



**British School
Overseas**

Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Jumeirah English Speaking School (JESS) Arabian Ranches

**Dubai
United Arab Emirates**

Date
Inspection number

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

The inspection and this report follow the 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 pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation; the school's complaints procedures; and leadership and management. If appropriate, there is a separate section on the quality of boarding provision. 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 pupils 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 DfE on the extent to which schools meet the standards for BSO.

During the inspection visit, 103 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Karen Hanratty. The team members were Dr Andre Nel, Dr Daniela Vasile, Sherine Eletriby and Tony Emmerson.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The relevant standards are:

Part 1 – ‘2(2)(d)(ii)- encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;’

and

Part 2 – ‘5(b)(vi)- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides students with a world-class education that prepares them for success in an ever-changing global landscape. Outstanding standards of teaching and assessment, a comprehensive curriculum and an unwavering focus on holistic development, enable students to achieve exceptional outcomes and develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes ready to thrive in any context. Focused leadership and sound governance ensure students safety and wellbeing remain key priorities.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- students, who are committed to their own learning, demonstrate confidence, exemplary behaviour and take pride in everything they do;
- vision and direction provided by the entire leadership team and governors, who robustly identify and act on school priorities, and create a positive school culture;
- passion and expertise of teachers, in planning and delivering outstanding lessons, which include stretch and challenge for all;
- JESS's sense of community, based on trust and pride, felt by all stakeholders;
- meticulous attention to safeguarding, which is effective in keeping children safe in school;
- academic outcomes of students across the school, from EYFS to year 13;
- identification and support of individual students' needs, in particular the commitment and expertise of the Oasis department;
- EYFS learning environments and provision, including self-directed use of sensory and exploratory materials that enhance children's engagement and development;
- utilisation of facilities and premises, standards of maintenance and cleanliness, and ambitious plans for further campus developments;
- provision for physical education (PE), which caters for all students, through lessons, ECAs and participation in competitions;
- communications and engagement with parents, keeping them both fully informed and involved in school life;
- IT infrastructure supporting the collection and analysis of a range of data sources which inform evidence-based interventions, challenge and support for students and staff.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Continue to develop the pastoral curriculum, aligned to school values, vision and mission, and embed this within the wider curriculum;
- ii. Embed a coaching culture within the school to support teacher self-reflection and continuous professional development (CPD), helping staff identify and fulfil professional targets;
- iii. Strengthen the school's position as a leader in technology integration, through data-informed action research, that examines how technology is shaping the school ecosystem, and by leveraging expertise to drive regional innovation and contribute to the broader educational landscape.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Jumeirah English Speaking School, Arabian Ranches Branch				
Address	P O Box 24942, Arabian Ranches, Dubai, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	+971 4 3619010				
Website Address	www.jess.sch.ae				
Key Email Address	sobrien@jess.sch.ae				
Headteacher/ Principal	Mr Shane O'Brien				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Mr Stuart Walker				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	1813	Boys	919	Girls	894
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	955	
	3-5 years	132	17-18 years	294	
	6-11 years	432	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	4				

Jumeirah English Speaking School, JESS, was founded in 1975 as a 3 to 11 primary school. The school was based in Jumeirah and provided an education to English speaking expatriate families living in Dubai. Since its inception, the school has run as a not-for-profit, coeducational, day school.

In 2005, the decision was made to extend the school's offer to include secondary education. A new campus was opened at Arabian Ranches, which provided additional primary spaces and sufficient secondary places for students from both sites. A total of more than 2,500 students aged 3 to 18 are now educated across both campuses.

The school enjoys a strong reputation for academic excellence combined with a community feel. JESS is an inclusive school, with a focus on students' wellbeing. These attributes were

recognised by the SENDIA (Special Educational Needs Inclusion Award) and WAS (Wellbeing Award for Schools) which it received in 2022.

The student body encompasses 76 different nationalities, of which 38% are British. Indian and Australian make up the next largest contingents, with 9% and 4% respectively. 27% of students are learning English as an additional language, however, most would be considered 'independent' or 'proficient' users of English.

JESS is a member of AoBSO (Association of British Schools Overseas), COBIS (Council of British International Schools), IAPS (Independent Association of Prep Schools), NOS (National Online Safety) and HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference).

4.1 British nature of the school

JESS Arabian Ranches exhibits a wealth of characteristics which give it a very British feel. These include physical attributes, organisation and the ethos of the school.

