

Victory Heights Primary School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 17– 20 May 2022

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Age Group: 3-11
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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 three 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 must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on the UK Government's Get Information about Schools (GIAS) website.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The DfE issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.

The Standards are as follows:

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

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

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

Key for inspection grades

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

Proportions used in the report

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

Information about the school

Victory Heights Primary School is a British independent, international school located on two sites and placed in the heart of Dubai Sports City. The early years phase, which opened in September 2021, is located on the southern edge of Sports City and the primary phase is located about one kilometre away.

There are 851 pupils aged between three and 11 years, with approximately a third of the roll in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). There are 67 different nationalities, of which the largest ethnic groups are British (31%).

There are 75 pupils (9%) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 440 pupils (52%) for whom English is not the principal language (EAL). It is an inclusive school that caters for the full range of abilities and needs. Children in the early years follow the new English early years framework. Pupils follow the English national curriculum, adapted to the Dubai context.

The senior leadership team, which was restructured in September 2021, comprises the principal, deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers, one inclusion champion, one pastoral care leader, one head of Arabic, one head of Islamic studies and one early years leader. The school has a below-average staff turnover of 10%.

Pupil numbers have steadily expanded since the school opened in 2013. It is now an average-sized school compared with others of its type. Pupils move to local or international schools at the end of Year 6.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school closed between March 2020 and July 2020 and all pupils followed remote learning. Attendance was 96%. All pupils had equal access to distance learning. The school reopened fully in September 2020. Stakeholders describe the school's communication strategy as 'highly effective'. Safeguarding arrangements, including a well-being risk assessment for staff and pupils, were implemented. All staff completed national online safety training. The school ensured the rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and well-being. Assessment identified gaps in learning for a small minority of pupils and, as a result, support strategies enabled them to catch up.

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 May 2022 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 70 lessons both in classes and live online. Two lessons were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. Inspectors gave feedback to two members of staff.

There were 28 meetings with leaders, teachers, managers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and carers 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, 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 United Arab Emirates (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.

English

In **English**, attainment and progress are **outstanding** across all phases. Pupils exceed English national curriculum expectations and make rapid progress over time, including those with SEND and those who have EAL.

Most children in the early years arrive with skills in English language and communication that are above those typical for their age. They are well supported by their teacher and learning support assistants in the acquisition of skills in reading, writing and oracy.

The wide-ranging indoor and outdoor learning opportunities ignite pupils' curious minds and encourage them to ask questions and to be excited about learning.

The whole-class reading approach from EYFS to Year 6 introduces all the pupils to the same high-level texts and rich language enabling them to become fluent readers and writers very quickly.

By the end of Foundation Stage 2 (FS2), children are confident readers and writers. They can share their ideas and are becoming comfortable using a wider range of vocabulary and language structures. Most children meet or exceed the English early learning goals in reading, writing and communication and language by the end of FS2.

By the end of key stage 1, pupils can read novels and can write with a high level of independence, using more complex sentence structures such as coordination and subordination and an appropriate range of adjectives and adverbs.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils have exceptional writing skills. The quality of their extended writing skills is exceptional. They can use a mixture of active and passive voice and relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that or an implied relative pronoun.

Mathematics

In **mathematics**, the attainment and progress made by all pupils overall are **outstanding**. Pupils with SEND and those who have EAL make similar progress. Across the primary phase boys and girls perform similarly.

Children across the early years make rapid progress, with the vast majority attaining the expected level across all mathematics aspects by the end of Reception. This prepares them well for Year 1. In FS2, children demonstrate very secure number skills and understanding of place value to perform addition calculations, using concrete objects.

By the end of Year 2, most pupils reach the expected level in mathematics.

In Year 2 pupils measured the distance from different points in the school to a dinosaur party, located in the school library. This engaging activity based on a story and class topic enabled all learners to make excellent progress.

By the end of primary, the vast majority of pupils attain levels above those typical for the UK and continue to make outstanding progress. In a Year 6 class, pupils worked with a high level of independence on challenging angle-word problems. They proficiently used a range of methods and reasoning skills to complete the problems effectively.

Science

In **science**, the attainment and progress made by almost all pupils, including pupils with SEND and EAL, are **outstanding** and above UK averages across all phases.

