

# Dubai British School

## Emirates Hills

### British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 10 - 13 October 2021

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Age Group: 3 -18  
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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 Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust 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).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust 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 the UK Government's Get Information about Schools (GIAS) website.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from September 2017. 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 DfE issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.**

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
7. The manner in which complaints are handled
8. The leadership and management of the school

The purposes of BSO 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.

### 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

Dubai British School Emirates Hills (DBSEH) is a British International school located in the Springs area of Dubai's Emirates Hills. The school is a member of the Taaleem group of schools and was established in 2005. It offers education to 1169 pupils aged three to 18 years, making it smaller than many similar all-age schools in Dubai. The majority of pupils hold British passports, but 64 different nationalities are represented in the school population. A very large majority speak English as their first language. It is an inclusive school that caters for the full range of abilities and needs. There are 93 pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school's vision is: 'At Dubai British School Emirates Hills, we believe that every member of our community can Enjoy, Aspire, Achieve'. Children in the early years follow the new English early years framework. Pupils in the primary school and key stage 3 follow a modified English national curriculum. In Year 11 pupils take GCSE and BTEC National Diploma level 2 and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) examinations. In the sixth form, students study Advanced Subsidiary (AS), A levels and BTEC National Diploma level 3 examinations. Almost all students leave at the end of the sixth form to attend universities around the world, with around half going to the United Kingdom.

The school's operational management and academic provision during the significant challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions was excellent. Due to significant and thorough planning and preparation, the school was open operationally throughout the last academic year, with only a small proportion of pupils choosing distance learning, unless they were affected by mandated class or year group closures. Attendance remained high and pupils maintained their academic progress and attainment. Well-being and safety remained a high priority, with pupils still being able to speak to the counsellor as necessary. Clear communication with all stakeholders meant that all was seamless and well organised.

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

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 54 lessons. Nine were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff.

There were 26 meetings with leaders, managers, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents, human resources (HR) personnel and members of the school's governing board, including the Taaleem chief executive officer (CEO).

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered.

## Evaluation of the school

Dubai British School Emirates Hills is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

The school meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of legislation in the United Arab Emirates. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

The early years is extremely well led and managed. The team has introduced a new objective-led approach to the new early years framework with planning that is proving particularly effective in helping staff meet the needs of all children. The early years leads have attended ongoing leadership training and have provided training for teaching assistants on quality observations and interactions.

As a result of the well-devised curriculum, a stimulating and well-planned environment and excellent teaching, children are making strong progress from their various starting points. 89% meet the early learning goals by the end of foundation stage. Children are learning to take turns, to work together with others and to listen quietly on the carpet. They stay focused on activities and persevere with tasks.

The learning environments inside and outside are well organised, purposeful and include excellent resources that enable children to develop a wide range of skills and confidence. Children experience a good combination of 'free-choice' activities and teacher-led sessions.

There is a strong focus on the basic skills of language and communication. Oral story telling is now embedded in early years and key stage 1. Children are able to retell the stories using the same vocabulary and are able to talk with growing confidence to describe the characters they have met in a range of different tales and nursery rhymes.

Children are encouraged to write and the teachers' model this well. They are given many opportunities to write in the continuous provision and this is having a positive impact on their progress in writing.

In an activity related to knowledge and understanding of the world, the children completed a lovely introduction-to-science activity, the egg-drop investigation, to check if their egg cracked when wrapped in different materials. This was linked to the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme they are learning. They explored a range of different materials with similar or different properties, with support. The teacher increased their vocabulary, talking about cause and effect and, as a result, children began to predict and think critically.

Each child has a Seesaw learning profile that details their progress in all areas of learning and supports teachers in assessing pupils' progress and planning next steps. This includes input from parents.

