

Dubai College

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 8-11 February 2016

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Age group: 11-18
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on 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 students.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the studentss.
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 students education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

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

Key for inspection grades

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

Proportions used in the report

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

Information about the school

Dubai College is situated in the Umm Suqeim district of Dubai and opened in 1978. It is an independent, co educational, not-for-profit, academically selective school. At the time of the inspection, there were 870 students on roll, aged from 11 to 18 years. It is an average-sized school. The school operates in two phases with 623 students in the secondary phase (11-16 years) and 247 in the sixth form (17-18 years). Although around 40 nationalities are represented, most students have United Kingdom backgrounds and speak English as their main language. No students speak English as a second language. Thirty-seven students are identified as having special educational needs.

The school follows the English National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. Students then take a combination of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations at the end of the secondary phase and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced level examinations at the end of the Post-16 phase. Last year, 100% of students were offered a university place and 94% moved on to higher education establishments in the UK, USA and across the world; the remaining students took a gap year.

The school's ethos is to engineer a balance in the lives of students who are academically very gifted. Staff want each student to discover for themselves who they are and who they want to be. The school creates a wealth of opportunities for students to participate in as broad a range of experiences as possible whether they are sporting, creative, philanthropic or academic. The leaders' vision is to be the best British school overseas in the world.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

The BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. On this combined inspection, there were also seven DSIB inspectors. The school was given three weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. The inspection team had access to a wealth of information about the school prior to the inspection. Schools in Dubai are required to submit documents online each year and inspection teams can view these. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base for reaching the judgements found in both reports. Over four days, the team visited 132 lessons. Inspectors held 58 meetings to interview senior leaders, subject coordinators, the special educational needs coordinator, other staff, students, parents and governing body members. The team scrutinised students work and school documents including: the self-review document which reflects the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans, policies, assessment systems, and safeguarding procedures. They generally observed the school at work and followed up on any issues raised. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by parents and followed up any issues raised.

Evaluation of the school

Dubai College is an outstanding school. It provides an outstanding quality of education for all of its students and meets the standards for British Schools Overseas. It shows a good capacity for further improvement, particularly with the appointment of the new headmaster.

The school caters for academically able students who are fluent in English. The selective entry policy assesses students in English, mathematics and cognitive ability. Students may also excel in creative arts and/or sport. The school admits a small number of high achieving students who have special educational needs or who are disabled. External reports, measuring attainment and progress in all subjects across the curriculum, show that the school performs considerably better than other schools registered with the Council of British international schools (COBIS), other schools in the region, and other coeducational independent schools in the UK, particularly in achieving A* and A grades at GCSE and A level.

The attainment in **English** of students at each key stage is outstanding. Their achievements in public examinations place them among the very best schools internationally and in comparison with all independent schools in Britain. Students show exceptional skills in speaking and listening in both phases of the school. They are perceptive and articulate and express their opinions with confidence, employing a wide range of vocabulary. Their understanding of literary texts is exceptional. In Year 7, students are able to understand the unconventional nature of a Shakespearean sonnet. In Year 11, students read dramatic text, expressing meaning through appropriate intonation and analyse character traits deduced from the text. Written work is equally strong; persuasive and fluent sentence structure and syntax are embedded early and grow in sophistication with each year. Creative writing is strongly established in Year 7 and continues throughout the school.

Progress in English is outstanding and students rise to the high expectations of their teachers. High attainment on entry to the school is built on rapidly and leads to the outstanding results that students achieve at GCSE and at A Level and places them among some of the highest performers internationally. Work at this level is characterised by high level thinking skills, an advanced ability to interpret literary texts and fluent, persuasive writing.

Students work cooperatively, showing respect for each other's opinions and learning from a variety of collaborative tasks. Their ability to critique and improve their own work and that of their peers helps them achieve rapid progress. Students use literary terms with confidence and aplomb; their written work, like the oral work, benefits from their wider vocabulary and sensitive descriptive powers. Reading shows sensitivity to intonation and the effect of punctuation. In the sixth form, students absorb new ideas very quickly and challenge each other, and their teachers, with extremely perceptive argument.