Children in the early years enjoy exploring the world around them. There is a wide range of quality activities, some outside, which enrich learning. Children enjoy looking at animals, including the school's rabbit, and plants. They keenly observe how different habitats allow different things to live in them. Opportunities to explore the world around them abound, including feeling different textures, measuring liquids and sorting animals into groups such as farm animals and domestic animals. The choice of topics, such as 'once upon a time' and 'minibeasts' involves children's input and ensures engagement. Connections with the UK and life in Britain are plentiful, such as when a FS2 class was discussing how barracudas do not live in British seas as it is too cold. This resulted in a discussion comparing the relative climates of the UAE and Britain.

In key stage 1 science, practical skills are well developed and investigative work is developing. As an example, Year 2 pupils spend time considering whether water can move through a stem when it has no roots and they design and carry out a small investigation to discover the answer. Pupils are very competent when handling basic scientific equipment and relish the opportunity to undertake practical work. The higher-order skills associated with investigating, such as hypothesising, seeing patterns in data and concluding are further developed during key stage 2.

These skills are enhanced during Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) classes, as when a Year 6 class tackled an 'escape-room' activity and needed to design clues which used their scientific understanding.

Other subjects

In other subjects, the attainment and progress of all groups, including those with SEND and/or EAL, are at least good. In Spanish, art and music, pupils make good progress and attain good standards across the primary phase. In physical education (PE) and in humanities, attainment and progress are outstanding. Teachers of those subjects develop pupils' higher-order critical-thinking skills and enquiry-based learning very well. The wider curriculum is very well resourced and allows teachers to help pupils to deepen their understanding and long-term memory.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding.
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met.
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard.
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this standard.
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard.
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during March 2022, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas 2017 except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the United Arab Emirates. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

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

The **curriculum** is outstanding. It is firmly rooted in the best practice of the English national curriculum, with thoughtful modifications which reflect the context of the school, such as work associated with the national day of the UAE and South African Freedom Day. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are supplemented by humanities, Spanish, art, music, PE, design and technology and information technology. The curriculum meets the academic and pastoral needs of all pupils. There is an emphasis on research-based, child-centred learning and, especially during the remote learning due to COVID-19, on the well-being of pupils, families and staff. This focus on the well-being of all has been maintained following the return to more usual learning.

The school makes excellent use of its local and international environment and the resources within it. For example, in recognition of the 50th year of the United Arab Emirates, Victory Heights Primary School embarked on a significant project – ‘50 at 50’, in which children and other members of the school community were encouraged to take part in 50 philanthropic activities throughout the year of the 50th anniversary. Pupils also make use of the Hamdan Sports Complex for swimming competitions. The school is proud of its collaborative ‘make-up project’ with Kent College, Dubai. Pupils have regular opportunities to explore art with trips to the Oli Oli. They learn about the Amazon rainforest by visiting the ‘Green Planet’.

Curriculum policies and schemes of work are detailed and comprehensive and ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities can succeed. Eighty per cent of lessons focus on building a solid foundation of knowledge while the other 20% focus on experiential learning, which allows pupils the opportunity to explore and discover in a creative way. Inclusion staff and learning-support assistants (LSAs) are deployed efficiently and ensure that all pupils, including SEND and EAL pupils, receive appropriate support to enable them to follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

In the Foundation Stage, the choice of topics is influenced by the interests of the children, in both FS1 and FS2. Children experience a wide curriculum taking in such topics as ‘fairies’, ‘under the ocean’, ‘minibeasts’ and ‘once upon a time’. They have a large amount of autonomy in their learning, which is linked to themes such as engagement, developing ideas, innovative follow up and expression to show understanding. The curriculum focuses on the English EYFS areas of learning, including developing mathematics, communication and language and an understanding of the world.

In key stages 1 and 2, knowledge, understanding and skills are developed rapidly, with, for example, pupils in Year 2 being able to read a text and make a prediction about how a story may develop and write a paragraph to show their understanding.

The curriculum, across all phases, ensures that policies and plans enhance the school’s core values ‘nurture, challenge and excel’ and the promotion of respect and equality, where UAE law allows, for those protected characteristics outlined in the UK Equality Act 2010. For example, there are 67 different nationalities in the school, which makes it a rich and varied community where pupils learn to have compassion and empathy. Curriculum opportunities such as International Day or South African Freedom Day broaden all pupils’ respect and tolerance as they understand the similarities and differences between ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. As part of International Women’s Day, Years 2 to 4 celebrate ‘International Women from History’ while Years 5 and 6 focus on the suffragettes. The school has recently received the UNICEF UK Silver Rights Respecting School award.

