

Dubai English Speaking College

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection dates 9–12 November 2015

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Age group: 11-18
Report published: Dec 2015
Report reference no: 1024

Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

The Standards are as follows:

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

The purposes of the inspections are to:

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

The BSO inspection was combined with an inspection carried out with inspectors from the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). The DSIB inspection evaluated the school's performance when measured against the quality indicators for schools in Dubai. The

outcomes of the DSIB inspection are contained within a separate report which is available from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai.

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

Dubai English Speaking College is located in Academic City, Dubai and is a large, not-for-profit school. It opened on the current site in 2005 and provides education for boys and girls from Year 7 to Year 13, aged 11 to 18 years. The college has increased pupil numbers in recent years and, at the time of the inspection, there were 1253 pupils on roll with 63 different nationalities represented. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. Dubai English Speaking School (DESS) is the primary school in the same group; the schools share a governing body.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum of England. The school is divided into two phases. The secondary phase includes Years 7 to 11, where pupils take both the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations at the end of Year 11. Post-16 includes Years 12 and 13, and these students take AS, A level and BTEC courses. Most students who leave the school in Year 13 go onto university courses, either in Dubai or in universities across the world including the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

There are 114 teachers and two guidance counsellors. All teachers in the school have appropriate teaching qualifications. In addition, there are 39 support staff employed at the school, including 9 Learning Support Assistants.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three CfBT Education Trust inspectors. On this combined inspection, there were also eight DSIB inspectors. The college was given three weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. The inspection team had access to a wealth of information about the college prior to the inspection. Schools in Dubai are required to submit documents online each year and inspection teams can view these. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base. In total, inspectors visited 95 lessons and some of

these were jointly observed by college leaders and inspectors. They held 36 meetings including those with the Principal and other school leaders, staff and parents and representatives of the board. Inspectors talked with pupils in formal interviews, in lessons and informally as they met them around the college. Inspectors also observed the work of the school and looked at self-evaluation, improvement plans, pupils' reports, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by parents and followed up on issues raised.

Evaluation of the school

Dubai English Speaking College is an outstanding school that meets the requirements of the British School Overseas Standards. Pupils receive an excellent education and, as a result of high quality teaching, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points. Despite such high quality outcomes, there is no trace of complacency anywhere in the college. Consequently, there is a strong capacity to improve still further.

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding in both secondary and post-16 phases.

By the end of Key Stage 4, 2015 GCSE results in English language and literature were outstanding with over 75% of pupils attaining grades A*-B. This is well above UK outcomes at 37%. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs is good. Over 47% attained grades A*-B, adding nearly half a grade to their predicted scores.

A similar picture is seen at the end of post-16 with almost all students making outstanding progress and achieving a minimum of one grade above their predicted scores.

Attainment and progress in external examinations over the last three years indicate an ongoing improvement in A*-B results. Particularly strong progress was made at the post-16 phase, rising from 33% in 2013 to 64% in 2015. Students reached standards well above the UK average in 2015 as 49% achieved grades A*- B.

By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils can write imaginatively with technical accuracy, using punctuation correctly. Pupils are adept at organising text effectively to ensure coherence and clarity, for example, when considering the writer's technique in the development of characters in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Pupils speak clearly and with confidence in whole-group discussions. They readily share their opinion: for example, when considering the analysis of text they use, with increasing accuracy, specialist terms to describe the writer's linguistic techniques. During discussion, pupils listen intently to each other and develop high quality focused dialogue in response to the ideas expressed. During this key stage, pupils are encouraged to read widely with an emphasis on the introduction of classic novels and poetry.

By the end of Key Stage 4, almost all pupils have developed an individual, distinctive writing style, particularly in response to questions which enable them to respond using persuasive language. Their extended writing is mature and reflective, it explores and justifies opinion with pertinent extracts from text to illustrate answers. Pupils apply their well-developed analytical skills to improve the standard of their writing by incorporating the same level of higher order reasoning skills. They can readily apply their well-developed skills of inference, interpretation and evaluation within whole-group discussions.

By the end of the post-16 phase, students have developed a mature style of writing which can be adapted to respond to a wide range of linguistic demands. For example, the extended writing of most students is outstanding and reflects their ability to produce a sustained, well organised, persuasive argument or critical evaluation of a piece of text. Their highly developed interrogative approach to textual analysis and broad knowledge of linguistic technique are reflected in the quality of quotations they select to exemplify a specific point. Almost all have developed a high level of critical thinking and evaluative skill which they use effectively to develop content and articulate opinion for example, in debates.

