

# Dubai English Speaking School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

**Inspection dates**                      **9-11 November 2015**

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**Age group: 3-11 years**  
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from CfBT Education Trust who spent three days at the school. CfBT is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

CfBT Education Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. CfBT employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

**To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on Edubase.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The purposes of the inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

The BSO inspection was combined with an inspection carried out with inspectors from Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). The DSIB inspection evaluated the school's performance when measured against the quality indicators for schools in Dubai. The outcomes of the DSIB inspection are contained within a separate report which is available from Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai.

### **Key for inspection grades**

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

### **Proportions used in the report**

90–100% Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all  
75–90% Very large majority, most  
65–74% Large majority  
51–64% Majority  
35–49% Minority  
20–34% Small minority  
4–19% Very small minority, few  
0–3% Almost none/very few

## **Information about the school**

Established in 1963, Dubai English Speaking School (DESS) is a private, not-for-profit, multi-national day school following the National Curriculum of England. It is located in Oud Metha Road, Dubai. At the time of the inspection, there were 966 pupils on roll aged from three to 11 years. The school is comparable in size to other international schools of a similar type.

The school comprises pupils of 46 nationalities and provides rich cultural diversity. A large majority of the pupils have United Kingdom (UK) backgrounds and seven are Emirati nationals. The school has identified 129 pupils who have some form of special educational need. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The 69 teachers are well qualified with most trained in the UK. The school aims to make learning irresistible. Dubai English Speaking College (DESC) is the secondary school in the same group and shares a governing body. The vast majority of pupils leaving DESS continue their education at Dubai English Speaking College(DESC).

The headteacher and Principal have been at DESS for less than two years. Additionally, the senior leadership team has seen recent changes and additions.

The school is a member of the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME) and has applied to become a member of the Council of British International Schools (COBIS).

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

The BSO inspection was carried out by three CfBT Education Trust inspectors. The school was notified of the inspection date three weeks in advance. The inspection team had access to a wealth of information about the school prior to the inspection. Schools in Dubai are required to submit documents online each year and inspection teams can view these. On this combined inspection, there were also nine inspectors from DSIB. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base. In total, inspectors visited 89 lessons. They held 36 meetings, including those with the Principal, headteacher and other school leaders, members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and talked with representative groups of pupils. Inspectors also observed the school's work and looked at the specific self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by parents and carers and followed up on issues raised.

## Evaluation of the school

Dubai English Speaking School is an outstanding school. It provides an outstanding 'British-style education' while embracing fully and celebrating the values and heritage of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the diversity of cultures represented in the school. Pupils' attainment in all core subjects and most other subjects is outstanding and most pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.

Children in the **early years** (Foundation Stages 1 and 2) make outstanding progress. From their varied starting points, most exceed the expected level of attainment of the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social development, communication and language, physical development, understanding the world, expressive arts and design, mathematics and literacy.

High outcomes are the result of the development of excellent learning skills through children's exceptional engagement within an inspirational curriculum. Children learn through practical activity, exploration and discovery as well as carefully guided learning input. The school's vision to create irresistible learning opportunities starts in the early years. The exciting and well-resourced learning environment entices children to learn in the indoor and outdoor provision. There is a very good balance of rigour and independent choice within an imaginative curriculum that is skilfully adapted to meet the needs of all groups of children.

Children are encouraged to have responsible attitudes and be resourceful when approaching their learning tasks and this contributes to their excellent behaviour. Across the early years, children make excellent progress in their personal and social development through the opportunities provided to make choices about how they spend their time. Most are able to initiate imaginative role-play situations without adult support. As they move through the early years, children's self-confidence and decision-making increase.

The school has created a language-rich environment across the early years. Children absorb high quality English and, alongside this, they also effortlessly learn Arabic through song, interactive wall displays and by hearing Arabic used interchangeably

by adults in the classroom and in the non-statutory, Arabic lessons taught by specialist subject teachers.