The school offers a full range of extra-curricular activities across all phases. The provision is diverse, ranging from sports activities to additional Arabic classes and is well attended by both genders.

Outside the traditional curriculum enrichment involves events, activities and assemblies which develop pupils' understanding of British culture and traditions. Patron's days (such as St. George's Day) are celebrated, alongside events such as the Queen's Birthday and The Platinum Jubilee. Additionally, pupils from many countries celebrate their own special days, such as Spanish Day, as well as religious festivals such as Eid and Holi. Extra-curricular activities and a programme of 'extended-day' activities across Years 1 to 6 allow pupils to explore a broad range of interests beyond the traditional curriculum, such as dance, craft and chess.

The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and academic progress. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education (including moving to a UK school). During COVID-19, the school took swift action to ensure that the whole curriculum was implemented very effectively, largely via remote learning.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is **outstanding**. Highly effective teaching meets pupils' needs precisely and ensures that almost all pupils of all abilities make excellent progress across the curriculum. Teachers know their subjects very well and have a detailed understanding of their curriculum and of how pupils learn. Consequently, excellent, well-structured, orderly, paced and well-resourced lessons are routinely planned and executed.

Pupil's progress meetings ensure a high degree of continuity and provision for all pupils with whole-class feedback books along with team discussions in year groups. Staff continue to learn and share best practice in order to present high-quality learning experiences for all pupils. During the pandemic, remote learning continued to be most effective, with good use of breakout rooms and work carefully matched to pupils' prior attainment and capabilities.

Teachers almost always have high expectations of their pupils. They use a wide range of strategies to support, encourage and challenge them. For example, in Year 2 classes where pupils were learning about plants and how water moves through them, key words were not only displayed, but starter sentences were available for those who needed a little help. Similarly, challenging tasks were available for those who could benefit from them. There is, therefore, very effective matching of work to pupils' capabilities, with engagement and enjoyment very evident. LSAs and teachers plan work and feedback to pupils jointly. LSAs are included in the extensive Continuing Professional Development programme, with some extending their qualifications and becoming teachers. The inclusion department offers highly effective in-class support and one-to-one tuition where needed.

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Their forensic lesson planning engages, challenges and promotes pupils' questioning to deepen their understanding and encourage them to develop their curiosity so that they achieve at the highest level. A typical staff comment to inspectors was, 'every child has a chance to shine, they are challenged and their progress is celebrated throughout their own learning journey'.

Assessment of pupils' learning is ongoing and is used well to inform detailed daily planning. There are four data-capture points annually, when internal assessments allow pupils to show what knowledge, understanding and skills have been mastered. Additionally, external assessments, progress tests in the core subjects, are carried out annually. This data and information from cognitive-ability tests are compared and benchmarked very effectively. The results of these comparisons are also used very effectively by teachers to plan effective learning which offers well-designed support and challenges pupils.

Consequently, learning is very effective and contributes to the outstanding progress made by pupils in the core and many of the foundation subjects.

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

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi) of the UK Equality Act 2010 that cannot be met due to the laws of the host country. The school's provision 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.

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

The school has established a global community with inclusive practice. It celebrates pupils across a large spectrum of faiths and cultural backgrounds including those learning EAL and those with SEND. Pupils contribute well to inclusion and created the school logo to represent its shared vision of equity, inclusion and diversity. Leaders ensure that pupils with disabilities and medical issues are given the same opportunities as their peers across all aspects of school life. The importance of treating people with respect in relation to diversity has been explored through topics such as black culture and achievement.

The school promotes equality awareness. An example has been an awareness campaign to highlight the different cancers that are gender specific and the active encouragement of both genders to participate in sports. Across the school pupils' relationships with both peers and adults are characterised by respect and appreciation, building an environment of high goals and achievement. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding.

Through moral education and work on anti-bullying, pupils have a strong understanding of citizenship and what is right and wrong.

Pupil's awareness of how to live a healthy life and build confidence, self-esteem and resilience is developed through a broad range of programmes and initiatives. These include participation in internationally recognised personal pursuit programmes and through the school's social development programme, which develops skills for life-long learning.

Pupils are actively encouraged to learn about and celebrate the different nationalities and cultures represented in their school. This includes celebration of Islamic values through Ramadan and UAE National Day and celebration of cultural and religious festivals, such as Remembrance Day, Diwali and International Day.

Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and consideration of the less privileged and the rights of animals is developed through a designated programme, awareness assemblies and pupils' own acts of kindness.

