



Al Ain English Speaking School

Primary Parent Handbook

2024/2025



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Principal's Welcome



Helen McCauley

Principal

hane@aaess.sch.ae

Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very special welcome to each and every one of you. I am extremely proud to be a part of this school team and to work in partnership with the children, parents, staff and wider community.

AAESS Primary is a child centered school. We recognise that every child is an individual and that learning is a very personal experience. Our school is a unique community of learners. All the actions we take have the best interests of the children in mind – ensuring they receive their entitlement to the highest level of education possible.

We believe that teaching is not the imparting of knowledge but the enabling of children to take responsibility for their own learning. Our aim is to provide an environment where every child feels it is safe to try something new, safe to make a mistake and safe to succeed. All our children have the opportunity to develop as a valued member of the school. We aim for academic excellence, as shown in our end of year results, and celebrate effort and achievement with equal enthusiasm.

We know that children work better and learn more effectively in a happy atmosphere based upon courtesy and respect for one another. Children need to have choices, but they also need boundaries and therefore, our positive discipline policy is based upon firmness, fairness and understanding. Each of us strive to set an example for others by treating everyone with respect and politeness.

Assessment for Learning forms part of the daily life of our school. Data from a number of sources, including children's self and peer assessment, is used to help develop policy and practice. Such data provides useful information, which can then be used to inform the ongoing process of curriculum development and lead to the further raising of educational standards.

As members of the global community we have come together at AAESS from all four corners of the earth. Our school culture and curriculum is one which welcomes and celebrates the richness and diversity of everyone. We accept our responsibility to challenge prejudice and to learn tolerance and respect through understanding. Our school does not exist in isolation but is a fundamental part of the lives of many of the people of Al Ain.

At AAESS Primary we firmly believe that it is the uniqueness of each and every one of us that can bring us closer together and one which will help each child take his or her place as a citizen of the world. We are proud of our children and our school. If you wish to pay us a visit, you're always most welcome.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen A. McCauley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the printed text "Kind Regards".

Our School

Established in 1979, Al Ain English Speaking School (AAESS) is one of the oldest and most highly regarded schools in Al Ain. The school is committed to providing a high quality education drawn from the framework of the National Curriculum for England and the curriculum of the Ministry of Education of the UAE.



As an inclusive, caring and multicultural school, our focus is on providing students with personalised, innovative learning opportunities that constantly build on successes.

In our delivery of the British Curriculum, students are taught to value enquiry, perseverance and reflection, while treating one another with respect.

The curriculum is consistently good in all phases. It is broad and relevant and provides good continuity and progression for students' learning.'

Irtiqaa Inspection 2019

British School Overseas

We are extremely proud that Al Ain English Speaking School was the **first** school, in Al Ain, officially endorsed as a British School. This accreditation is quality assured by Ofsted (the UK inspectorate for the Department of Education).

British School Overseas



“The quality of the curriculum is good. The curriculum enables pupils to make good progress in following the English National Curriculum. There is a clear rationale well-planned programmes of learning across different subjects through a thematic cross-curricular approach.”

BSO Inspection 2022

Our Facilities

State of the art facilities include:

- an indoor swimming pool



- large auditorium
- computing suites
- science labs
- specialist art and music rooms



- full pitch astroturf
- sport hall and indoor running track
- library
- shaded outdoor play areas



Our Vision:



For our **students** we aim to:

- Create new and high quality learning experiences.
- Challenge and support every student to excel.
- Expect the highest standards of behaviour.

For our **parents** we aim to:

- Deliver regular feedback about student's progress and achievements.
- Develop a good partnership and open lines of communication.
- Provide opportunities for parental involvement.

For our **school** in the wider community we hope to:

- Promote the school's achievements to all stakeholders.
- Engage in local, national, and international initiatives.
- Develop further beneficial links with other institutions.

Our Values:



At AAESS, we aim to create a learning community whose values are built upon mutual trust and respect for all.

Our core values are fully aligned with the Abu Dhabi Student Competence Framework and teach:

Respect Tolerance Empathy
Honesty Care Integrity Resilience

Developing understanding of these, will ensure our 21st Century learners become caring global citizens in the future.

Meet the Senior Leadership Team



Carolyn Bavister

Deputy Principal

cbavister@aaess.sch.ae

As students embark on or continue their learning journey at AAESS, we are keen to develop happy and successful partnerships with all our children and their families.

The AAESS teaching teams work together to create effective and meaningful learning experiences for all our students. Our broad and balanced curriculum has been carefully designed and sequenced to ensure each child is equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for now and their future.