Students attainment in **mathematics** is outstanding throughout the school. Achievement is very impressive by any measure, and results compare very favourably with those in the highest performing independent and selective schools in the UK. From above average starting points, students make significant and rapid progress and achieve very high standards. GCSE results have improved and are extremely high. In 2015, 92% of students achieved A* or A grades. This compares with a UK average of 16.5%. The proportion of A* grades has risen from 59% in 2013 to 75% in 2015. Results are similarly impressive in Years 12 and 13. Mathematics is a very popular option, and approximately 80% of students study the subject at A level. In 2015, 65% of students achieved A* or A grades. There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of students, including boys and girls and those who have special educational needs. All achieve equally well in all phases of the college.

Throughout the school, students show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their study of mathematics. They arrive with secure numeracy skills, and challenging teaching ensures that they make rapid progress and can use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding to solve increasingly difficult problems. For example, Year 8 students make excellent progress in their ability to identify and produce plans and elevations of 3D shapes. Year 11 students use their knowledge and understanding of circle theorems to solve demanding problems. In Year 12, students rapidly recognise that they can use Pascal's triangle in their expansion of complex algebraic expressions, and apply this very effectively to enhance and deepen their understanding. Students routinely use their mathematical skills very competently in other subjects, including science and geography.

Attainment in **science** is outstanding. The high performance of students in all three separate sciences has been maintained over several years at both GCSE and A-level. In GCSE, the very large majority achieve A* or A grades, well above UK averages. At A level, around 60% of the year group choose science as an option; the majority of whom achieve A* or A grades, again well above UK comparisons. There are no gender differences in attainment in any phase of the school.

Progress in science is outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 3. From above average starting points, students add considerable value to their attainment scores. This continues at GCSE when students still perform above expectations. At A level, targets are set based on value already added at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, yet continue to improve from previous years. In

lessons, almost all students make better-than-expected progress in relation to the learning objectives, which are aligned with expected curriculum standards.

Investigative science is a normal feature of lessons and students enjoy scientific enquiry. Students of all ages are encouraged to work independently, using their problem-solving skills, and opportunities are regularly given to apply their previous knowledge and understanding. During the inspection, for example, in Year 7 students were expected to carry out a practical experiment to separate mixtures. No method was given to them, so they used prior knowledge of filtration, evaporation and condensation to plan and carry out their experiment. They had a good understanding of the importance of validity and reliability. Year 13 students' approach to their work is completely open-minded, with a willingness to think deeply and to disagree with the teacher's comments. This is because students take ownership of their decision making. All of this leads to excellent outcomes for students. They evaluate and learn from errors in their experimental work, addressing problems or anomalies as they arise.

All students currently study **information and communication technology (ICT)** at GCSE and it is an option at A level. Achievement is very high with 92% of students achieving an A* or A grade at GCSE in 2015. Year 11 students are very confident in recognising and analysing different types of computer animation and their uses in different situations.

All students study computer science in Key Stage 3 and make excellent progress. During the inspection, in Year 8, students were involved in assessing and feeding back on each other's work in order to refine and improve a website they were constructing. This included coding to create enhanced visual effects. Consequently, they made substantial progress towards producing an impressive website.

ICT is also used very effectively across the curriculum. Students routinely use ICT to research and enhance their studies in almost all subjects, both in school and at home. In a Year 7 history lesson, for example, students enthusiastically used a variety of ICT resources routinely to a very high standard to research and prepare a presentation on change and continuity in Dubai. This included written, visual and audio material, which the students produced and organised themselves. Similarly, Year 10 geography students used ICT very successfully to enhance their understanding of issues related to flooding in Pakistan. In physical education (PE), students used video clips of the correct techniques to emulate.

In other subjects of the curriculum, students attainment is outstanding and they make excellent progress. In 2015, 81% of all GCSE entries were at A* or A grade, and, at A level, 68% of entries were at A* or A. These results would place the school in the highest performing group of schools in the UK. Students excel in a wide range of subjects: of particular note are design and technology and art where the quality of work is simply superb, with each student interpreting the brief in a completely different and innovative way. They use a wide range of technology, including 3D printing laser cutting and vacuum forming techniques.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Standard 1 below).
Students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).