The school curriculum is based on the National Curriculum for England. This encompasses the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and iGCSE examination programmes in Key Stage (KS) 4. Teachers use a wealth of UK created support materials and programmes. Teaching resources and equipment are largely sourced from the UK. Across the school, students' attainment and progress is measured using UK standardised assessments, and benchmarked against UK as well as international standards. Most teachers have UK qualifications or have taught in other British international schools. Ongoing professional development is based around developments in UK research and best practice. Many of the school's leaders have completed professional leadership qualifications from the National Professional Qualification suite of trainings.

Leadership and governance follow a British model. Leaders are given autonomy to make key decisions, and held to account for the school's performance. School policy and practice in key areas, including safeguarding and child protection are guided by UK institutions.

The school's annual calendar is divided into three terms, with breaks in the winter, spring and summer. Timetables are structured around lesson length and curriculum allocation in line with UK norms. The school offers an extensive range of curriculum enhancement including relevant trips and visitors, together with an extensive range of optional extra-curricular activities (ECAs).

Education is holistic, with a strong focus on developing students' social, moral and cultural knowledge and understanding. A strong wellbeing programme offers individual support as needed. British values are effectively promoted and embedded. Students are offered a range of leadership and community service opportunities, many of which are subject to a democratic selection process. A strong house system, behaviour and rewards policies and school uniform all add to the British nature of the school.

Students celebrate a range of British festivals, including Remembrance Day and an Easter Bonnet competition. Residential trips in the secondary school include visits to the UK, related to aspects of the curriculum.

The school is a member of AoBSO (Association of British Schools Overseas), COBIS (Council of British International Schools), IAPS (Independent Association of Prep Schools), NOS (National Online Safety) and HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference).

5. *Standard 1* The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is outstanding. A broad and rigorous curriculum that promotes academic challenge, independent learning, and critical thinking, supported by outstanding targeted teaching, assessment strategies and interventions, results in confident successful learners, who demonstrate a willingness to engage with complex ideas.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding and meets the standard for BSO.

The school delivers the National Curriculum for England, including the EYFS programme, while incorporating Arabic, Islamic studies and moral, social and cultural education (MSCE), in line with Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements. A curriculum policy is in place, supported by clear schemes of work. In secondary, students follow programmes of study leading to iGCSE, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualifications.

The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to provide a broad, balanced, inclusive and engaging educational experience which meets the diverse needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It fosters personal, social, emotional, and academic development, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the next stages of their educational journey.

In EYFS, a focus on fostering curiosity and developing key knowledge and skills through a play-based approach gives children ownership of their learning. Blocks of enhanced provision are tailored to children's interests and developmental needs, with activities adapted to address varying requirements. Questioning, play projects, and fostering independence are emphasised, nurturing responsible and confident learners. Safe and welcoming environments, where children settle quickly, register themselves independently, and confidently navigate daily routines support learning. Recently redeveloped indoor and outdoor learning environments are a key strength of provision, with many stimulating spaces for creativity and exploration.

In the primary years, the curriculum builds on the foundations established in EYFS. A thematic approach makes learning engaging and relevant, connecting concepts across historical and societal contexts. For example, students explore democracy through Ancient Greece and the Victorian era, drawing meaningful parallels to their world. Cross-curricular links are embedded through collaborative planning, enabling cohesive development of key skills and knowledge. Thematic weeks further enrich

the learning experience, allowing students to showcase their progress through creative and exploratory projects.

The curriculum demonstrates strong vertical alignment, promoting coherence and progression across Key Stages. This alignment ensures that students build foundational knowledge in earlier years and expand on these concepts as they progress through the school. Theory of Knowledge (ToK) in IBDP classes is delivered by specialist teachers, although the confidence of individual teachers can impact its overall effectiveness. Tailored programmes, such as *Essential Pathways* for students needing extra support in core subjects, allow these students to reintegrate into the mainstream curriculum when ready.

The inclusion of British reference points, such as Carol Ann Duffy's poetry and Wilfred Owen's war poems in English, ensures students gain a strong understanding of British cultural heritage and values. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is developing; it is delivered through moral, social and cultural (MSC) lessons, which explore global and ethical themes, with topics such as online safety fostering discussions around digital citizenship and respectful disagreement. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is integrated into the science curriculum, with parental consent, and within the confines of MoE regulations. The YouHue and MindBeat programmes promotes emotional well-being and personal responsibility.