Peet Vreugdenburg

Deputy Principal
Inclusion

pvreugdenburg@aaess.sch.ae

A warm welcome back to returning families and a heartfelt hello to our new members! Our Inclusion department is dedicated to fostering a vibrant school community where every child thrives.

At AAESS, we celebrate diversity and ensure all students feel valued, supported and empowered to learn. Together, we can create a space where differences are embraced and each child shines.



Sarah Carter

Assistant Principal
Upper Key Stage 2
Year 5 and 6



Gary Jenks

Assistant Principal
Lower Key Stage 2
Year 3 and 4



Michelle Taylor

Assistant Principal
Key Stage 1
Year 1 and 2



Denise Grant

Assistant Principal
EYFS
FS2 and Preschool

We believe that it is vitally important to develop the children under our care as holistic, well-rounded, and responsible young people. A successful school is a partnership between parents, teachers, students and the community as a whole. When this partnership is sound and healthy, then the school, its community, and most importantly the students flourish.

Year Groups & Key Contacts

The staff at AAESS are truly committed to providing an exciting, challenging and personalised learning experience for all students.

Our Heads of Year are all experienced leaders and are there to support you, your children and their teaching teams.

Curriculum	Year Group	Age	Head of Year
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	Preschool	3-4 Years	Lynda Mines
	FS2	4-5 Years	Denise Grant
Key Stage 1 (KS1)	Y1	5-6 Years	Lindsey Jordan
	Y2	6-7 Years	Jennifer Pellegrotti
Key Stage 2 (KS2)	Y3	7-8 Years	Tamara Gale
	Y4	8-9 Years	Will Dobson
	Y5	9-10 Years	Hayley Brown
	Y6	10-11 Years	Micheal Matthee

Primary Curriculum

The Primary School is a place where children will learn and develop key skills to be educated and become successful life-long learners.

AAESS is an exciting learning environment, providing a high quality education based on the National Curriculum of England for students aged between 3-11 years.



The standards for learning and development are divided into 3 age groups:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (Preschool and Foundation Stage 2)
- Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)
- Key Stage 2 (Years 3 - 6)



Our primary school curriculum aims to promote pupils' communication skills, creativity and independent critical thinking. Each year group delivers the curriculum through a thematic and engaging cross-curricular approach, with each theme taking a subject to drive the learning forward. An enquiry-based approach provides our pupils with the opportunity to work collaboratively, innovatively and develop higher order thinking skills.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Preschool & FS2)

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is divided into seven areas of learning and the children work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

- **Personal, Social & Emotional Development**
- **Communication & Language**
- **Physical Development**
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World



Personal, Social & Emotional Development

The Foundation Stage children will develop in confidence and learn to make effective relationships. They are encouraged to show care and respect for the needs and feelings of others. The children also develop their understanding of the importance of sharing and taking turns. Teachers strive to ensure the children feel valued and secure, as well as develop a sense of achievement through learning.

Communication & Language

Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children will have opportunities to: experience a rich **language** environment, develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, **speak** and listen in a range of situations. They will listen to stories daily, where they will be encouraged to respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.

Literacy

During FS, Children will learn to read and understand simple sentences. They will develop their phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately.

Mathematics

Number rhymes, songs and counting games will form an important part of daily activities. The children will compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count using everyday objects. They will develop their skills to recognise and use numbers and become familiar with numbers in their everyday lives. They will also learn to use mathematical language to describe shape, position, size and quantity.

Understanding of the World

The children will get to find out about other people, the place where they live and about all aspects of the environment through three main aspects: People and Communities, The World and Technology.

Expressive Art and Design

Children will develop their imagination and creativity in a range of ways including: singing songs and making music, dancing, playing with colours, textures and design.

Physical Development

The children will learn to move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and coordination. Using the indoor and outdoor areas, with a range of large and small equipment they will develop their balance and awareness of space. They will also begin to handle appropriate tools, objects and malleable materials with safety and increasing control.



Key Stage 1 Curriculum (Year 1 & Year 2)



