EXCEL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL L.L.C
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EXCEL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Annual School Report

Academic Year 2025-2026

A Member School of the AJ Group of Schools - Al Ain, UAE

Prepared for parents, staff, the Board, and the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) in accordance with school annual reporting requirements.

eSIS 9335 | British Curriculum | FS2 to Year 11 | Irtiqa'a Rating: GOOD (January 2025)

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1. School Overview

Excel International School (EIS) is a British curriculum school (eSIS 9335) operating under the AJ Group of Schools, alongside Al Ain Juniors British (AJB) and Al Ain Juniors Indian (AJI). EIS delivers the National Curriculum for England from FS2 through to Year 11, with Mathematics and Science taught in English.

Vision: At EXCEL we aim to nurture our young people to be achievers of extraordinary determination, who set the right goals in areas of education, morality, attitude, ethics, and values.

Key Facts at a Glance

eSIS Number	Year Levels	Irtiqa'a Rating (Jan 2025)	Curriculum
9335	FS2-Y11	GOOD	British

Student Population

The school is licensed to function from FS2 until Year 13. It is currently functioning up to Year 10 in the 2025-26 academic year. The ADEK-approved maximum number of students is 636. Steady growth has been visible over the past three years, and the expected student numbers for the next academic year are close to 500 students.

As of the most recent enrolment count, EIS supports a growing and diverse student body across four phases. Projected figures for the 2026-2027 academic year point to continued growth toward full capacity. The school's population is broadly balanced between Arab and non-Arab families, with Muslim students forming the largest single group, reflecting the diverse, multicultural character of the school community in Al Ain. As of the most recent enrolment count, EIS supports a growing and diverse student body across four phases. Projected figures for the 2026-2027 academic year point to continued growth toward full capacity.

Key Developments in 2025-2026

- Continued roll-out of AI-enhanced professional development through the Aristotal coaching platform, with EIS recognised as a regional leader within the AJ Group.
- Successful delivery of a Distance Learning period (March-April 2026), with real-time survey feedback from parents, students, and staff used to adjust practice within the same term.
- Design and Board approval of the new EIS Excellence Scholarship Program, a merit-based fee concession initiative launching for Grade 8/Year 9 to Grade 11/Year 12 students from 2026-27 registration.
- Expansion of inclusive provision, with four dedicated Inclusion Rooms now equipped and in use across the school (including a newly established fourth room).
- Submission of the school's K-12 AI Implementation Plan to ADEK, building on EIS's participation in the ADEK AI Pilot Programme during 2025-26.
- Continued strong performance of the Nahla & Nahil digital Arabic reading platform, judged 'Very Good' in its first full year of school-wide use.

2. Academic Performance

EIS uses the GL Progress Tests (PTE - English, PTM - Mathematics, PTS - Science) as its principal standardised benchmark assessments, alongside internal end-of-year attainment data, IBT (Arabic), and — from Year 10 — Edexcel IGCSE preparation. Judgments follow the Irtiqa'a scale, where results are 'Acceptable' at 75%+ meeting expectations, and 'Good', 'Very Good', or 'Outstanding' according to the proportion of students exceeding expectations (50%+, 61%+, and 75%+ respectively).

2.1 GL Progress Test Attainment — 2025-2026

Subject	Year Group	Meeting Expectation	Exceeding Expectation	Judgment
Science (PTS)	Year 4	94%	85%	Outstanding
Science (PTS)	Year 5	86%	78%	Outstanding
Science (PTS)	Year 6	76%	70%	Very Good
Science (PTS)	Year 9	100%	100%	Outstanding
Science (PTS)	Year 10	100%	100%	Outstanding
English (PTE)	Year 4	89%	71%	Very Good
English (PTE)	Year 5	76%	54%	Good
English (PTE)	Year 6	51%	42%	Weak
English (PTE)	Year 7	82%	66%	Very Good
English (PTE)	Year 9	96%	92%	Outstanding
English (PTE)	Year 10	88%	88%	Outstanding
Maths (PTM)	Year 4	100%	91%	Outstanding
Maths (PTM)	Year 5	86%	63%	Very Good
Maths (PTM)	Year 6	72%	45%	Weak
Maths (PTM)	Year 7	100%	93%	Outstanding
Maths (PTM)	Year 9	100%	96%	Outstanding
Maths (PTM)	Year 10	100%	94%	Outstanding

Strengths: Years 4, 7, 9, and 10 are consistently 'Outstanding' or 'Very Good' across all three subjects, and Science results are strong throughout the school, with Year 9 and Year 10 both achieving 100% attainment and exceedance in Science.