A rich variety of physical activity including swimming, dance and physical education (PE), allows children to develop excellent physical control, coordination and fine motor skills. The wide range of planned tasks enables children to create a strong awareness of the world around them.

Pupils' attainment is very high and progress in **English** is outstanding. In the early years, children make outstanding progress from their different starting points in the development of their basic skills. Most listen carefully, speak clearly and choose words thoughtfully. They understand and accept the need to take turns in speaking and are polite and respectful, both to adults and each other. Most use their developing knowledge of letter sounds to read and write high frequency words, for example when writing labels or making lists. A minority is able to write simple sentences.

Outstanding progress continues as pupils move through the primary phase. As a result, attainment in English at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is high compared with that of pupils of the same ages in schools in England. As almost all pupils are enthusiastic learners, and expectations of what they can achieve are high, pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills develop rapidly. By Year 2, most pupils reach standards that are well above those expected of pupils of the same age in England. They express their ideas with increasing precision and use a growing vocabulary. Pupils make excellent progress in reading because the regular teaching of letters and the sounds they make helps to ensure that pupils' basic reading skills are secure. This also provides a secure platform for the development of writing skills which, although above those expected for their age, are not quite as high as pupils' reading skills.

In Year 6, almost all pupils are fluent, independent readers. They use their good knowledge of punctuation and grammar to read with understanding and expression. Most are able to extract information from a range of demanding texts and a variety of source material. Most pupils' writing is grammatically sound. They develop a good cursive script and are able to write extended pieces for different audiences and different purposes; for example, in writing a news report or a letter from a wartime evacuee. Progress in writing is underpinned by the numerous stimulating opportunities provided for pupils to talk through their own ideas and listen to the views of others before writing. Almost all demonstrate high level speaking and listening skills and considerable self-confidence in expressing their ideas.

Pupils' attainment in **mathematics** is far higher than average and progress is outstanding. In the early years, children are provided with a range of activities to spark their imagination and to develop their understanding of number. As a result, children make outstanding progress, reach high standards, and are exceptionally well prepared to start Year 1.

This outstanding progress continues across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a result, standards by the end of Year 2 are well above those expected for their age; by the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally high. The proportion of pupils who are working at the highest level, is well above the average for pupils in England. Teachers effectively help pupils use what they know to solve problems and tackle a range of mathematical problems across a wide range of subjects within the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of percentages and

decimal fractions to work out the cost of building a new hotel in time for Expo 2020, and then to work out when shareholders could expect profit on their investment once start-up costs are factored into the project. The home-learning projects have been designed to complement pupils' class learning and take account of the best way different pupils learn. Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants are skilled at knowing when to step in and help pupils in their learning and when to step back and allow pupils to figure problems out for themselves.

Attainment is very high in **science** and progress is outstanding. In the early years, from their different starting points, children make excellent progress in developing their understanding of the world. They use the inspirational learning environment to enquire and discover things for themselves. During the inspection, the youngest children found out what made plants grow, used magnifying glasses and observed the inside of a pumpkin. Through play and skillful adult questioning, children investigated the concept of shadows by blocking light. They could predict whether the shadow would get bigger or smaller according to the position of the light source. Children in Foundation Stage 2 developed their science vocabulary and understanding of floating and sinking as they investigated the properties of materials in water in order to make an underground palace for Cinderella.

Outstanding progress continues as pupils move through the primary phase. In Key Stage 1 and into the start of Key Stage 2, attainment in science is more variable. This is largely the result of a historic legacy which leaders have addressed following a phase of a lesser focus on science. Rapid progress is helping to raise attainment where this has dropped.