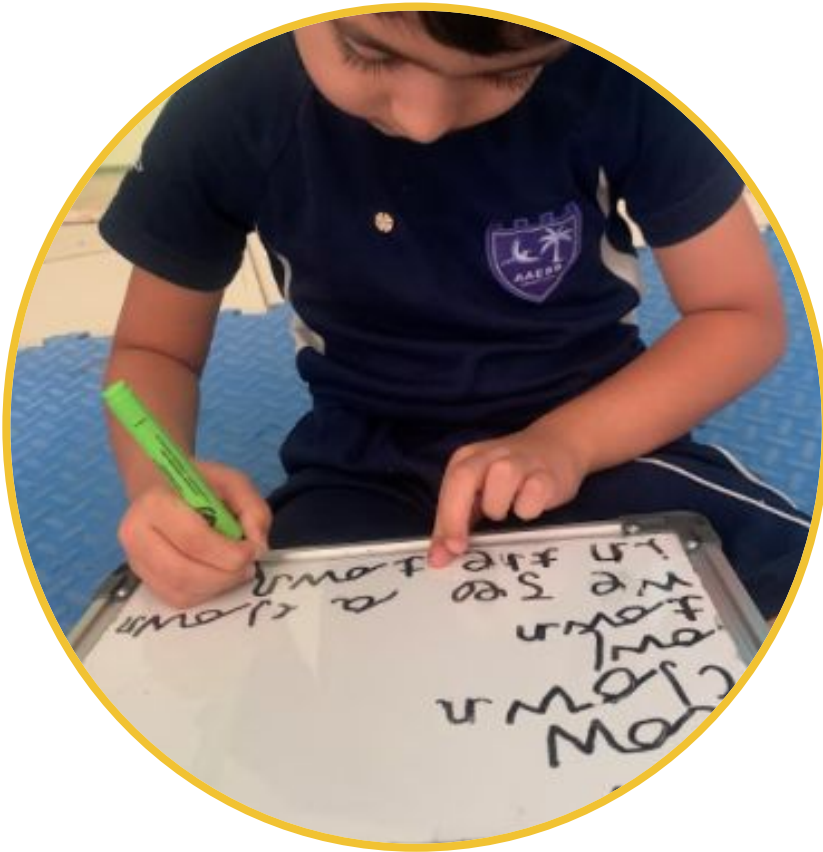
Key Stage 1 is an engaging environment that provides plenty of opportunities for the children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in meaningful and relevant ways. Lessons are planned with a strong emphasis on investigative and experiential learning where students are able to make connections across different areas of learning and disciplines. Risk taking, creativity, collaboration and independence are also celebrated.

Key Stage 2 Curriculum (Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 & Year 6)

The Key Stage 2 curriculum is designed to give all students every opportunity to make full use of their skills, qualities and attributes to prepare them effectively for the secondary school. The main focus is to continue to ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet every child's needs and celebrates the cultural diversity of the school community. Wherever possible we strive to enrich our curriculum by using intercultural resources and offering a variety of learning opportunities that promote both Emirati and other cultures.



Daily Phonics



In Foundation Stage, daily Phonics lessons enable the children to learn the letters and their sounds. Phonics are taught in an order which makes it easier to make words. First the children will learn **s, a, t, p, i, n**. Then they learn **m, d, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss**. The children will also be taught how to **blend these sounds** together to make words.

Throughout KS1 (Years 1 & 2), the children will continue to develop their phonics knowledge, decoding skills, spelling accuracy and fluency.

English - Writing

English lessons are carefully planned to be imaginative, progressive and meet the needs of all our students. The use of the Talk for Writing Strategy aims to enthuse children and support their language development through a storytelling approach. It equally provides them with a range of engaging writing opportunities that are suitably tailored to their topic and to match their individual needs.



English - Reading



At AAESS, we aim to promote and develop reading for pleasure across the school as we want our children to see books not only as a vehicle for learning but also as a source of enjoyment!

Research has proven that children who read for pleasure are more likely to be successful and happy throughout their lives and an average read of 20 minutes a day greatly increases vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Maths - Mastery

The concept of teaching mathematics to mastery is to ensure that topics are well developed. Students spend time fully exploring a concept before moving on to a different topic. Their new knowledge is then applied in subsequent lessons and pupils have ample opportunity to develop relationships between the topics.



Science

Science teaching focuses on both content and skills. In their lessons, the children are encouraged to be active learners and are provided with opportunities to develop their enquiry skills as well as explore their ideas or try to find answers to their questions.

They increase their science knowledge and understanding by taking part in practical investigations using appropriate equipment.



Integrated Curriculum



Our Integrated Curriculum refers to the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum (Art and Design, Design and Technology, Geography, and History). These subjects are taught through thematic topics which are **enquiry led**. They start with a **‘Hook’** (an initial stimulus or experience designed to help the children connect with the content and skills that will be taught) and end with a final **‘Outcome’** where the children can celebrate or share their achievements with each other, parents or the school community.

Specialist Subjects

AAESS is fully compliant with the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum expectations for the teaching of **Arabic, Islamic and Arabic Social Studies**.

Specialist teachers use their expertise to provide high quality learning experiences and outcomes for these subjects.

In Key Stage 2 students will also receive specialist science and computing lessons.



