

# Victory Heights Primary School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 14 to 17 April 2025

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Age Group: 3 to 11

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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. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

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

**To be recognised by the Department for Education, 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 British Schools Overseas (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 British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

- Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching 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

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>Outstanding</b>  |
| <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>Good</b>         |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>Satisfactory</b> |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>Inadequate</b>   |

### Proportions used in the report

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

## Information about the school

Victory Heights Primary School (VHPS) is a co-educational day school, located in Dubai Sports City, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The school opened in August 2013 and is one of five existing schools owned by Interstar Advisory Services. A new school, the City of Arabia, Victory Heights is due to open in August of the current year. There are 1,040 pupils on roll, aged three years to 11 years.

VHPS operates as a split site, with its early years provision located a few miles away. The school offers the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum for younger children, followed by the national curriculum for England (NCfE) at key stages 1 and 2. At the end of Year 6, most pupils transfer to other schools in the UAE, with a few relocating to different parts of the world, including the United Kingdom.

There are over 67 nationalities represented in the school with the largest proportion being British. There are 91 pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 46% of pupils use English as an additional language (EAL). The school identifies 5% of its pupils as needing additional language support as English Language Learners (ELL).

The founding principal has been at the school for 12 years. A few senior leaders are transferring to the new school, including the current headteacher who has been promoted to the role of principal. One of the assistant headteachers and several middle leaders will join him.

Since the previous BSO inspection, the role of deputy head of subject has been replaced by heads of subject. A new middle leader role, the head of curriculum, has been introduced in the current year. From August 2025, the responsibilities of the early years' leader will be extended to include Year 1. Almost all class teachers have teaching qualifications from the UK.

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in April 2025 and the

inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the inspection start date. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 67 lessons. Nine lessons were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. Inspectors gave feedback to four members of staff.

There were 21 meetings with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board, including the owner of the school.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, school policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered by looking at survey results and in meetings with parents, pupil councils and teachers.

## Evaluation of the school

Victory Heights Primary School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 11 years.

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

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding across the school. Pupils from all starting points make outstanding levels of progress in English, including those identified with SEND and EAL needs. In the EYFS, the proportion of children reaching early learning goals in communication and language and literacy, including word reading, and writing is significantly above expected levels for England. Primary pupils' attainment and progress in international assessments have exceeded England averages for the previous three years, including the Year 1 phonics test. In 2024, Year 6 external benchmarking data showed outstanding progress by all groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND as well as more able pupils. Teachers' effective intervention has resulted in boys now making similar rates of progress to girls, where historically they made slightly better progress than boys.

By the end of the EYFS, children can read and write short sentences competently. They have excellent oral skills and can describe, explain and give opinions.

In key stage 1, pupils develop a wide vocabulary and are highly confident in speaking and listening. For example, pupils in Year 1 enthusiastically discuss what to include in a news report about pollution in the oceans, and how to make their reports more persuasive by using vividly descriptive words. Pupils are able to read a range of different types of text, demonstrating very good understanding.

In key stage 2, pupils excel in their use of high-level skills, such as inferring, summarising, analysing and evaluating in both written and spoken English. In Year 5, pupils learn about colonial history and the British Empire while exploring how writers use emotive language. They write well for different audiences and purposes, using mostly accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' best writing is fluent and confident.

Pupils' attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding across the school. Across all phases, pupils make excellent progress from their starting points, and almost all exceed the expected standards for their age when compared to England averages. There are no significant differences in the attainment levels of different groups of pupils. Teachers' highly effective and targeted interventions support pupils with EAL and pupils with SEND well, enabling them to make excellent progress.

Children join the early years being able to recite some numbers from memory. By the end of their time in the EYFS, most confidently sequence numbers up to at least 50 and develop a secure understanding of number bonds up to 20. During their activities, children use age-appropriate mathematical terminology, identifying properties of two-dimensional shapes and can determine which container can hold the most liquid through trial and error. Most children attain well above England averages in their understanding of number and number patterns. They leave well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

In 2024, almost all Year 2 pupils attained the expected standard in mathematics, performing well above England averages. Pupils continue this level of exemplary progress across key stage 2. In Year 6, almost all pupils attain above expected levels in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics, significantly exceeding England averages.