Pupils are given sufficient time to investigate and explore science in lessons and also in outside learning areas. As a result, their understanding of fair testing, ability to hypothesize, problem solve, observe and start to form conclusions develops well. Pupils confidently plan and design experiments and select appropriate equipment needed for their investigations. Excellent cross-curricular links and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to research, measure digitally and record outcomes in a variety of ways including video, strengthen knowledge, skills and understanding. By the end of Year 6, most pupils reach standards that are well above those expected of pupils of the same age in England. They explain their thinking with increasing clarity, describing scientific processes and using a wide range of science-related vocabulary and terminology.

Very high attainment and outstanding progress are seen in a wide range of other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils excel in a variety of arts, sports, music, drama, computing and languages, including French. Progress for the majority in Arabic is acceptable and good in Islamic Education. Pupils who have special educational needs make excellent progress in their behaviour, social and personal development and almost all make good academic progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make outstanding progress.

### **Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:**

The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).

The quality of teaching and assessment are both outstanding (see Standard 1 below). In order to raise the quality of teaching even further the school should continue to provide high quality professional development, coaching and mentoring,



peer observations and monitoring of learning and teaching. Greater consistency in marking needs to be addressed.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).

The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).

The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of this standard (see Standard 5 below).

The provision of information for parents meets the standard. The quality of the information received by parents is very high (see Standard 6 below).

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the standard (see Standard 7 below).

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Standard 9 below).

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during November 2015, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.**

## **Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school**

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The curriculum at the Dubai English Speaking School is outstanding. The curriculum is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum for England. It promotes pupils' academic and personal development exceptionally well and so prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education. Curriculum planning takes full account of recent developments in schools in the UK and this ensures that pupils can easily enter and re-enter the UK education system at an appropriate level.

In the early years, the curriculum is planned so that there is an effective balance between child-initiated activities and adult-led tasks. It provides many excellent opportunities for children to challenge themselves, reflect upon the world around them and develop a love of learning. Across the school, the inspirational curriculum is organised into appealing thematic units and meets well the needs of pupils of all ages. It provides opportunities for pupils to be innovative, creative and independent with their learning while providing them with vital skills for tomorrow's world. Where appropriate, effective use is made of the immediate environment and the resources available in the local community. Cross-curricular links further strengthen learning. The curriculum has been carefully planned at all phases to ensure consistency and increasing challenge within and across each phase of the school. The curriculum is successfully modified to meet the needs of all learners. Pupils needing additional help, including those who have special educational needs, are well supported and higher achievers are suitably challenged. Enrichment programmes are in place for most able pupils.

Woven through the broad and rich curriculum is a set of values developed by pupils and based on the United Nation's convention of human rights. Pupils speak exceptionally passionately, for example, about their right to a good education or the right to feel safe. These qualities help them to take risks in their lessons and learn as

much from 'our failures as we do from the things we get right'. As a result, pupils develop into caring and respectful young people with an exceptionally strong work ethic and a passion for learning. The curriculum is carefully planned to reflect the host country and make use of the local environment as well as including elements that are distinctly British. This results in a rich and complementary variety of content within the curriculum. For example, the Second World War and the history of Covent Garden, art inspired by Arabic calligraphy, folk tales from around the world and a focus on fiction written by British authors all enrich learning. Extensive and effective use of technology supports and enriches the curriculum and the development of pupils' skills is evident across all curriculum areas.

The school has recently introduced computing and programming into the curriculum from Years 1 to 6. Since the last DSIB inspection, leaders have also further developed the curriculum for Arabic. While there has been much improvement in this aspect, leaders recognise there is still more to do to bring it up to the same high standard as other aspects of the curriculum.

An exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities and experiences enhance and enrich the curriculum. These include art, music, sport and academic pursuits. The school enjoys great sporting success at local, national and international competitions. Themed days, visits to local places of interest, and residential trips are on offer. Year 6 pupils have recently benefitted from a residential trip to enjoy the challenges of outdoor and adventurous activities. Years 4, 5 and 6 have opportunities to experience curricular options such as business studies and economics, psychology and Spanish as part of transition events with Dubai English Speaking College.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Teachers have access to high quality professional development, coaching, mentoring, peer observations and monitoring of learning and teaching and, as a result, the quality of teaching is very high. In most subjects, teaching promotes pupils' learning and personal development exceptionally well. This is seen in the work in pupils' books, displays of their work and records of their progress. As a result, almost all pupils make outstanding progress and achieve high standards in most English National Curriculum subjects.

