

American School of Dubai

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Founded in 1966 by Dubai Petroleum, predating the UAE itself, this not-for-profit campus champions the AP Capstone diploma.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	73/100
Academic outcomes	77/100
University placement	76/100
Prestige & heritage	71/100
Alumni network	68/100
Facilities	80/100
Transparency	73/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

American School of Dubai has two features that cut through a crowded Dubai market: age and structure. It was founded in 1966, before the UAE itself, and it remains a not-for-profit day school rather than a branded for-profit outpost. That matters. The school has had time to build depth, habits and alumni continuity, and it does not read like a recent entrant chasing premium positioning. The regulator rating is Outstanding, the accreditations are NEASC and CIS, and the school runs an American curriculum with a clear AP identity, including AP Capstone. For families who want a US pathway in Dubai without the franchise feel, ASD sits in a **rarefied** bracket.

The practical offer is strong. ASD teaches ages 3 to 18 in English on a large campus in central Dubai, with more than 2,000 students, two libraries and a Center for Design and Innovation named in the school’s own account of its facilities. The staffing profile is a serious selling point: a 9:1 student-teacher ratio and average class size of 20 give it more room for individual attention than many large-city competitors. The average annual day fee across the full school is AED 89,319, which places ASD firmly in the expensive tier, but parents are paying for a mature operation with scale, specialist spaces and a long-established academic infrastructure. This is not a school trading on novelty; it is a settled, high-functioning institution.

What makes ASD special is not flamboyance but coherence. The mission is standard enough, yet the more telling detail is the combination of an American programme, AP Capstone, strong inspection standing and a campus built for design, arts and sport as well as classroom teaching. The university destination data in the context is uneven rather than glamorous — American University with 11 students, Arizona State with 2, The University of Alabama with 1 — and that is worth stating plainly. ASD does not publish a headline-grabbing list here of elite-name destinations. Parents who need that kind of signalling will want more disclosure. Parents who care more about fit, breadth and a serious American-school experience than about a parade of famous university badges will find ASD more convincing.

The students who thrive here are those who want a full American school life rather than a narrow exam factory. ASD suits internationally mobile families, confident joiners, and pupils who will use the campus, the activities and the elective breadth, not just the timetable. It also suits students who want strong teacher access without the intimacy of a tiny school. Children who need a highly structured, conservative, results-drilled environment have stronger options elsewhere in Dubai. ASD is for families buying into a mature community, an American curriculum with substance, and a school old enough to know exactly what it is.

STRENGTHS

- Established in 1966, prior to the founding of the UAE, ASD is among the oldest international schools in Dubai, giving it a long-standing alumni network and institutional continuity rare in the local market.
- It is a not-for-profit independent school governed by a Board of Trustees, so tuition income is reinvested in the school rather than distributed to shareholders.
- The school offers a broad Advanced Placement programme in High School, including the AP Capstone Diploma pathway, supporting a clear US-university route.
- Its purpose-built Al Barsha campus houses the Center for Design and Innovation for Public Purpose, over 100 classrooms, two libraries, and a world-class range of arts and athletics facilities.
- Co-curricular provision is world-class across sports, music, drama, dance and visual arts, with the school reporting more than 400 extra-curricular offerings.

TRADE - OFFS

- Fees sit at the top of Dubai's American-curriculum market — around US\$27,000 a year for day pupils, with additional facility and capital charges — placing ASD in the ultra-premium band.
- ASD does not offer an International Baccalaureate Diploma, so families wanting that pathway must look elsewhere among Dubai's American-curriculum schools.
- The KHDA overall inspection rating is Good — solid, but below the Outstanding or Very good headline achieved by some rival American-curriculum schools, largely owing to non-compliance in Arabic and Islamic Studies.
- A waitpool operates once places fill, so eligible applicants are not guaranteed a place at popular entry points, and high-school entry is generally limited to the start of each semester, making mid-year relocation difficult.

- Its community spans more than 80 nationalities, giving a genuinely international, if US-dominated, student body.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points run through most grades, with PreK-Grade 1 governed by strict KHDA age cut-offs and Grades 2-12 placed case-by-case using transcripts, credits and social/academic readiness; Grade 9-12 applicants must submit official records for credit transfer. Application deadlines fall in November (PreK-K2) and February (Grades 1-12), with decisions roughly a month later. A formal waitpool operates once places are full, and high-school entry is generally limited to semester starts, so families relocating mid-year should expect constrained availability at ASD's premium fee levels.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_7350fc0cd8.