The school encourages pupils of all ages to undertake positions of leadership and responsibility. These are sometimes more formal roles, such as membership of the student council and executive cabinet but can also be informal, such as leading a small charity event or extra-curricular activity.

The British values of democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and individual liberty are braided into the schools' work. Pupils have a strong understanding of democracy. This is demonstrated in the election of the student council and head boy and girl but also in how the school operates. One pupil stated that democracy is 'part of their school because everyone is allowed to give their views'. These strong values are also tangible across the school in pupils' supportive and respectful relationships. Views promoting British values are visited in the schools' curriculum and are consistently and sensitively addressed within the context of UAE laws

British life and culture are taught through humanities, mathematics, science and literature. In a literature lesson in the early years children explored the landmarks of London through stories. In the primary phase pupils learn about World War II building a comparison of the UK in the past and in the present.

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

The school meets the requirements of the standard and the regulatory requirements and cultural obligations of the UAE.

The planning and deployment of systems to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils feel safe in their school. They say that teachers always support them. They know that adults listen to their concerns and always put their welfare and safety first. The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe at the school.

Pupils are made aware of the potential hazards of social media and how to remain safe online. This information is easily available to pupils in the school and community. Behaviour across the school is outstanding. Bullying rarely occurs and if it does is successfully managed through well-developed pastoral systems and strong relationships with parents.

The school is a calm and relaxed place, where positive relationships thrive. Pupils new to the school are welcomed through well-planned activities.

The school has a secure system in place to manage and review punctuality and attendance, which is fully supported by parents. Attendance is close to the UK average at 97%. During the COVID-19 pandemic this figure dipped briefly but it has now recovered well.

Leaders have established strong systems for the safeguarding and protection of pupils. They mirror the best UK practice and meet the requirements of the UAE. All staff undertake training related to the school's safeguarding policy. The required checks are made to ensure that those employed by the school are suitable to work with children. All safeguarding leaders are highly trained and constantly review their practice in line with new expectations and best practice. All staff fully understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and know how to deal with any concerns appropriately. Additionally, parents and visitors are made fully aware of the schools' expectations in this respect. As part of the school's safeguarding audit, pupils voice their views on procedures.

Leaders and managers with responsibility for welfare, health and safety ensure that UAE and UK policies and procedures are enforced and that the school environment is always safe. Incidents involving the premises are swiftly reported and actioned.

Risk assessments are developed and followed for all appropriate activities and areas in the school, ensuring full compliance. The school's review of its practice is ongoing. There was a strong response during the pandemic. The school has well-developed systems to keep pupils safe with supervision both inside and outside the premises firmly established. Fire procedures are followed to the letter, reflecting the best UK practice and meeting local fire regulations.

The school was highly successful in addressing the needs of the pupils and their families during the pandemic. This included webinars on how to use online learning. The school kept in daily contact with parents, ensuring that well-being was the priority.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has a dedicated and efficient human-resources team, which follows the safer recruitment practices for all employees and ensures that all staff are suitable to work with children.

The school keeps an up-to-date, comprehensive single central record of all staff working in the school and the checks that have been made. The recruitment procedures check the identity of prospective staff, their qualifications, background and police checks and references from their previous position to determine their suitability to work with the children. Scrutiny of available records confirms that all teaching staff are licenced by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). The proprietor underwent local checks to ensure that his background and experience did not prohibit him from opening a school.

Currently three members of the senior leadership team and one governor have completed the safer recruitment training. Other staff are being trained as part of the succession-planning process.

Rigorous checks are conducted on visitors, parent helpers and supply staff. Only when the checks are complete can a visitor enter the school to work with pupils. The school confirms that all the required employment documents have been received from contractors.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The requirements of this standard are met.

The accommodation, which is on two sites, is very well suited to its purpose, with clean, spacious, interesting classrooms in which pupils can learn without distraction or danger. Both sites, the primary school and the separate, new Foundation Stage building, are surrounded by secure walls or fences and entry is controlled by a team of security staff. Lanyards of different colours identify visitors and staff.

