

## **The Quality Assurance Visit Report: Repton Abu Dhabi (March 2018)**

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### **1. Introduction**

The four members of the RISL Quality Assurance team spent three days at the Fry Campus from March 11<sup>th</sup> to March 13<sup>th</sup> 2018; their biographies can be found at the end of this report. At the outset the team would like to express its gratitude to everyone who made the visit so enjoyable. It was a particularly busy time at the school, given the campus opened only five months before the team arrived, but this did not detract from the enthusiasm of the staff towards the team. The warmth of welcome was appreciated, as was the willingness of the leadership, staff and pupils to embrace the purpose of the visit.

This was the fourth annual Quality Assurance Visit (QAV) to Repton Abu Dhabi. Since the last visit the second campus opened, referred to in this report as Fry (RAD). The original site, which houses the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, is now referred to as the Rose Campus. Originally the team intended to spend time at both sites, however in the immediate week before the QAV ADEK announced their inspection at the Rose campus; therefore the team focussed its attention on the new Fry Campus, which houses Years 3,4, 5 and 6. These four year groups comprise 180 students. The campus encompasses a total build area of 25,000 square metres and houses state-of-the-art facilities including purpose built classrooms with modern communications, a five-lane 25-meter indoor swimming pool, three indoor sports halls and four shaded rooftop tennis courts. There is also a sky-court/dining area with capacity for 400 plus pupils as well as a central library in addition to the art centre, design and technology rooms, music halls, science laboratories and a variety of educational spaces offering a range of flexible learning options.

ADEK approval was given shortly before term started in September 2017, that Fry (RAD) opened on time and in such good order is a testament to the professionalism of all those concerned, teaching and non-teaching staff alike. Although at present there are relatively few children in the school (the building is designed for c1800 children) it is evident that the design of the building has already generated a

purposeful academic environment, in particular the central atrium gives a sense of space and ambition. The leadership team is well on the way to developing a culture of pupil engagement, learning and curiosity. This is particularly impressive given the newness of the building and the teething problems which tend to come with all new building projects.

## 2. Executive Summary

- The recommendations from the previous QAV report have been embraced and implemented.
- The school is very well led at all senior levels.
- The school evidently prioritises its stated ambition to be the leading technology school in the UAE. This was noted as a particular strength in the previous QAV, and so it remains.
- The Governors steward the school effectively. The Board has the appropriate structure to ensure it has a detailed understanding of the workings of the school. It sets the appropriate metrics for success.
- Fry (RAD) provides a comprehensive and well-rounded education, which is wholly in line with the aims of the school and with the expectations of Repton UK.
- In English and Mathematics attainment is above UK standards for the large majority of pupils. Despite a large number of pupils entering the school with English as an additional language (EAL), they make strong progress as a result of very effective teaching and an innovative and rich curriculum.
- The QAV team was impressed by the pupils' attitudes to learning; they are very positive across the school. They are enthusiastic and active learners, who work hard, support each other and strive to meet the expectations of their teachers.
- The curriculum at Fry (RAD) is rich and varied. The school offers the British Independent School Curriculum for English-medium subjects and the UAE Ministry of Education Curriculum for Arabic-medium subjects.
- Teaching across the school is highly effective in promoting positive progress and high levels of achievement.
- The teaching staff are dedicated, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and skilled. Their lessons are well-planned and, in the majority of cases, based on an accurate understanding of the pupils' needs. The children clearly enjoy their lessons and are actively engaged in their learning.
- The team made special note of the culture of review, reflection, adaptability in evidence around the campus; there is a constant desire to improve.
- There is a strong Inclusion department, which will strengthen as the processes become more embedded.
- The school is successful in meeting its aim to provide *'the best for every child'* an agenda that is supported by the core values of tolerance, respect, integrity, empathy, resilience, honesty and care.

- There is an enthusiastic and committed parent body; one that is fully engaged with the education of their children.
- The pupils' voice is clear and well received.

### **3. The characteristics of the school**

Repton School, Abu Dhabi, was founded in 2013 and is a British curriculum international school, situated across two purpose-built sites on Al Reem Island, an area which has undergone rapid development (and is continuing to do so) close to the centre of Abu Dhabi. Evolve Knowledge Investments (EKI), the Dubai based educational operator works in partnership with Repton International Schools Ltd (RISL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Repton School founded in 1557; the latter has a particular role in supporting the educational development and growth of the school. This is achieved in various ways, for example with representation on the Board of Governors and by providing the Chair of the Governors' Education Committee.