Enrichment opportunities, such as extracurricular activities (ECAs), educational visits, residential trips, visitors and competitions, further enhance the learning experience. A rich programme of ECAs runs from year 2 and is very well attended. Opportunities span competitive sports, arts, STEM clubs, community service, and much more, enabling students to explore interests, build new skills and develop global awareness. The Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) component of the IB programme further promotes community engagement and personal growth. Careers guidance, supported by platforms such as *Unifrog*, prepares students very well for post-16 and post-18 pathways, including university applications and vocational opportunities. An effective options process from year 9 ensures informed decision-making, guided by academic counselling, statistical forecasting, and regular communication with parents.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly through development plans and meetings to ensure its relevance and alignment with best practices. Recent updates, such as the introduction of advanced options such as further mathematics, highlight the school's responsiveness to student needs.

By integrating British values, fostering independence, and prioritising holistic development, the curriculum inspires students to achieve their full potential while equipping them with skills for lifelong learning.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding, meeting the standard for BSO. Lessons are characterised by expert subject knowledge, effective differentiation, and high levels of student engagement. Across the school, teachers meticulously plan purposeful and well-structured lessons that cater to diverse learner needs, ensuring excellent progress for all students.

Teaching and assessment practices in EYFS and KS1 are highly structured, effectively addressing the developmental and academic needs of all learners. Lessons include a balance of academic objectives and play-based or exploratory activities. This approach fosters curiosity, independence, and critical thinking skills in young learners. A wide range of teaching strategies, such as hands-on tasks, storytelling, and collaborative projects, ensures that teaching is inclusive and responsive to diverse learning styles and abilities.

In primary, a student-centred approach underpins teaching. Students are actively engaged in the learning process, they ask meaningful questions, and explore practical solutions, enabling them to connect their learning to real-world contexts. Students routinely reflect on prior learning and apply their understanding. For example, at the start of a year 6 algebra lesson, students were challenged to create success criteria, based on their previous understanding of the subject. These were elaborated on by the teacher to reinforce key features of the learning.

Across the primary school, students are given a good deal of autonomy over their own learning. For example, in a year 4 lesson on measuring perimeters of 2D shapes, students worked out ways in which they could calculate the perimeter, and shared these with the class. This challenge allowed students to explore the concept and learn from their peers. Whilst learning objectives and success criteria are shared by teachers, this level of students' agency over their learning is not yet as well developed in the secondary school.

The use of cross-curricular links is well embedded and effective. 'Theme' lessons provide opportunities for students to connect areas of learning and explore ideas in a different context. For example, in a year 3 theme lesson, students learnt sketching techniques such as cross-hatching and stippling in the style of Quentin Blake, to support their class reading book, 'The Twits', which contains his illustrations.

Differentiation of learning is a notable strength of teaching at JESS Arabian Ranches. Teachers consistently ask open-ended questions to extend learning. Differentiated tasks provide support, and challenge components encourage students to explore increasingly complex concepts. In the best lessons, students choose the level of challenge they feel most confident with from a range of tasks. Additional high level and open-ended challenges provide stretch for all. For example, in a year 2 lesson

on the properties of 3D shapes, students were challenged to continue a repeating pattern of six shapes and determine the number of vertices the tenth shape in the pattern would have.

In the best lessons observed, students demonstrated higher-order and critical thinking, collaboration, and independence. For example, year 12 computer science students programmed autonomous robots and explored advanced problem-solving tasks, such as colour detection, showcasing creativity and independence. Similarly, in a year 9 science lesson, students wrote creative postcards as molecules travelling through bodies of water, blending scientific knowledge with creative writing.

Teaching supports students' understanding and application of the school's core values. For example, in a year 6 science lesson investigating the corrosive effects of sugary drinks on teeth, students noted that the rules around drinks at school promoted care and integrity. Scientific thinking is developed from an early age, with students demonstrating a good understanding of criteria for a fair test, able to plan their own age-appropriate investigations and make sensible predictions.

The 'Oasis' learning support department, provides tailored measures for students with SEND, working directly with students as well as providing teachers and parents with support and information. The inclusion team is also involved in the admissions process. Individual education plans (IEPs) are created for students with additional learning needs. Highly effective early interventions result in SEND students making progress equal to or better than their peers. Additional services such as speech and language, and occupational therapy are available on campus, providing comprehensive support. The school puts emphasis on inclusion, ensuring that all students have opportunities to succeed. There is good provision for students who are gifted and talented both in class and through curriculum enhancements.

