

Star International School, Dubai

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection dates 23-25 November 2015

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Age group: 3-14 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 the Dubai School 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 the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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

Star International School opened in September 2005. It is situated in Al Twar 2, PO box 51008, Dubai. Currently there are 573 pupils on roll aged between three and 14 years. The number of children in the early years is 146. There are 368 pupils in the primary phase of the school and 59 pupils in Key Stage 3. The school does not have any pupils over 14 years. Many pupils leave the school on completion of the primary phase to continue their full secondary education in other schools. Others prefer to remain in the school for Key Stage 3 and then transfer to other schools locally to complete their International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations. Over 90% of pupils speak English as an additional language with 55 different nationalities represented. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs. They are supported at various levels by the special educational needs coordinator.

Star International is a privately owned, inclusive, community, English-speaking British international day school. Its vision is 'to develop Star members in the local and global community, who are able to lead themselves and others through their love of independent learning and their compassion for humanity.'

The school offers the Cambridge International (CIE) curriculum. Children in the early years follow the newly updated Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS.) A broad range of enrichment activities and trips are incorporated into the curriculum. Cross-curricular links between subjects enhance learning; children in the early years learn through topic-based learning, known as 'topic'. In the primary phase, pupils' understanding of geography, history, art, music and personal, social and health education (PSHE) is also delivered through 'topic'.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

The BSO inspection was carried out by three CfBT Education Trust inspectors. On this combined inspection, there were also eight DSIB inspectors. The school was given three weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. 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. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base for reaching the judgements found in both reports. Over three days, the team visited 105 lessons and undertook learning walks; three of these observations were jointly conducted by school leaders and inspectors. Inspectors held 50 meetings to interview senior leaders, subject coordinators, the special educational needs coordinator, other staff, pupils, parents and governing body members. The team scrutinised pupils' work and school documents including: the self-review document which reflects the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans, policies, assessment systems, and safeguarding procedures. They generally observed the school at work and followed up on any issues raised. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by parents and followed up any issues raised.

Evaluation of the school

Star International School, Dubai is a good school. It provides a good quality of education for all of its pupils and meets the standards for British Schools Overseas. It shows a good capacity for further improvement.

The attainment of children on entry to early years classes varies. Teachers have created an initial assessment in the first term, which includes phonics, reading high-frequency words, word building and numeracy counting skills. On-going assessments are used to measure progress so that teachers have a good knowledge of individual children. The large majority of children achieve the early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1.

The attainment of pupils in **English** at all levels is above average in comparison to national and international standards. The progress pupils make is good. The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to this. Almost all children in the early years enter the school speaking English as an additional language and make rapid progress. By the end of the early years, the large majority of children meet or exceed the expected level in reading and almost all meet or exceed the expected level in writing. They enjoy choosing books for themselves and some can talk about the pictures and what is happening in the story. Their increasing interest in using writing materials encourages them to form symbols and write their names. Good listening skills are a strong feature in enabling them to use an increasing range of words to communicate in English.

At the start of Key Stage 1, pupils have confidence in crafting short sentences using capital letters and full stops, forming letters with increasing competence. They have

age-appropriate reading skills and, in one lesson for example, were delighted to recognise time connectives and 'bossy' verbs. A well-stocked library and a recent extreme reading competition support pupils' development in reading.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils speak and listen with confidence, articulating their ideas clearly. They listen carefully and respectfully to other people's ideas and can respond in a range of contexts. Their handwriting is generally neat and they understand rhetorical questions and subordinate clauses. They use these in their writing, which is often above the expected standard for their age.

Attainment in the secondary phase is above average and progress is very good. The large majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are able to make insightful comments and engage the listener with the variety and maturity of their thoughts and language. They show considerable skill in assessing the work of their peers and in learning from this. In the analysis of a war poem in Year 9, pupils were able to deal confidently with, and sensitively interpret, the symbolism and metaphor of the verse and write fluently about it. Frequent opportunities to contribute to class discussions mean that almost all pupils across the school are articulate, confident speakers.