Pupils make outstanding progress in **English** from their various starting points. In Years 2 and 6, standards in reading and writing have been above the England average for a number of years. By Year 6, 95% of pupils meet the expected standard in English. Of these, 88% of pupils made more than expected progress. These high standards are sustained because teachers have excellent subject knowledge, assess pupils' learning thoroughly and plan teaching that moves learning forward at a rapid pace.

Pupils develop a love of reading in the early years that is enhanced as they move through the school. In the early years and key stage 1, the new primary headteacher, with support from the primary English leaders, has started to address the inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics and the school has purchased a new phonics scheme that will give a structured approach to the teaching.

By the end of Year 6 pupils write well in all areas across the curriculum and are able to confidently use their knowledge and understanding of different types of writing to good effect. Pupils write in a range of styles, using ambitious vocabulary and increasingly complex sentence structures. Leaders are aware that, as a result of COVID-19 (coronavirus), some pupils' handwriting and spelling are not developed in as much depth as their creative ideas and vocabulary. The school's recovery plans are now ensuring that these pupils are quickly catching up with their peers.

By the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils who attain a 7 or above in English Language and English Literature GCSE is high. 87% of pupils had made better-than-expected progress at the end of Year 11. Furthermore, over the last 3 years, 79% of all GCSE student grades showed above-expected attainment in the final results. In context, this percentage of above-expected pupil grades is 40% higher than that of pupils globally over the same period. There is no significant variation between different groups of pupils overall.

Students in the sixth form attain similarly high standards in English Language and Literature at A level. 83% of all post-16 student grades showed above-expected attainment in the final results. In context, this percentage of above-expected student grades is 20% higher than students globally over the same period.

The English curriculum opens pupils' eyes to a broad range of texts including texts that contribute to our rich literary heritage. Pupils read a range of challenging and thought-provoking literature.

Attainment in mathematics is **outstanding** in all key stages, including the foundation stage and post-16. It compares very favourably with a range of measures including international and UK averages. The parent group measures attainment against the school's own targets identified using

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data obtained on entry to the school. These targets are demanding, since they assume that pupils will be challenged. From the very earliest years children learn about number, shape and space and the rudiments of geometry and the confidence they acquire at this stage is still apparent as they tackle parametric equations in Year 13.

Progress is outstanding at all stages. In the primary phase pupils' progress is judged against UK norms and other measures, including termly externally moderated tests and data gathered on entry from all pupils. In the primary school, skills and knowledge, including mental arithmetic, are developed effectively by meticulously planned teaching. This enables pupils to grow in confidence and stretch their own abilities through differentiated tasks and extended exercises. In the secondary school, teaching remains demanding but supportive, with material frequently taking pupils beyond the GCSE curriculum as, for example, in a trigonometry lesson in Year 11.

Trends over time indicate that both attainment and progress have remained at a high level. Subject leaders manage the transition from primary to secondary school successfully. In addition, they quickly identify any areas for development. For instance, in Year 1, data suggest a small drop in standards, after the introduction of a new curriculum. Leaders plan to ensure that the teaching and curriculum at the end of key stage 4 and into key stage 5 match those elsewhere in the school.

Attainment in **science** is outstanding in all phases. Pupils make outstanding progress throughout their time in the school.

Throughout the primary phase the large majority of pupils make better than expected progress against predictions. All groups of pupils make similar levels of progress from their starting points, over time. The trend in attainment in external progress tests is positive but with some recent dips. However, DBSEH had the highest performance of pupils in Dubai, just below the Advanced international benchmark. Applying and reasoning skills are higher than in other Dubai private schools. This improved progress has come due to exciting lessons, for example a very messy lesson where pupils recreated the work of the digestive system and weekly highly engaging and collaborative science, technology, engineering, art and maths (STEAM) lessons. By the end of key stage 4, the average grade is 7 to 8 in triple science subjects and 6 in combined science. Very high proportions of pupils achieve the top grades, particularly in comparison with UK national averages. Overall, pupils make exceptional progress, achieving an average of three and a half grades higher than initially predicted. Overall, there is no significant variation between different groups in GCSE science subjects.