Assessment practices are well-established, robust and comprehensive; they are a key strength of provision. The use of formative and summative methods, tethered to curriculum aims and standards, ensures a balanced approach to evaluating attainment and progress. A range of assessment for learning strategies, such as observations, mini-whiteboards and thumbs-up/thumbs-down checks, are used effectively across the school to gauge understanding and provide immediate feedback. Moderation sessions ensure that assessment practices are consistent and aligned with curriculum standards.

Regular summative assessment points provide data which is analysed in impressive detail. The school's innovational use of technology to gather and analyse assessment data, which is applied consistently and rigorously in lesson planning, needs assessment and reporting, is exceptional. Teachers and the Oasis department apply attainment and progress data effectively to identify trends, address gaps, and personalise learning plans and interventions, which are monitored for impact.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students are outstanding.

JESS Arabian Ranches maintains high standards in behaviour, attendance, and attainment, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. Students demonstrate respectful, confident, and engaged attitudes, contributing to a collaborative classroom culture. Attendance is closely monitored, with structured interventions ensuring students remain engaged in their learning, and overall attendance rates reflect the school's commitment to maximising educational opportunities. Attendance is good at 96% overall.

Levels of attainment and progress at JESS Arabian Ranches remain consistently high, with students across the school performing well above UK averages in all areas.

In the EYFS, 89% of children in FS2 achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) in 2023/24, significantly exceeding the UK average of 68%. Similarly in the year 1 phonics screening test in 2023/24, 93% of students met the required standard, compared to a UK average of 78%.

The school uses the GL *Progress Through* tests to assess and benchmark attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. In years 1-6, the attainment of 76% of students' exceeded age-related expectations in English, 77% in mathematics and 91% in science, far exceeding UK averages across all three areas. Progress across all three subjects is similarly impressive, with the number of students exceeding expected progress being 83% in English, 80% in mathematics and 91% in science, again, far above UK averages.

In secondary, 2024 academic results highlight exceptional performance across IGCSE, IBDP, and BTEC programmes. At IGCSEs, 21% of marks were Grade 9, compared to the average in England of 5%, with 98% of were Grades 4-9 (England average: 67.6%). Students on the IBDP programme achieved a 100% pass rate, with an average score of 37.2 points, significantly exceeding the global average of 30.3. Additionally, 30% of IBDP students achieved 40+ points. In the BTEC programme, all students passed, with 86% achieving the top score of D*D*D*. IBDP, IGCSE and BTEC outcomes are consistently above the relevant UK and world benchmark, with similarly impressive historic data available on the school's website.

JESS Arabian Ranches consistently excels in international benchmarking assessments. In the 2023 Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), year 5 students scored 602 in mathematics and 608 in science. These results significantly surpass the TIMSS international averages of 503 in mathematics and 494 in science. Similarly, in year 9, students scored 602 in mathematics, and 600 in science, compared to the global averages of 478 for both. In all four assessments, the school achieved 'High

International Benchmark' status. These outcomes position JESS Arabian Ranches students amongst the highest-achieving globally in both subjects.

The school's analysis of progress data confirms that there are no significant differences between the progress of boys and girls or other student groups, including SEND, EAL, and high-achieving learners.

The impressive IB and BTEC results in year 13 all students to progress to prestigious universities in the UK and beyond. Academic success and university acceptances are celebrated in large displays at reception.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

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

At JESS Arabian Ranches, the school's core values are a lived experiences shared by students, teachers, and parents alike. Students develop a deep understanding of the value of diversity, embodying the school's ethos in their words and actions. Teachers and leaders at JESS foster a culture that transcends the school walls and become the foundation of a shared identity for students, parents, and staff.

Spiritual development is a key focus, where reflection and exploration of deeper meanings underpin many activities. Spirituality is cultivated through opportunities to connect with one's inner self, develop empathy, and reflect on life's bigger questions. "We are taught how to be us", one year 3 student mentioned. Lessons, ECAs and assemblies, often student-led, create space for the celebration of shared values, achievements, as well as for reflection and joint learning.

The school's behaviour policy fosters a culture where students learn to distinguish between right and wrong, and understand the importance of fair and consistent boundaries. As one Primary student reflected, "Rules are important to keep us safe and to help us learn". This understanding is reinforced in assemblies, MSC lessons, and everyday interactions, where the consequences of actions—both positive and negative—are made clear. For example, year 12 students participated in an engaging assembly on vaping, showing balanced perspectives, strong interest and engagement. The respectful and supportive relationships between teachers and students, as well as among peers, reflect the success of the school's approach, creating a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere.