In the early years, children make rapid progress because teachers have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and should be taught. Teachers make excellent use of a wide variety of resources to create a highly stimulating learning environment. In this environment, children flourish and their basic skills quickly develop in all areas of learning. Children quickly conform to adults' high expectations of behaviour and this lays the foundation for the exemplary attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the primary phase.

Strong subject knowledge and careful planning, to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, are features of teaching in the primary phase. Teachers know their pupils well and make sure that support is provided for those experiencing difficulty in learning as well as for the few who speak English as an additional language. Teachers make very good use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Carefully targeted support by teaching assistants often helps pupils to concentrate as well as to make outstanding progress. Appropriately challenging work is also set for those capable of reaching higher levels. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and motivated learners and there is a lively buzz in most lessons as pupils work together in pairs or small groups, sharing ideas and finding things out for themselves.



Questioning is generally used very well to check pupils' understanding and to probe the reasoning behind their answers. Perceptive questioning also encourages pupils to think more deeply and to use more varied vocabulary to explain their thoughts to others. This was seen in literacy themed lessons in Year 6, for example, where pupils explored the impact of graffiti on the observer. High-quality questioning developed pupils' critical thinking as they considered what they thought were the implicit messages in the work of the street artist known as 'Banksy'. Pupils demonstrated a well-developed understanding of a variety of social and moral issues and speaking and listening skills that were well above expectations for their age.

Particularly effective use is made of assessment information to track pupils' progress towards their targets, identify underperformance and provide additional support where necessary. The assessment systems also allow standards and progress to be compared to schools in the United Kingdom. In most subjects, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in accordance with the school's marking policy. In these subjects, pupils are provided with clear guidance on how well they are doing and what they must do in order to improve. However, marking of this quality is not consistently seen across all subjects. The use of assessment information to plan lessons is less effective in Arabic. As a result, the work does not always match pupils' ability levels and this limits the progress they make.

## **Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary because pupils are self-disciplined, consistently polite and courteous. In lessons, they are eager to learn. Almost all pupils exhibit a very positive attitude and demonstrate a high level of responsibility towards their own learning.

Attendance is high and pupils arrive punctually for school and lessons throughout the day. Respect for their teachers and each other is evident and the highly positive relationships are a noticeable feature of the school. Almost all pupils are confident and self-assured; they take on leadership roles, lead initiatives, make presentations, contribute to assemblies and play an active part in school life.

Pupils have developed an exceptionally strong understanding of their rights as individuals but also the responsibilities they have to look after others. Pupils are confident to explain why 'it is our responsibility to help others in school, in our community and also in our world.' They speak highly of the opportunities the school offers. One pupil told inspectors, 'to do something amazing in life we need a good education but also need to look out for others, so we all get the best possible chances in life.' The work of the DESS Charity Committee supports pupils with structured opportunities to channel their desire to help others. In collaboration with the Red Crescent organisation, pupils have been supporting the Bilal Bin Rabah (Let's Play) project and have raised money to provide computer equipment and shading. Pupils also described the work of the Axum African charity they support to buy sewing machines, weaving machines and woodworking equipment.

The school proactively develops pupils' emotional intelligence. This is based on the four rights outlined in the UN convention and also UK human rights' legislation (the right to an education; the right to feel safe; the right to relax and play; and the right to

be treated with respect). Numerous positions of responsibility provide opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to contribute to community life. For example, the school prefects and play leaders have a vital role in helping the day-to-day management of the school.