Relatively high numbers of students choose A-level science subjects with many going on to university courses in medicine and veterinary science. Results are excellent, with average grades of A or B. The trend is improving at the top grades and A to C grades are above UK averages. Overall students achieve two and a half grades higher than predicted. All groups of students make better than expected progress but those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able made the most progress last year. There is little variation between different groups of students overall, but some statistical variance occurs due to small cohort sizes.

Across this inclusive, non-selective school, pupils make outstanding progress in a range of subjects to reach high standards, above UK averages. Most pupils made better than expected progress in their A levels, BTECs and GCSEs to achieve grades higher than predicted. This has been consistent over the past three years. The average grade for all subjects at GCSE was a 7 and a B or above at A level. The average grade across all BTEC subjects at levels 2 and 3 was distinction.

Students in the sixth form are being well prepared for life beyond school. They are given opportunities to be independent and to develop their own talents and aspirations beyond the academic. They are taught finance skills and about the laws in the countries they are going to. Students say they are extremely well supported in their university applications from a range of

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people including the dedicated university counsellor. The majority go to the UK including Oxbridge and Russell group universities. Students speak extremely highly of their school experience, particularly in terms of the personal support for their well-being, cultural inclusion and social interactions with all in the caring community. They are active members and leaders of the school community with a sense of responsibility.

## 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 is outstanding 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 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 the standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Standard 6 below).
- 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 outstanding (see Standard 8 below).

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during October 2021, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas 2017 except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the United Arab Emirates. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. 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 standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010

The quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding. The school offers a curriculum of excellent quality and coherence in all phases. Data provided by the school confirms that it meets the needs of all groups of pupils effectively, including those with SEND, English as an additional language (EAL) and those identified as the most able in the school. This is achieved where appropriate by blended curriculum arrangements for a small number of pupils through ASDAN and BTEC National Diplomas in six subjects which stand alongside a full range of GCSE and A-level subjects. The flexibility offered by these pathways makes a significant contribution to the school's capacity to accommodate the needs of all pupils. In the sixth form, the strong take-up of the Cambridge International Project Qualification (IPQ) enriches the programme and develops valuable skills for those about to move on to higher education. The school conducts systematic and responsive reviews of the curriculum. This has led to the recent introduction of, for example, media studies and psychology.

Britishness is present in many areas of the curriculum, for example the poetry of Wilfred Owen in English, World War I in history and British advertisements from the last seventy years in media

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studies. An understanding of democracy is promoted through excellent arrangements for the school to hear the pupils' voice and, for instance, the election of head girl and head boy. Mutual respect is modelled by everyone in the school, especially of other cultures through recognition of and respect for other religions and nationalities in, for example, the celebration of UAE Day and the European Day of Languages. Pupils are prepared for further education and employment by personalised advice and support for their applications from a specialist. Almost all go to a global range of universities.

The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by growing provision for a full range of extra-curricular activities. In the primary phase pupils can, for example, learn to draw or do jigsaws or origami. In the secondary school they can, for example, learn British sign language or join the environment action team. Pupils confirm that the clubs offer excellent opportunities for developing leadership skills and boosting their self-esteem.

The school actively promotes respect for people with protected characteristics through, for example, visits to mosques, age-appropriate materials and obvious equal treatment of genders in lessons. A media studies lesson in Year 10 invited pupils to discuss and challenge stereotypes of women. Empathy Week highlights the plight of asylum seekers and gives to shoe- box and food-bank collections. There is a very strong ethos of inclusion throughout the school. The school makes excellent use of the immediate local environment and the resources of the local community. The cleaning of beaches and release of turtles will return to the agenda as restrictions ease. Similarly, the school will renew links with the heritage centre in Old Dubai and a local shop staffed by people with hearing impairments. The school is taking full advantage of visits to Expo 2020 and the golden jubilee of the United Arab Emirates.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** is outstanding. The school meets this BSO standard. Teaching of consistently high quality enables pupils to acquire excellent knowledge, skills and understanding and to make outstanding progress. It prepares pupils to enter or re-enter the UK system extremely well.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They also have excellent knowledge of how pupils learn their subject best. In addition, they pay close attention to the diagnostic work of the inclusion staff. They consistently implement the strategies devised for their pupils to accommodate their different learning styles and meet their well-being needs. In this way, teaching ensures that tasks and pathways are created which match closely the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and those identified by the school as the most able.

