to grow.

The school is governed by a parent-composed board of governors, reflecting the structure of a UK governing body. The principal has been in post since 2020.

BISR DQ currently educates 902 pupils aged three to 18 years. This includes 93 pupils in the early years, 430 in the primary phase, and 378 in secondary, of whom 64 are in the sixth form. The pupil body represents 61 different nationalities; British nationals make up 29%, with a further 28% from Commonwealth countries. The school admits pupils with a broad range of ability and manages high levels of pupil mobility. Approximately 101 pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including 13 pupils on a reduced timetable. Just over 60% of pupils are identified as learners of English as an additional language (EAL) with just 19 pupils needing additional support.

The curriculum in the early years follows the UK's early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework. The primary school delivers the national curriculum for England (NCfE) until the end of key stage 3, adapted to the local context. At the end of key stage 4, pupils take International GCSE examinations. Sixth-form students follow the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) or transfer to the Al Waha campus for A levels and International Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC)qualification pathways.

The school's vision is to be an outstanding British international school, providing world-class learning experiences and developing students as positive global citizens. The school's ethos is

defined by its 'REACH' values which emphasise respect, excellence, accountability, challenge, and happiness.

The school has, in the last academic year, demonstrated resilience and adaptability during a period of sudden geopolitical regional instability.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three EDT inspectors who spent three days at the school. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in advance and the inspection dates were confirmed with 10 weeks' notice. Inspectors reviewed key information about the school prior to the inspection.

During the inspection the team visited 48 part-lessons and carried out learning walks, including extra-curricular and enrichment activities. A total of 26 lessons were jointly observed with leaders. Inspectors also attended assemblies and spoke to pupils in breaktimes. The team held 30 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and reviewed a broad selection of documentation, including assessment records, policies and strategic plans. Safeguarding arrangements were evaluated to check their compliance and effectiveness. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through the BSO survey, which was distributed shortly before the inspection.

Evaluation of the school

British International School Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

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

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding.

On entry to the EYFS, 79% of children in 2025-26 demonstrated age-appropriate communication skills. By the end of the phase, 86% were working at expected levels and 88% met the ELG for communication and language. Children can retell favourite stories confidently, identify characters and settings, and write short sentences.

In Year 1, 83% of pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics' screening check, surpassing the England average of 80%. By the end of Year 2, this rises to 97%, also above the England average. Trained staff teach a targeted phonics programme systematically and use regular assessments to track each pupil's progress. By the end of key stage 1, 96% of pupils meet or exceed expected standards, a highly significant achievement because 76% of the cohort are EAL learners.

By the end of key stage 2, 98% of pupils are working at or above expected levels in English, well above levels in England. Pupils who stay at the school long term make particularly strong progress, and 97% of EAL pupils reach the expected standard or higher, demonstrating high levels of progress from their starting points. Teachers plan units around high-quality texts that build pupils' retrieval skills, vocabulary and grammar, and support the development of strong writing skills. Teachers model reading expertly, and gradually develop pupils' independent reading and comprehension, building confident readers. Teachers teach grammar and spelling in context to emphasise meaning.

By the end of key stage 3, 95% of pupils work at or above expected levels. Over three years, the gender attainment gap narrows considerably.

IGCSE outcomes reflect high attainment and progress. In 2026, 59% of pupils achieved at grades 9 to 7 in English language and 53% in English literature, well above England averages. Outcomes have risen over three years, and most pupils achieve almost one grade above their expected levels of progress in English language. In lessons, pupils analyse challenging texts critically. Teachers support EAL pupils to tackle IGCSE academic language, which results in very high outcomes.

At key stage 5, the average Standard IBDP grade for English language was very high at 5.8, which is well above the global score of 4.9. This has been achieved by regular reviews of the curriculum, the inclusion of non-fiction texts, an increase in the analysis of poetry, the use of high quality and demanding texts and the detailed analysis of assessment information to target precise levels of support.

Across all phases, boys and girls achieve similarly, and pupils with SEND and EAL make remarkable progress from their starting points. Early identification and long-term SEND strategies enable pupils to reach their potential. Pupils' books confirm the outstanding levels of achievement.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding.

There are only minor differences in attainment and progress between boys and girls across most key stages. Pupils with EAL make remarkably strong rates of progress. Pupils with SEND make strong progress overall, but with some levels of variability.

Children enter the early years with low starting points in number, with only 54% meeting age-related expectations on entry. Almost all make very strong progress, resulting in 90% achieving the early learning goal (ELG) in number and 100% achieving the numerical patterns ELG. In the Reception Year, children successfully compare and order groups of up to three objects, using mathematical vocabulary such as 'equal', 'least', 'most', 'more' and 'less'.