Across the school, students' behaviour is exemplary, driven by purposeful learning and messages that emphasise positive reinforcement and mutual respect. Initiatives and displays around the campus, such as the 'Manners Matter' in primary, promote respect for each other and for the environment. One Primary student mentioned that "They teach us in FS1 and FS2 how to be nice; in primary we are only reminded of this." In lessons, students demonstrate focus, collaboration, and a willingness to challenge themselves. Teachers model respectful interactions, creating a safe environment where students feel valued and understood.

The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect, ensuring that students understand and uphold these principles in their daily interactions. The process of elections for the student council is highly democratic and inclusive. Teachers and leaders are actively visible around the campus, holding themselves, other adults and students to account, as well as students holding each other to account. Consistency is key, observed in all areas of the school. In a year 13 lesson,

moral dilemmas were discussed in the form of a debate; students took turns and built on each other's ideas. They were polite and respectful of other views, even when challenging them.

The school provides numerous opportunities for students to grow as individuals, through sports, arts, and service learning. During a year 10 class, following up from the internship programme, students researched skills required for the future, ranked them in order of importance for their further studies choices, and created an action plan on how to improve on some of them. The school's high expectations are paired with the support needed to help every student succeed, ensuring that each individual has the tools to reach their potential.

Student leadership is a cornerstone of the JESS experience, with a well-structured system that ensures every voice can be heard. From class representatives to the seven committees in the secondary student council, students are given meaningful roles that impact the school community. This leadership structure empowers students to take ownership of initiatives, such as organising sustainability campaigns, leading diversity workshops, and running school events, building essential skills of collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. The voice of students is actively sought through forums, surveys, and councils, ensuring that their perspectives shape school decisions. The impact of student leadership is profound, with initiatives extending beyond the school to benefit the wider community.

The school places a strong emphasis on celebrating diversity through cultural events, such as Ramadan, Diwali, and Lunar New Year, encouraging students to explore different traditions and recognize the values that underpin them. A deep appreciation for local culture and laws is evident throughout the school, where students are also taught to respect and celebrate the traditions and customs of the UAE. Assemblies and classroom activities highlight the importance of the UAE's rich culture and the meaning behind national holidays, fostering pride and understanding of the local heritage. Students engage in community projects that align with the values of generosity and hospitality inherent in Emirati culture.

The PSHE curriculum at JESS is evolving with the needs of its students, ensuring that it remains relevant and impactful. In primary, lessons focus on foundational concepts such as kindness, sharing, and managing emotions, while in secondary, students tackle more complex topics such as digital literacy, mental health, and social justice. The impact of the PSHE curriculum is measured through regular feedback from students and parents, as well as behavioural observations and engagement levels. Initiatives such as the wellbeing leadership program further enhance the curriculum, providing opportunities to put learning into action.

JESS Dubai provides a well-rounded education that not only prepares students for academic success but also fosters their personal and social growth. Through its commitment to outstanding education, leadership opportunities, and a focus on cultural appreciation and critical thinking, the school creates an environment where students thrive and make a positive impact on the world around them. JESS prepares students to navigate a complex world with empathy and discernment, ensuring they are not only informed but also reflective and fair-minded.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety is outstanding and meets the standard for BSO.

JESS is fully compliant with the regulations in the UAE and respects local cultural expectations. There are a range of clear policies and procedures in place to ensure the welfare, health and safety of students, all of which are available on the school's website. All policies are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are in line with UK best practice.

JESS Arabian Ranches prioritises safeguarding, which is at the core of school priorities. All staff receive regular safeguarding training, including outsourced staff, ensuring everyone stays up to date on best practices. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are experienced and well-respected members of staff. Information is clearly displayed in key areas of the school identifying members of the safeguarding team. Regular meetings between DSLs in primary and secondary, combined with weekly updates shared with senior leadership, ensure a consistent and structured approach to managing safeguarding concerns. Alongside this, students are taught about personal safety through assemblies and MSC lessons, creating a culture of awareness.

The wellbeing of students and staff is monitored and support provided as required. Students use pastoral dashboards on a weekly basis to share how they are feeling: YouHue in primary and MindBeat in secondary. These apps can also be used by students to report concerns, bullying or just to reach out for support. The school promotes an open culture where everyone feels comfortable raising concerns, even low-level ones; both primary and secondary students have access to the school counsellors supporting mental health and wellbeing.