Throughout key stage 2, pupils develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts and operations, confidently applying these to problem-solving tasks. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils use their knowledge of fractions to carry out four-step solutions in an imaginative task of planning lifeboat allocations during an evacuation from the Titanic. In Year 6, pupils analyse population and housing data from Britain in the 1950s to explain the impact of migration and its link to housing availability.

Pupils' attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding across the school. All pupils reach standards in tests that are above the England average with no significant variation between pupils, including pupils with EAL or SEND.

In the early years, almost all the children attain standards in understanding the world that is well above England standards. Almost all children make better than expected progress from their starting points. Children use their 'looking eyes' to closely observe differences between materials and predict what might happen when different substances are mixed. In the Reception Year, children investigate and describe how blubber acts as an insulator to keep polar bears warm in arctic conditions.

From key stage 1, pupils use of scientific vocabulary develops rapidly and they can accurately describe and compare the structure of a fish to other animals. In Year 2, pupils perform simple tests to find starch in food and most can explain why foods containing carbohydrate react differently.

In key stage 2, pupils use different types of scientific enquiry to set up comparative and fair tests. Older pupils investigate which eighteenth century trade goods would have dissolved in water on a sea voyage. In groups, they carry out experiments to check the solubility of a range of dry foodstuffs and then discuss possible reasons for each outcome.

By Year 6, pupils successfully apply their higher-level mathematical skills to measure the angle at which light is reflected. Pupils collaborate effectively to solve problems and use scientific evidence accurately to support or refute their ideas.

Pupils make excellent progress in a range of **other subjects** across the curriculum. From Year 1, pupils benefit from specialist teachers in Spanish, physical education (PE), computing, music and sports, play, and active recreation for kids (SPARK). In PE, younger pupils learn how to dribble a ball while changing direction. In science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) lessons, older pupils apply

their scientific knowledge to real-life problem-solving tasks; for example, exploring how to alter images in a periscope by changing the angle of a mirror. In humanities, older pupils explore the experiences of the Windrush generation, using historical interviews and archive footage to understand the feelings of people migrating to the United Kingdom in the 1950s.

## 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 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 April 2025, 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.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and consistently engaging. Learning opportunities spark pupils' curiosity and inspire them to learn through real-world experiences. Well-structured schemes of work ensure pupils' clear progression in the development of their skills and knowledge.

Across the school, the curriculum provides a strong emphasis on developing oracy, creative thinking, and reasoning skills. All pupils become articulate, knowledgeable learners who think critically, listen actively, and engage meaningfully in discussions.

In the EYFS, the curriculum promotes inquisitiveness through child-led learning and a well-balanced mix of teacher-directed and continuous provision activities. Across the primary phase, the objectives of the NCFE are enhanced by the use of thematic, cross-curricular topics. Well-considered curriculum modifications develop pupils' knowledge of the UAE, prompting them to question, interpret, and reflect on the world around them.

The whole curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND, EAL and the most able. The expertise of the inclusion team and its highly effective work in helping teachers to plan pupils' personalised learning pathways is a strength of the school.

British values feature across the curriculum with a specific focus on what it means to be British in a global context. In discussions, pupils confidently explain the school's democratic processes, including campaigning and conducting fair elections for pupil leadership. Year 2 pupils distinguish between rules for organisations and laws for different countries, while exploring individual liberty and collective responsibility in their moral, social and cultural studies.

The curriculum promotes respect for all people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief and pregnancy and maternity. Those characteristics which UAE law precludes the school from addressing are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation.