In Year 2, pupils add two-digit numbers accurately and demonstrate critical thinking by creating their own questions for a given total. By end of key stage 1, 87% attain the expected standard or above. Benchmarking data shows that 44% achieve above- average performance, stanine 6 or higher, while 70% make expected or better progress.

Year 6 pupils multiply four-digit numbers by two-digit numbers fluently. When challenged with the question 'What is the maximum number of digits in the product of a three-digit number and a two-digit number?', pupils arrived at correct solutions through valid mathematical reasoning.

By end of key stage 2, 96% attain age-related expectations or above, with 70% making expected or better progress. Pupils with SEND make particularly strong rates of progress.

In Year 9, pupils apply their understanding of two-dimensional area to deduce the surface area of a cylinder. At the end of key stage 3, 94% achieve expected attainment or above and 67% make expected or better progress. Benchmarking data indicates that 83% achieve stanine 6 or higher, with 41% making better than expected progress. Benchmarking outcomes at the end of key stages 1, 2, and 3 are all above national averages for England.

In their first lesson on arithmetic sequences, Year 11 pupils successfully derived the formula for the n^{th} term. IGCSE outcomes are strong, with 70% achieving at grades 9 to 6 and 47% achieving at grades 9 to 7, compared with the England averages of 29% and 19%, respectively. Three-year trends show pupils consistently achieving approximately half a grade above predictions. EAL pupils make particularly strong progress, while pupils with SEND make less progress relative to their starting points than their peers.

In the IBDP, Analysis and Approaches (AA) students, independently discovered methods for expanding binomial expressions through investigation. Applications and Interpretation (AI) students successfully interpreted cumulative frequency curves to estimate key statistical measures. In the 2026 examinations, AI students achieved an average score of 4.7 while AA students achieved an average of 5.2. Students achieved, on average almost half a grade above predictions. Both figures compare favourably with the world average of 4.4. Three-year trends show sustained year-on-year improvement, with the most recent cohort of students achieving positive outcomes against predictions.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding.

Science is a significant strength across the school with attainment and progress consistently above age-related expectations. Outcomes demonstrate strong rates of progress from pupils' starting points in all phases. Outcomes for EAL pupils exceed both national and school averages, while SEND pupils outperform national averages. Boys and girls achieve similarly high levels of attainment, reflecting the effectiveness of targeted support and a highly inclusive curriculum.

In the EYFS, children make outstanding progress from their low starting points so that outcomes in Understanding the World have been consistently above England averages for the past four years. Children develop strong scientific understanding and enquiry skills from the earliest stages. In a discovery play session, children studied a worm by using a magnifying glass. They demonstrated good observational skills and described it as 'wriggling slowly' and one child wondered if the worm was a predator and would hurt other insects.

In primary, attainment and progress are exceptionally strong because teachers introduce investigative approaches early. In Year 3, pupils investigated magnetic poles with considerable awe and curiosity. Across key stage 2, an average of 86% of pupils make excellent progress to achieve expected standards or above. By the end of Year 6, 97% are working at the expected standard or above. In Year 5 pupils use scientific vocabulary such as metamorphosis accurately.

In key stage 3**,** science is the strongest-performing core subject for attainment and progress. By the end of Year 9, 96% of pupils achieve expected or better attainment and progress,

demonstrating excellent progress from starting points. In Year 9 pupils learned the processes that form sedimentary rocks, engaging actively in discussions and regular assessment.

At IGCSE**,** science continues to add significant value. In combined science, on average, pupils achieved almost a grade higher than predicted in 2026. At grade 9 attainment improved to 9%, while 51% achieved grades 9 to 7. Teachers have driven this continued improvement, especially in top grades, through an increased emphasis on the application of knowledge. Teachers increasingly use challenge and open-ended questioning, evident in a practical lesson measuring osmosis.

In the IBDP the average science grade increased to 5.4 in 2026, above the global average of 4.6. Students achieved, on average, almost half a grade higher than their predicted grade. Students have exemplary attitudes to learning, a significant factor in their success, as seen in a successful lesson on Newton's law of gravitation where they worked collaboratively to answer examination questions.

Pupils' attainment and progress in a range of **other subjects** are outstanding.

In the early years, discovery play sessions help children build key skills in balance, coordination, and spatial awareness through opportunities to cycle, climb, and construct. These experiences prepare children for physical independence while developing their gross and fine motor skills.

