



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024
Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 7:30pm
Secondary Auditorium

The Honorary Secretary, Ms Maheen Pfeffer, welcomed all in attendance at the British School Al Khubairat's Annual General Meeting for 2024 and introduced her fellow Governors, Headmaster and Director of Finance and Operations who were also present at the top table.

The Hon. Secretary continued that, due to there being 79 registrations for the AGM, under the School's Constitution, the meeting was not quorate as it did not have the required 20% of parental attendance. The meeting therefore dissolved for a short period of time before being reconvened by order of the Board. During the break, the Head Boy and Head Girl of Secondary, Mubarak Al Dhaheri and Orlagh Traynor, gave short talks on what it meant to be a BSAK student.

The Hon. Secretary thanked the Head Boy and Head Girl for their enlightening speeches. The Hon. Secretary also confirmed that, following expiry of the requisite time period, the meeting was declared quorate under Paragraph 6 III (ii) of the Constitution and the Agenda items could therefore commence.

1. Adopt the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2023

The Hon. Secretary asked for the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday the 28th of November 2023 to be adopted. The Minutes had been posted on the School's website and parent portal for review from Monday the 4th of November 2024.

No objections were noted from all present and the Hon. Secretary declared them approved.

Proposed: Lois Magee
Seconded: Stephanie Clark

Following the adoption of the Minutes, the Hon. Secretary introduced Mr Faisal Raja, the Board Chair.

2. Introduction from the Chair – Mr Faisal Raja

Good evening BSAK Community,

On behalf of my fellow Governors, I would like to formally welcome you to the 2024 Annual General Meeting of The British School Al Khubairat.

Our School remains full of energy with an added vibrancy now that the outdoors are opening up to us all once more with the cooler weather coming in. The playgrounds are full of students playing games and enjoying catch ups with friends which is lovely to witness when visiting the School.

It is hard to believe 2025 is nearly upon us. I hope your children have enjoyed this last term having taken advantage of the fantastic opportunities BSAK has to offer. An outstanding education provided as standard, with further enhanced learning in the form of modern forward-thinking methodology such as the teaching of the Harkness Method in Secondary and the CUSP Curriculum in Primary as only 2 examples. We are proud

that our School can be seen as an educational trailblazer in the region, whilst also being open to sharing the knowledge with other schools in the UAE and beyond.

We also hope your children have benefited from the vast range of co-curricular offerings made available to them. These are fantastic opportunities to delve into their areas of interest and passions outside of the norms of education participating in various sports, the Arts and technology as only a few examples. After just attending the School Production of Rock of Ages, it was once again a fantastic showcase of our talented Students and dedicated Staff coming together which I felt really left all attendees with a strong sense of pride in our wonderful Community.

The Board works in collaboration with the School to ensure resources are in place to allow BSAK to continually improve. The last Academic Year has seen the Science and Innovation Centre and improved 6th Form areas really become part of the modernised fabric of BSAK. With further recent improvements such as the redesigned Primary Reception area and improved Jubilee building allowing the facilities to catch up with the rest of the outstanding BSAK Experience. There will be more exciting developments to come with plans in place for more improvements which we greatly look forward to updating you on soon. Watch this space.

The Headmaster will outline further achievements and developments at the School in his report to follow. Please also refer to the Governor's Annual Report for the 2023-24 Academic Year, which will be distributed to you all shortly after the AGM.

I feel it is very important to take this time to acknowledge the following:-

Our Staff and Leadership Team – Above all, we are incredibly fortunate to have an outstanding team of talented teaching, support, and operational staff, led by our visionary Headmaster, Mark Leppard, and his Senior Leadership Team. On behalf of the Board and the BSAK community, I extend our heartfelt thanks to each member of the BSAK Staff for their remarkable achievements and unwavering dedication to our Students.

Our Parents – We deeply appreciate your ongoing support of our School. BSAK continues to be committed to fostering each child's educational journey, development, and well-being. We welcome all forms of communication from you, as both positive feedback and constructive criticism encourage our Staff and provide the School with valuable insights for improvement.