Across the curriculum, the school successfully honours its pledge: to nurture responsible global citizens who are sensitive to other cultures and people. Pupils analyse British history objectively, deepening their understanding of tolerance, individual liberty and democracy. The school fosters a culture of inclusivity in which differences in the school and the wider community are recognised, valued, and respected.

The curriculum is further enhanced by the inclusion of a range of complementary learning activities, such as a well-structured moral, social and cultural programme, and dedicated well-being lessons. To reinforce thinking about school values, pupils participate in philanthropic and fundraising projects that support local and international projects.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities as part of the extended curriculum for pupils to explore and develop their personal interests and talents. Activities include creative arts, life skills, language development, and a variety of sports aimed at both participation and competition. These programmes are well planned, offer continuity and progression, and enjoy high levels of pupils' participation.

Pupils receive age-appropriate, high-quality support and guidance to help them transfer smoothly between phases and to prepare them for life at secondary school.

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

Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and understand how to make learning accessible for pupils. They have high expectations of what pupils can do, using an approach that challenges all pupils, not just the most able, to reach the highest levels of understanding and providing well-planned support to help pupils achieve. As a result, pupils' progress in lessons is excellent. Teaching takes account of the needs of individuals. Individual education plans (IEP) ensure that pupils with SEND make good progress and, similarly, that more able pupils are challenged appropriately. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers to enable all pupils to make excellent rates of progress.

Learning goals and success criteria are clear and shared with pupils so that they can work productively in an orderly manner. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to engage learners, and they make excellent use of resources to enhance learning. For example, a well-chosen short video clip of King Charles III inspires pupils' interest at the start of a topic on pollution. The careful use of information technology (IT) is a feature of most lessons, with older pupils uploading their work to share with their parents as part of their own self-assessment. Whole-class teaching, group activities and pair work enable pupils to collaborate well and share their ideas enthusiastically.

Teachers use questioning expertly to consolidate and reinforce learning, but also to challenge pupils to reason, explain and justify their ideas. In science, pupils develop strong investigative skills strengthened by the accurate use of specialist terminology. In English, pupils are increasingly perceptive, able to appreciate figurative language in a poem and evaluate how a writer's choice of language creates specific effects. Pupils in mathematics, solve complex problems using a reasoned, step-by-step approach. Teachers know how to inspire and motivate pupils, engendering enthusiasm, excitement, and a love of learning across all subjects.

Pupils learn in context, for example, in a 'mathematics mania' class, pupils develop sophisticated reasoning skills, using pictures and diagrams in a problem-solving exercise. Cross-curricular links and connections to the wider world are a key feature of lessons, bringing learning to life. Pupils solve problems faced by the East India Company in the eighteenth century as they apply a range of skills to consider how to trade goods safely across the world.

Both senior leaders and teachers use internal and external data effectively to plan teaching and learning. Internal assessments provide useful information for teachers to target individual learning needs and to ensure pupils' better than expected progress. The school benchmarks attainment and progress data against relevant international standards, using the EYFS early learning goals, online progress tests and reading assessments to ensure pupils are on track to meet or are exceeding their targets. Formative assessment, particularly the use of the whole class feedback book, provides teachers with dynamic and timely continuous assessment information. Pupils are aware of their own depth of understanding and, from the very early stages of their education, can evaluate this using an approach that ensures that they know what to learn, how to learn and can measure their own levels of progress. Initially guided by teachers, they become independent learners over time.

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

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

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

Pupils across the school appreciate the highly inclusive community where they and staff actively celebrate and support diversity of every kind. Pupils report that they are taught to be respectful to others, show care and compassion for all. Parents express confidence that staff value their children and support both their academic progress and emotional well-being.

The relationship between pupils and staff is polite, positive, and respectful. Respect and kindness underpin the school's day-to-day culture, as reflected in its motto: 'All You Need is Love', providing a constant reminder of the importance of kindness, empathy, and understanding.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning across the school are exemplary. The importance of laws and school rules are reinforced through the 'Bootcamp Programme' at the start of each academic year which provides pupils and teachers with the opportunity to agree and establish clear expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils from across the school understand boundaries and the reasons behind them. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to build strong relationships with others; for example, children sharing items in the early years, and in primary pupils helping others to learn. Older pupils learn about their growing bodies as part of the science curriculum.