Specialist teachers deliver art, music, physical education (PE) swimming, library sessions, Arabic, French and Spanish lessons in the primary phase. In a well-structured Year 3 basketball lesson, pupils demonstrated enthusiasm and skills' development. Primary outcomes in 2026 demonstrate high attainment across foundation subjects, with over 90% of pupils achieving expected standards or above. Outcomes have improved in almost every subject over the past two years. Pupils leave the primary phase very well prepared for the demands of key stage 3.

GCSE results continue to improve year on year with pupils achieving over one grade higher than predicted across all subjects. In a Year 11 art lesson, pupils aspired to exceed their target grades, demonstrating strong independence and commitment to developing their personal portfolios. On average, 13% of pupils achieved the top grade of 9, compared with an England average of 5%.

The school enables pupils to exceed expectations regardless of their starting points. Pupils with SEND make strong rates of progress, with attainment improving significantly throughout key stage 4.

IBDP outcomes in 2026 were very high, with the highest IBDP pass rate in the school's history with a record high score of 43 points. Average subject grades improved significantly and remained well above global averages. The average diploma subject grade increased from 4.7 to 5.5 in 2026, compared with the global average of 4.9. Results were particularly strong in history at 6.1, design and technology (DT) at 6.5 and visual arts at 5.7. In a highly successful and inclusive history lesson, the teacher drew relevant connections about contemporary life and British values. Combined with high levels of students' engagement, this approach promoted meaningful historical enquiry and deepened students' understanding.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

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

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during October 2026, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school

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

The quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

Leaders plan the curriculum carefully and structure it well to ensure continuity and progression in learning. It meets the requirements of the EYFS, the NCfE and the IBDP. Teachers extend learning beyond curriculum requirements. Across all phases, high-quality planning, real-world experiences and planned opportunities for independent research deepen pupils' knowledge. Pupils transfer their understanding to new situations rather than simply recalling facts.

In the early years, teachers build on children's natural curiosity through an enriched, play-based programme to successfully attain early learning goals. This continues seamlessly into the delivery of the NCfE across the school. Specialist teachers deliver lessons in languages, art, music, DT, and a range of sports, giving pupils a broad-based education. Detailed schemes of work translate into lesson plans, which teachers adapt to reflect the culture of the KSA. Secondary pupils study a diverse range of GCSE courses that provide a strong foundation for

further study. In the sixth form, the IBDP helps pupils direct their own learning, think critically and build the skills for lifelong learning.

Leaders review the curriculum regularly, using assessment information and pupils' feedback. The school has strengthened the key stage 3 and 4 English curriculum with non-fiction and poetry analysis to prepare pupils for the IBDP. Transition arrangements are extensive. Early years children visit primary lessons and meet reading buddies, and primary and secondary teachers share data and plan joint lessons.

Teachers provide excellent support for pupils with additional needs. Leaders use high-quality assessment information to identify pupils with SEND and EAL. Pupils gain access to the curriculum through skilled teaching and purposeful scaffolding. Learning support teachers plan interventions carefully and adapt tasks so that all pupils succeed. Teachers routinely plan for the most able in all lessons.

British values are evident across the curriculum and planned in every lesson. Leadership opportunities and school-wide projects promote them. Pupils explain the importance of democratic processes when they elect student councillors and house captains, and they value choosing representatives who listen. The school's 'REACH' values shape curriculum planning and carefully chosen texts such as 'Hidden Figures' are used to explore individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different beliefs. During the inspection, pupils attended an assembly on leadership, advocacy and Black History Month. In Year 13 students presented confidently on Sir Lewis Hamilton and Baroness Doreen Lawrence, showing how individuals reform institutions for society's benefit. These presentations linked explicitly to individual liberty, mutual respect, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils engaged fully, supported one another and recognised their own capacity to influence positive change.

The school actively promotes respect for all. It celebrates cultural diversity, fostering an inclusive environment where pupils recognise, value, and respect differences. Pupils consistently demonstrate tolerance, respect, and empathy in all aspects of school life.

The personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme progresses clearly through age-appropriate, contextualised themes linked to the school's well-being framework. Primary pupils develop character, emotional literacy and resilience, and discuss concerns in a safe environment. Secondary themes include belonging, self-regulation, purpose, lifestyle and resilience. Pupils report that PSHE helps them to manage conflict in and out of school. Teachers review parents' and pupils' surveys to identify concerns and adapt this curriculum accordingly. The school sequences its relationships and sex education (RSE) programme carefully, keeping in mind the culture and laws of the host country. Pupils learn appropriate language and knowledge about their bodies, establish boundaries and recognise unsafe situations. Parents appreciate the information that they receive about the programme before teachers begin its delivery.

