

Capital School Dubai

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 15 - 17 June 2021

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Team: Alison Hedley, David Jones

Age Group: 3 -15 years

Report Published: 12 July 2021

Report Reference Number: 6/001/2021



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 three 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 Edubase.

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. Manner in which complaints are handled.
 8. Leadership and management of the school
 9. The quality of provision for boarding
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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.
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Key for inspection grades

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|----------------|---------------------|
| 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

Capital School opened in September 2014 and is in the heart of Deira in the Al Qusais district of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. It caters for pupils from age 3 years to age 13 years. The BSO inspection focused on the foundation stage, the primary phase in years 1 to 6 and the secondary phase in years 7 to 9. The school follows the national curriculum for England and an enhanced curriculum to meet the additional requirements of the United Arab Emirates. The language of instruction is English. The school is fully inclusive and positions itself amongst the most affordable schools offering a traditional British style of education for pupils.

Capital School has 647 pupils. There are 60 different nationalities of which the largest ethnic groups are Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (34%). In the foundation stage there are 174 children (27% of all pupils). In the primary phase there are 438 pupils (68%). There are 35 students (5%) in a small secondary phase in years 7 to 9. There are 55 pupils (9%) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). 76 pupils (11%) learn English as an additional language (EAL).

Capital School has 55 qualified teachers. The leadership team comprises the chief executive officer (CEO), principal, vice-principal/head of primary, deputy head of primary, head of early years and head of secondary/designated safeguarding lead. Several leaders, including the principal, were new to the school in 2020. The school has above-average levels of staff turnover. The governing board has 10 members representing a wide range of stakeholders.

Capital School has previously been inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) in 2019. The school's provision and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic were externally evaluated through a distance-learning evaluation in 2020 by Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

Capital school offers pupils the option of 100% in-school lessons, or 100% online lessons. In January 2021, the school had 2 days of forced school closure due to the global pandemic.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in April 2021 and 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 28 lessons both in classes and online. Several were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. 24 meetings took place with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board including the 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

Capital School is a good school and provides a good quality of education for pupils from foundation stage 1 (age 3 years) to Year 9 (age 13 years).

The school meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the 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 because of this inspection.

The school's vision is to provide the best British style of education for all pupils. This vision is promoted by the CEO who together with governors and the school's leadership team

has implemented changes to improve the school, most notably in the accuracy and refined analysis of assessments of pupils' attainment and progress and the use of assessment data to improve the quality of teaching. Much attention and effort have been devoted to improving the school's communication with parents and families.

Pupils make good progress in **English**. Attainment overall is slightly below curriculum expectations in England. A small minority attain standards that are in line with the UK national averages. Attainment in reading is below that of writing. Standards overall are below the English national curriculum expectations although they compare more favourably with international benchmarks. Progress in writing is increasing steadily. Across the school, improving reading is a priority. Some success is already noted due to the additional support and resources provided for this area.

A large majority of children who enter the school in the foundation stage learn English as an additional language. At this early stage of learning, they quickly communicate effectively in English. This group of children makes at least good progress and achieves well. The natural curiosity of all children in the foundation stage enables them to respond positively to the many engaging activities on offer to them. Consequently, their communication and English language skills development are rapid.

In the primary phase, attainment in English has risen steadily since 2018, although standards remain slightly below those expected in England by the end of Year 6. The large majority of pupils make the expected amount of progress and the proportions of pupils that exceed this are increasing in all primary classes.

From the start of the primary phase, pupils' English language and communication skills continue to improve rapidly. They are attentive listeners and respond with accuracy when questioned. They enjoy sharing their views with their fellow pupils and support the communication of others.

The large majority of pupils in primary develop creative writing skills, using a broad range of vocabulary. Pupils can use punctuation and grammar to good effect. They are encouraged to think about using synonyms to build a rich vocabulary that they can use in their speaking and writing.

Older pupils' ability to analyse complex text is developing well. In Year 9, students select and discuss with enthusiasm their choice of appropriate text to illustrate Macbeth's ambitious struggle for power and the moral dilemmas this created for him.