Areas for Development: Year 6 is the school's most consistent area for improvement, judged 'Weak' in both English and Mathematics this year. The proportion of Year 6 students exceeding expectations fell year-on-year in both subjects — from 55% to 42% in English and from 87% to 45% in Mathematics — a significant cohort dip that is a named priority within the School Development Plan (see Section 3) and is being addressed through targeted intervention.

2.2 External and Standardised Assessment Context

- Internal SMART targets are set annually against GL Progress Test, IBT (Arabic), ASSET, MAP, and equivalent standardised benchmark assessment (SBA) tools, with year-on-year targets for improvement built into the SDP for English, Mathematics, and Science.

- EIS participates in TIMSS, and is working towards stronger participation in PISA and PIRLS as part of its international benchmarking strategy, with a School Development Plan priority dedicated to sustaining and improving outcomes on all three international assessments.
- Edexcel IGCSE results are not yet available for the current Year 10 cohort (the school's first cohort to sit external Edexcel board examinations); internal SMART targets of 80%+ students achieving above-expected outcomes have been set across English as a Second Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, ICT, Business, and Economics for 2025-26 as a baseline for future external results.

2.3 Arabic Literacy — Nahla & Nahil Digital Reading Platform

In its first full year of school-wide implementation, the Nahla & Nahil digital Arabic reading platform was judged overall 'Very Good', with strong engagement from both Arab and non-Arab students in Year 2 to Year 7. Engagement naturally softens in Years 8-10 owing to increased subject load and examination pressures, but remains an effective tool for vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, and independent learning across the school.

- Leading classes recorded activation rates of 91-95% and completed between 300 and over 1,400 digital stories each during the year.
- The school has set a 2026-27 target of at least 90% account activation school-wide, with best-practice sharing from high-performing teachers and termly monitoring of usage data.

3. School Development Plan (SDP) — Progress Update

The 2025-2026 School Development Plan was built directly from internal self-evaluation and the school's most recent Irtiqa'a inspection, and is structured around five priority improvement objectives. Progress against each is summarised below.

Priority 1 — Raise achievement in all subjects, particularly FS and Primary

- Baseline assessments, bi-weekly formative tracking, and differentiated planning have been embedded across all year groups, with a specific focus on closing gaps for the most able and for students with additional learning needs.
- A dedicated strand of work targeted raising the Early Primary (Kindergarten) Department from 'Acceptable' to 'Good', through an extended, zone-based inquiry curriculum, daily differentiated small-group instruction, and strengthened parent engagement.

Priority 2 — Improve teaching and assessment in all phases

- Assessment-for-learning practice, structured intervention for underperforming students, and consistent application of the marking and feedback policy were prioritised school-wide, with particular emphasis on FS and Primary.

Priority 3 — Sustain outcomes in TIMSS and improve PISA/PIRLS readiness

- Structured mock assessments, professional development on international assessment frameworks, and integration of TIMSS/PISA/PIRLS-style questioning into daily lessons continued through the year, supporting the strong Science and Mathematics outcomes reported in Section 2.

Priority 4 — Improve curriculum implementation and modification

- Cross-curricular links were strengthened through STEAM weeks, thematic projects, and an expanded STEAM Elite Club, alongside continued work to ensure differentiation for students of determination and the most able is embedded in every lesson.

Priority 5 — Improve the effectiveness of leadership

- Termly Quality Review Meetings (QRM) were used to strengthen leadership accountability for assessment data, particularly in support of students with additional learning needs and gifted and talented students, with HODs and SLT required to report progress each term.

Looking Ahead: The Year 6 English and Mathematics dip identified in Section 2, and the continued drive to embed AI literacy (Section 9), will both be reflected as explicit priorities in the 2026-2027 School Development Plan.