In lessons, pupils maintain high levels of concentration and perseverance. They embrace challenging tasks and support each other in their learning. Pupils listen attentively to others' contributions and, particularly in the upper year groups, respectfully challenge differing views and opinions.

In the early years, children grow rapidly in confidence and independence. Teachers provide rich opportunities for children to lead their own learning, collaborate, and solve problems. As pupils move through the school, staff challenge them to articulate and explain their thinking. Pupils eagerly take the initiative in lessons and whole-school projects, taking on leadership roles to develop and present creative solutions. Nearly all pupils remain highly engaged in their learning and work independently or collaboratively to achieve their personalised goals.

Pupils' strong moral code develops through a wide range of opportunities that promote and challenge their understanding of right and wrong. The personal, moral and social education curriculum along with British values regularly invites pupils to explore their democratic rights and responsibilities, encouraging them to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils use tools such as Kelso's choice well to think through and resolve conflicts thoughtfully.

The protected characteristics of the UK Equality Act are strongly embedded across the curriculum through thematic topics and carefully chosen literature. In Year 6, pupils engage in powerful discussions about respect and tolerance at the time of the Windrush generation as part of their background research on Benjamin Zephaniah's writing. They empathise with the experience of migrants and recognise their role in rebuilding post-war Britain. Pupils' awareness of gender and disability inequalities inspires them to promote girls' participation in cricket and to select charities that challenge inequality.

The school develops pupils' social responsibility well. Pupils deepen their understanding of cultural diversity through initiatives such as 'Culture Capture', which enables them to gain direct experience of the variety of cultures represented in their school. Pupils plan and participate in charitable and fundraising events, making meaningful contributions to both local and international causes, showing integrity and care when choosing the charities that the school supports. Pupils speak knowledgeably about British institutions such as the Houses of Parliament and confidently compare these to similar institutions in the UAE.

Pupils embrace opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities, including serving as subject ambassadors and councillors. These roles build their confidence and strengthen their self-esteem. Teachers regularly seek pupils' views on school life through surveys and dialogue. Pupils understand the significance of their input and take these responsibilities seriously. For instance, they recognise how their feedback

influenced changes to the timings and availability of extra-curricular activities, ensuring fair access for all.

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

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

The school is safe, harmonious and welcoming. Policies for health and safety, fire procedures, behaviour, recruitment, anti-bullying and safeguarding are comprehensive, thorough and regularly reviewed. All policies meet required standards and are fully implemented in practice. There are regular, well-documented fire drills and arrangements in place for breaktimes in hot weather.

The school carries out risk assessments for relevant activities, including educational visits. The operational management of the school is excellent. For example, the procedures for the safe arrival and departure of pupils using buses or private cars is meticulous.

Behaviour is exemplary and the school has clear procedures to record any incidents of misbehaviour. There is a clear anti-bullying policy, which includes how to manage cyber-bullying. Pupils' awareness of online safety is highlighted throughout the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities such as 'Well-being Wednesdays'. Consequently, pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are confident about approaching adults for help as needed. The school's doctor and nurses ensure comprehensive medical and emergency cover and are also proactive in promoting pupils' healthy living and the prevention of disease.

Attendance is outstanding at 98% and punctuality is very good, exceeding the England average. Highly effective measures are in place to raise pupils' levels of punctuality and the school is monitoring closely the full impact of these actions.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding, exceeding requirements. Safeguarding, well-being, and inclusion are at the heart of the school. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), deputy designated safeguarding lead and all staff are all trained at an appropriate level in safeguarding and child protection. This includes support and ancillary staff, parent-funded learning support assistants and contractors. In discussions, pupils know the names of the DSL and safeguarding team and confirm that they trust any adult in the school to support them.