The activities programme, offering 160 seasonal activities, enriches the curriculum. Sporting, digital, creative and technology activities develop pupils' interests, confidence and well-being, and around 84% of pupils participate in at least one activity a week. IBDP pupils support activities through Creativity, Activity Service (CAS) core component and report gains in their critical thinking and leadership skills. Pupils organise fundraising within the host country's laws, recently funding activities for support staff and resources for the key stage 5 trip to Nepal.

A well planned careers programme begins in Year 7, where pupils reflect on their skills, interests and talents. Pupils and parents value this support, as it leads to well informed career and educational choices. The curriculum prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in British society and for smooth reintegration into UK or British-curriculum schools. The curriculum reflects the school's ambitious targets and successfully supports pupils' academic and personal development.

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

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and a deep understanding of how pupils learn. They apply the skills developed through professional development effectively in both planning and delivery. Teachers build planning on prior learning and on assessment evidence to target the knowledge, skills and understanding pupils need to develop next.

Teams collaborate effectively to embed whole school expectations into planning, creating a high level of consistency for pupils across the school. Teachers and leaders analyse assessment information thoroughly to develop a comprehensive understanding of every pupil's abilities and specific needs. Information-rich profiles of pupils help teachers to set appropriate levels of challenge. Almost all teachers use this information successfully to plan lessons that offer multiple levels of challenge and meet the needs of different groups. Teachers use in class assessment strategies, including mini whiteboards, paired discussion, retrieval activities and effective thinking time to check pupils' understanding, monitor progress and identify misconceptions. They then adjust the pace, focus and support in lessons to maintain high levels of challenge and success for all pupils.

Teachers consistently consider the needs of pupils with EAL and SEND. The support for learning department provides expert guidance and targeted interventions that help teachers to adapt teaching approaches and, where necessary, the curriculum so that all pupils can succeed. Teachers implement strategies from individual learning plans effectively and tailor their teaching accordingly. They support pupils through scaffolding and targeted assistance from themselves and teaching assistants, when available. Teachers have challenging expectations for all pupils, including the most able. They frequently combine appropriate challenge with opportunities for pupils to exercise choice and select work that best matches their current skills knowledge and understanding.

A culture of professional learning creates an ethos of continuous improvement. Peer observation and peer-led professional development has begun and will continue to develop.

Teachers in all phases establish clear expectations and maintain strong classroom management and establish effective routines that create purposeful learning environments. They teach ambitiously and use effective questioning, open-ended tasks, dialogue, enquiry, exploration and scaffolding to ensure that all pupils can achieve successfully. Teachers implement the 'Everyday Excellence' framework consistently, driving improvements in the quality of teaching across the school. As a consequence, pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding efficiently and securely. Teachers frequently connect learning to real-life contexts, helping pupils to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways.

Almost all pupils make strong rates of progress from their starting points. Through regular self-assessment, teacher-assessment and feedback, pupils know their current level of attainment

and how to improve. Teachers provide feedback through exercise books and for older pupils through the school's online platform, giving pupils clear guidance on the next steps in their learning. For example, in Year 3 mathematics, the teacher modelled a word problem linked to a real situation so that the pupils could apply their number skills to a practical context.

Strong classroom management and well established routines promote excellent behaviour. A highly effective curriculum supports both academic achievement and wider personal development. Pupils from the EYFS to the IBDP are motivated, engaged and committed to their learning. They demonstrate positive attitudes, contribute purposefully in lessons and sustain their concentration well. Consequently, lessons are productive and learning environments support high-quality outcomes. Pupils show respect, responsibility and care for each other. The 'REACH' values permeate through teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school.

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

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

The **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** development of pupils is outstanding.

Pupils and staff work together to create a calm and purposeful learning environment that exudes high expectations. The school's 'REACH' values shape all aspects of school life. Year 5 pupils stated that their favourite thing about the school is that everyone treats each other with care and respect and values their contribution. Pupils' self-esteem is high, and they thrive in this nurturing environment where they are well known as individuals.

Pupils behave exceptionally well throughout the school day. In the early years, children help one another with unfamiliar challenges. For example, after a teacher held one child's hand to help him balance, children stepped in to support one other, explaining that holding hands would help. Across the school, pupils show remarkable attitudes to learning. They engage enthusiastically, persevere with challenging tasks and take risks. Year 5 pupils explained, 'Mistakes do not scare us because we know that making mistakes isn't a problem, it just helps us learn better.'