Pupils' overall standards in **mathematics** are above average and pupils make good progress. In the early years, children make good progress and almost all achieve the early learning goals in numbers, space, shape and measures. Children can sort objects into different groups according to their shape and size, and can recognise and write numbers from one to 10. Children can use mathematical vocabulary effectively. For example, while playing, they construct models and talked about their shapes and properties; when playing with water, they show a good understanding of capacity.

Primary-age pupils achieve well in mathematics, and a large majority attain at least the expected standard. Progress is good with most pupils making the progress expected of them, and around a quarter making better-than-expected progress. Pupils' basic numeracy skills are secure, and they are increasingly confident and proficient in mental mathematics, following a recent focus on this within the school. Lower primary pupils show good skills in estimating and measuring; they use mathematical vocabulary fluently when identifying the properties of two-and-three-dimensional shapes. Pupils in upper primary readily recognise and construct nets of three-dimensional shapes, and apply their learning effectively to real-life situations.

In the secondary phase, pupils successfully build on their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding and achieve well. Most pupils make at least the progress expected of them. As a result, a large majority reach the expected standard at the end of Year 9, with approximately half attaining above this. Pupils show sound understanding of applying what they have learned when investigating interior and exterior angles in regular polygons. They calculate these effectively and accurately, before deriving algebraic expressions summarising the relationship. However, pupils do not have enough regular opportunity to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve practical problems in real life.

Attainment in **science** in all phases is above average. The majority of pupils exceed the levels attained by pupils of a similar age in the UK and achieve more highly than other schools worldwide using the CIE curriculum. Progress is also good in all phases.

Almost all children in the early years show a good understanding of scientific concepts and gain an increasing vocabulary and experience of the world through

active learning. Children look at colours, textures and patterns through leaf rubbings, for example, and understand the concepts of floating and sinking, beginning to make predictions about the boats they have made. Children have opportunities for exploring and to develop their own ideas. For instance, they plant seeds and know that water is needed for these to grow. They also name different animals, including those that live in water. Visits to the Dubai aquarium enhance their learning about sea creatures.

In the primary phase, pupils develop scientific enquiry skills through practical work: predicting, hypothesising, investigating, recording results and drawing conclusions. Pupils in Year 2 fully understand the concept of a fair test and the majority can plan their own experiment to recognise that some materials dissolve in water, having discussed it as a group with the teacher. Pupils are developing subject specific language and are building a strong vocabulary with accurate meanings. In Year 4, pupils develop their critical thinking skills through thought-provoking questions posed by the teacher. For example, having learnt about food chains, she asked questions that elicited a good insight to their understanding, such as: 'Why would a shark and a lion not be in the same food chain?'

By the end of the secondary phase, in Year 9, pupils develop their scientific thinking and become more proficient in selecting and using scientific equipment. Pupils are able to identify which wire has most resistance, using previous knowledge and building effectively on it, to design an experiment to test their hypotheses. The focus on developing independence and an ability to think laterally to develop their own ideas is being successfully integrated into lessons.

All pupils gain enjoyment from their scientific enquiry. A minority of secondary pupils contribute to a science magazine by researching a variety of topics such as meningitis. They report on their experiments such as testing for starch and tell others about their trips to, for example, Sci-Fest in Creek Park. This left them really excited about science and 'its wonders'. Secondary pupils are also encouraged to research the answers to questions posed by other pupils, promoting a greater interest in science across the school.

Pupils' attainment in information and communications technology (ICT) is at expected levels and progress is good. Children in the early years begin to use ICT confidently to reinforce their learning. They practise counting using a 'gingerbread man' program and demonstrate letter-formation skills using an interactive whiteboard.

In the primary and secondary phases, pupils have discrete ICT lessons. Year 1 pupils successfully improve their coordination and control and enjoy using a software painting application to produce a 'celebration' image. This also emphasises the cultural variety in the school. Year 6 pupils show good skills and understanding in working towards producing animated images linked to the Vikings topic. In lessons, pupils occasionally use tablet computers to support their learning, but this is not widespread due to resource limitations.