The inclusion team is central in supporting all pupils and promoting their well-being. Pupils with SEND, those with ELL needs and more able, gifted and talented (MAGT) pupils are identified through the admission process which includes input from parents, teachers and former schools. Detailed termly reviews ensure that the school effectively supports all pupils relevant to their individual needs. As a result of an inclusion team member being allocated to each year group, pupils receive excellent levels of support. As a result of parents being actively engaged in the school, their children receive highly focused and responsive care and attention.

## **Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school benefits from a well-qualified human resources team that ensures that comprehensive background checks are fully completed for all staff appointed to work in the school. This includes detailed checks on all non-teaching staff and external providers, for example, specialist sports coaches offering after school clubs. The school maintains a detailed single central record (SCR) of all staff which logs the date that they were appointed and the date that they started work. School leaders and governors regularly review this to make any necessary changes or updates.

The school has a robust recruitment process which fully complies with all statutory requirements. The recruitment process includes a check on the identity of prospective staff, their medical fitness, qualifications, police checks and character references from their previous and current employer to determine their suitability to work with children. The school adds an additional check by speaking directly to the previous employer to verify the reference. A colour-coded lanyard confirms the level of access for each person entering the school.

All leaders and governors who recruit staff have successfully completed safer recruitment training, in addition to completing the relevant required safeguarding courses. A high proportion of teachers have British teaching qualifications.

## Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school consists of a main primary school site and a separate EYFS section. Buildings are attractive, clean, and extremely well maintained by the facilities manager and team. Classrooms are spacious, well-lit and have good acoustics. The school is very secure with staff present at security points at each entrance. Entrance and exit points are key-controlled and accessible only to authorised persons. The school keeps detailed records of any repairs or maintenance, ensuring pupils' safety.

The design of the premises enhances learning and facilitates pupils' independence and collaboration. In the EYFS, each class has access to its own outdoor space. In the primary school, each year group benefits from a pod structure that comprises classrooms and communal areas, promoting collaborative learning, small group work and project-based learning. Sport and recreation areas have been updated recently and are well used throughout the day for a range of activities appropriate for this age range.

The school doctor and medical team manage the clinic, which is well equipped, including a separate toilet, washing facilities and a bed for the care of sick or injured pupils. The school has plentiful toilets, washing and changing facilities for pupils' sole use. Water stations are clearly labelled and available in corridors and playground areas

In the primary school, there is an assembly hall for whole school gatherings and celebrations. Specialist rooms for music, art, STEAM and SPARK enable pupils to develop their creative and scientific skills, although there is no science laboratory for the more advanced experimental work which is currently carried out in classrooms. Pupils benefit from a well-stocked library in the primary school and younger children have the opportunity to visit the school's own library bus. The school has a range of outdoor sports facilities, including a grass pitch, hard surface court and an indoor swimming pool. The Arabic and Islamic Cultural Centre includes a vegetable garden which pupils use in their 'Ground to Plate' topic work. The school has a well-being room and garden, providing pleasant, tranquil spaces for the whole school community to enjoy.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Parents express highly positive views about the school. Both the school's own surveys and those conducted during the inspection confirm that most parents strongly support the school. Parents report that their children love coming to school. Parents appreciate the nurturing relationships and the school's unwavering belief that every child can and will achieve. They value the high levels of care, support, and guidance that the school provides, especially regarding pupils' academic and emotional well-being. Parents stated that their children feel safe, secure, and supported, which empowers them to take risks in learning and, as a result, make even greater progress.

The school's website contains all the required policies and information, including safeguarding, admissions, the curriculum, SEND and EAL arrangements, behaviour and sanctions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, the management of medication and complaints. Parents confirm that these policies are shared and discussed at annual meetings and, for example, have led to greater clarity in the curriculum policy. As a result, parents feel informed, valued, and more involved in their child's education.