Pupils lead initiatives and take on wider responsibilities. They enjoy changing their environment and the curriculum. At the entrepreneur fair, they identify problems and create sustainable solutions. Leaders gather pupils' views through surveys, student council meetings and informal conversations, and act on them. For example, after a survey about reading genres, pupils now benefit from visual storytelling media such as comics.

Pupils develop a strong moral code. Curriculum activities encourage them to reflect on right and wrong, and restorative conversations with staff help them understand the impact of their words and actions on others.

The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils compare life in the KSA with life in the UK and describe why every country keeps historical

records. They know how public institutions and services differ in the KSA, the UK and internationally. The school does not promote partisan political views.

The school's SMSC provision encourages respect for other people, with regard to every protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010. The school cannot fully meet the requirements regarding marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and sexual orientation because of the current laws in the KSA. Teachers promote respect through carefully chosen literature and planned curriculum activities. Recently, pupils considered how the British author Malorie Blackman promotes change through her books. They discussed how they would feel if characters in their books rarely looked like them. They recognised prejudice and injustice and identified how to use their passions to inspire change.

Pupils reflect, act thoughtfully and show respect for diverse cultures and traditions. They speak knowledgeably about the cultures in their school. They celebrate Saudi National Day, Chinese New Year and International Day. Parents state that their children proudly carry two flags, one for KSA and one for their home country.

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

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

New pupils and staff benefit from an effective induction process that helps them settle quickly into the welcoming school's community. New pupils quickly establish friendships, become familiar with routines and understand the school's expectations.

The school provides all teaching and support staff with annual safeguarding training, delivered in staff members' first language where necessary. Weekly safeguarding scenarios in staff bulletins reinforce awareness of potential risks and reporting procedures. At the start of each academic year, leaders provide briefings to staff on updates to the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance and require staff to sign that guidance has been read and understood.

Comprehensive health and safety policies fully align with KSA requirements. Staff implement these consistently and maintain thorough risk assessments for pupils, events, and activities. Leaders maintain a safe and secure learning environment through daily, weekly and monthly checks. Fire and evacuation procedures are rigorously implemented through regular alarm testing, equipment inspection and both announced and unannounced evacuation drills. Feedback from these exercises is used to strengthen procedures still further.

Two well equipped medical clinics provide access to qualified nursing support. Staff complete first-aid training, including the use of adrenaline auto-injectors, and first-aid kits and defibrillators are strategically located across the school. For educational visits leaders identify a designated first aider, complete detailed risk assessments, prepare medication and establish comprehensive emergency contact arrangements. This includes a named senior leader who remains on call throughout the trip.

Behaviour across the school is consistently strong. Through the 'REACH' points system, leaders and staff actively promote positive behaviour and celebrate pupils' contributions. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with promptly and consistently in line with the behaviour policy and parents

feel it is handled effectively. Leaders maintain detailed and secure records and analyse trends. Bullying of any kind is extremely rare. When concerns arise, staff investigate and resolve them quickly, informing parents, and using restorative approaches to support pupils' positive choices. A comprehensive anti-bullying policy provides clear guidance on recognising and responding to different forms of bullying.

Although attendance fell temporarily during regional instability between February and June 2026, it has recovered to 95% exceeding the England national average.

Safeguarding sits at the heart of the school's work. A fully trained team of campus designated safeguarding leads (DSL) and safeguarding support officers, supported by the BISR Group DSL ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet or exceed expectations while remaining fully aligned with KSA requirements. Leaders identify concerns early, gather the pupils' voice through surveys and worry boxes and closely monitor vulnerable pupils, and those with identified needs to ensure coordinated support and effective oversight. In the BSO pupils' survey, almost all pupils reported that they feel safe and are happy at the school.

Leaders have successfully established strong cultures of safeguarding and health and safety. As a result, pupils feel protected, learn how to keep themselves safe and develop healthy lifestyles. The school completed the EDT safeguarding audit ahead of the BSO inspection, meeting all requirements. Inspection evidence confirms that safeguarding arrangements are highly effective throughout the school.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's arrangements for staffing, recruitment and safeguarding are highly effective and fully aligned with KSA's legal requirements. They also reflect the standardised approach used across all BISR schools, ensuring consistency and clarity in safeguarding practice.

The human resources (HR) department maintains a detailed and accurate single central record (SCR) that records staff appointments, start dates, identity checks, qualifications, medical fitness, right to work, criminal record checks and references. Recruitment procedures ensure that all required checks take place before staff begin employment. The SCR also includes visitors, supply staff, parent helpers, contractors and governors, providing a comprehensive overview of all adults who work in or gain access to the school.