Pupils' attainment and progress in **mathematics** are consistently outstanding. Their attainment in mathematics significantly exceeds pupils' performance in UK schools in every measure at GCSE, AS and A2 level. For example, in 2015, 66% of pupils achieved A*-B grades at GCSE compared to a UK average of 34%. At A level, results remain impressive and exceed the UK figures consistently overtime. In 2015, 67% achieved A*-B grades.

In lessons throughout the college, pupils work confidently to develop fluency in mathematics fundamentals; this increases in complexity over time.

In Year 7, pupils manipulate negative numbers, including through multiplication, and use this learning when substituting into linear equations. By Year 9, pupils are able to factorise quadratics and explain what they are doing in correct mathematical terms. Working through investigations independently, they are able to consolidate their understanding of factorisation. Pupils' ability to work both independently and collaboratively is seen in numerous Year 11 investigations.

Practice and consolidation play a central role in the mathematics lessons. Well-designed variation helps to build pupils' fluency and understanding of underlying mathematical concepts.

In post-16, mathematics attainment and progress are outstanding. This can be illustrated by senior students' abilities in manipulating advanced mathematic higher order reasoning and thinking. Throughout the college, a real strength is the ability of pupils to select and evaluate appropriate problem-solving strategies to deal with complex mathematical problems. Real-life contexts are used successfully to link curriculum areas and bring the subject alive. For example, British triathlete data are incorporated into students' use of statistics, histograms, and scatter diagrams.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding in both secondary and post-16 phases.

Pupils demonstrate an impressive understanding of scientific concepts that exceed the curriculum expectations for their age. In Year 11, for example, pupils actively acquire an understanding of fusion and how it provides stars with energy. Their GCSE examination results are strong and have been sustained at a high level over the past three years. For example, in 2015, 81% of all science results were graded A*-B. This is much higher than averages found in schools and colleges in the UK. Most groups of pupils make better-than-expected progress, both in lessons and overtime. In Year 7, for instance, pupils are successful in developing their ability to collect reliable and reproducible results through experimentation.

There is a similar picture in post-16 provision. Although numbers are smaller, students demonstrate outstanding attainment and make outstanding progress in the sciences. Evidence from lessons and students' notes confirms that students consistently learned new concepts through experimentation and investigation. In Year 13, for example, students experimentally investigated the change in energy in an oscillating spring and were able to

explain how this could be translated practically. Students' results in external examinations remained at a high level for the past three years. Most groups of students made better-than-expected progress.

Pupils' successes at DESC are not confined to the core subjects. Indeed, attainment is at least above average and progress is often outstanding in almost all subjects of the curriculum. Particular strengths noted in GCSE results for 2015 include art, drama, French, Spanish and humanities.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

The quality of the curriculum provided by the college is outstanding. Plans to further monitor the work set for pupils who have special educational needs are already being implemented (see Standard 1 below).

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding (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 this Standard. They are outstanding in quality (see Standard 5 below).

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

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

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

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

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The college meets the requirements of this Standard.

The college curriculum is outstanding and is both distinctive and original. At Key Stages 3 and 4, it fulfils the requirements of the English National Curriculum and prepares pupils very well for external examinations commonly used in colleges in the UK. These include GCSE in Year 11, AS in Year 12 and A level in Year 13.

Departments work hard to keep the curriculum fresh to meet pupils' changing needs. The college has taken account of the recent changes to the UK curriculum and, as a result, pupils are able easily to enter or re-enter the UK system.

The curriculum provides excellent breadth and balance, both inside and outside the formal timetable. Physical education is particularly strong and the college has an enviable record in sports competitions.

Pupils who have special educational needs now receive a great deal of skilled support. In most cases, they make rates of progress similar to those of other pupils in the college. In the past, that has not been the case. College leaders recognised that systems for checking and improving the provision and support for pupils who have special educational needs were not as strong as for other areas of provision. Leaders acted decisively and have introduced better systems with expectations for these pupils' learning made clear and explicit in teachers' planning. It remains an area of focus for the college and one that needs to be checked regularly. This is because it is too soon to evaluate the impact of these changes.

The needs of the most able pupils are very well supported by a range of well-considered options. For example, the enrichment programme for the most able offers a variety of opportunities to develop both talents and skills, including: the World Scholars Cup programme; Young Musician of the Gulf competition and the Senior UK Mathematics challenge. Only a few pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. They are very well supported and their needs are fully met. They make similar, outstanding, rates of progress to the other groups of pupils in the school.