In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Most other subjects, including humanities, art and music are taught through 'topic' in the primary school. In the secondary school, pupils are taught by a specialist teacher. For example, Year 8 pupils made very good progress and greatly enjoyed investigating and summarising the characteristics and differences between Roundheads and Cavaliers during the English Civil War.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

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

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall (see Standard 1 below).

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

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good (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 the Standard. They are of good quality (see Standard 5 below).

The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard. (see Standard 6 below). The quality of information is outstanding.

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

The leadership and management of the school are good (see Standard 9 below). In order to improve the school still further, leaders recognise that their action plans do not focus sharply on pupils' outcomes in comparison with international expectations. Longer term strategic planning is required to provide a clearer and even more ambitious vision for the school.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. **The school's curriculum is good** and provides a rich and varied full-time education for all pupils.

The early years curriculum follows the Early Learning Goals and has a clear focus on developing knowledge and skills. In the primary and secondary phases, the school follows the CIE curriculum, as this is well suited to the international context of the school. However, the school also ensures that it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for England. There is good transition between the different phases, and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education in other schools, either at the end of Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3. Consequently, pupils are well prepared to join or re-join the UK educational system.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and gives pupils experience of languages, mathematics, science, ICT, humanities, physical education (PE) and aesthetic and creative subjects. It enables children and pupils to make good progress across the school and also reinforces the British nature of the school. Curriculum topics celebrate 'Britishness', such as a study of Queen Victoria evidenced by a superb display. Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

In the early years, there is an emphasis on child-initiated learning and free-flow provision. There is a strong focus on communication, language and numeracy skills, as well as personal, social and emotional development, physical development and expressive arts and design. Teachers plan themes according to children's interests, hence this rich and varied programme of activities provides good opportunities for children to communicate in English and make good progress in all areas of learning.

The primary curriculum has discrete lessons for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with most other subjects covered through topic lessons. These are well planned to ensure interest and enjoyment for all pupils. There are also separate lessons for ICT, PE, social studies, music, French, Arabic and Islamic studies, including some lessons taught by specialist teachers.

The secondary curriculum covers all national curriculum subjects, and also includes Arabic and Islamic studies. It is taught by well-qualified specialist teachers. All pupils follow the same curriculum, although there are opportunities for pupils to choose topics or presentation methods within subjects. For example, older pupils in humanities chose how to produce their coursework for assessment in different formats including models, diaries and cartoons. All Year 9 pupils have a work experience opportunity, which provides an introduction to careers guidance.

The use of ICT enhances pupils' learning. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards. These are used effectively and, at times, creatively by teachers and are well integrated into lesson planning, particularly in English. Pupils enjoy completing tasks or solving problems using computers or tablet computers when they have the opportunity, and show good skills in using technology. However, this is not as widespread as it might be because of resource limitations.

The curriculum is enriched by a rich and varied programme of activities, clubs, trips and visits both during and after school. These cover sport, drama, music and culture. For example, secondary pupils attended a residential 'eco-camp' run by the Emirates Marine Environmental Group. Other pupils have visited the theatre to see Shakespeare's *Othello*, and the school regularly presents theatrical and musical productions. These are well supported and appreciated by pupils, and add greatly to their educational experience.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good across the school and enables pupils to acquire knowledge, deepen understanding and develop skills well in all subjects. As a result, they make good progress and achieve above average standards across the school. Pupils are well equipped to enter or re-enter the UK educational system.

Teaching in the early years is good. Teachers are well qualified to teach younger children and plan activities that are purposeful, well focused and encourage children to play, explore and take responsibility. Teachers record children's progress carefully and use this to plan activities to further extend children's learning.

Teachers in the primary and secondary phases are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subjects and the way pupils learn. Pupils benefit from a positive dialogue with their teachers, which contribute to pupils' engagement in their learning. Lessons are orderly and productive, Teachers know their pupils well, and plan motivating lessons that meet the needs of individual pupils effectively, including

disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils say that lessons are 'fun and interesting' and they greatly enjoy learning. As a result, they behave very well.