Enrichment



At AAESS we adopt a holistic approach to education and take pride in being able to offer a range of enrichment opportunities to cater for all our students; taking into account their different abilities and range of interests.

In addition to the wide range of subjects offered in each class, the enrichment activities enable children to make choices about the types of activities they wish to pursue to broaden their experiences and develop their interests.

Enrichment opportunities include: Extra Curricular Activities, Field trips and Workshops.

Supporting Learning

At AAESS, we aim to provide an atmosphere in which all children can reach their full potential. The school places great emphasis on the early identification of children who may have a learning difficulty or disability which is a barrier to their learning. The Head of Inclusion and class teacher jointly create an IEP (Individual Education Plan) designed to support their needs and progress.

Parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress through review meetings.



Student Achievement

Each child is valued as a unique individual, and teaching and learning activities are based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

Teachers continually assess children's progress and provide learning that matches their differing needs.

Parents will receive three academic progress reports each year.



Student Rewards

On joining the school, all students are assigned to one of our four houses and will collect individual House Points for their house as well as take part in special events or activities within their houses.

Although we strongly encourage teamwork and collaboration through our House Point system, we also recognise the importance of providing opportunities for individual students to be rewarded.



Home Learning



As a school we explore every opportunity to encourage a positive approach to learning both at home and school.

The purpose of setting home learning tasks is to enable children to:

- Improve their thinking and memory skills
- Develop positive study skills and habits
- Review and practice what has been covered in class
- Get ready for future learning in classes
- Extend learning by applying skills to new situations
- Help parents become more involved in what their children are learning in school

Health and Wellbeing

AAESS is committed to safeguarding and committed to promoting the wellbeing of children, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The school has a clinic and three full time nurses who deal with any injuries and illnesses which may occur during school hours. The Wellbeing committee, in collaboration with the school counselling department, leads the provision of and approach to mental wellbeing at AAESS. The health and safety and general wellbeing of all stakeholders at AAESS is considered a key priority of the school.



Promoting a healthy lifestyle



To support us in promoting healthy lifestyle choices, please ensure that your child brings the following to school every day:

- A light, healthy snack for morning and afternoon snack time
- A healthy lunch, e.g. sandwiches, fresh fruit, yogurt. Please encourage your child to eat healthy food therefore no crisps or chocolate and strictly **NO NUTS**
- A named water bottle
- A named AAESS school hat

A healthy diet can help concentration and learning. Promoting healthy lifestyles and good eating habits are an essential part of our work as a school

All food items should be in non-breakable containers and no glass bottles should be used. It is advisable to place small ice packs in the lunch boxes. The boxes are kept in air conditioned areas.

There are at least two playtime breaks, in each year group, every day. The timings of these vary depending on the year group but during these breaks the children will have the opportunity to eat their snacks or packed lunch.



Communication

We work hard to ensure communication is good, honest, open and based upon mutual respect and understanding. The following lines of communication are used regularly by the school: announcements on the school website, WhatsApp messages, text messages, emails or phone calls. It is important that you update any changes to your contact details.



Attendance and Punctuality



AAESS places a high value on the regular attendance and punctuality of all students. Every lesson in school has an educational value; therefore, attendance and punctuality support the school's foremost aim of student learning, progress and development.

We ask for your support in trying to achieve attendance as near to 100% as possible. Should your son or daughter be unable to attend classes please ensure the the class teacher or primary school attendance officer, Mrs Catherine Smith are informed. csmith@aaess.sch.ae

Parental Involvement



The education of our students is a partnership between home and school. Parental involvement is actively encouraged both at home and school.

During the academic year, all parents will be given the opportunity to see and discuss their children's learning. We also provide opportunities for parents celebrate their child's achievements and successes.

Special Events

Throughout the year there are many special celebrations held at school to enhance and enrich the curriculum. Annual events organised include: National Day and Sports Day.

Dates and timings of all events scheduled will be shared in the Primary Paths and Newsletters.



School Uniform

At AAESS, we believe that wearing a uniform is an identification of pride for our school and helps children develop a sense of belonging and equality.

It is therefore important that all students wear the approved uniform which should be clearly labelled with your child's full name.



All uniform items can be purchased from Zaks Store in Al Ain or online: [AAESS @ zaksstore.com](mailto:AAESS@zaksstore.com)

Transportation

AAESS follows the guidelines as set out by the Abu Dhabi Emirate School Transport Guidebook, which highlights the responsibilities of Schools, Bus Operators, Bus Drivers, Bus Monitors, Parents and Students.



To book or enquire about transportation for your child or children, please contact our transportation officer: myaghi@aaess.sch.ae

[Bus Application Form](#)