The annual Quality Assurance Visit (QAV) is commissioned by Repton School UK and its purpose is to provide an assurance that the quality of the educational provision accords with the Repton Board's expectations. It is expected that any suggestions for future improvement made by the QAV team will be subsequently implemented. The written QAV report is made available to the Principal, the Governors of Repton School UK, Repton School Abu Dhabi and to EKI. Whilst the QAV is not intended to replace the ADEK inspection, there are many common elements.

During the course of this visit the team observed lessons, conducted meetings with teachers, administrators, school leaders, parents and pupils. Break times, assemblies, and the beginning and end of the day were also observed. Policies and paperwork were reviewed and evaluated, as were previous inspection reports. It should be noted that the school was inspected in 2016 by ADEK inspectors who were most impressed with what they saw, subsequently rating the school as Very Good.

#### **What Repton Abu Dhabi says about itself**

The school presents itself in the following way:

*What does a Repton education stand for? Academically selective and with high aspirations, we are a school that never loses focus of the individual child. Repton is a school where there are many blends: a blend of the pursuit of excellence with a broadening of the mind; a blend in the fulfilment of succeeding as an individual with the pleasure of working as part of a team; and a blend between the investment in self-discovery with an awareness of others. This, as our sister schools refer to, is the 'wholeness' that personifies a Repton education.*

*An international school with a British flavour, Repton Abu Dhabi offers an inclusive learning environment appealing to families from a range of backgrounds. The curriculum combines the best of the British system with the dynamism of the UAE. It is supported by an exciting and broad extra-curricular programme taking full advantage of our first rate facilities. In short, we feed a natural curiosity for learning to equip your child with a solid foundation on which to build their future dreams.*

*The school aims to incorporate the Ten Values that lie at the heart of the “home” school in Derbyshire.*

#### *The Ten Values*

*Repton Abu Dhabi sets out to educate all pupils with a firm set of values, which it also seeks to uphold in all its many and varied activities. These values are:*

*To instil our pupils with the determination and self-confidence to meet the challenges of an ever-changing technological world.*

*To develop a sense of dignity and respect for others.*

*To enable our pupils to display real dexterity of thought and action when faced with changing circumstances.*

*To encourage the development of a sense of inquiry, independence of thought and a willingness to take risks in a rational fashion.*

*To demonstrate initiative when faced by the challenge of leadership and responsibility.*

*To promote internationalism by developing an understanding of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations.*

*To instil in our pupils a sense of pride and commitment to the values and achievements of the school, both during and after their time there.*

*To present opportunities for our pupils to express their creativity, develop a joy of learning and gain self-confidence.*

*To involve our pupils in the promotion of a caring and compassionate society, both within the school and in the outside world.*

*To promote these values and objectives through the educational and extra-curricular activities pursued by the school, and all its staff, pupils and parents.*

#### **4. The Team**

Ian Davenport is a governor of Repton School, UK. He is the founding Chief Executive of The Royal National Children’s SpringBoard Foundation, having previously been the Head Master of Blundell’s School. Prior to Blundell’s, he was Senior Tutor and Head of Department at Radley College and an Economics tutor at Oxford University. He was also an ISI inspector. He is an adviser to the Department for Education. In addition he is an adviser to the ISC and HMC schools. After graduating he worked for an American investment bank. Currently he is a governor

of other independent boarding schools, as well as sitting on the Boards of the RISL international schools.

Niel McLeod is the Director of Academics and Education at Evolve Knowledge Investments. He joined in 2015. He has over 25 years of experience in English education, working in senior leadership roles for the past 20 years including seven as a Head Teacher. He has experience of developing new schools in the UK and his work on assessment was featured as a national case study of good practice. Since 2011 he has worked as a school inspector for Ofsted, inspecting schools across the UK. He holds a BA in Education from the Christ Church University College in the UK and the National Professional Qualification for Head Teachers in the UK.

Paula Bushby is currently Assistant Head (Academic) at Foremarke Hall, Repton Preparatory School where she has been since September 2009. After gaining a BSc (Hons) in Biology and a PGCE in Integrated Science from Goldsmiths' College, University of London, Paula taught Science and Biology at senior level for 9 years, both in the UK, and in International Schools. She made the move into the prep school world in 2004, initially to take on a Head of Science role. She gained her MEd in Educational Leadership from University of Buckingham in 2016. In addition to overseeing the academic life of Foremarke, she also teaches Science and PSHE.

Naomi Williams is the Headmistress of Foremarke Dubai. Previously she was the Deputy Head at Repton Junior School Dubai. She has held senior positions in a variety of UK independent and state maintained schools. Before transferring to Dubai she was a senior member of the Oxfordshire LEA team specialising in school improvement. She is a Geography graduate.