Leaders regularly review the curriculum. After consultation with parents and pupils, they introduced additional pathways for Year 11 pupils including dance, GCSE psychology and Business BTEC for year 12.

The college has a well-planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE). 'Grow and Life' encompasses all aspects of the college curriculum to promote each pupil's personal and social development, including health and well-being. It helps them to become healthy, informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities. The programme is supported by themed days; the latest is a 'Health and Well-being' day. Pupils speak in glowing terms about this day. They experience new activities such as yoga, Tai Chi, mindfulness, positivity and Tiger Training.

Careers support and guidance are now a strong feature throughout the college, having been an area previously identified for improvement. A member of the leadership team is now responsible for careers guidance and a careers coach has been appointed to assist pupils both in group workshops and one-to-one sessions. These help pupils to carefully consider decisions about the next steps in their lives. Consequently, pupils are using a well-considered approach that encourages them to become curious about a wide range of career options. This supports them well in the university application process and, in many cases, guides them into the top universities across the world.

There is a rich, extensive and stimulating range of extra-curricular activities across all areas of college life. These encompass social, cultural, scientific and aesthetic opportunities for pupils and provide them with a wide range of interests and aspirations. Senior leaders regularly monitor participation in order to recognise pupils' contributions and interests.

While the college is international, this is underpinned by a British ethos. A moving assembly to commemorate Remembrance Day was skilfully linked to the UAE's Martyrs' Day which is planned for later in the month. The debating society encourages freedom of speech, voting takes place for certain roles and responsibilities across the college and is one of the ways pupils learn about democracy.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Pupils in secondary and students in the post-16 phase make outstanding progress. This is because teachers have

excellent subject knowledge. They know how to share this knowledge with their pupils in exciting and engaging ways. This ensures there is sufficient challenge and support available when required. For example, strategies such as scaffolding and writing frames are used successfully to support and encourage pupils to be independent and to take responsibility for their own learning.

In mathematics, the range of strategies includes the highly creative use of electronic tablets to provide great challenge and opportunity for pupils to tabulate, produce graphs and self assess their work. Teachers use excellent questioning to skilfully challenge thinking and probe pupils' understanding of complex problems. This effective dialogue in lessons between pupils and teachers results in a high quality, interactive learning experience.

Teachers plan opportunities which encourage pupils to think critically and effectively sequence learning experiences: for example, through planned, focused discussions which are then followed by a period of review. This ensures maximum impact on the skills of learners. In Year 8 English, pupils were allocated defined 'detective' roles to question peers. They sought evidence and followed up with a factual recount of their findings.

Pupils are enthusiastic, independent learners who thrive on collaboration followed by self reflection to improve their work and that of others. In Year 13 drama, students challenged each other's character performance and offered guidance on how to improve a character's dialect for better effect. Pupils demonstrate their ability to connect different areas of learning and apply them in different contexts. For example, in Key Stage 3, pupils in English were asked to create poetry based upon a selected painting from the GCSE and A Level exhibition work. Students communicated their learning very effectively using a variety of methods, including the use of learning technology such as tablets and laptops.

The quality of assessment is outstanding. Appropriate external assessment systems have been selected which rigorously measure pupils' performance. Tests are aligned fully with the English National Curriculum and ensure accurate external validation of pupils' work. The data collated are used effectively to track and monitor standards throughout the whole college, across year groups and by individual pupils. Teachers' assessments are based upon pupils' progress towards externally set targets. Internal testing is frequent and used effectively to identify underperformance. Subject leaders are rigorous in their analysis of assessments, with relevant intervention strategies planned to address any gaps identified in learning. In response to relatively weaker performance in recent international tests, the curriculum has been modified to provide additional focus on the development of comprehension skills.

An innovative new system of assessment has been developed to respond to the removal of national curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 and the new linear GCSE examinations. The review process has been rigorous and included key teaching staff in the design of the new approach. Parents and pupils have been fully updated on changes within the assessment process. The system was implemented at the start of the academic year and is monitored to track its effectiveness.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and leads to improvement. The 'box and bubble' method is used successfully by most teachers to confirm areas of acquired learning and to give guidance to pupils on how to improve further.

There is an excellent range of strategies to assist pupils in the review of their own learning and to identify their next steps to improvement.

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

The college meets the requirements of this Standard.