Both sites are modified so that they are fully accessible, with ramps, evacuation chairs and lifts. There are large multi-purpose spaces, a swimming pool with attendant lifeguard and many areas in which pupils may leave the classroom and learn in a different environment. Outside areas are shaded and fenced or walled to ensure safety. They are protected with cushioning or guards where appropriate. In addition, there is a recently created STEAM room, a gym, specialist art and music rooms and a library. There is an Arabic and Islamic Cultural Centre and plans are in place for further, enriching learning spaces, such as another STEAM room. Classrooms are bright and excellently resourced, with sufficient temperature control to ensure a pleasant learning experience. Furnishings are of excellent quality and sized appropriately. Wi-Fi (which is securely accessed) is available throughout and an astroturf pitch is also used for PE lessons. The school provides a safe and highly stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

Maintenance is ongoing, with a school-based group of staff on hand to deal with low-level day-to-day needs. Maintenance of water fountains, air conditioners, fire extinguishers, the swimming pool and electrical equipment and other 'plant' occurs regularly throughout the year as needed. Detailed records of this are kept. Evacuation drills are held regularly and logs are kept. Learning is encouraged by the accommodation as it is so stimulating.

Adaptations during the pandemic included the creation of isolation rooms on each site, additional handwashing areas and social-distancing signage.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The website provides clear information about school life, inclusion, facilities, policies, admissions and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, complaints, curriculum, assessment and behaviour. It ensures that all aspects of the school, including the latest news, are shared with potential visitors.

Parents have immediate online access to information about their child. Teachers keep parents up to date with specific information in relation to their child's work and progress and make class announcements. Social-media platforms inform parents of past and future events and learning experiences, with important information and updates. There are weekly letters from the deputy principal giving updates to families and the community.

Members of the leadership team warmly greet pupils and welcome parents at the school gate daily. This comment from a parent typifies views, 'Teachers are there when we pick our children up at the end of the day and are very accessible. They are our main point of contact.'

All parents receive two reports per year on their child's progress. The school holds three consultation evenings per year when teachers and parents discuss progress. Parents feel valued by the school because, not only does it conduct regular surveys, but also publishes the results with an account of the action taken. Parents agree that the staff go the extra mile in their caring approach to nurturing each child. A typical comment was, 'Our limit isn't five minutes at the parents' consultation. If you feel you need extra time, the teachers organise extra meetings. Teachers do everything they say they will and respond immediately.'

The school organises regular webinars for parents, for example 'Reading and Phonics with Parents' or 'Transition from FS2 to Year 1'.

The vast majority of parents feel valued and heard by the school and governors. There are 30 parent representatives who help the communication flow between the school and parents. A typical view was, 'We enable the teachers to do their job, which is all about teaching. We parents help support the communication.' For example, on Sunday nights, all the parents' representatives for each class send a reminder to all the other parents about events for the week. There is a well-developed community spirit where everybody is working together.

Parents agree that the current school sites are limited by space and that the school would benefit from having more facilities for sports to engage more pupils in them.

Parental feedback regarding the school's response to COVID-19 was overwhelmingly positive. Parents said that the school tried its absolute best to maintain a community feel despite the fact that everyone was apart. They valued events such as being invited to the weekly online assemblies and the class award ceremony.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The complaints policy is part of the Concerns and Complaints procedure, which is available on the website.

The policy is reviewed at least once a year and approved by the school manager and principal. Dated records are maintained throughout. The five-stage procedure outlines how complaints are resolved within clear timescales and the expectations of all parties. Day-to-day concerns are swiftly managed by the class teacher. Parents agree that their concerns are always addressed immediately in a highly efficient manner.

There has been one complaint this year made to the school, then to KHDA. It was resolved promptly to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

During COVID-19 restrictions the school has dealt positively and fairly with a range of concerns to the satisfaction of all parents.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are fully met and that the areas for improvement identified during the previous BSO inspection have been addressed.

The principal and the senior leaders have a relentless and tenacious drive to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest possible standards. The quality of education that pupils receive is outstanding. The school's vision to 'nurture, challenge and excel' has led to outstanding academic progress, a varied and creative curriculum and children who develop into confident and well-rounded individuals. Victory Heights Primary School is a school where pupils thrive and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Highly skilled senior leaders are committed to embedding well-being across the school. They have taken very effective steps to reduce staff workload and promote staff well-being and as a result, a large majority of staff feel well supported.

The culture of the school is thoroughly focused on 'working together as an effective team'. Victory Heights Primary School is an inclusive school that promotes equality and diversity. All staff are appointed through a rigorous screening, selection and interview process. They have clear job roles and responsibilities. They collaborate and communicate well through an open-door policy, coaching and professional dialogues leading to productive meetings with colleagues. Leaders and all staff are excellent role models. They engage with all stakeholders in a manner that consistently embodies the high standards they expect of others.