Lessons are orderly and productive. The school has a well-established culture of good manners and behaviour. Pupils know they will get attention without seeking it. Hard work and high achievement are the norm. Adult members of the community model the behaviour which is expected. Pupils are interested and involved because they are well motivated and know what the expectations and opportunities are in this school.

Teachers use methods and a range of resources which lead to effective learning, notably the use of digital platforms. These were particularly effective during online learning when some pupils were unable to attend school during Covid-19 restrictions. Teaching resources often take the form of self-help banks, so that differentiated pathways rather than differentiated tasks are available. In mathematics, for example, a series of individual calculations often becomes an extended quest. Similarly, evaluating the arguments for different approaches to the development gap in a Year 8 geography lesson becomes a longer, collaborative task culminating in a digital group presentation in class. Tasks are available to pupils digitally, so that they can move forward at their own pace and keep their work under review.

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Excellent teamwork and cooperation, as well as independence, initiative and self-motivation, are common features of almost all lessons, enabling pupils to develop the skills they need to become effective learners. Pupils say that teachers are kind and know them well, both as learners and as people. Teachers give freely of their own time outside lessons to help anyone who is struggling. They treat pupils with respect and hence pupils show respect for their teachers and one another.

Assessment is effective in ensuring that teaching matches the needs of the pupils and this is embedded in the school's processes, not only through formal assessment but through teachers' observations and discussions. In this way, the strategies identified for individual pupils are monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly so that they keep up to date with their changing needs. Much of the regular feedback to pupils is immediate and electronic and verbal feedback is plentiful at all ages. Pupils confirm that marking gives plentiful praise as well as helpful indications of how they can improve their work.

The school aims to maximise and sustain levels of achievement by sharing best practice in teaching. Mutual lesson observations are regular and frequent, with targeted feedback, an open-door policy and a climate of positivity. The school is sensitive to opportunities to improve, so that, for example, clashes over assignment submission dates, raised by pupils, have been addressed promptly and effectively.

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

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding. The school's values, 'Feeling Good, Doing Good', permeate all aspects of school life and encourage respect and tolerance of others. The school has a comprehensive SMSC programme which instils appropriate values about what it means to be British, promoting fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect. This programme alongside other curriculum subjects and discussions with pupils and pastoral leaders indicate that the school strongly promotes and pays particular regard to the protected characteristics in relation to the characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. It is unable to meet fully the requirements in respect of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation due to the laws of the United Arab Emirates.'

Britishness and British values feature strongly throughout the school. Pupils say that it is part of their role to 'do good deeds to help those less fortunate'. They do this through events like The Ramadan Fridge, donating toys and fundraising events. Pupils who are in the Smiley Squad share random acts of kindness in the school and the school celebrates World Friendship Week. The school celebrates Black History Month, Ramadan, Eid and International Day while also marking UK events, such as Armistice Day.

Pupils are given a broad and balanced pastoral education with dedicated moral-education lessons which encourage pupils to reflect and think deeply about moral issues. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about the protected characteristics outlined in the UK Equality Act 2010 such, as erasing stereotypes and about female role models both from history and the present day, for example, Zara Rutherford, the youngest woman to attempt to fly solo around the world.