The college's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance and punctuality are outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent, and leaders promote this area as a high priority. Leaders have recently introduced a four-point assessment system which allows pupils to grade themselves as learners, and then provides them with indicators for improvement. Pupils comment very favourably on this development. 'It allows us to think about how well we are doing as learners and when we spot some gaps, do something about it' was a typical view expressed to inspectors.

At break and lunch times, as well as during lessons, pupils consistently demonstrate excellent attitudes and a well-developed, strong self-reliance. They enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning as well as supporting each other.

Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are exceptionally strong; a keen moral sense, trust and mutual respect are evident. This was highlighted by pupils at the college council meeting when they listed the care, guidance and support they receive from staff as one of the areas of which they are most proud at DESC. They all agreed that this contributed significantly to their success. The college council is a force to be reckoned with, having strong views and opinions which members are keen to express. Their impact is illustrated by numerous improvements, including the addition of outside seating for post-16 students as well as improvements in the canteen and library.

The college provides numerous activities and opportunities for pupils to build their self esteem and self confidence. It has successfully created an ethos whereby pupils want to be involved. One of the main conduits for this to happen is through the house system. For example, staff from Desert House recently organised the 'Desert Spitfire Initiative'. This allowed pupils the opportunity to build and create model Spitfire planes and fly them. As well as working in a number of subjects, pupils enhanced their personal skills in areas such as collaboration, communication and team building. In addition, pupils worked across all age groups, encouraging older pupils to share their expertise.

Pupils' understanding of their community and environmental responsibility is outstanding because they are proactive in leading initiatives that have a positive impact. The 'eco-warrior' group is highly motivated, with a strategic aim to increase environmental awareness across the college.

The curriculum is most successful in ensuring that pupils are taught to understand and appreciate the range of different cultures within the college and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life. Cultural awareness is developed through assemblies, visiting speakers and foreign cultural trips such as the Visual and Performing Arts residential trip to London. Pupils took part in workshops with the puppeteers from *Warhorse*, dance lessons with the cast of *Miss Saigon* and received a taste of history when touring Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. For pupils studying art, the works of Monet and Van Gogh were observed at the National Gallery.

Creativity is valued highly; for example art, music and literature are all celebrated and are all executed to a very high standard. The chamber choir has won the Choir of the Gulf competition two years running and pupils' gifts and talents in other areas are recognised by the wide availability of clubs in the arts.

Pupils spoke to inspectors of what they were most proud at DESC and many of the areas above were mentioned. Pupils also pointed out that the college helps them to develop as a good person. As one pupil expressed so succinctly, 'In this college, pupils are valued not just for what they can do but for what they are.'

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

All the requirements of this Standard are met.

Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are outstanding. The mutual respect which permeates the college reinforces the supportive and caring ethos.

The college has an impressive range of policies and procedures to ensure that all members of the college community are safe and well cared for by specialist staff and facilities. All policies and procedures fully comply with current regulations. High quality child protection training is provided for all staff and the policy clearly outlines procedures for referral. The college is rigorous in ensuring that child protection policies are delivered in practice. The well-qualified college nurse plays an active role in the promotion of health in the college. Medical facilities are well organised and scrupulous attention is given to the storage and administration of medicines.

Pupil safety is regarded as paramount in all aspects of college life. Arrangements for settling pupils into college life are exemplary with strong links established with the partner primary. Detailed risk assessments are completed for all external visits, including the daily transport to and from college, and then reviewed to introduce improvements where necessary.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and promoted for pupils and staff. For example, the canteen serves a wide range of high quality healthy food including innovative options for those with food allergies.

The role of the tutor has been recently reviewed by all staff with the aim of improving the quality of provision and ensuring the purposeful use of this time. This is working well and enables tutors to fulfil important aspects of the role such as mentoring pupils and contacting parents.

The full review of tutor-time activities ensures these now fully support and enhance the PSHE programme. In order to foster this combined approach, strong links have developed between individual tutors and a linked PSHE teacher. Communication between tutors and the leadership team is strengthened further in regular tutor meetings.

The focus on global citizenship in tutor time provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to engage in active research, listen to expert speakers and then deliver a presentation to their house.

There is now a highly effective careers programme, supported by the appointment of a well-qualified careers counsellor. Careers guidance is incorporated within the PSHE programme from Year 9. In post-16 students have access to individual guidance for advice on university applications and their next career steps. The college's great success in this area is illustrated by the high numbers of students who reach their university of choice, with the majority attending British universities.