Recommendations from a previous review have been implemented appropriately, demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement. Evidence of lessons learned from safeguarding cases demonstrates reflective practice and a strong commitment to maintaining high standards of safeguarding and recruitment compliance.

Staff verify identity through original documents, including passports and birth certificates, and record both the date of verification and confirmation that original documents were seen. Recruitment checks include prohibition checks, International Child Protection Certificates (ICPC) and police clearances covering 10 years from all the countries staff have worked in. Leaders have also updated recruitment criteria to reflect current KSA requirements regarding teaching experience.

Reference procedures are thorough. The school obtains three references for teaching staff and HR and senior leaders verify references through telephone calls or recorded online meetings. Social media screening forms part of recruitment, with clear thresholds for concern, documented risk assessments and candidate discussions.

There is tight confidential access to the SCR by HR staff only. However, the safeguarding governor, the group safeguarding lead and the principal undertake regular scrutiny and spot checks. These robust systems ensure that only suitable adults work with children and contribute strongly to the school's safeguarding culture.

Teachers are well qualified and are predominantly British nationals. Twenty new staff joined the school in the current year. All benefited from a comprehensive induction programme.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Since acquiring the site, BISR has significantly developed and upgraded the buildings. These improvements provide a high-quality learning environment that strongly supports pupils' academic and personal development. Attractive green spaces, shaded seating areas and play facilities encourage social interaction and recreation. The early years outside learning area has a misting system that enables pupils to gain access to outdoor learning opportunities throughout the year.

The campus is safe and secure. Security staff closely monitor both entrance and exit points, while staff provide additional supervision during drop-off and pick-up times. Parent identification badges control access through the turnstiles for younger children while pupils in Year 3 and above manage their access independently.

Classrooms and specialist areas are well used and provide sufficient space to accommodate learning comfortably. They provide welcoming and richly resourced areas to support high-quality teaching and learning across the school. The campus has excellent facilities for large gatherings, including the auditorium, while sports halls support a broad range of PE activities. The swimming pool, science laboratories, food and design technology rooms provide safe, well equipped environments that enrich learning. Dedicated music, drama and art facilities further enhance the curriculum. Staff make excellent us of the premises and resources to create a stimulating learning environment that has a significant positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

The school provides suitable and sufficient toilet, washing and changing facilities for pupils and staff. Medical clinics in both main buildings have treatment spaces and dedicated toilets and washing facilities to support pupils or staff who become unwell or have injuries. Safe drinking water is readily available around the campus. Washrooms and showers supply hot water at a comfortable and safe temperature of 40^{o}C.

The school has high-quality lighting in every part of the campus. Classroom acoustics and particularly specialist music and drama facilities effectively support teaching and performance activities. PE, sports and swimming facilities alongside outdoor play areas provide extensive opportunities for recreation physical development and well-being for pupils of all ages.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has established strong, mutually respectful relationships with parents, and these relationships have grown stronger during times of turmoil. Parents speak very positively about the school's ethos and about the support their children receive to achieve well.

Parents report that their children feel very secure at school. They appreciate that school leaders are always visible, and that teachers and support staff, particularly security staff, always keep their children safe. Parents show a strong awareness of the school's safeguarding procedures and feel confident that the school manages all concerns sensitively and efficiently. They respect these procedures and believe that they make the school a more secure place for learning.

Parents confirm that teachers know their children well and help them achieve their best. Parents of pupils who receive support for learning appreciate the targeted interventions and the high-quality support that enable their children to gain access to the curriculum. Parents of pupils who have experienced well-being concerns also appreciate the support that senior leaders and the school counsellor give their children.

Parents are particularly grateful for the information that they receive about their child's attainment and progress. They enjoy coming to see their child's work and speaking to the teacher, and they appreciate the guidance on next steps for improvement. They value the written reports that they receive regularly. They report that teachers are always ready to meet with them outside formal meetings, and that staff take their concerns seriously and act on them efficiently and effectively.

Parents commend the school for streamlining the information it sends out about systems and policies. They particularly like the weekly newsletter which gives them all the information in one place.

The school collects parents' views through a wide range of formal and informal methods, including surveys about school policies, systems and the curriculum. Parents report that their views are valued by leaders and incorporated into the school's planning.

Parental feedback shows high levels of satisfaction with the school, its child-centred ethos and its commitment to keeping pupils safe. The findings of this inspection confirm these views.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's arrangements for managing complaints are very effective and fully compliant with BSO expectations. Leaders provide a clear written complaints policy to parents through the website and Family Portal. The policy sets out informal and formal stages, clear timescales, written procedures and access to a panel hearing, comprising at least three members, including an independent panel member. Parents may attend hearings and bring a companion, while the panel provides findings and recommendations in writing. Leaders maintain comprehensive, confidential records of all complaints, outcomes and actions taken.