Behaviour is exemplary because pupils think about how others are feeling, look out for one another and respect and celebrate similarities and differences. Pupils said that bullying or inappropriate

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behaviour was very rare and was resolved quickly. Older students explained that everyone is responsible for looking after each other commenting that they are not bystanders and would challenge any inappropriate behaviour or derogatory language.

Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength and there is an excellent level of mutual respect and trust. Staff have high expectations and are strong role models in showing pupils, through their own actions and behaviour, how to form positive relationships. Staff manage behaviour in lessons very effectively.

Pupils say they are 'happy and feel safe in school'. It is clearly evident that they develop positive attitudes to learning and are able to voice their thoughts, feelings and opinions. For example, in a Year 10 media lesson pupils had the freedom to discuss appearance ideals and were confident in being able to challenge stereotypes while remaining respectful of diversity.

Pupils are academically highly motivated. The school leaders and staff are unwavering in their efforts to provide pupils with personal skills development through the Positive Education programme. This is developed around the 6 Cs and instils strengths in character and encourages them to be cooperative, caring, creative, courageous, critical thinkers and communicators.

There is a clear and structured career-guidance and counselling programme. It supports students in making informed choices, explore alternatives and helps them to be better prepared individuals for the changing workplace of the 21st century.

Pupils have many opportunities to undertake leadership roles throughout the whole school. For example, they take on responsibilities in school such as school-council representatives, eco warriors, house captains, peer mentors and sports leaders. Election to these roles is through a democratic process. The pupil voice, exercised through these roles, has been responsible for shaping school policy, for example in agreeing some improvements such as setting up a quiet reading room.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Provision for the welfare and safety of pupils is outstanding.

The excellent admission and induction arrangements help pupils immediately to become part of school life. Similar attention to detail is afforded to transition between year groups and phases. These are equally successful. Despite high attendance, around 97%, and punctuality rates, leaders are not complacent and data is monitored. There is a strong commitment to safeguarding pupils. All staff have annual safeguarding training and understand the DBSEH child protection policy and procedures for reporting and recording. Leaders and managers embed safeguarding practice as an integral part of everyday school life.

In meetings, pupils said they value greatly the support they receive from staff in school, including the counsellors, if they have emotional or personal problems.

Risk assessments are rigorous, reflect the written risk-assessment policy and cover all aspects of school life, including the science laboratories and handling of hazardous substances. They are updated regularly and the school's procedures for monitoring their implementation are robust.

Fire regulations are applied stringently and are similar to those in the UK. Regular fire drills are carried out and are logged carefully, as are lockdown drills and panic-button drills. Pool safety is excellent and there are clear systems and signage which support the procedures for evacuation. The systems and organisation for the children entering and exiting the school are exemplary. Security guards are positioned at the school entrances and the leadership team observes health and safety and checks on access to the site.

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Pupils actively demonstrate a high level of self-awareness and self-confidence and are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. This is supported by the school nurse, healthcare plans, medical profiles and a register of allergies. Pupils are aware of healthy lifestyle choices such as healthy eating, for example in the Year 7 personal development lesson pupils were discussing healthy, well-balanced food choices and the impact of sugar on their dietary health. Pupils have access to an extensive range of sporting activities, promoting a healthy lifestyle, including competitions with other schools.

Much work is undertaken to help pupils keep themselves safe online, in particular with regard to social media. For example, the school organises workshops and shares the dangers of cyber bullying with parents and pupils and peer mentors share their experiences about staying safe online with younger pupils. Keeping themselves safe was an important feature of online learning during Covid-19 restrictions. Students who are moving on to universities in the UK and other countries are taught about the laws in these countries and how to stay safe when away from home.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Rigorous recruitment checks are in place for all staff. The HR departments in the school and in the Taaleem central office diligently maintain a single central record for all teaching staff and supply staff, governors and administrative staff. The company employing outsourced staff shares its up-to-date information with the school. Evidence of police checks to confirm that prospective staff are not barred from regulated activity relating to children, identity, right to work in the UAE, medical fitness and verification of qualifications are all kept on individual personnel files. No staff can start working with children until all the checks are in place.