ADEK – Our gratitude goes to ADEK for its continued support and guidance. We look forward to strengthening our partnership and sharing knowledge to benefit the entire education sector in Abu Dhabi.

Our Sponsors – We express our heartfelt thanks to the ruling family of Abu Dhabi for their continued support of our School. Established in 1968 on land generously donated by the late President His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, BSAK was formalised in 1971 through an Emiri Decree, which provides land to the school in perpetuity. We also thank His Majesty's Ambassador and the British Embassy for their longstanding association with BSAK, the only British Embassy School in the UAE. The Ambassador serves as our Patron, and the Embassy's recognition greatly supports our operations.

To the Board of Governors – I thank my colleagues on the Board for their dedication and for giving up their time supporting BSAK which they do on an entirely voluntary basis.

This evening we have 2 positions to fill on the board – of which more later.

With that, I thank you for joining us this evening and again thank you for supporting BSAK.

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The Hon. Treasurer thanked the Chair for his speech.

3. Report from the Hon. Treasurer

The Hon. Secretary advised the meeting attendees that the Honorary Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statements had been posted on the School website and Parent Portal for review since the 15th of November 2024. The Hon. Secretary advised that The Hon. Treasurer, Headmaster and Director of Finance and Operations were available to answer any questions on the Report and the Financial Statements. After confirming there were no questions, The Hon. Secretary asked those present to consider and vote on the following resolutions:

1. "That the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2024 be approved and published"

A resolution of the meeting that the audited finance statements for the year ended 31st August 2024 are approved and hereby published.

It was noted that nobody opposed the motion, it was passed unanimously.

Proposed: Eleanor Edgar
Seconded: Frederick Byrne

2. "That the auditors KPMG be appointed as the School auditors for the academic year ending 31st August 2025".

It was noted that nobody opposed the motion, it was passed unanimously.

Proposed: Ross Thompson
Seconded: Sam Walter

4. Ballot for Parent Elected Governors

The Hon. Secretary explained that there were 2 vacancies for Parent Elected Governor this year and 4 candidates putting themselves forward for the roles. Each candidate introduced themselves in turn with a 3 minute speech in order by surname: -

- Mariam Musallam Al-Qubaisi
- Frederick Martin Byrne
- Faisal Raja
- Ross Thompson

The Hon. Secretary thanked the candidates for their speeches and requested that the Parents in attendance complete their ballot paper by voting for 2 candidates only using the provided Ballot Papers. She also reminded the Parents that they had to have signed the register to confirm attendance at the AGM in order for their vote to be valid.

Completed ballot papers were collected by the Head Boy/Girl and were counted by the Clerk prior to the results being announced at the end of the meeting. Whilst the votes were being ratified, the Hon. Secretary introduced the Headmaster, Mr Mark Leppard, for his report.

5. Report from the Head – Mark Leppard MBE

Good evening BSAK Community and welcome to the School AGM hosted by our Board of Governors.

My presentation will focus upon the achievements, challenges and successes over the past 15 months as well as give a flavour of where we are heading moving forward.

This evening is an opportunity for the Community to hear first-hand from the Board. There are certain constitutional requirements but also the chance for us as BSAK Stakeholders to come together.

Working together is fundamental to the success of the School and ultimately your children. Bringing parents into school for specific opportunities is hugely beneficial and over the past 12 to 15 months this has been a specific focus with workshops focussed upon Inclusion, AI, MOE subjects, Social Media, the direction of Sport at BSAK to name a few. This approach strengthens both our understanding of BSAK and our already amazing community.

At this point it is important to acknowledge and thank my Senior Leadership Team who support me as Headmaster to ensure that we deliver a very successful academic program and the holistic aspect of BSAK that drive and develop students:

Heads of Schools; Elaine Rawlings, Nigel Davis

Deputy Heads; John Foster, Gareth Jones, Pete Collings, Ellie Edgar,

Assistant Heads; Charlotte McDowell, Sam Walter, Nichola Cooper, Steve Oakes, Jeff Payne, Mike Byrne and Duncan Ogilvie.