Parents report that they are always made welcome in the school, and that they appreciate regular communication about all aspects of the school. The school has established strong formal and informal networks with different parental groups. Most parents regularly engage with the parent liaison officer who keeps them updated about events and activities. Parents praise the school for the high-quality guidance and personal support that they receive to identify the best secondary school for their child, expressing confidence in how well the school prepares their children for life in secondary school.

Teachers and senior leaders maintain a strong visible presence around the school and remain open to parents' views, including any concerns or complaints. Parents speak positively about how quickly and effectively staff deal with any concerns raised. They attribute this rapid level of responsiveness to the leadership team's clear prioritisation of pupils' well-being.

The school communicates with parents through a range of channels, including online platforms and social media. These provide regular updates and information about their children's progress, showcasing exemplary work and celebrating pupils' significant achievements.

Parents receive high-quality reports which provide information about their children's academic attainment, personal development with clear targets for improvement. They appreciate the regular opportunities to meet teachers and discuss how best to support their child's learning at home.

## **Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

All parents have access to the complaints policy on the school's website. The policy fully complies with all requirements. Each part of the informal and formal process is clearly explained, including the timescale by which the complainant can expect a response from the school and the further stages in the management of an unresolved complaint.

The school maintains an accurate, up-to-date written log of all complaints and their resolution. In the current year, there has been one complaint which is currently being dealt with. In the previous year, no formal complaints were received. The school endeavours to resolve any informal concerns quickly and learns from any complaint it receives to make further improvements.

## **Part 8. Leadership and management of the school**

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are fully met.

The school is owned by Interstar Advisory Services which operates a network of five schools in the UAE with a sixth due to open in August 2025. Since establishing Victory Heights Primary school, the chairman and principal have set the tone for staff to follow. They both exude a genuine passion for education which permeates throughout the school and is reflected across the whole school community. Members of the leadership

team are role models who successfully inspire those around them to strive for higher standards in all aspects of the school. Leadership of the early years is well established and has a positive impact on children's outcomes. All leaders, including governors, understand their roles in achieving the school's vision to nurture, challenge and excel for the benefit of all pupils.

School leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of the strengths and areas for development as a result of the highly effective self-evaluation processes. The school's improvement plan is underpinned by individual subject action plans, based on the rigorous and robust analysis of pupils' assessment data. Each half term, leaders produce a detailed overview to confirm key successes, common trends, and targeted areas for development for each subject and year group. This ensures that leaders and teachers have the evidence to hold others to account, using this overview in meetings on pupils' progress.

The principal promotes a strong collegiate approach in identifying key priorities for improvement, encouraging all members of staff to contribute to the decision-making process. The leadership team demonstrates excellent capacity to improve the school further. Over the previous year, school leaders have placed a strong focus on careful succession planning to ensure the effective transfer of the strengths in the current leadership team to the new leadership team so that it can continue to contribute to the success of the school.

Governors, effectively led by the chair, ensure that the school operates legally, and that its financial policies are sound. Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding, which is a standing agenda item at each of their meetings. Governing body membership includes educational experts and representation from the school's teachers and parents. The chair acts as a critical friend to the principal, holding her to account on all aspects of the school to identify areas for future improvement. The principal meets parents on a regular basis to discuss recent school initiatives. The focus of a recent meeting was the successful appointment of the school's current headteacher to the post of principal of a new school in the network.

Several staff and school leaders have completed a range of national professional qualifications (NPQ), positively supporting succession planning. Middle school leaders enthusiastically participate in action research projects to identify areas for future school improvement.

Highly detailed data analysis and systematic strategic planning ensures that priorities for teaching and learning are closely aligned to professional development requirements. The school has introduced a new staff appraisal system to enable individual staff members to have ownership of their professional development and greater positive impact on the school's improvement. This new system promotes individual growth, reflection, opportunities, and wonder (GROW).

Leaders promote strong and purposeful links with pupils to ensure that their voice is heard. In pupil council meetings, suggestions are quickly passed to the principal for consideration and action. The chair invites pupils to meet with him twice a year to challenge any governors' decisions which have a direct impact on them. Pupils readily email subject leaders with their ideas for change. For example, members of the pupil council recently requested that recycling boxes be available around the school.