Staff turnover is low at under 17%. There were 25 new staff this year inclusive of senior leaders, learning assistants and administrative staff. Most were recruited from within Dubai due to travel restrictions this year. New staff receive a letter of intent followed by a formal contract with a six-month probationary period. The contract is not fully formal until after the six-month period, after which a two-year contract is given. Online safer recruitment training has been carried out by the principal and head of secondary to date.

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

The school meets the requirements for this BSO standard.

The school is well resourced in terms of facilities which enhance pupils' learning, for example an auditorium, sports hall and artificial pitch, pool and specialist areas for science and graphics. The buildings are clean and fresh with cleaners working throughout the day. Forward planning for improvements in facilities is costed, comprehensive and appropriate, with an extended, shaded cafeteria planned, which will also provide a space for around two hundred pupils to assemble. Classroom furniture is replaced as part of a rolling programme of refurbishment. For example, all the fittings in the foundation stage have been replaced in recent months. Similarly, external areas of the school have been paved and landscaped this summer. There are designated toilets and washing areas for adults and pupils which are clean and well maintained.

Daily security patrols are conducted to report on any repairs required or issues which may have arisen relating to pupils' health and safety. There is a strategic approach to maintenance. The head of business operations and the facilities manager undertake a regular monthly walk around the premises. There is a periodic audit of matters relating to health and safety. Twice a year, the entire site is checked. There are no significant weaknesses or inadequacies.

Use of space is maximised, partly through necessity under COVID-19 restrictions, so that corridors are used to good effect as breakout rooms in the primary school. The overall impact on the pupils' learning is highly positive. The atrium is used for display of classwork and choir rehearsals for example, giving a lively, vibrant and welcoming impression on entry. Displays are everywhere, reinforcing key messages about the 6 Cs, reminding pupils of basic information in the subject areas they are approaching, and celebrating achievements of past and present pupils. There are reminders everywhere that this is a British school, such as an excellent collage of the Queen done by post-16 students.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Parents are highly complimentary about the school and the education it provides for their children. They commented on the welcoming, friendly and inclusive community that the school creates and really value the support that their children receive both academically, socially and emotionally.

Parents are extremely happy with the information the school provides and the systems for communication. The school provides information booklets about the school on entry including clear documentation covering aims, school hours, expectations, calendar of school events and examination results. The school's website and parent portal are regularly updated and have a wealth of information, including safeguarding policies and the complaints procedures. The portal gives parents easy access to the school's ethos, aims, mission statement and policies. Weekly newsletters include teachers' email contact details. Parents say that the school's response to the COVID-19 situation was 'fantastic and the distance learning programme was exceptional.' They felt that communication was incredible, and the staff were clear about all the changes.

The school operates an open-door policy and staff, including senior leaders, are very approachable. Concerns are dealt with in a timely manner and parents are happy with the support they receive from staff and leaders in school. Parents say that the school ensures that well-being is a priority. They know who to speak to and how to get support if they need it. They were extremely appreciative of the work that the school counsellor does to support children, parents and families. Worries are handled discreetly and support and guidance are offered in confidence.

The school provides detailed individual academic reports for all children, pupils and students every term. It provides sharply focused information on a pupil's efforts and attitudes as well as their academic achievements. Parents are appreciative of the many initiatives to explain and help them support pupils' learning through workshops, internet information or signposting to further sources of information. The school has effective procedures to involve, support and educate parents to help older students make the best choices in their future education and careers.

Parents with pupils with SEND say that they are very well informed at every stage of their child's development. They are always included in reviews, decision making and target-setting meetings.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard. The complaints policy is available to parents on the website and is updated annually. It is fit for purpose. It sets out clear lines of communication and timescales for responses including how a formal complaint may be escalated. The policy makes it clear that all concerns are treated with confidence and respect and will never

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adversely affect their child. Parents say their concerns are dealt with in a timely manner and they feel that staff and senior leaders are always available to discuss any issues. The school has dealt positively with financial formal complaints during COVID-19 closures and dealt with one other escalated complaint.