The recently developed post of Cultural Ambassador supports the already strong work of the Cultural Diversity activities. Pupils take these roles very seriously and rightly so. For example, the Eco Warriors were pleased to find out that the paper cups provided for the many water coolers were made of recycled paper, but were less happy that the cups were manufactured in Canada. To reduce this carbon footprint, they petitioned the school leaders to source locally recycled paper cups. They are not called warriors for nothing! Democracy is explored in the leadership election processes applied in school. Pupils receive input from visiting speakers, including some parents, sharing their experience and the traditions of their home country. Displays around the school and a range of books by British writers support the promotion of modern British life. Values of tolerance, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights are embedded within the curriculum. Pupils have insights into public life in Dubai and age-appropriate levels of general knowledge about society and life in Britain. The wide range of nationalities represented in the school population means that pupils learn about each other and their cultural heritage socially as well as from planned elements within the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are developing their understanding of a wide range of cultures including those of the UAE and Britain.

### **Standard 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

All the requirements of this standard are met. Arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. They are supported by a comprehensive list of school policies, which are firmly established and regularly updated. These underpin the school's powerful ethos of inclusion and support for children when they first enter the school. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding match current requirements in the United Kingdom and the requirements of Dubai. In the event of concerns for a pupil's welfare, all staff know what to do and to whom they must speak.

Appropriate policies are in place to promote good behaviour and to guard against bullying. Supervision of pupils is very effective and pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They are not aware of any instances of bullying. Pupils have very few concerns about behaviour and know to whom they should go if they have any worries. This is confirmed by school records, which show that there are no recorded incidents of bullying and that instances of unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare.

Safety arrangements meet local requirements. Regular drills ensure that adults and pupils know the procedures to be followed during evacuation of the buildings. Checks by the Civil Defence confirm that evacuations are completed speedily and efficiently. Security for visits outside the school has a high profile and risk assessments are integral parts of the planning of all visits. An admission register and an attendance register are kept up to date; both conform to local regulatory requirements.

The school doctor and two nurses ensure that there is a high quality of care for any pupils who become ill or require regular medication. The medical team keeps the relevant staff fully informed about the medical needs of individual pupils. Medication

is kept in a locked cabinet and all staff are fully informed about how and by whom it can be administered. The medical team also makes very useful contributions to the school curriculum and provides advice to parents on, for example, asthma and allergies, and healthy nutrition. There is a suitable written policy on first aid, which is implemented appropriately.

A comprehensive special educational needs policy guides support for pupils who have special educational needs. Support is highly effective and enables all to play a full part in school life. Parents are included in planning how the needs of their child will be met and in monitoring their progress. This close partnership with parents helps both school and home to offer consistency of approach.

The school environment supports learning exceptionally well. The buildings, equipment and resources are excellent and fully suited to the educational needs of the pupils, including those who have special educational needs. The indoor and outdoor accommodation in the early years provides children with a vibrant and nurturing learning environment. They enjoy a stimulating range of activities that contribute significantly to their academic and personal development.

#### **Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The school is not for profit and the governing body, comprised of selected members, manages the affairs and finances of the school. The members carry out their duties on a voluntary basis.

All staff are recruited with great care. The Principal, headteacher, human resources department and the administrative staff all work in various capacities to ensure the required checks are in place to confirm that staff are suitable to work with children. A single central record is maintained of staff and volunteers who work in the school. Medical checks are carried out as appropriate and the right of staff to work in Dubai established. Members of the school team supervise volunteers, supporting school activities and school trips and visitors to the school.

#### **Standard 5. The premises and accommodation**

The school meets the requirements of this standard and also the local requirements of the Dubai authority. The premises, resources and accommodation are of a high standard. Pupils are proud of the school environment and treat their surroundings with respect. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are litter free. The support staff ensure that the buildings and classrooms are maintained to a high standard and in a hygienic state. All pupils bring packed lunches as there is no school canteen. The appropriate authorities carry out regular checks of the premises and accommodation, and the school has all of the certificates needed to operate.