Teachers encourage pupils to develop independent learning and thinking skills, and to apply their knowledge to solve problems. This is very evident in science but, at times in mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunity to use their skills and knowledge to investigate and solve practical problems, particularly in the secondary phase. Questioning is a strong feature, particularly in English lessons, to develop critical thinking skills.

Teachers have high expectations overall of what pupils can achieve and plan work to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Even so, the work they set occasionally lacks challenge, particularly in mathematics. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and marking in English is very effective. Teachers mostly use praise and rewards well. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in many lessons, and mostly support pupils' learning well.

The school has effective systems for checking and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. This information is used effectively to identify when pupils need extra support and sometimes to provide targets. The school has chosen to use the Cambridge International and International Benchmarking Test to compare how well it is performing relative to similar and other schools. This shows that attainment and progress are generally above the expected levels and rates. The school is working towards using this information more effectively. The most recent data from these tests were not available at the time of the inspection.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school in most lessons, when pupils are moving around the building and at break times. A large majority of pupils show good levels of self-discipline even when there is little adult supervision. Star International calls itself a 'Good Morning' school and pupils greet visitors and adults warmly and with great self-confidence.

Pupils play well together at break times and are clearly tolerant and inclusive. There is a friendship bench where pupils befriend one another. Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school, although the importance of not bullying was underlined in a recent assembly led by an outside speaker. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and 98% of parents confirm this view. Pupils arrive punctually and attendance is very good at 97%. The 'Golden Rules' were devised and agreed upon by pupils and the vast majority of pupils follow the rules. Mutual respect is clearly evident in the playground and the classroom. Teachers understand how to weave values such as honesty, mutual respect, charity, forgiveness and neighbourliness into their teaching and thus into the very fabric of the school.

Pupils make good overall progress in developing personal qualities that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community and become global citizens. Pupils are thoughtful and caring and recently collected blankets to be sent to Syria. They visit old people's homes and shared a sports day at the disabled sports club of

Dubai.

The school regularly celebrates the local culture of Dubai and recognises and values the uniqueness of each child in a school community that represents 55 different nationalities. Four hundred children participated in cultural excursions out of school in the first two months of the academic year. An annual week devoted to international understanding culminates in International Day, contributing to a harmonious multi-national school community. The ethos, nature and appearance of the school are recognisably British and the school is justifiably proud of the numerous ways in which it demonstrates its 'Britishness'. The National Day of Martyrs is recognised along with Armistice Day and assemblies foster an understanding of the British way of life and its history. Pupils would be able to join or rejoin a British school seamlessly. A recent British themed tea party allowed Year 1 pupils to eat traditional food and practise traditional etiquette. All Key Stage 2 pupils are currently reading books by British authors such as Roald Dahl, Dick King Smith and Michael Murpurgo. A pen-friend exchange of letters exists between a primary school in southern England and Star International. Both schools celebrate the 'Stars of the Week'. The vast majority of teachers come from the United Kingdom or Ireland.

Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and this is strongly promoted by the school in lessons, assemblies and in visits for instance from the Dubai police authorities. Pupils demonstrate daily their understanding of the concept of freedom of expression and have opportunities to explore democracy with the election of house captains and prefects. Every child is given a vote after listening to candidates' speeches. Many opportunities exist for pupils to develop leadership skills. Responsibilities are given to pupils in every year group from delivering the daily register to editing the monthly pupils' newspaper.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. Procedures for promoting the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. The school is clearly a caring community, where pupils are well known by the adults in the school and pupils care for one another, especially through a buddy system. The new 'Dojo' reward system allows teachers to communicate very quickly with parents, for example over pastoral concerns. A reassuring photograph of a happy child was recently sent to one parent to allay anxiety.

A bullying policy is in place, although pupils say that there is no bullying. At the end of the school day, pupils are monitored very closely. Pupils are very well-supervised at all times but also move freely and safely around the school with a minimum of teacher oversight. Child protection policies and procedures are in place and meet the expectations of the UK. Teaching staff are trained, but non-teaching staff are not all trained in aspects of safeguarding. Pupils know who to go to if they have a problem. A trips' policy exists and risk assessments are carried out effectively.