The school's behaviour policy focuses on positive reinforcement, celebrating good behaviour rather than focusing on sanctions. This approach helps foster a culture of mutual respect and support. The school's anti-bullying strategy is underpinned by a robust policy, which incorporates a zero-tolerance approach. Anti-bullying is promoted within the curriculum and highlighted in the assembly programme. Anti-bullying week is held annually to equip students with the knowledge of how to deal with bullying issues should they arise. A log is maintained of all serious behaviour infringements and sanctions taken.

The school is aware of the possible threats to wellbeing created by technology, and in particular, social media. E-safety is taught across the school. In September 2024, the school introduced *Yondr* pouches to remove students' access to mobile phones during the school day; this strategy has had a very positive effect on students' wellbeing and relationship with technology.

Students make healthy choices in terms of diet, exercise and mental wellbeing. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through the curriculum as well as through the wide range of ECAs available. The dining hall provides healthy and nutritional meals for students and staff.

A comprehensive list of all students enrolled in the school is maintained, in line with local regulations. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored through iSAMS. In rare cases of persistent absenteeism, the school adopts a structured approach, involving both pastoral support and family engagement to help remove any barriers to attendance. One of the school's key strengths is the strong relationships between students and staff, which creates a positive, inclusive environment, evident throughout the campus.

A well-structured supervision rota ensures that teachers are on duty during breaks and lunches, keeping a watchful eye on students. The secure access system at the main entrances ensures that all visitors are registered and monitored. Different coloured lanyards are used to identify staff, visitors and parents, and reflect levels of safeguarding training.

The school follows a rigorous process for planning and preparing for school trips. This is captured in the school's trips policy, which is reviewed regularly. Visits are made to locations as part of the planning process to verify that all aspects are safe. Meetings are held prior to trips taking place to ensure that all staff members on the trip are aware of the itinerary and any vulnerable children. Risk assessments include any medical concerns, which staff attending the trip are made aware of. Robust risk assessments are also carried out for a wide range of on-site activities, including science and PE lessons, and any exceptional events, in line with the school's risk assessment policy.

The school is well-maintained, clean, safe and secure. The head of operations records actions in an electronic maintenance log, and a clear policy and procedures are in place for reporting issues.

Compliance with local fire standards is ensured through regular visits from the Dubai authority, fire drills and fire equipment checks; evacuation routes are clearly displayed. Staff and students benefit from regular fire drill training and the school carries out at least one fire drill per term.

The school doctor and three nurses provide excellent support in developing a nurturing environment for students. The clinic is well stocked with medical supplies and equipment to accommodate short term care. 79 staff including EYFS and PE staff have up-to-date first aid training. First aid kits, epi pens and defibrillators are available. A first aid policy is in place and regularly reviewed.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO; it is outstanding.

The school has very effective policies and procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff, supply staff and governors. The rigour and meticulous attention to detail regarding all steps in the selection and appointment of staff are centred around the school's primary concern of keeping students safe. Senior leaders and HR staff work collaboratively, using consistent processes including application and interview strategies, standard background checks regarding ID, qualifications, medical fitness and right to work in the UAE, together with additional steps such as checking applicants' social media and online presence.

Once in post, staff are supported and monitored to ensure their performance meets the school's high expectations. Appraisal processes are objective and evidence based, utilising a bespoke dashboard app to gather and analyse performance data across a range of key skills. These are also tailored to specific roles within the school, such as leadership posts.

Data is examined at school-wide level as well as individual, to look at trends and facilitate continuous professional development (CPD), which often involves staff working together on joint areas for development. A recently introduced programme of peer coaching encourages trust-based conversations, collaboration and shared learning.

Professional development supports high-quality teaching. Weekly CPD sessions address key whole school or departmental priorities. Individual CPD needs are identified through the sophisticated analysis of learning walk feedback and lesson observations, where findings are compared to the school's best practice statements. Lead practitioners provide targeted support to staff, ensuring continuous improvement in pedagogical practice.

A comprehensive single central register for all staff, contractors, volunteers, and supply workers is meticulously maintained. This database includes all the required checks for BSO, including ICPC checks, international clearance certificates, references and much more. The single central register was made available to inspectors. Safeguarding training is refreshed annually for all staff.