4. Inspection & Accreditation

Irtiqa'a Overall Rating	Inspection Term	Inspection Dates
GOOD	Term 2	21-23 Jan 2025

EIS's most recent Irtiqa'a inspection took place in Term 2 (21-23 January 2025) and resulted in an overall rating of 'Good'. Findings from the inspection directly informed the current School Development Plan's five priority objectives (Section 3), with particular attention to achievement in the Foundation Stage and Primary phase, and to the effectiveness of leadership monitoring and accountability.

The Irtiqa'a scale used for judging progress and attainment sets clear thresholds: a 'Good' rating requires 50-60% of students attaining or progressing above expectations; 'Very Good' requires 61-74%; and 'Outstanding' requires 75% or more. These same thresholds are applied throughout the school's internal GL Progress Test analysis in Section 2.

No additional third-party accreditation or affiliation renewals are recorded for the current cycle. The school continues to operate under its Irtiqa'a inspection framework as its primary external quality assurance mechanism, alongside its participation in the ADEK AI Pilot Programme (2025-26) and subsequent AI Implementation Plan submission (see Section 9).

5. Student Achievements

5.1 EIS Excellence Scholarship Program (launching AY 2026-27 registration)

A major new initiative approved this year is the EIS Excellence Scholarship Program, a merit-based fee concession scheme for Grade 8/Year 9 through Grade 11/Year 12 students. Scholarships are scored out of 100 points across four pillars — Academic Performance (60%), Leadership (20%), and Sporting and Cultural Excellence (10% each) — with the highest-scoring students eligible for a 48% fee discount that brings EIS tuition to parity with Al Ain Juniors British (AJB).

Scholarship Tier	Points	Discount	Recognition
Deserving Scholar	60-69	10%	Genuine effort, developing merit profile
Merit Scholar	70-79	25%	Strong all-round achievement
Distinction Scholar	80-89	35%	High academic and co-curricular excellence
Excellence Scholar ★	90-100	48%	AJB Parity — highest tier

The programme rewards excellence not only in academics but in sport (ADEK Cup and similar competitions), culture (public speaking, singing, Quran recitation, debate), and formally recognised school leadership roles (Team Captain through to Head Boy/Head Girl), giving students multiple pathways to recognition.

5.2 Essential Lifelong Skills & Career Guidance

From 2026-27, a structured Essential Lifelong Skills & Career Guidance curriculum (delivered in partnership with Unifrog) will be embedded across Year 7 to Year 9, developing meta-skills such as focus, communication, listening, public speaking, leadership, creativity, study and revision technique, and entrepreneurship — each mapped to age-appropriate objectives and termly themes.

- Year 7 focuses on focus & concentration strategies and communication skills.
- Year 8 focuses on public speaking, leadership, and creativity & innovation.
- Year 9 focuses on study and revision technique, and entrepreneurship, including a Welsh Baccalaureate-aligned Enterprise and Employability Challenge.

5.3 Co-Curricular and Wellbeing Engagement

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) met throughout the year, including a well-attended session in May 2026 that reviewed the year's transition to online learning, student wellbeing and emotional health, school policies, home-school communication, and plans for 2026-27 — reflecting an active and engaged parent community working in partnership with the school.

6. Staff Development & Achievements

Professional development remained a defining strength of the school this year. Across the AJ Group of Schools (EIS, AJB, and AJI combined), 2,508 CPD sessions and 4,062 training hours were logged between May 2025 and June 2026 — a 576% increase on the October 2024 baseline — with EIS contributing the largest share of Group activity.

EIS CPD Sessions (53% of Group)	In-House Delivery (Group-wide)	EIS Aristotal AI Engagement
1,335	78.2%	88.9%

6.1 AI-Enhanced Coaching — Aristotal Platform

EIS has emerged as a regional leader in AI-powered teacher coaching. An impact analysis covering the full Sept 2024-June 2026 period (38 teachers) found the coaching programme's overall effect to be of 'significant' impact with 'high evidence' of positive change in student outcomes, moving classrooms from a teacher-led, pace-driven model toward pupil-centred discovery.