Senior leaders set high standards of accountability for themselves, go above and beyond and are reflective practitioners and, in turn, inspire those around them to strive for greater heights. Staff are very proud of their school and its leaders. This is demonstrated by a comment made by one teacher: 'Everything we do as staff is for the benefit of the children.' The vast majority of staff feel well supported in their professional development.

Leaders focus continuously on pupils' outcomes. Middle leaders and teachers are thorough and uncompromising on continually improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise standards of achievement. Regular checks on teaching, supported by well-targeted professional development and appraisal by leaders have led to an increase in the proportion of high-quality, exceptional teaching since the last BSO inspection.

The school has the capacity to improve further with three members of the senior leadership team currently completing Master's level degrees and four teachers on the National Professional Qualification programme.

The leadership of early years is outstanding. A clear warmth and passion for the care of the children as individuals leads to positive relationships between adults and children and as a result, children thrive in this safe learning environment.

Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and those areas that need to be improved further. They use their considerable knowledge and experience to challenge senior leaders regularly very effectively. There are clear accountability procedures to sustain and improve all aspects of the school's work. The board is confident in the leadership team and respects its separate responsibilities. It conducts the headteacher's annual appraisal with rigour. Its clear financial policies have enabled the successful growth of the school with the construction of a new building to accommodate EYFS in September 2021. Further work to develop sporting facilities is underway. Governors recognise that this is needed to improve provision in this aspect of school life. Governors ensure that the school is compliant with all legal requirements and that safeguarding procedures are effective. They have frequent and purposeful communications with school leaders to ensure that the school's priorities are met.

The partnership between parents and the school is strong and makes a significant contribution to the learning and well-being of pupils. Parents say that the school cares wholeheartedly about pupils and that it is an incredible community to be a part of. The work of leaders and staff to keep pupils safe is highly effective.

Self-evaluation is sharp and accurate. There is a strong correlation between the self-evaluation, the monthly school-improvement cycle and the strategic plan. The school's detailed plans for future developments are firmly based on providing the best opportunities for all pupils.

The school responded very well to the COVID-19 pandemic. Protocols and systems were rapidly put in place during distance learning. Leaders' priorities focused on the safety and well-being of all stakeholders to support the school community. Teachers worked hard to ensure that high academic standards were maintained. The school's distance-learning provision was rated as developed, the highest grade, by the MoE.

Early years provision

Provision in the early years is outstanding.

Most children in the early years arrive with skills in English language and communication that are above those typical for their age. Children are carefully assessed on entry to establish precise areas for their development and their personal interests so that individual learning journeys can be planned. Teachers rigorously track and monitor each child's development and progress.

By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a Good Level of Development is above that typical of England. As a result, children are ready to move to Year 1. Teachers plan captivating activities that not only challenge children academically but also build on their own interests. Confidence and independence in learning are actively developed from an early start, alongside skills in cooperation and collaboration.

The schools' strong provision for outdoor learning and wide range of appropriate resources facilitate the rapid progress of children's learning. The high expectations of teachers and teaching assistants rapidly establish clear routines and the children's readiness for more formal teaching. This, in combination with the excellent behaviour of the children, contributes to high achievement and strong learning outcomes.

Parents are highly involved in their children's learning and experiences. Ongoing work is regularly shared through online platforms and profiles of learning, including assessments. In addition, communication is further developed with parents through assemblies and an open-door policy, so concerns can be quickly

addressed. This careful building of relationships with parents has ensured seamless collaboration, fostering high standards and expectations.

Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Leaders have a robust understanding of early years provision and have implemented clear steps for improvement. Leaders and teachers in the early years have been proactive and effective in supporting parents and children during the pandemic.

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's laws.

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

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

What the school could do to improve further

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

Facilities are not extensive enough to allow all pupils sufficiently frequent access to sports. Governors should ensure that the further development of the site allows extra-curricular sport and in-school sporting activities to be enjoyed more often by all pupils.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			
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School details

Name of school	Victory Heights Primary School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 2013
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number of roll (full-time pupils)	851
Number of roll (part-time pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	Foundation Stage - 36,576 AED to Year 6 – 49,877 AED
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Dubai Sport City, Dubai, UAE
Telephone number	+971 4 4231100
Email address	reception@vhprimary.com
Headteacher	Ms Sasha Crabb
Proprietor	Mr Dinesh Kothari

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standards –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

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

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

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

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

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