In **mathematics**, the vast majority of young children and pupils make good progress especially in number in the early years and primary phases. Good progress continues for most older students in secondary. Overall, pupils attain standards that are slightly below the curriculum expectations in England, but comparisons with international benchmarks are more favourable.

Almost all children in the early years phase make consistently good progress, frequently from low starting points. Children quickly acquire skills in counting and knowledge of number. They connect learning to real life and can apply their skills in skip counting to role-play activities.

In primary, most pupils make consistent progress from varied starting points and a majority exceed the minimum amount expected. Pupils develop secure knowledge in number facts and times tables supported through regular use of online technology. They solve problems with money using UAE dirhams and British pounds and pence.

In secondary, students continue to make at least good progress. The majority of pupils' work systematically and can solve complex problems in 2D and 3D shape. Pupils' progress well in highly individualised tasks matched to their abilities. Most pupils' ability in reading are below the expectations for their age and this affects problem solving in mathematics.

All groups of learners including those who learn English as an additional language and those with SEND make at least good progress in mathematics.

In **science**, progress overall is at least good for all groups of learners across the school. Attainment is below the standards of children of a similar age in England. International benchmarks compare more favourably.

Children in the foundation stage learn about the world around them and most make at least good progress from frequently low starting points. The majority attain levels of understanding about the world around them that are below UK expectations. Children in the foundation stage conduct investigations in sinking and floating and explore why different materials sink more easily than others. They quickly develop the ability to make scientific predictions.

In primary, most pupils make the expected amount of progress, and many exceed this. Pupils enjoy a range of engaging scientific investigations including how torchlight is absorbed in some materials but not in others. They quickly learn scientific vocabulary and can explain accurately the meaning of 'transparent', 'translucent', and 'opaque'.

In secondary, most pupils make accelerated progress. They enjoy the laboratory environment and engage in scientific investigation in biology, physics and chemistry.

All groups of learners including those who learn English as an additional language and those with SEND make at least good progress. Pupils across the school showcase their scientific learning and skills through exciting whole-school events such as the Capital School Science Week.

Capital School is proudly inclusive and welcomes all children. Pupils with SEND are well supported through inclusive provision. As a result, they make at least good progress

towards their individualised targets. This is facilitated by the extremely effective and carefully planned support they receive that is matched to their needs and abilities. The school takes every opportunity to ensure that learning tasks are modified, and that learning-support staff are deployed to provide a balanced level of focused intervention and independent learning for the school's most vulnerable pupils.

Those pupils who receive support to develop English language proficiency have access to a range of effective guidance. Pupils are equipped with resources online and in school to support their learning across the curriculum. Native command of the English language is a mandatory requirement for all teachers of the national curriculum for England at Capital School, such is the importance of rapid English language acquisition for its pupils. The benefits of technology are maximised in ensuring that English language proficiency is rapid for those pupils who learn English as an additional language.

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, learning and assessment are good overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good (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 (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 good (see Standard 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during June 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 good. The school meets this BSO standard. The curriculum enables pupils to make at least good progress.

Capital School follows the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum that offers young children aged 3 to 5 years a range of engaging and interesting activities in the seven areas of learning. Thereafter, the school follows the national curriculum for England in the primary and secondary phases.

The curriculum is enhanced to include the Arabic language and reflect Emirati culture. All pupils in primary and secondary study compulsory subjects in English and Arabic, mathematics and science. All Muslim pupils also study Islamic education as a compulsory subject. The school offers French to all pupils.

The school's curriculum is designed to reflect a traditional style of British education that embraces its Middle Eastern location ensuring that children thrive as they are growing up in Dubai. The school's values and ethos underpin a rich and exciting curriculum that promotes the best of British education for all pupils, at the same time embracing the school's diverse international context. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the experiences, opportunities and responsibilities expected of British citizens.