I also want to acknowledge and thank our Board of Governors under the Leadership of the Chair, Faisal Raja. They play the role of critical friend and I never feel unsupported. Their focus is always crystal clear: Are we doing the very best for each BSAK child? This in fact is our focus throughout the school, but important that it comes from the top.

The 2023-24 academic year was very successful, which I hope came through in my contribution to the annual report as well as this evening's presentations.

It is important to take time to reflect, celebrate and question. Looking back at the 2023-24 academic year there is much to celebrate, but also areas to question and improve. It is healthy to strive to be even better, it is good to question how else we can develop and to see if our students can be pushed further in their overall education which I believe should not be one dimensional but in fact multi-faceted.

We are a school that offers a first class holistic education, but what does an outstanding holistic education look like?

Firstly, it must have superb academic foundations that lead to exceptional academic results. In order to truly understand academic results, detailed analysis at school, cohort, year, class, subject and individual student level must take place. We do this as a matter of routine and once a year in October we present a very detailed report to the Board of our academic outcomes from EYFS to A Level results. The approach we are able to take is one that is proactive, rather than reactive. We can analyse every individual student at any time to understand the academic progress, achievements and next steps. This is so powerful in supporting every student at BSAK on an individual basis.

<Mr Leppard proceeded to present a number of slides giving a high level summary of each academic phase commencing with EYFS.>

It is important to understand that from EYFS to Year 13 our data is triangulated using internal teacher assessment alongside extensive external tools that are UK and UAE nationally standardised. All of this data and more is shared with ADEK through their inspection cycles.

As you see our Early Years provision is consistently above all UK assessed areas. It is important to note that the EYFS phase is the least time we have had our students, your children, in our care, so to exceed UK benchmarking is very encouraging and highlights the strength of our Early Years Provision.

KS1 portrays a very similar and equally positive and consistent picture to EYFS. In fact, as you will see through all of the data from EYFS to Year 13, consistency speaks loudly. Once again in Key Stage 1 our performance outshines the UK data across the board.

A positive step forward is the introduction of UAE MOE Government benchmarking tests for MOE subjects. The picture here is very positive and an area we will continue to develop. As mentioned, these are external benchmark tests, not BSAK tests, recommended by ADEK to understand where we are as a school with regards the MOE subjects.

Once again KS2 data is extremely positive and consistent, outperforming UK statistics across the board. Our internal teacher assessment is also consistent, showing strong triangulation and again, consistency between internal and external data. This tells me that our teachers know their students.

The picture is very positive for KS2 MOE subjects, which is very pleasing as it has been an area of focus since our last ADEK Inspection.

As we move to look at the Secondary academic performance, starting with Key Stage 3, once again BSAK shines. Teacher Assessment, exams, progress tests all show very strong outcomes and significantly positive comparisons with the UK. Just look at the lower table regarding the 'meeting 4+' and 'Above 7+'. Impressive.

Academic outcomes are always important but as students reach their examination years where the grades support university entrance or career pathways, obviously this raises the stakes.

<Mr Leppard proceeded to share slides presenting the GCSE and A-Level results and University Destinations>

I am delighted and proud in equal measure when viewing the 2024 GCSE results. They really are impressive and once again very consistent. It is important to note the value added at this stage. Any value added score above 0.25 is considered significant and can be attributed largely to the school environment. For GCSE the average value added score was +1.2 meaning BSAK adds nearly a whole grade above externally predicted grades.

It is important we also understand where BSAK sits as a school. I often hear 'Are we a good comprehensive' or 'Are we comparable to an independent school'.

In fact for GCSE BSAK sits alongside the UK'S selective schools, which are the highest academic performing schools in the UK. Let us not forget that we are also a non-selective community school, unlike the selective schools we sit alongside.