## **Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school**

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are consistently met. The highly effective senior leadership team works well collaboratively and has an excellent vision for the school. There is a strong sense of community in the school with a real sense of inclusion, tolerance and positive relationships. Leaders at all levels are excellent role models, communicating ambition and constant improvement. They have an accurate understanding of themselves, reflected in self-evaluation. The whole-school strategic plan is improving on its already outstanding quality.

Online learning during the COVID-19 restrictions was very successful and managed very well. Parents and pupils said the learning programme was exceptional. However, leaders are now working hard on what they describe as 'putting the joy back' into learning now that restrictions are mostly lifted and activities, trips and collaborative learning can resume.

Middle leaders are very competent and committed to improvement of their subject areas. They work collaboratively across the primary and secondary phases and are working hard to create a seamless transition for pupils. The early years leader is working effectively with her team to embed the new curriculum and has robust action plans in place.

The school is part of the Taaleem group of 17 schools. The Taaleem group provide strong and supportive governance. They hold the school to account through reviews, performance accountability and difficult questions. The director of school improvement works closely with the principal, coaching and supporting while allowing the school autonomy to make its own decisions. One board member has a specific inclusion and safeguarding remit and each meeting has this as a standard agenda item. The advisory board is made up mostly of parents, alongside two student representatives. This board has a voice and influences Taaleem and school decisions. The board has clear financial policies and ensures that the school operates legally, is compliant with all requirements and that safeguarding procedures are effective. It effectively appraises the principal's performance. The board has every confidence in the leadership team and respects its separate responsibilities.

The high-quality teaching staff are deployed well. Staff performance is formally reviewed to support improvement. Best practice is shared, as is peer observation. Appraisal always begins with asking about aspirations, so that these can be nurtured and facilitated. Succession planning is very important and is all part of boosting morale. All the teachers the inspection team spoke to were very complimentary about the collaboration within their team, the support they receive from all and absolutely enjoyed working at the school.

Leaders ensure safeguarding procedures are very effective. Face-to-face training is given within the first week of school, led by senior leaders who are level 3 trained. The school uses a highly effective online system to record any concerns. This then creates a tight log that can be interrogated to look at patterns of behaviour. Counselling services are available to parents as well as pupils. The mental health and well-being of both pupils and staff are a high priority. A number of workshops, talks and courses support these, as well as online safety. Lesson plans identify those with well-being issues and provide strategies to support them.

Dubai British School EH is a highly inclusive school. Diversity is celebrated and there is no evidence at all of discrimination or inequality. It nurtures and cares for every one of its pupils. This

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is reflected in the happy caring community feel of the school, where pupils thrive and are highly successful.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

Dubai British School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country's laws.

It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010.

2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;

5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

Until recently, the school did not have a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. As a result, some pupils did not progress as rapidly as they could. Leaders should embed the new phonics programme to ensure that pupils make strong progress in early reading.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstandin	Good	Satisfactor	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

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

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

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

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	Dubai British School Emirates Hills
<b>Type of school</b>	Private. For profit
<b>Date school opened</b>	2005
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 -18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1167
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	n/a
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED 49,026 – AED 73,540
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	n/a
<b>Address of school</b>	Dubai British school, Springs 3, Emirates Hills, Dubai, UAE. PO Box 37828
<b>Telephone number</b>	009714 361 9361
<b>Email address</b>	principalpa@dubaibritishschool.ae
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Simon Jodrell
<b>Proprietor</b>	Taaleem

## 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 Education Development Trust

**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.

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are 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 Education Development Trust 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 Education Development 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 Education Development 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. Education Development Trust 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

Education Development Trust 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.

Education Development Trust 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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