The school offers a curriculum that aims to inspire all groups of pupils to develop a lifelong love for learning and to embrace challenges so that they reach their full potential. Capital School celebrates diversity and aims to create global citizens who are dynamic, creative, independent learners. The school embraces innovation and technology and this is reflected in all pupils' skills and abilities using ICT. This has enabled the school to successfully teach the full range of curriculum subjects to all pupils when learning has been online

The curriculum is well adapted to pupils with SEND. The skilled and dedicated SEND leader based in a well-resourced inclusion room coordinates a wide range of curriculum adaptations and interventions both in lessons and in small groups for the schools' most vulnerable pupils.

The curriculum supports rapid English language proficiency with adaptations and age-appropriate resources provided to ensure that pupils can be successful in the full range of subjects.

The well-planned reading programme in the foundation stage supports children in their understanding of the different shapes of letters and the sounds these make. It has increased children's ability to decode words and improved their spelling. In addition, an increased range of teaching strategies has recently begun to improve children's comprehension skills. The *Mini-Me Challenge* has been effective in developing children's fine motor and early writing skills.

Opportunities for pupils to learn about British culture are included in the curriculum. Children in the foundation stage learn about the tradition of afternoon tea in England. They compare the sunny and warm winter months in Dubai to the cold, wet and windy winter months in England. Primary pupils learn about the Great Fire of London and Samuel Pepys and construct realistic models of Stuart era buildings. Older pupils are eager participants in the UK technology competition Bebras. Secondary pupils entered the Oxford University Writing Competition.

All pupils have many opportunities to learn about the important values of tolerance and respect for different religions, most notably through the moral-education programme. Pupils say the school encourages friendship and acceptance of all.

Pupils understand that everyone is unique and that physical appearances are different for many pupils and adults at Capital School. Tolerance and acceptance are taught in lessons and pupils know that everyone should be treated the same. They understand racial equality. Pupils cite examples and they talk respectfully about the medical professionals from different parts of the world who have provided specialist care for their loved ones.

Pupils know that boys and girls can equally realise their ambitions and that gender should not make any difference. They say many pupils aspire to work in engineering and that the popular extra-curricular club giving pupils the chance to explore science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) in less formal settings is equally well attended by boys and girls.

Staff are active in supporting gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes. Before the pandemic, girls were encouraged to participate, with great success, in STEM club. Capital School challenges gender stereotypes and encourages gender equality.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities has been suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. Pupils look forward enthusiastically to when these can resume.

The Capital School curriculum enables pupils from a young age to develop ideas about future work and careers. Careers education at the school commences in the foundation stage, through a topic on different jobs, When I grow up.

Careful attention is placed on equipping libraries with the most popular British fiction for children. The full collection of stories published by the British poet and story writer Roald

Dahl are accessible for pupils' enjoyment. Together with regular reading lessons, this promotes high levels of engagement and a love of reading.

The school has been successful in adapting its curriculum to support the small number of pupils that choose to learn online at home during the global pandemic. Digital technologies and resources have supported a highly successful distance learning programme.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The school meets this BSO standard.

Teaching is strong in all phases of the school. It is of high quality and is at least good. There are occurrences of exceptional professional practice. Teaching promotes problem-solving and reasoning so that pupils connect learning to real-life situations. It makes connections to situations that are familiar to students in Dubai and unfamiliar situations when new aspects of British culture and English traditions are introduced. Teaching maximises the benefits of ICT especially in capturing immediate information about how well pupils are learning.

Teachers in the foundation stage have a secure understanding of how young children learn to read and communicate well in English. They plan engaging activities covering the seven areas of early years learning. They ensure that the youngest children develop their early writing skills and gain an understanding of the world around them. Teaching assistants provide excellent support for young children and routines are quickly established. Teaching assistants show exceptional levels of care for and kindness to young children in the foundation stage.

Teachers in primary are trained in the English national curriculum and most have a wealth of experience. They have a good understanding of effective teaching strategies and how pupils can make rapid progress across the curriculum. In secondary, teachers have expert knowledge of their specialist subject and provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils with individualised attention and support. They ensure that the expectations for good progress in the national curriculum of England are met and that all groups of pupils achieve well.