There is a thorough behaviour policy which aims to 'promote an environment in which everyone feels happy, safe and secure'. The emphasis is on promoting good behaviour, although sanctions exist and these are explicit. There have been no serious sanctions recorded recently, although key stage leaders maintain a log of minor offences.

The school maintains records of fire practices, although not all of those relating to

last year's practices were available. There are checks of water hygiene, both in the school and swimming pool, laboratory safety checks and checks on the cleaning of the premises. The school has a secure perimeter fence and a guard is present at the entrance to the school throughout the day to check visitors. Buildings are maintained in good order and the school is cleaned well by an external company. Pupils are aware of their environment so that even after they have eaten a packed lunch, the school remains litter free.

The qualified school nurse makes a strong contribution to the health of all pupils and has initiated a variety of health-related programmes, such as the '9,5,2,1,0 club', to promote fitness, a healthy diet and lifestyle. Pupils help to monitor healthy eating at break times and also are very keen to promote an environmentally healthy school. The part-time doctor carries out immunisations. There is a first aid policy, records of accidents and pupils' sickness are meticulously maintained, and all medicines are in date. Pupils are supervised well on the buses and parental drop off is carefully managed at the start and end of the day.

There is an attendance register and much emphasis is placed on punctuality. Absence is recorded meticulously but, occasionally, first day absence is not acted upon.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The school ensures that all the required checks are in place and confirms that employed staff are suitable to work with children and have the right to work in Dubai. A number of volunteers work in the school. These parents have not undergone the same security checks, but class teachers closely supervise their interactions with pupils.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The buildings are clean, well-maintained, nicely decorated and welcoming. Pupils are encouraged to respect their school environment, through a culture of no littering, led by a pupil environment committee, the 'Enviolites'.

The resources in the school meet the educational needs of pupils. The specialist classroom for science is well-equipped with a spacious technicians' room with a fume cupboard and appropriate lockable cupboards for chemicals. All safety measures are in place. There is one main library, a library for the early years and a well-resourced reading corner for Key Stage 3. These facilities provide fiction and non-fiction material to engage pupils in reading. The multi-purpose hall is used for assemblies, drama and sport. The PE department is able to make full use of this generous facility.

Extensive covered areas for outdoor play and sport and a swimming pool provide very good opportunities for physical education, play and relaxation. Washrooms are clean, maintained in good order and plentiful. There is no school canteen and pupils bring their own packed lunches.

Classrooms are fit for purpose and equipped with interactive whiteboards, which are used effectively to enhance learning. The corridors are wide and light and allow free

movement of pupils even at the busiest times. Classrooms and corridors have lively displays of pupils' work, which relate closely to the current curriculum and generally support the ethos of the school. World Smile Day, the school's anti-bullying day and the theme of 'extreme' reading are examples of displays, among the many, which attract positive attention. The interactive 'Ask Alberta Einstein' science board, where pupils pose questions for one another, adds to the innovative curriculum.

Security at the start and end of the school day is very good. There is a high perimeter wall and railings surrounding the school campus. The arrival of visitors is carefully monitored. Fire evacuation practices are accurately recorded and the swimming pool is a safe and hygienic environment, subject to daily checks by school staff and monthly checks by a specialist outside team.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The provision of information for parents, carers and others is excellent. At a meeting with parents, they stated that they are able to communicate quickly and effectively with the school and that they receive extensive information and have many opportunities to support their child's journey through the school. Regular newsletters and a copy of 'The Monthly Star', written by the pupils, further enhance the opportunities for parents to understand the life and activities of the school.

There is one formal occasion each term for parents to come into school and discuss their children's progress with teachers. These days enjoy a very high rate of attendance and parents and the school share a belief in the importance of regular consultations between teachers and parents. Two thorough written reports are sent home each year.