In surveys, parents comment that the values of school leaders align closely with their own. They value highly the school's strong community ethos and its nurturing environment. Almost all school staff agree that the school is well led and managed. Most are proud to work at the school and comment that senior leaders listen to and care for them.

School leaders and governors are committed to promoting equal opportunities across all aspects of the school. The school exhibits a strong culture of caring, fully supporting the well-being of all. The school recognises its key responsibilities are to safeguard, promote and protect the safety of all children in its care.

## EYFS provision

Provision in the **Early Years** is outstanding.

Most children join the foundation stage aged three and make fast progress from their starting points. Most children achieve Good Levels of Development (GLD), above those expected in England.

Effective leadership, dedicated teachers and well qualified support staff ensure excellent provision. Teachers use baseline assessment to personalise teaching that caters for the needs of all children. For children with ELL needs, there is a strong focus on the development of oracy and language skills, using a structured phonics

programme. Consequently, children make rapid progress in speaking, listening, early reading and writing skills.

The curriculum is based on the EYFS, enhanced by the addition of subjects such as Arabic, music and swimming. There are ample opportunities for outdoor play so that children can explore and discover the world. Teachers encourage children to solve problems, work things out for themselves and take risks in a secure environment. High-quality resources enhance learning. For example, an art area and working kitchen allow children to carry out role play with focused discussion with adults and each other.

Teachers know the children well and monitor their progress carefully. Personalised checklists for literacy and mathematics use 'can do' statements to track children's development of skills. Teachers carefully plan interventions to ensure that all, including children with SEND and ELL learners, make excellent progress. For example to improve boys' literacy skills, more construction-based play activities were introduced.

Parents are fully engaged as partners in their children's learning. Children are well prepared for entry to key stage 1. The transition is well managed, ensuring children move seamlessly to the next stage of their education.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

Victory Heights Primary School 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 that relate to 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5 (b)(vi). Victory Heights Primary School 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 for development:

There is a need for the school to continually develop its learning and teaching facilities in order to meet the requirements of an ever evolving and innovative curriculum. Leaders and governors should explore ways in which specialist classrooms, including science laboratories, can continue to be developed to meet leaders' ambitious plans. This will ensure that pupils will continue to benefit from high-quality inspirational teaching and learning across the school.

## Summary of inspection judgements

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

### The quality of education

|  |          |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|
| Overall quality of education   | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs         | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |
| How well pupils make progress in their learning  | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

|  |          |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|
| Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |
| The behaviour of pupils  | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

|  |          |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|

### Leadership and management

|  |          |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|
| Overall effectiveness of leadership and management | <b>x</b> |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|

## School Details

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Name of school</b>                    | Victory Heights Primary School   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                    | Private  |
| <b>Date school opened</b>                | August 2013  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>               | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                  | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b> | 1,040  |
| <b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b> | -  |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>          | Foundation 1 – AED 39,216<br>Foundation 2 – AED 42,780<br>Year 1 – AED 46,346<br>Year 2 – AED 46,346<br>Year 3 – AED 49,911<br>Year 4 – AED 49,911<br>Year 5 – AED 53,476<br>Year 6 – AED 53,476 |
| <b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>            | -  |
| <b>Address of school</b>                 | Dubai Sports City<br>Dubai Land<br>454959  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                  | 04 423 1100  |
| <b>Email address</b>                     | principal@vhprimary.com  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                       | Sasha Crabb (Principal)  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                        | Dinesh Kothari (Chairman)  |

## GLOSSARY

**Achievement** – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

**Accreditation** – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

**Assessment** – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

**Attainment** – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

**British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO)** – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

**Central Support Team** – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

**Combined or Joint Visit** – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

**Cycle of Inspection** – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

**Curriculum** – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB)** – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

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

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

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

**Ofsted** – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of 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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