Teams of teachers collaborate well and plan engaging lessons. They foster enjoyment in learning for all pupils. Lessons are organised so that activities carefully match the abilities of all children and build on their prior knowledge and skills.

Pupils with SEND are taught well and receive support from a highly skilled inclusion specialist. This ensures that pupils are given activities that carefully match their individual needs.

The programme of professional development for teachers is reliant on internal training and the sharing of best practices that are evident in teaching. Support and training for teaching assistants are guided by middle and senior leadership. Performance

management through the school's Professional Growth developmental coaching programme is in place.

Learning at Capital School is interesting and engaging for all pupils. Pupils demonstrate a genuine interest in lessons and are active participants who ask many questions and are curious. Independence is encouraged and even the youngest children explore and seek to find things out for themselves. Teaching promotes a balance of guided and independent learning. Learning opportunities take place individually and in groups where pupils collaborate and learn from each other. Older pupils draw conclusions and find meaning in their learning. Pupils' competencies using ICT meant the transition to learning online during the forced school closure was smooth and there was continuity in learning.

Pupils learning the English language become more proficient very quickly because of the good teaching support and effective resources that are provided for them. Resources are readily accessible, including online on the school's website where pupils can download a range of support resources to further aid their English language skills in home learning.

Pupils show tremendous enthusiasm and display exemplary behaviour in most lessons. Teachers set high expectations of pupils' learning and conduct.

The assessment policy and guidelines are clear and reflect the significant work that has been undertaken to improve the quality and accuracy of the schools' assessment data. Improvements in the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are the result of a successful collaboration between leaders and teachers.

Internal assessments track pupils' progress over time across the curriculum and there are regular assessment points throughout the academic year. In foundation stage, regular observations monitor young children's progress in meeting the early learning goals in readiness for Year 1 when they will start to study the English national curriculum subjects. In primary and secondary, internal assessments measure pupils' ability against the curriculum expectations for England in core subjects.

International benchmark assessments evaluate how well pupils achieve compared to those in other international schools offering the national curriculum for England. The school also captures information about pupils' ability and preferred learning styles.

Teachers rigorously assess all pupils' work and use rubrics that enable pupils to understand the feedback they receive from them. They ensure that pupils know what to do next in learning. Verbal feedback from teachers is personalised and focused. Pupils also take responsibility for assessing some of their own learning.

Teachers and senior leaders hold regular pupils' progress meetings with parents and families where they review assessment information and plan support for pupils if needed.

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 development is good.

Inspection evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, curriculum plans and discussions with pupils and leaders conveys that the school has paid due diligence to the protected characteristics outlined in the UK equality Act (2010) 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.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is good. Capital School is proudly inclusive, and this pervades all aspects of school life. All pupils feel fully accepted by their teachers and their peers, including those with SEND. They are confident learners because of the care, guidance, support, and respect they receive as individuals. They demonstrate respect and high levels of self-esteem and are eager participants in all aspects of school life.

Adults at the school know about the physical and emotional sensitivities of individuals. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage quiet and hesitant children to join in with others in the many interesting lesson activities. Pupils talk about the hand of friendship bench for the informal parts of the day and how all pupils are encouraged to include others who may want to join in.

Star of the Week is a highly sought-after award that not only reflects pupils' academic achievements but also their acts of kindness and the gestures of inclusion teachers notice among pupils.

Individual teachers offer their expertise in mindfulness and provide the Character Strengths programme to students. They continue to develop their knowledge of character strengths and how these can be effectively used to enhance pupils' well-being.

British values are celebrated in Capital School. Pupils understand democracy as part of school council elections and for secondary pupils the comparison is made with the British parliamentary democratic processes.

The elected student governors act on behalf of the pupils to convey their views on school matters and act as their voice. Student-voice displays are located around the school, promoting discussion points for all pupils of all ages.