Classrooms are of a good size and provide attractive environments for learning. The accommodation allows teachers to meet pupils' learning needs in a variety of ways, such as when younger pupils move quickly into their different groups for the teaching of phonics. Specialist teaching areas for music, ICT and PE are well equipped. Very good use is made of the well-resourced library to support learning. Effective use is also made of the technology available in classrooms, such as interactive boards, and pupils make regular use of ICT as an integral part of learning in most subjects.

The creative use of the available space ensures that the school provides an exciting learning environment in which pupils flourish. This is evident in the high quality displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and throughout the school. They demonstrate that the school is a stimulating learning environment in which pupils enjoy learning and reach high standards. This is seen, for example, in the very impressive displays of pupils' research and writing on the impact of the Second World War on life in Britain.

Excellent use is made of the high quality indoor and outdoor accommodation in the early years and Year 1. The swimming pools and the large sports field are exceptionally well maintained and used very effectively to provide pupils with a wide range of physical activities, both in and out of school time. There are numerous shaded areas for pupils to use in non-contact time and an appropriate number of washrooms for staff and pupils.

The school buildings allow safe access for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, and for emergency evacuation should the need arise. There are high quality medical facilities for pupils who are or who become ill. The school is well decorated and maintained. The facilities' manager and members of the senior leadership team carry out regular reviews to ensure that the premises are maintained in a safe condition.

## **Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others**

The requirements of this standard are met. The provision of information for parents, carers and others is of a high standard. Leaders have developed very effective systems for keeping parents well informed about all aspects of the school's work. The senior leadership team ensures that parents have up-to-date, accurate and timely information, including information about the overall achievement of their children. The headteacher welcomes parents and their children every day at the school gate and provides everyone with a warm welcome.

Relationships are open, honest and helpful. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's academic progress. Leaders have also redesigned how parents can support their children with tasks to complete at home. The implementation of this new initiative has involved a parents' workshop, where pupils supported their parents to understand the Learning Hub (an online method of support for homework activities). The Learning Hub can be accessed at home where parents and their children can watch video clips to support, for example, their spoken French or Arabic.

The school has met with groups of parents and surveyed them on their views on a number of different issues. Leaders are very keen to ensure parents' views are taken on board and provision adapted as a result of these findings. During discussion with inspectors, parents commented, 'I would not want my children to go to any other school. This is the only place for them to be. All staff are exceptionally helpful and do all they can to support us all.' The school's links with the community are well developed and help to enhance pupils' understanding of the multicultural and multi-faith world in which they live.

Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of their children's education, for example, their work to support the Dubai Cares charity or to come into early years and support children's understanding of an Emirati wedding. Parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language are delighted with the support their children receive and the high level of information they receive about their child's progress.

## **Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The complaints' procedures are clear and are available on the school website. There is a staged approach to the handling of complaints with clearly stated timelines. The procedures allow for complaints to be referred to the board of governors if they cannot be resolved satisfactorily at school level. Records indicate that formal complaints' procedures are rarely used. Parents confirmed that easy access to teachers and school leaders ensures that any issues are generally addressed swiftly and informally.

## **Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding**

Not applicable.

## **Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school**

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The leadership and management of the school at all levels are outstanding. The exceptional leadership of the headteacher, along with the Principal, board of governors and leaders at all levels, shares a vision that is integral to all the school does. This is clearly communicated to the pupils and shared with the whole school community. The Principal oversees the senior leadership teams of both DESS and DESC, aligning ethos and standards across the schools and reports directly to the board of governors. The leadership and management of the early years are outstanding and support children's excellent progress. Together, senior leaders have established a strong and consistent vision of the school's future developments around the concept of 'irresistible learning'. They inspire staff and pupils to achieve highly and perform outstandingly. The highly skilled and energetic team sets a clear educational direction and has the collective experience and skill to secure high outcomes. They promote equality of opportunity and positively tackle any form of discrimination. Morale among staff and within the school community is high because they have confidence in the senior leadership to maintain high standards and develop the school still further. The day-to-day management of the school is highly efficient. The leadership team delegates effectively, empowering middle leaders and teachers to take responsibility for aspects of school improvement, to share the vision and to have ownership. This results in a climate of high expectations and effective team working that impact positively on pupils' learning and well-being.