Staff understand and apply procedures consistently, resolving most concerns informally through early intervention and clear communication. Formal complaints directly to the principal are rare with no cases requiring escalation to the formal complaints process or board level. Leaders analyse complaints to identify themes and to inform improvement planning. The effective handling of concerns and complaints contributes to the school's culture of trust and accountability.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The principal and the extended leadership team (ELT) provide clear strategic direction and have established a culture of high expectations, strong relationships and collective responsibility. As a relatively new school, leaders have been thoughtful in prioritising improvement initiatives, introducing change at a measured pace to ensure that developments are sustainable and have a positive impact on learning.

Senior leaders communicate an ambitious and values-driven vision rooted in the 'REACH' principles. Pupils consistently demonstrate these values in all aspects of school life. Leaders model these values through their visibility and individual interactions with pupils and families.

Despite being a relatively small school, a strength is the development of leadership capacity. Middle leaders are empowered to lead improvement within their areas and demonstrate a clear understanding of whole-school priorities. They can articulate how curriculum development, assessment, transition arrangements and teaching improvement contribute to the school's improvement objectives. Staff describe leadership as approachable, supportive and solution focused. They value the autonomy that they are given and feel confident in proposing evidence-based changes.

Leaders have created a culture of continuous professional learning. Professional development has had a positive impact on whole school teaching and learning. Leaders should now consolidate these improvements and strengthen opportunities for staff to learn from one another, accelerating professional growth further. Leadership development programmes such as national professional qualifications (NPQ) opportunities are highly valued. Performance management procedures are rigorous and developmental ensuring accountability. Staff are proud to work at the school and speak positively about the supportive, collaborative and child-centred culture.

Leaders have established robust systems for self-evaluation and strategic planning. Leaders use performance information, stakeholders' feedback, departmental reviews and regular monitoring activities to identify and refine the school's improvement priorities.

Governance is highly effective. The board comprises a diverse and highly skilled group of committed volunteers who bring extensive professional expertise to their role. Governors ensure that the school operates fully within both the UK and KSA legal frameworks. Financial governance is strong, with robust committee scrutiny and effective oversight of budgetary decisions that prioritise educational outcomes.

Governors work in close partnership with the principals of all three schools and the chief executive officer (CEO), providing both support and challenge while respecting the distinction between strategic governance and operational leadership. The CEO conducts the principal's appraisal and the governing body monitors strategic objectives closely. Effective committee structures, regular monitoring and rigorous follow-up of actions ensure leaders are held to account and improvement remains sharply focused.

The school systematically gathers and responds to the views of pupils, parents and staff through surveys, meetings, town halls, student leadership structures and informal consultation. Staff report that leaders listen to feedback and respond appropriately. Pupils describe the school as caring and supportive and value the opportunities available to contribute to school life. Parents are highly engaged and contribute positively through parent forums and the parents' and teachers' association (PTA).

Leaders actively promote equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination, ensuring that all members of the school's community feel valued and respected. The international nature of the school is celebrated and reflected throughout the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The diverse composition of the governors provides positive role models, while strong oversight of SEND and EAL provision helps create a highly inclusive and effective learning community.

Safeguarding is highly effective and deeply embedded in the school's culture. Leaders ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood by all staff and that training, monitoring and record keeping are rigorous. The dedicated safeguarding governor demonstrates rigorous oversight through regular safeguarding meetings, scrutiny of recruitment processes, single central record checks, safeguarding and health and safety walks, training audits and trend analysis. Leaders promote safeguarding, well-being and inclusion as collective responsibilities, contributing to a strong culture of vigilance and care.

Leaders, particularly the highly respected principal, communicate high levels of ambition, inspire staff and pupils and evaluate provision accurately to drive sustained improvement. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure that the BSO standards are consistently met. This child-centred culture ensures that the school is exceptionally well placed for continued improvement.

Early Years Provision

The quality of the **early years'** provision is outstanding.

The school's early years provision enables children to make outstanding progress. Assessments at the start of the year, showed low starting points: 42% of children worked at the expected level in literacy and 54% in mathematics. In 2026, 76% of children achieved a Good Level of Development by the end of the foundation stage. This figure is much higher than in the previous two years and well above the England average of 68%. Children exceeded national benchmarks in all the ELGs.