Primary pupils talk of their respect for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II of England and say that is because she offers a hospitable welcome to leaders from all over the world and that this contributes to world peace. They know how the British monarchy supports

charities to help people who are less fortunate than others and why this is a good thing for them to do. Dubai Cares is a local charity that pupils say is important for them.

The Child Soldiers project raises the awareness of pupils in secondary that there are young people of school age serving as soldiers in areas of conflict around the world. They know that there are charities that help educate and rehabilitate former child soldiers and support their reintegration into education and into their communities. Secondary pupils compare the conditions and life of children in non-democratic countries to the rights of children in democratic nations. Pupils learn about the rule of law and the principles for ensuring an orderly and just society.

Capital School promotes an ethos of tolerance, mutual respect, and harmony between different cultures. The school celebrates many traditions. This is particularly noticeable in the moral-education programme and UAE social studies lessons in primary and secondary. UAE national days are celebrated and Ramadan is respected. The whole school celebrates different cultures in the annual International Day event. There are 60 different nationalities at Capital School and all are considered worthy of recognition. In the foundation stage, a global map mounted on walls displays photographs of children in their national dress, linked to their country of origin.

Special events take place throughout the year to celebrate Christmas, Bonfire Night, Eid Al-Fitr and Diwali. The school offers Emirati pupils leadership opportunities through the Emirati Proud Project, showcasing their country and culture to other learners.

Capital School's behaviour policy sets high expectations for pupils. Its core values of respect, innovation, collaboration, humility, empathy and responsibility are regularly discussed with pupils in developing their understanding of integrity and the differences between right and wrong. Pupils at Capital School know their ABCs: A: always do your best, B: be kind and caring, C: change the world and make it better.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard, as well as the regulatory and cultural obligations of the United Arab Emirates. Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils at Capital School are **good**.

Thorough arrangements have been set in place by the designated safeguarding leader, who has promoted a culture that ensures that all pupils know who to contact with a concern and that all staff are fully trained about what to do. Expectations are in line with UK guidance. An easily accessible software system is used across the school to record concerns and send alerts directly to the named member of staff responsible for safeguarding. Great care has been taken to provide additional support for pupils during distance learning with the creation of virtual drop-in rooms where students can report any issues.

The school has fully implemented all the necessary COVID-19 protocols, which include temperature checks on all pupils, staff and visitors on entry to the school. There is a qualified nurse on duty who provides the day-to-day medical care and a school doctor should specialist advice be needed. The medical room is well resourced with an isolation room available should any COVID-19 emergency arise.

Senior managers meet with specialist staff weekly to review health and safety in and around the school. This enables a quick response to any immediate concerns and where needed provides the necessary financial approval to implement required changes. Detailed records are maintained to confirm that the required safety checks, protocols and training sessions have been completed. A risk register is maintained to identify and respond to potential risks. Hazardous materials and equipment are stored securely, including in specialist areas such as science laboratories.

Fire drills are carried out in line with requirements and any improvements needed are recorded for reference. Modifications have been made to reduce viral transmission during the evacuation procedure, such as additional spacing between pupils at the muster point.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and reflects the school's vision to encourage respect for others. Pupils confirm that they enjoy the many friendships they have made in school and that bullying is rare. Older pupils offer help and support to younger pupils in times of need.

Pupils confirm that they have enjoyed returning to school from distance learning and appreciate the support given by their teachers during this transition time. Attendance is carefully monitored during both distance learning and in school. Pupils know how to keep safe and new strategies have been used for example to ensure that they maintain physical distance and fully engage in daily sessions of physical fitness because outdoor play is restricted. Pupils are offered mindfulness to further support their mental health.

Attendance rates are good and typically exceed 96%. Although interrupted during the global pandemic, these high levels have eventually resumed and been sustained including when learning moved online. The school has a robust system in place to address non-attendance and punctuality issues and is supported through excellent relationships with parents and families.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

All information is held on a single central register (SCR). Background checks comply with the expectations for the suitability of staff working with children and young people in schools in England. The recruitment procedures check the identity of prospective staff, their qualifications and references from their previous position to determine their suitability to work with the children at the school. Background and police checks, together with the right to work in the UAE, are verified before potential candidates join the school.