Child protection is also given a high priority and conforms to the best of UK practice and also the requirements of Dubai. Staff understand the safeguarding policy and receive regular,

appropriate training. During the inspection, staff confirmed they know how to respond correctly to a disclosure of abuse. A strong anti-bullying culture is a hallmark of the college, with a strong awareness of internet safety. In the secondary phase, it was recently agreed by senior pastoral managers to hold a whole-school session on inappropriate texting. Parents showed their support for this as no parent used the 'opt out' choice for their child.

The school has fully appropriate provision for disabled pupils.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The college meets the requirements of this Standard. There are rigorous procedures in place, prior to appointment, to check that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. In addition, the college also has written statements confirming that candidates and new appointments have the right to work in Dubai. Recently, the college has tightened its procedures still further by linking with professional associations. These are able to verify that staff members have cleared police checks and are available to work in the host country.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The college meets the requirements of this Standard. It also meets the local requirements of the Dubai authority. The facilities' manager is meticulous in his attention to detail and in ensuring that pupils learn in an attractive, hazard-free environment that is fit for purpose.

The college makes excellent use of the premises and accommodation to support the learning needs of the college community. Despite the increase in the number of pupils on roll, the layout of the buildings and the imaginative use of space have enabled the college to retain a 'spacious campus feel'. Pupils value this feature of their college and comment very positively about the way in which their learning needs are met. For example, post-16 students now have access to their own 'block'. This has been refurbished and extended recently to allow for additional study areas, break out areas and includes their own coffee shop and fitness suite. These new arrangements encourage students to manage their own learning in surroundings that are conducive. 'Staff listen to what we say and try their hardest to provide the best for us' was how one student described the improvements to their facilities.

Specialist subjects are also very well supported throughout the college with some excellent facilities available. A rolling programme of improvement, carefully prioritised, provides an even greater range of learning opportunities. A good example is the upgrading of the drama studio. It provides pupils with access to a professional level of equipment. As a result, the department is able to produce impressive productions at a very high level. The recent production of *Grease* illustrated the positive impact of these improvements on the experience and outcomes for pupils.

The college site is clean, tidy and litter free. Pupils take a great pride in keeping it that way. 'We spend a lot of time here and visitors always comment on how tidy we keep our college', commented a Year 8 pupil. Excellent relationships between teaching and support staff reflect the college's expectation that everyone's contribution should be valued. Resources are of high quality, plentiful and well deployed. Food hygiene, in both its preparation and serving, is given a high priority. Pupils spoke positively about the improved facilities available for them to use at lunchtime and breaks.

Pupils feel safe because the security of pupils is given such a high priority. Systems are well regulated so that access to the site is carefully controlled and monitored. Medical facilities for pupils are comprehensive with well qualified and trained nursing staff available throughout the day to deal with any emergencies.

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

The requirements of this Standard are met. The college provides parents with an impressive range of information which enables them to become fully involved in their children's education. The main conduit for this is the college's website, which contains a wealth of information, including the daily online DESC dispatch, and college development plan. All the documents required to meet the BSO standards are readily available.

Consultation with parents is a significant strength. For example, information from a meeting to inform parents of recent changes to assessment and the curriculum was also included in the form of an electronic presentation. This enabled absent parents to remain actively involved.

There are many examples of the college listening to parents, taking account of their views and acting upon them. The 'You said, we did' section, listed on the website, is testament to this. Alongside the formal parents' forums, the headteacher and senior leaders are present at the college gate every morning and available for any informal conversations with parents. Feedback from parents confirmed how much they appreciated this visibility and accessibility.

The positive picture from parent questionnaires was confirmed at the meeting inspectors held with parents. Inspectors were told that communication was excellent, it was 'free flowing and two-way'. Parents confirmed that any concerns, whether academic or pastoral, are dealt with swiftly and to their satisfaction.

The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the reporting arrangements on their children's progress. There are two interim reports followed by parents' evenings and an end-of-year report. These do not hold any surprises because of the two previous meetings and the policy of the college to contact parents immediately if there are any concerns. Daily pupil planners and regular homework are other means of communication between college and home. These enable parents to monitor their children's progress.

Standard 7. The college's procedures for handling complaints

The college meets all the requirements of the Standard. The complaints' procedures are clear and information is available on the college website. College records indicate that the complaints' procedure is rarely used. Parents confirmed that direct access to college leaders and teachers means that most issues can usually be addressed informally.

Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

Standard 9. Leadership and management of the college

The college meets the requirements of this Standard.

The headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for the college and he provides inspirational leadership. His relentless determination to sustain the college as a centre of excellence is shared by the leadership team and all staff. Staff as well as pupils strive to live up to the college's 'Dare, Excel, Share, Create' approach. Leaders are passionate about the inclusive ethos and justifiably proud of their work with the diverse range of pupils. The priorities of the UAE, as well as the promotion of British values, are integral to the college's ambitions and feature strongly in strategic development plans.

A Principal has overall responsibility for both the college and the associated primary school which is located 12 kilometres away. Following his appointment to the post two years ago, he has brought a valuable overview of the two schools and an insight into how they can work more closely together. The improved focus on transition and sharing best practice, as well as promoting innovation, are good examples of his success in this role.

Excellent systems for self-evaluation are embedded fully which helps to explain why the college continues to improve at so many levels. There is no sense of complacency and, at every level, performance is analysed so that lessons can be learned. For example, pupils' results are analysed in meticulous detail and any gaps in performance picked up quickly, followed by actions to put things right. The school compares its examination results against the best schools in Britain and internationally. There is a wealth of data provided about pupils' performance and this information is at the heart of team meetings; individual departments review their performance regularly. Subsequent action plans are concise with targets that are readily measured.

The college is innovative in the way it gathers information from which it reviews procedures. For example, 'lead learners' are pupils who contribute to discussions about their learning experiences in different classes. Their views are valued by staff which illustrates the college's culture of openness and being receptive to new ideas. The college has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses because its self-evaluation is rigorous and honest.

The high level of expertise and professional insight across the leadership team enables leaders to successfully promote effective teaching. The promotion of pupils' learning skills, alongside their personal development, is given a high priority. The notion of a 'professional learning community' is firmly embedded within the college's ethos. An innovative aspect of this is the involvement of pupils in sharing ideas about how best teachers might promote independence, collaboration and thinking skills.

The professional, warm and supportive relationships across the college owe much to the example set by leaders. All staff feel valued and know that any requests for support will not be seen as a weakness. On the contrary, it is seen as a means to improve their practice. Staff enthusiastically share successful strategies and willingly take up the many opportunities to further their professional development.

The school's track record of continuous improvement is impressive. Leaders have responded promptly to changes in the English national curriculum, for example, and modified what they do to ensure that the quality and design of the curriculum remain outstanding. In addition, they recognised that the support offered previously for pupils who have special educational needs should be improved. Positive action was taken and this area remains at the centre of scrutiny from college leaders.

The positive impact of the leadership team is evident at every turn; not least in the rising trend in pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and Islamic education over the previous three years.

Governance of the school is excellent and this stems from the very successful working relationships between the board, Principal and headteacher. Each is clear about their individual roles and responsibilities and systems for holding school leaders to account are transparent. As a 'not-for-profit' organisation, DESC ploughs any profits back into the school. Consequently, resources are of high quality and, fortunately for the college, many of the governors bring a wealth of experience and relevant professional backgrounds to their post.

The college staff are very well qualified and trained. Most are British trained which enables them to confidently teach the English national curriculum and to prepare pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK education system.

Efficient systems ensure that all financial, legal and safeguarding regulations are met. For example, procedures for recruiting staff have improved and are comprehensive. As a fully inclusive college, it actively promotes equal opportunities and is rigorous in tackling any form of discrimination.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

What the college could do to improve further

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

Against a background of an outstanding college

- Monitor rigorously the work planned for pupils who have special educational needs, when in class and in the learning support department, to ensure it is well matched to pupils' needs and offers appropriate challenge. Check and report on the impact of the support that is offered.

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 | √ | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|

The quality of provision for boarding

| | | | | |
|----------------|----|--|--|--|
| Not Applicable | NA | | | |
|----------------|----|--|--|--|

Leadership and management

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

School details

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Name of school | Dubai English Speaking College |
| Type of school | Private |
| Date school opened | September 2005 |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 1256 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | 74,219 – 79,772 dhs |
| Annual fees (boarders) | Not applicable |
| Address of school | Academic City PO Box 125814 Dubai, UAE |
| Telephone number | +971 4 360 4866 |
| Email address | Headteacher@descdubai.com |
| Headteacher | Chris Vizzard |
| Proprietor | Mr Andrew Gibbs |

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

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

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

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

Standards –

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Report reference no: 1024