A Level results are equally positive with an increase in A* grades being achieved by BSAK students. This was something the school has targeted for the past three years. Once again, BSAK out performs the UK and our BTEC vocational option continues to produce grades at the highest levels.

Again looking at UK school comparisons BSAK sits amongst the academically selective schools, both state and independent.

These results are something to be extremely proud of, but it is important to see where they lead to. As you can see, BSAK enables students to **access every** pathway of their choosing both in the UK and beyond. We are seeing more students opt for Universities based in the UAE and as a result we were the first non Government school in the UAE to offer a UAE Universities Open Day, hosting twelve UAE based universities. This is definitely a growth area.

I have gone into quite a lot of detail regarding our academics, and rightly so. However, BSAK is more than that. Over the past twelve months, after the success of our Science and Sixth Form developments, we have continued to invest in our facilities.

In Primary we have started a complete renovation of our Jubilee building. We also made significant improvements to our Primary Hall and Reception Entrance including a parent coffee shop that opened this week. In Secondary our Heads of Year and Counseling services went into a purpose built area, we created subject specific facilities for eSports as well as created another food outlet area.

Over the next five years you will see further investment in facilities that will keep enhancing the holistic educational experience your children receive at BSAK. More on this in the coming months.

As well as physical developments, student wellbeing is crucial. In both Primary and Secondary the wellbeing of our students is fundamental. We have focussed on a partnership approach for greater success which includes parental and student workshops on important topics including social media, coping with university, AI use, Inclusion workshops and so much more. We now have tools that produce in depth data on individual students, taking away ambiguity and creating focus. This is an area of continual focus for us all.

In this presentation I have used the word 'Holistic' numerous times. I firmly believe in learning both in a formal setting and an informal one. One aspect of this is our extensive and varied co-curricular program that through the 130 activities offered on a weekly basis, BSAK students can find their passion.

All of what I have mentioned so far does not happen by chance. It takes a team of dedicated staff to ensure we remain continually focussed upon our students. Last year we commissioned an external and very extensive anonymous staff survey. With over 85% uptake, the results were mind-blowing. The team from 'A Great Place To Work' said they had never seen such results, let alone at first submission. We pride ourselves upon a high but healthy staff retention between 88-91%. The average for international schools is around 60%

Continuity, stability and opportunities to grow are crucial for quality educational provision. BSAK achieves this and when we do have staff changes, they are for the right reason and allow us to bring in new and fresh ideas.

As a school continually improving, it is important to also be influencing educational circles. The Leadership Team and a number of staff present at conferences, lead regional initiatives and sit on the Boards of some of the most influential education boards globally. Why is this important to your child? It is important as it means we have access to the latest educational thinking and can influence discussions, but also colleagues from around the globe see the BSAK name at various events and we can bring them in when vacancies arise, resulting in BSAK securing the best educationalists from around the globe. That impacts the classrooms where your children are educated.

I have spoken long enough and I think it is important we put these words into some form of context. Please sit back and enjoy the BSAK Experience.

<Mr Leppard concluded his presentation with a short film showcasing the BSAK Experience>

Thank you for your continued support.

The Hon. Secretary thanked Mr Leppard for his report.

6. Result of Ballot

The Honorary Secretary thanked all of the candidates for standing and confirmed that Mariam Al-Qubaisi had been successfully appointed as Parent Elected Governor and Faisal Raja had been reappointed for a further term. Ms Pfeffer passed on her congratulations on behalf of all those present.

7. Any Other Business

The Hon. Secretary advised that no resolutions or formal motions had been put forward and therefore no further voting had to take place.

Ms Pfeffer then invited attendees present for any comments or to raise any further questions with the Board, Headmaster and Director of Finance and Operations. Questions were responded to by the Headmaster, Director of Finance and Operations and the Honorary Treasurer.

Finally, the Hon. Secretary concluded the AGM by thanking everyone for attending and for their continued support and participation in the BSAK Community.

The AGM for 2024 was declared closed at 8:40pm.