

# King Faisal School

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



*Founded by the King Faisal Foundation in 1991, the first school in the Kingdom to run all three IB programmes end to end.*

## RANKING DIMENSIONS

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Overall              | 56/100 |
| Academic outcomes    | 57/100 |
| University placement | 52/100 |
| Prestige & heritage  | 67/100 |
| Alumni network       | 48/100 |
| Facilities           | 64/100 |
| Transparency         | 38/100 |

## EDITOR'S VERDICT

King Faisal School occupies a rare position in Riyadh: an established Islamic day school with deep local roots, bilingual teaching, and a serious international track. Founded in **\*\*1968\*\*** and operating under the King Faisal Foundation, it combines Saudi National and British curricular strands across ages **\*\*4-18\*\***, with Arabic and English both central to school life. That matters in a market crowded with schools that force a harder trade-off between national identity and international ambition. King Faisal School offers parents a more integrated proposition: *\*cultural confidence\** without academic insularity, and *\*institutional weight\** without the transient feel of a newer private entrant.

What sets it apart is not novelty but range. This is a school for families who want children grounded in Islamic values and Arabic while still working fluently in English and moving through a broad academic programme. That dual commitment gives the school its edge. In Riyadh, many schools do one side of that equation well and treat the other as an add-on. King Faisal School puts both at the centre. For parents, that creates a powerful practical advantage: a child can remain anchored in the local context while building the language base and academic habits needed for competitive university pathways. The attraction lies in *\*serious bilingualism\**, *\*clear moral framing\**, and the credibility that comes with a long-established institution.

It belongs on a shortlist for families who want stability, social substance, and a school that understands the expectations of Saudi professional households. It will suit students who are comfortable in a structured environment, can handle academic demands in two languages, and benefit from a community where faith and national culture are explicit, not peripheral. The strongest fit is the student who wants *\*high expectations\** and *\*a strong sense of belonging\** rather than a looser, more experimental school culture. For internationally minded Saudi families, and for others who want a school embedded in the Kingdom rather than floating above it, King Faisal School offers *\*rooted ambition\** and a distinctive place in the Riyadh market.

#### STRENGTHS

- Offers the full IB continuum on one campus, with the Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programmes all authorised at the Diplomatic Quarter site, giving continuity from early years through to graduation.
- Established in 1991 as a not-for-profit school set up by the King Faisal Foundation, giving it an unusually long operating history and an endowed, non-commercial governance structure rather than a for-profit chain.
- Enrols close to 3,000 students across its boys' and girls' sections, giving it a scale that supports a broad range of subject options, sports and extracurricular activity.
- In the 2020 IB Diploma exam session the school reported a 92% pass rate, though this is a single, dated data point rather than an independently verified multi-year trend.
- The campus sits inside Riyadh's Diplomatic Quarter, a location convenient for diplomatic and international families based in that district.

#### TRADE-OFFS

- The school does not make its fees public, and third-party aggregators only estimate tuition in the upper tier of Riyadh pricing, so families cannot budget precisely before applying.
- Schooling is gender-separated from KG1 onward, with distinct Girls' and Boys' senior sections each run by their own principal and leadership team, which will not suit families wanting a fully co-educational environment through secondary school.
- Admission runs through a waiting list, with the school retaining the right to accept or reject any application, and a personal interview and entrance exam with senior staff form part of the process, making entry uncertain rather than guaranteed.
- Public sources describe the academic offer as an IB continuum with a legacy American Diploma stream rather than a distinct British (IGCSE/A-level) pathway, so families specifically seeking a British curriculum should confirm current provision directly with the school.

## ADMISSIONS

Entry is managed through a waiting list: families register interest and are contacted only when a place opens, then complete a full application (via OpenApply) with national ID, birth certificate and family passport copies. Shortlisted candidates attend a tour, document check, and a personal interview and entrance exam with school leadership before an offer is made; registration is finalised only once at least one semester's tuition is paid. Fees are not published, and independent estimates place annual tuition in the premium band for Riyadh. A merit-based King Faisal Foundation scholarship exists for high-GPA applicants, but general admission is not guaranteed and can be competitive depending on year group and section.

WTS RATING



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