The board of governors meets monthly, or more frequently when required, to develop and consolidate the strategic direction of the school. They offer both challenge and support, to ensure proposed developments are both financially viable and well matched to the school's overarching aims. Governors take into consideration feedback from all stakeholders, and regularly visit the school to hear first-hand the opinions of staff, parents and students. The governors show dedication and expertise in carrying out their role.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

Premise and accommodation of the school meets the standard for BSO and is outstanding.

The strategic vision of the director and board of governors, with input from the senior leaders have created an environment which is welcoming, inviting, purpose built and safe. Facilities are extensive, and well suited to the age of the students as well as the demands of the curriculum. Indoor and outdoor learning areas in EYFS and primary have a natural flow, and offer stimulating opportunities for learning and play. Outdoor recreation spaces for older students are suitable for eating, relaxation and social activity. Classrooms and other teaching areas are age-appropriate, spacious and well designed. All rooms are well-lit, ventilated and appropriately sound-proofed. Outside areas are also suitably lit to ensure safe access to the premises at night. Facilities for PE are extensive, the grass playing fields are of the highest quality and extremely well maintained.

The school benefits from separate toilets with wash facilities on all floors in each building for staff, students and visitors. Water for washing is at an appropriate temperature and poses no risk of scalding. Toilets are segregated for boys and girls. Custom built disabled toilets with handrails for support are also available. Disabled access to upper floors is available using the chair lifts; evacuation chairs are also in place. Suitable changing and shower facilities are provided for swimming and PE. A plentiful supply of clean, temperature controlled and filtered drinking water is available in all buildings via dispensers on each floor around the site.

A well-resourced health clinic is staffed by a full-time doctor and three nurses. It provides suitable accommodation for the medical examination and short-term care of students. A toilet and washing facilities are also available together with an isolation room, in line with UAE regulations.

The school site is safe and secure, with excellent management of the site by the head of operations and her assistant. Security is extremely effective, and the school swiftly identifies and deals with any health-and-safety hazards. The maintenance team ensure all areas of the school are kept clean throughout the day.

The school buildings are being updated with additional facilities, though a phased, fully funded plan. Outside learning areas in EYFS and primary were recently created. A new sixth form centre, primary library and suite of 16 new classrooms was added during the summer of 2024. Work is underway to redevelop the swimming pools and add a new block which will include a dedicated exam hall, easing pressure on other facilities during hottest months. Additional plans include a complete refit of all science teaching areas, which will further enhance provision in this area of the curriculum.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers and others meets the standard for BSO, it is outstanding.

The provision of information for parents at JESS Arabian Ranches is rooted in trust, openness and a strong sense of partnership. Parents consistently highlight the school's alignment of its values with those of their families, emphasizing excellence and care. These values are not abstract; they are embedded in every interaction and communication, fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Key information about the school, including its aims and guiding statements, contact details, previous inspection reports, academic achievement and the admissions policy, is readily accessible on the school's website, which is comprehensive and user-friendly. Contact details for senior leaders, including the director, are prominently displayed to promote accessibility. The school maintains a transparent approach to policies and procedures. Safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour and the complaints policy, among others, are clearly communicated through the website, weekly bulletins and accessible documents.

The admissions process at JESS is comprehensive and designed to ensure a smooth transition for new students and families. This includes an opportunity for children and families to spend time in school before their start date, when they receive guidance to help prepare for this new chapter. This proactive process reflects the school's dedication to making every family feel supported and welcomed, and aids rapid integration into the JESS community.

Primary school parents enjoy regular updates through *Seesaw*, while daily contact with teachers at the classroom door fosters open communication. In secondary, communication shifts more toward the students, in a model of gradual increase of responsibility, with some structured systems for updates, particularly in Sixth Form. However, the transition from primary to secondary could be enhanced, as some parents have noted a gap in communication during the early years of Secondary.

The school's proactive approach to keeping parents informed about their children's progress and well-being is widely praised. Teachers excel in communication, particularly regarding academic updates and pastoral care. Written reports are clear and actionable. A 'no surprises' approach ensures parents are alerted early to any concerns. Parent-teacher meetings, are effective due to the teachers' thorough understanding of each student.

Transition periods, such as moving from primary to secondary, or preparing for university, are carefully managed. Transition days, detailed presentations on pathways such as IGCSE options, and one-to-one meetings address individual concerns. Settling-in reports early in the academic year focus on engagement and self-management, reinforcing the school's holistic approach. Sixth Form parents benefit from tailored updates related to university preparation

and exam readiness. This comprehensive reporting ensures that parents are not only informed but also empowered to support their children effectively.