Every week, parents are sent a curriculum overview of the previous and following week with web-links to assist them to help their children with their learning at home. Training sessions are regularly held after school to help parents to understand what their children are doing in Arabic and Islamic education, English, mathematics and science. The newly adopted Dojo system allows for rapid communication between school and home. Pastoral issues and reward and sanction points can be transmitted instantaneously to a parent's mobile phone. A home/school information system also allows parents to access details, for instance, of children's homework.

There is a strong parent-teacher association and the school is delighted by the willingness of parents to volunteer to come into school to help on special occasions like the International Day in the summer term.

The senior leadership team and class teachers have an open door policy and parents are able to come into school to talk to the Principal and her deputy each morning; and teachers can be available by appointment within 24 hours. Parents are very appreciative of this regular communication and have nothing but praise for the school.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The complaints' procedures are clear and information is available on the school's website. School leaders have an 'open door' policy, which means that informal complaints are quickly resolved. At their meeting with inspectors, parents confirmed that any concerns were dealt with fairly and in a timely manner.

Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The leadership and management of the school are good. The Principal is supported well by senior leaders and effective subject and key stage leaders in her continuing ambition to improve pupils' achievement and personal development. The leadership of the early years is good and, despite being new to the role, the early years leader has created a strong team with high morale. The vision and ethos of the school is shared by all, including parents, pupils, staff and the governing body. This contributes to the caring, inclusive atmosphere where pupils are happy and enjoy school. As a fully inclusive school, leaders actively promote equality and establish a positive learning culture. There is no discrimination of any kind. Relationships are professional and morale in the school is very positive. The school runs extremely well on a day-to-day basis.

Self-evaluation is undertaken regularly and involves most teachers in reviewing the school's performance with oversight from the senior leadership team. Priorities for improvement sensibly begin with those identified by the inspection team from the DSIB in their annual inspection. However, judgements are not always as accurate as they might be and the longer term strategic planning could be clearer. School leaders recognise that more improvements are required in these areas. As well as sharpening the ways in which they evaluate the success of initiatives, school leaders need to check more regularly how well pupils' performance compares to international standards.

The cycle for reviewing the performance of teachers is in place. It requires all staff to be reflective of their own performance. Regular reviews of teaching, book scrutiny and planning are used to set targets, mostly related to teaching practice. A buddy system for staff is in place to offer support and peer observations, alongside an effective programme of professional development by colleagues, external courses and sharing best practice across Star and other schools. As a result, teaching is improving, but the retention of staff is difficult in this transient population. The school is successful in recruiting enthusiastic staff, almost all of whom are from the UK and have a good knowledge of the National Curriculum for England and CIE. The supportive school community contributes strongly to staff happiness; they feel valued and regularly recommend the school to others.

The governing body is effective, with representation from the proprietor, the community, businesses, parents and teachers, all of whom bring a broad range of expertise to the team. Governors ensure all statutory requirements are met. They are well informed about the work of the school through regular contact with the Principal, presentations from coordinators and the school council. As a result, they are able to

question school leaders. This aspect of leadership works well. Governors also talk of being a 'watchdog' and understand their role in holding leaders to account. This however is not always fully reflected in the minutes of meetings. Nevertheless, the governors are clear about the separation of responsibilities and ensure appropriate staffing and resources are in place. Clear financial management underpins the school's development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Star International 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. Develop school improvement planning by:
 - focusing more sharply on pupils' outcomes using whole school action plans that include succinct success criteria
 - ensuring internal and external assessment data are used by all leaders in order for the school to know itself very well in comparison with international expectations
 - formulating a clearer and more ambitious vision for the school that is fully integrated in longer term strategic planning.

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	NA			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		√		
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School details

Name of school	Star International School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 2005
Age range of pupils	3-14 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	573
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	n/a
Annual tuition fees (day pupils)	AED 18,754 – 37,110
Annual fees (boarders)	n/a
Address of school	Star International School Al-Twar Second PO Box 51008 Dubai, UAE
Telephone number	+971 4 2638999
Email address	administrator.altwar@starintlschools.com
Head teacher	Ms Dolly Goriawala (Principal)
Proprietor /owner	Emirates Technical Associates (ETA)/ Al Ghurair

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.

CfBT first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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