Staff recruitment and induction processes are outstanding and, as a result, new staff, mostly British trained, settle quickly into their positions at the school. Induction sessions are valued by the teachers; the highly positive result of a survey of new



teachers confirms this. Systems for staff appraisal are carefully considered. Teachers' classroom performance is assessed regularly, through a coaching model, to ensure that pupils are engaged in high quality learning. Additionally high quality training opportunities to develop leadership skills and professional attributes are available to staff. This helps to explain why learning is of high quality and teaching often outstanding.

School leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses because self-evaluation is rigorously backed by clear evidence and is mostly accurate. Teachers and leaders at all levels are involved in thorough analysis of the school's performance and clear identification of areas for future improvement. Teachers are involved in data analysis and self-evaluation, ensuring that everyone has a genuine sense of ownership. This contributes to the commitment, by all concerned, to bring about future improvements. The school's successful outcomes demonstrate how well this process is working. Ambitious action plans set out how improvements will be achieved in subjects, at phase and whole-school levels. These are reviewed regularly and supported where necessary to ensure they are on track. As a result, the school has excellent capacity for further improvement.

Governance of the school is effective. The governing board, carefully selected to support the needs of the school, is representative of the school community and holds the leadership of the school to account. The board works closely and in cooperation with the school, with the separate responsibilities of the board and the senior leadership team fully understood and respected. Board members visit the school on a regular basis so that they remain fully informed, as well as being accessible to parents. As a result, they respond promptly to stakeholders' concerns and suggestions. Governance checks that financial policies are effective and the management of staff performance is rigorous. Governors are aware that all safeguarding requirements are fully met by the school. They acknowledge their need for further training to ensure they are fully up-to-date and informed.

The management of finances and resources is outstanding. The accommodation, equipment and resources are of a high specification and staff throughout the school are deployed effectively. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Results of the parents' survey, along with meetings conducted by inspectors, confirmed that parents are confident that the school is well led and that leaders are supporting the needs of their children effectively.



## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

Dubai English Speaking School meets the requirements for British Schools Overseas.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

1. Increase the frequency of outstanding teaching by:
  - continuing to provide high quality professional development, coaching and mentoring, peer observations and monitoring of learning and teaching.
2. Raise standards further in primary by:
  - implementing consistently the school's marking policy.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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### The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable	N/A			
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	Dubai English Speaking School
<b>Type of school</b>	Private
<b>Date school opened</b>	1963
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	966
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	N/A
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	Foundation 1 Dhs. 34,000, Foundation 2 – Year 6 Dhs. 39.325
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Address of school</b>	Oud Metha Road P.O. Box 2002 Dubai United Arab Emirates
<b>Telephone number</b>	04-3371457
<b>Email address</b>	cdando@dessdubai.net
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Dando
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Andrew Gibbs

## GLOSSARY

**Achievement** – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

**Accreditation** – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by CfBT

**Assessment** – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

**Attainment** – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

**British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO)** – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

**CfBT Education Trust** – CfBT is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

**Central Support Team** – Personnel based in CfBT Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

**Combined or Joint Visit** – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

**Cycle of Inspection** – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

**Curriculum** – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB)** – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner CfBT Education Trust.

**Leadership** – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for

learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

**Learning** – Pupils’ gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

**Management** – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school’s work in an efficient and useful way.

**Ofsted** – The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

**Progress** – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

**School self-evaluation** – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school’s work on the outcomes for pupils.

**Standards** –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

**Teaching** – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils’ learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide, CfBT Education Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. CfBT staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for, and with, individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential.

CfBT has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

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