Senior leaders are visible and approachable, engaging directly with parents at the school gates. The formal complaints process is rarely needed, as most concerns are resolved informally through open dialogue. When necessary, the process is structured and includes escalation to governors, ensuring accountability.

Strong communications are a cornerstone of JESS's inclusion strategy. Parents of children with SEND or those learning English as an additional language consistently praise the school's ability to identify and address needs early, as well as clearly communicating strategies and working together with home for the benefit of the student. One parent shared how the school recognized their child's dyscalculia and implemented tailored support, showcasing its commitment to creating an inclusive environment. Regular information sessions, workshops, one-to-one meetings, and detailed updates ensure that all parents feel informed and supported, regardless of their child's needs.

Overall, JESS exemplifies best practices in engaging and supporting families. By combining clear communication, transparency, and a genuine partnership, the school fosters a strong sense of community. Parents trust JESS not only to educate their children but also to nurture their potential, guided by shared values of excellence and kindness.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

The school has a comprehensive, clearly written complaints policy which is readily accessible to parents through the website, parent portal or as a hard copy. It is also available in large print. Arabic speaking staff are available to help parents with translation if required.

Clear timelines are in place for each stage of a complaint, which may be flexible around school holiday periods to ensure a satisfactory outcome in a reasonable timeframe.

The procedure covers four stages:

1. Informal resolution – parents contact their child's teacher directly. It is hoped that most issues can be resolved in this matter. Discussions may involve year group leaders or members of the senior leadership team.
2. Formal resolution – complaints in writing are submitted to the head of school, and parents are invited for a meeting. The head of school appoints an investigating officer. A report is sent to the parents detailing the investigation and findings.
3. Directors Review – if a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the complaint is escalated to the director. The director will review the procedures followed, written records, evidence and the decision made by the head of school. The director will meet with parents to share his decision.
4. Final Appeal Procedure – should parents wish to proceed further with their complaint, the matter is elevated to the board of governors. An appeal panel consisting of the chairman of the board, the director, one other board member and one person independent of the management of the school is established. A hearing is held, during which the panel will either make a ruling or request further investigation. When a final decision is made, the panel conveys this to the parents in writing.

Parents also have the option of raising a complaint with Dubai's KHDA. Parents are welcome to bring another adult to any meetings relating to the complaint raised.

Written records are kept for all written complaints, including meetings and interviews, which are stored securely.

Almost all complaints raised are successfully resolved at the informal stage of the process.

12. Standard 8

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The JESS philosophy – three schools, two sites, one JESS – drives the unity of the school. Whilst JESS Arabian Ranches primary and secondary schools are led by separate leadership teams, both teams are united by the school's vision, mission and values. The vision of "Educating to make a difference in the world" is the key driver for the highly effective teams of senior and middle leaders, who work tirelessly in their desire to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students. The schools are united and guided by the director, whose focus, drive and unstinting dedication has overseen the establishment of a clear strategic plan, which will guide the direction of school development for the next five years.

School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, based on the robust analysis of a range of information. This includes students' attainment and progress data, staff appraisal data and other key performance indicators. School development planning is two directional – overarching strategic plans feed into department and year group annual improvement plans, whilst department and year group priorities become part of higher-level planning. Steps towards targets are carefully planned with clear aims and success criteria, and progress closely monitored.

School leaders are committed to the inclusion of all students, and provide the necessary resources to help every child fulfil their potential. Rapid developments in learning support through the growing Oasis centre and the provision of additional support services such as on-site counsellors, speech and language, and occupational therapists, have helped SEND students in the school to flourish, making impressive gains academically and in their social and emotional development.

The JESS community is a happy and united one, because the wellbeing of students, staff and parents is a key priority for leaders. Students are protected and safe in school due to the exemplary policies and practices around safeguarding. Students have regular check-ins through YouHue and MindBeat, which provides immediate feedback to leaders when students are experiencing difficulties or anxiety. Leaders have excellent relationships with staff, based on genuine warmth and open communications. Relationships are a strength across the school, between all stakeholders.

The board of governors fulfil their roles with commitment, diligence and proficiency. Their interactions with the director and senior leaders are supportive, robust and ambitious. Governors are actively involved in aspects of school life and development which reflect their professional expertise. Finances are extremely well managed, enabling the school to complete ambitious development plans. The board of governors effectively holds the director and senior leaders to account.