Teacher Engagement Outcome	Teachers	Description
Transformed	16	Sustained shift: discovery-based scaffolding, embedded wait-time, pupil-led reasoning
Developing	15	Positive shifts in some areas; inconsistent under time pressure
Disengaged	7	Limited meaningful engagement; a priority for targeted leadership support

Sustainability of this practice is currently rated 'Medium' by the coaching platform's analysis, with embedding still underway; the seven disengaged teachers have been identified as a specific priority for peer-coaching support in 2026-27.

6.2 CPD Provision and ADEK Compliance

ADEK requires all licensed teachers and academic leaders to complete a minimum of 75 CPD hours per academic year. The AJ Group's combined resource offer (Step Ahead training, Cambridge/Pearson/Edexcel programmes, COBIS resources, SISRA-linked CPD, Aristotal coaching, and the MD's professional library) provides a potential range of 85-130+ hours per teacher, well in excess of the requirement.

At EIS specifically, CPD logging as of April 2026 showed 169 staff recording 1,001 sessions and 1,275 total hours (an average of 7.5 hours per staff member with roughly seven of eleven months of the year elapsed), split 72% internal and 28% external delivery. Early Primary recorded the highest average engagement per teacher; Secondary and Upper Primary logging lagged behind. This is a recognised under-logging and participation gap that the school is addressing directly through retroactive logging campaigns, automated reminders, and closer HOD monitoring ahead of the year-end ADEK audit.

6.3 Flagship Programmes

- The Step Ahead programme (Summer, Winter, and Spring sessions) remains the Group's highest-volume in-house CPD provision, contributing 30-48 hours per teacher per year.
- The Managing Director's Professional Library, curated across seven categories from pedagogy to student wellbeing, was distributed to all three school libraries in December 2025-January 2026.

- Teachers attended Cambridge International events including the Cambridge MENA Conference on AI Innovation in Education and the 'Understanding Impact for Teachers and Middle Leaders' course, both completed and verified as external CPD.

7. Wellbeing, Inclusion & Safeguarding

7.1 Inclusion Provision

EIS operates four dedicated Inclusion Rooms, each equipped with sensory and learning resources — including calming spaces, tactile learning materials, small-group teaching areas, and specialist display and resource storage. A fourth Inclusion Room was established this year, expanding the school's capacity to provide targeted, individualised support for students of determination.

- Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) and Action Plans are developed for students of determination and low-ability students, with tailored teaching strategies and assistive technologies used to support access to the curriculum.
- The SPEED 2.1 software application was introduced to help teachers plan and prepare tiered intervention for students needing additional support.
- ADEK-mandated Inclusion training (Autism Awareness, ALN system, ISS) featured prominently in this year's CPD calendar across every school phase, led in partnership with ADEK and MRC-NECC ('Seeing the Signs' Autism Identification training).

7.2 Student and Staff Wellbeing — Distance Learning Survey

Following a Distance Learning period in March-April 2026, the school surveyed 37 teaching staff, 55 parents, and 30 students after the first two weeks, to capture an early and honest picture of the online learning experience.

Parents feel well informed	Parent Satisfaction (mean)	Staff rate self Effective+
93%	3.85/5	92%

Ninety-three percent of parents felt well informed by the school throughout the DL period, and Lower Primary recorded the strongest results school-wide (4.21/5 parent satisfaction, zero staff overload). However, the survey also surfaced a genuine perception gap: while parents and staff reported a broadly positive experience, students — particularly in Upper Primary/Middle School — reported lower enjoyment (37% rating 4-5 out of 5) and comprehension (only 73% understood teacher explanations). Around 30% of staff reported a poor work-life balance during the period, highest in Upper Primary/Middle School.

Action Taken: In direct response to survey findings, the school amended KG academic-day timings to better suit families, delivered focused staff training on using AI and digital tools more efficiently to boost interactivity in online lessons, and began documenting Lower Primary's practices for wider sharing across the school. Staff wellbeing in Upper Primary/Middle School continues to receive targeted attention.

7.3 Safeguarding

Child Protection and Safeguarding formed a consistent thread through the year's professional development calendar, with dedicated sessions delivered Group-wide alongside counsellor and social worker-led training, and specific autism-awareness and inclusion training mandated by ADEK. The Head of Inclusion undertakes a dual role as both trainer and learner in this area, including attendance at the Incluzun Summit 2026 on inclusive education and technology for diverse learners.