The executive committee has appointed an educational expert and highly experienced safeguarding governor to oversee this aspect of the school's work to ensure rigour, consistency, compliance and commitment to keeping children and young people safe.

The school has prioritised further strengthening of protocols to ensure best practices in thorough background checks for the suitability of leaders, teachers and support staff at all levels and that these are completed at the time of their appointment. The school is committed to enhancing recruitment processes to reflect the highest standards to meet the expectations for safer recruitment.

Safeguarding, child protection and safer recruitment procedures are followed and are compliant with UK and UAE requirements.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of the standard.

The school building provides a bright, spacious and safe learning environment for all pupils and staff. Separate areas are allocated to each of the phases, providing appropriate facilities for each of the age groups. The access point between the foundation stage area and the primary phase is securely locked and the entrance carefully monitored.

All entry points to the building are staffed by security guards who maintain a register of visitors. In addition, they complete the necessary COVID-19 checks, including checking that COVID-19 tests are negative and checking the vaccination status of visitors.

There is a separate entrance for school staff including a parking area. Security guards and classroom assistants staff the pupil entry points at the start of the day. Parents with children in the foundation stage are allowed to escort them to the class. Older pupils enter the school building and line up ready to be registered. School buses drop pupils at the allocated school gate ready to be greeted by the classroom assistants.

Specialist areas are available to share across the phases, including sports facilities and a food-technology room where students learn about food and nutrition. Dedicated specialist rooms are well equipped including a science laboratory where older pupils can safely carry out scientific investigations and experimental work. Classrooms are suitably furnished with age-appropriate furniture and access to the IT network. In the foundation stage, learning areas are well designed, providing children with a range of learning activities from construction to access to IT software on tablets. There are two well-equipped music rooms. Although temporarily out of use due to government COVID restrictions, the school has two swimming pools.

Plans are under way to renovate the secondary phase area and provide an additional lift for improved access for all.

The well-stocked school medical room is staffed by a fully qualified nurse. As part of the school response to COVID-19, an isolation room has been made available for emergency cases. First-aid boxes are available around the school and where relevant to their role, staff have completed external first-aid training courses.

There is a secure IT network available for the school community, with hardware safety and maintenance checks regularly completed by specialist contractors. The school is well-ventilated, creating a pleasant, safe environment for all members of the school.

Creative, well-designed displays adorn the school corridors, providing a welcoming learning environment that celebrates the work of pupils. The well-stocked library offers a range of books from classic fiction to contemporary novels. A colourful display board invites pupils to 'recommend a book' to a fellow reader.

The outdoor area is well shaded and has recently been improved by the development of a 'wellness garden' created by pupils and parents. This has transformed an unused area into an inviting space for all to use.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Improving the communication and the quality of information shared with parents has been a focus of the school's work. The range of formal and informal communication channels has been expanded. The school's website is current and informative with short video clips that provide a glimpse of the ethos and values of the school. School policies are up to date and available to parents to download.

Families new to the school, particularly for the youngest children in the foundation stage, say they receive a kind and caring welcome to the school. They feel well informed, confident and assured about the provision for their children.

Parents value the information they receive about their child's learning and achievements, especially in the secondary phase because this information is highly individualised.

Parents confirmed the results of surveys, which show that extensive and clearly presented information keeps them well informed. They have much trust and confidence in the school.

The reasons for transition to online learning during forced school closure were shared and explained. Parents expressed full confidence in the school's provision for online lessons and the safety of students who attend school for lessons.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The school has reviewed, updated and shared clear policies about how to raise a concern or make a complaint. These are accessible to parents and families and published on the school's website. Parents know that they can raise concerns informally and that there are more formal protocols in place for official complaints which can be escalated for review to an independent panel. Parents' views were considered in reviews of these processes, consequently they are confident that their concerns are taken seriously. They feel respected and know that any concerns raised are treated confidentially and sensitively.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the requirement of this BSO standard. The leadership and management of the school are **good**.