Highly skilled practitioners deliver a well-planned curriculum based on the EYFS framework. They know the children well, understand each stage of development, and use their excellent knowledge of how young children learn. Teaching is consistently strong across the phase and staff accurately assess children's progress against the ELGs.

The inclusive, play-based environment is well resourced and carefully planned. Children develop curiosity, independence, creativity and confidence, which helps them become articulate communicators. A daily phonics focus, supported by follow-up activities in the messaging centre, secures children's early reading and writing skills. Indoor activities promote both collaborative and quieter play. Outdoors, children move around on a large scale, learn through their senses, and develop construction, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Children make independent choices, follow their curiosity, take risks in their learning and regulate their own behaviour. Children, having finished their writing, asked an adult to share it with the class and display it before they took it home to show their families. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement, interest and confidence in their activities and leave the foundation stage well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

Staff share regular observations of children's significant achievements with parents, sometimes in home languages so that families can access them. These detailed records show how each child learns at school and how parents can support learning at home. Parents appreciate these records as they provide a valuable insight into their child's learning journey.

Leaders in this phase are effective. They demonstrate curriculum expertise, draw on current research, and evaluate practice consistently, then use their findings to plan and introduce improved learning opportunities. As a result, children achieve exceptionally well.

Sixth-Form Provision

The quality of the **sixth-form** provision is outstanding.

The sixth form currently comprises 64 students, with 34 students entered for examinations in the current year. Leaders have successfully developed the provision to meet students' needs with the recent introduction of the IB Certificate pathway, increasing flexibility.

Retention from Year 12 to Year 13 is 100%, demonstrating high levels of satisfaction and continuity. Retention from Year 11 into Year 12 is largely influenced by transfers to other schools within the BISR group to meet individual needs or relocation from Riyadh.

Leaders continue to expand the curriculum in response to students' interests, including the addition of economics in the current year and environmental systems and societies (ESS) next

year. Given the school's academic focus, comparisons between vocational and academic provision are not applicable.

Strong leadership, rigorous monitoring and sustained investment in IB-specific professional development ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are highly effective. Leaders have strengthened systems for tracking attainment, monitoring attendance and supporting students. Leaders identified improved consistency and quality of teaching and assessment as a key factor underpinning a substantial increase in IB Diploma pass rates from 77% to 96% over the past three years. The demands of the IBDP curriculum develop students' English and mathematical skills effectively.

International mindedness is embedded throughout. Teachers encourage students to explore ethical issues, cultural perspectives, contemporary social challenges and global responsibility. Students described opportunities to contribute to the school's life through leadership roles. These include a wide range of committees, including Model United Nations, being 'REACH' ambassadors and occupying Head student positions.

Students demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and attendance is strong at 95%. Students speak positively about the support they receive, including academic mentoring and well-being provision.

Careers advice and guidance are highly effective. Students receive personalised guidance on university applications, career pathways and course selection. Students benefit from a range of university-focused experiences, including IBDP and A-level option fairs and taster events. Internship opportunities provide valuable work-related learning and help students gain insight into future careers. As a result, progression outcomes are excellent, with all students, last year, securing places at their first-choice university destinations across a wide range of international institutions, including 50% at universities in the UK.

Excellent retention, highly effective careers guidance and strong progression to higher education mean that students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education and future employment.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

British International School Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws. The requirements of the host country take precedence.

It cannot fully meet the standards in paragraphs 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5(b)(vi). BISR DQ encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race and religion or belief, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

What the school could do to improve further

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

The school is actively developing a culture of peer observation and sharing of best practice through a structured coaching model. Leaders should further develop and embed professional learning communities that enable staff to observe, coach and learn from colleagues across subject areas, key stages and campuses. This will ensure that effective practice is identified, accelerates professional growth for staff, and ensures that all pupils benefit from the highest quality classroom practice.

Summary of inspection judgements

The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	X			

Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			

School Details

Name of school	**British international School Riyadh (BISR)Diplomatic Quarter campus**
Type of school	**Inclusive, co-educational, not for profit**
Date school opened	**August 2020**
Age range of pupils	**3 to 18 years**
Gender of pupils	**Mixed**
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	**902**
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	**n/a**
Annual fees (day pupils)	**50,568 to 111,172 SR**
Annual fees (boarders)	**n/a**
Address of school	**British International School Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter** **3586 Alradaef Street, Al Safarat, Riyadh 12512**
Telephone number	**011 520 9050**
Email address	**dq@bisr.com.sa**
Headteacher	**Anna Power**
CEO of BISR	**Nick Prince**

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 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standards –

(1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.

(2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

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

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

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

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

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

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