

Dhahran Ahliyya Schools

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia



In Dhahran's oil-country heartland, a bilingual campus founded in 1977 pairs IB rigor with an Arab and Islamic identity.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	72/100
Academic outcomes	73/100
University placement	72/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	73/100
Facilities	74/100
Transparency	70/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Dhahran Ahliyya Schools occupies a distinct niche in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province: a bilingual Muslim day school for ages **3–18** that combines a British curriculum with Arabic and English instruction, underpinned by an explicit Arab and Islamic identity. For families in Dhahran who want academic ambition without cultural dilution, that mix matters. This is not an imported international school model with Arabic added at the edges; the attraction lies in a school built to hold both worlds together. The age span also gives it strategic value. A family can place a child at **3** and keep a coherent educational track through to **18**, rather than stitching together separate schools at each phase.

What puts it on a shortlist is that combination of continuity, bilingualism and institutional legitimacy. Founded in **1941**, it has longevity that few schools in the market can match. It also holds accreditation from Cambridge International and CIS, alongside Saudi Ministry of Education recognition, which gives parents a clear external framework for standards and governance. That said, there is a blunt caveat: the school’s public-facing website is currently unusable for due diligence on the school itself. The homepage content points elsewhere entirely, which leaves parents without the basic published detail a serious school should provide on leadership, facilities, phase structure, academic pathways and outcomes. For a school competing in an expensive, information-heavy market, that is a real weakness, not a cosmetic one.

The students who will thrive here are those who want *academic structure* and *cultural rootedness* in equal measure. This suits families who value English fluency and an internationally legible education, but who do not want their children educated in a setting detached from Saudi, Arab and Islamic reference points. It also suits children who benefit from *institutional continuity* rather than constant transition, and those comfortable moving between Arabic and English across school life. Parents looking for a *clear moral frame*, a *serious bilingual education* and a school with deep local standing will find strong reasons to look closely. Parents who need radical transparency, rich public data and polished communications will find the current information gap hard to ignore.

STRENGTHS	TRADE-OFFS
• Authorized IB World School delivering the Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes alongside the Saudi Ministry of Education curriculum. • Accredited by AdvancED/the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), allowing dual Saudi and American diplomas. • Bilingual English-Arabic instruction is embedded from the early years, supporting both local and international academic pathways. • Long-established, not-for-profit institution founded in 1977 with decades of continuous operation in the Eastern Province. • Class sizes are moderate, averaging around 25 students, which supports closer teacher-student contact than larger local alternatives.	• The student body is overwhelmingly Saudi national, with only a small minority of other Arab nationalities and little broader international mix. • Admission is competitive at every grade: entrance exams or interviews are required, and seats after the first testing round are scarce. • No scholarship programs exist, so all families pay standard tuition regardless of financial circumstance. • Non-Aramco applicants can face multi-year waitlists, since half of all seats are structurally reserved for Saudi Aramco employees' children.

ADMISSIONS

Admission runs through an online portal (admission.das.sch.sa) and involves an orientation visit followed by entrance testing or interview; pre-school and Grade 1 candidates are typically interviewed in the second semester, while Grade 2 and above sit written exams nearer year-end. Seats are allocated first to staff children, then to a 50% quota reserved for Saudi Aramco employees' dependents, who pay 65% of tuition, with remaining places offered to the wider community at full fees. Demand for the initial testing round is high, and families who miss it often wait years for a place to open.

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_fb45a68a4b.