The school has many layers in its organisational structure. The board of directors meets twice each year. A memorandum of association defines the scope and purpose of its activity.

The executive committee comprises of proprietor representatives and the Capital School chief executive officer (CEO). This committee meets quarterly for strategic decision making.

The board of governors has 10 members and represents a broad range of stakeholders including: the CEO, the principal, a teacher, a teaching assistant, pupils, parents and educational experts. There are four sub-committees: teaching and learning, safeguarding, inclusion and Arabic and Islamic education. The CEO chairs regular meetings.

Governors include educational experts who provide valuable support and guidance to the school because of their deep understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to bring about rapid transformation. This is a strength of governance.

The CEO is very ambitious for the school and does extensive work dedicated to ensuring the school's commercial success and the positioning of the school in providing the best affordable British style of education in Dubai. To achieve this, most teachers recruited to the school are trained and experienced in the national curriculum of England. All human and financial resources are managed by the CEO, who also oversees facilities management. Staff turnover remains too high and leaders acknowledge that this is an important area to address.

The principal is a qualified, highly trained and experienced educator. Recently appointed, the principal has quickly devised a clear route map to ensure that all pupils realise their full academic potential and that their personal development is well supported. The principal leads the school effectively.

The principal is supported by a senior leadership team several members of which are new to this role. They are dedicated, energetic, hardworking and ambitious for the school but

some lack leadership experience. The senior leadership team is diligent and demonstrates commitment in executing their wide remit of responsibilities. It completes large volumes of managerial tasks efficiently and to a high standard. The principal and governors are supporting new leaders in gaining a deeper understanding of leadership at the senior level as they become more experienced in their roles.

The inclusion leader is skilled and highly effective in coordinating a range of interventions and support that meets pupils' needs. The designated safeguarding leader is passionate and knowledgeable and has independently sought to enhance her expertise. Leadership that cares for vulnerable pupils is strong.

The school's organisational structure makes appropriate distinctions between the roles given to each senior leader. However, there is still some work to do in ensuring that leaders' experience and knowledge match their responsibilities. In some aspects of their roles there is some clarity between the responsibilities of the CEO and the school's leadership. However, the differences are not sufficiently clear to ensure robust accountability.

The school's leadership has successfully secured high-quality teaching and improvements in assessment to provide an engaging and interesting range of curriculum subjects. This enables pupils of all ages enrolled at the school to make good progress.

Recognised as high quality, leaders have ensured that the school has adapted teaching and learning to provide a highly successful programme of online lessons and virtual schooling.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Capital 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 points for development:

- Raise pupils' attainment, particularly in reading across the school so that:
 - reading comprehension continues to improve
 - pupils can solve word problems in mathematics accurately
 - a greater proportion of pupils achieve the reading standards expected for their age.
- Halt high levels of staff turnover and improve retention rates so that there is greater continuity in learning for pupils.
- Redefine leadership roles to ensure that:
 - the strategic responsibilities of the CEO are more clearly separated from those of school leadership and management so that both can function effectively and with robust accountability
 - the delegation of responsibilities takes account of qualifications, training and experience.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | | | |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

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 | | ✓ | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|

Leadership and management

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Overall effectiveness of leadership and management | | ✓ | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|

School details

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of school | Capital School |
| Type of school | International School |
| Date school opened | September 2014 |
| Age range of pupils | 3-13 years |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | 647 |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils) | 0 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | AED 38,000 - AED 58,000 |
| Annual fees (boarders) | n/a |
| Address of school | Baghdad Street Al Qusais Dubai United Arab Emirates |
| Telephone number | +97 4238 1888 |
| Email address | info@capitalschooluae.com |
| Headteacher | David Muir |
| Proprietor | Madaen Al Shamilah Limited Company LCC |

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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Report reference no: 6/001/2021