8. Financial Summary

EIS operates within the AJ Group of Schools under Focal Point Management Consultancy (FPMC). Detailed audited financial statements are prepared and reviewed separately by the school's finance department and Governing Board and are available to parents and stakeholders on request; this section summarises the fee-related developments most directly relevant to families for the year.

8.1 Tuition Fee Context

Qualifying Grade / Year	EIS Current Annual Fee (AED)	AJB Benchmark (AED)
G8 / Y9	24,460	13,980
G9 / Y10	26,960	13,900
G10 / Y11	26,960	15,720
G11 / Y12	29,710	17,420

The introduction of the EIS Excellence Scholarship Program (Section 5.1) represents a planned investment in fee concessions of up to 48% for the highest-achieving students in Grades 8-11, funded as a merit-based retention and reward initiative rather than a blanket fee reduction. The scheme is non-retroactive, applies only to tuition (not transport, uniform, or examination fees), and is subject to a discretionary cap on the number of awards per year, pending Board approval each cycle.

8.2 Investment in Staff and Resources

Significant in-year investment was directed toward professional development infrastructure (the Aristotal AI coaching platform, the MD's professional library, and external Cambridge/Pearson/ADEK training), and toward inclusive education infrastructure (the fourth Inclusion Room and associated specialist resources). Both are reflected qualitatively in Sections 6 and 7; the school's finance function tracks the full cost breakdown separately in the annual budget report to the Board.

9. Future Priorities — Academic Year 2026-2027

Building on the achievements and challenges identified throughout this report, the following priorities will shape EIS's focus for 2026-2027:

9.1 Academic Standards

- Target the Year 6 English and Mathematics dip identified in Section 2 with structured intervention as the incoming Year 7 cohort transitions into Secondary.

- Continue to build toward the school's first Edexcel IGCSE external results, with 80%+ above-expected targets set across all Year 10/11 subjects.
- Sustain 'Outstanding' TIMSS-aligned outcomes and strengthen PISA and PIRLS readiness through continued mock assessment practice and curriculum alignment.

9.2 AI Literacy and Digital Learning

- Roll out the K-12 AI Implementation Plan submitted to ADEK, with a phased, age-appropriate model — from fully unplugged AI Discovery in FS2/KG through to a dedicated weekly AI lesson strand in Years 10-11 across English, Mathematics, Biology, and Computer Studies/IT.
- Complete mandatory AI Safety & Ethics and Level 1 AI Foundations training for all teaching staff by August 2026, with Heads of Department completing Level 2 Integration training by October 2026.
- Expand Aristotal AI coaching to AJB and AJI Heads of Department and Subject Coordinators, and provide targeted peer-coaching support for the seven EIS teachers identified as currently disengaged from the platform.

9.3 CPD and ADEK Compliance

- Close the CPD logging gap identified in Section 6.2 through retroactive logging campaigns and automated reminders, targeting full 75-hour ADEK compliance for all staff ahead of the 2026-27 end-of-year audit.
- Launch individual CPD portfolios for every teacher, teaching assistant, and academic leader, with a first Group-wide audit scheduled for December 2026.
- Introduce clearer CPD sub-categorisation (AI/Innovation, Wellness, EdTech) to strengthen reporting and strategic planning across the Group.

9.4 Student Programmes

- Launch the EIS Excellence Scholarship Program for Grade 8/Year 9 to Grade 11/Year 12 students, with the first award cycle assessed in January-February 2027.
- Embed the new Essential Lifelong Skills & Career Guidance curriculum across Years 7-9 in partnership with Unifrog.
- Raise Nahla & Nahil Arabic reading platform activation to at least 90% school-wide, with termly monitoring and recognition for high-engagement classes.

9.5 Wellbeing and Inclusion

- Continue to monitor and support staff work-life balance, particularly in Upper Primary/Middle School, following findings from the Distance Learning survey.
- Share Lower Primary's distance- and blended-learning best practice across all phases.
- Continue to strengthen inclusive provision across all four Inclusion Rooms and expand parental engagement in support of students of determination.

This report will be reviewed and updated annually by the Governing Board and Principal, in line with ADEK monitoring and quality assurance requirements.