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

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

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

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

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

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Standard 9 below). The school fully meets the needs of a small number of high achieving students who have special educational needs; even so, senior leaders and governors do not fully communicate the inclusive school ethos to prospective students and their parents at the time of application.

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during February 2016, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. **The school's curriculum is outstanding** and provides a broad and rich full-time education for all of its students. At Key Stage 3, it follows the English National Curriculum, but with modifications and enhancements to take advantage of the context and location of the school in Dubai and the UAE. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, a very wide range of GCSE and A-level courses is offered. In addition, approximately one third of all sixth-form students each year choose to take an optional Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Consequently, students throughout the school have opportunities to study in all major areas of learning including mathematics, English, the sciences, humanities, languages, technology, creative and aesthetic subjects and PE. Students benefit from a planned series of enrichment days specifically related to personal, social and health (PSHE) related issues. As the curriculum is closely aligned with that of the UK, it allows students to enter or re-enter the UK system at any stage in their learning.

The curriculum is under constant review, and is adjusted as necessary to meet the needs of students and to take account of changes in examination requirements and syllabuses. For example at Key Stage 3, computer science has replaced ICT, and this will continue into Key Stage 4. Latin has recently been introduced as an option at both GCSE and A level. The curriculum meets the needs of students extremely well; it engages and motivates them in their learning and promotes very high standards of academic, personal and social development. If necessary, it is modified to meet the needs of those with particular or special educational needs, so that these students make outstanding progress in line with their peers.

There is excellent continuity between the various stages of the curriculum. Students learning skills are very effectively reinforced and developed as they move through the school. Students are encouraged to think and work independently and creatively and to reflect on their learning. They also work very effectively together as groups and in teams. As a result, students are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Students receive extremely high quality advice and guidance at all stages to support them in their choice of subjects and future aspirations. Almost all students move on to higher education from the sixth form, with a large majority going to the most prestigious universities in the UK and other countries.

The curriculum is enriched and enhanced by a very wide-ranging programme of extracurricular activities, covering sport, drama, music, cultural and academic activities. Currently over 130 extracurricular activities are offered, and 95% of students participate in at least one of these activities. There is also an extensive range of visits, trips and visitors to add further enrichment. These varied activities include a very strong Duke of Edinburgh Award programme at all levels, participation in international music and debating competitions, residential outdoor activities visits for students in Years 7 and 8, and a range of international sporting tours.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding across the school and enables students to make very rapid progress in acquiring knowledge, increasing understanding and developing skills throughout the school. As a result, standards are extremely high in all subject areas, and students learn exceptionally well.

Teachers are well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. This enables them to plan lessons involving a variety of tasks and activities at a level well suited to these very able students. Lessons and learning activities are purposeful and have clear objectives. The pace of lessons is rapid and provides students with a level of challenge that results in rapid and sustained progress. Teachers make use of a wide range of resources and use ICT very effectively to support and enhance learning when appropriate. Teachers know students very well, and this enables them to tailor activities and questions very closely to the individual needs of each student, including those who have special educational needs.

There are excellent relationships between students and teachers, characterised by a culture of mutual trust and respect. Teachers have very high expectations of their students, and students are very highly motivated. Students listen attentively and engage very positively with all learning activities in the classroom and beyond. They take pride in their work and show great interest in their studies. Students respond extremely well to teaching that strongly encourages them to reflect and think deeply about their learning rather than just absorbing knowledge. They are perceptive and thoughtful, and are well able to develop and articulate responses to challenging questions and problems, both individually and as part of a group or team. Students are capable of seeing the wider picture, and quickly make links between seemingly disparate and unconnected information or ideas.

Teachers assess students work regularly and effectively, and use this information to plan activities that challenge students to improve further. In response to changing curriculum and assessment systems in the UK, the school has recently introduced a revised and more rigorous assessment and tracking system; this more closely monitors students' attainment and progress against targets. This system is embedding throughout the school, and is enabling students, teachers and parents to have a much clearer picture of how well students are performing. The styles of teaching, learning and assessment are closely aligned with those of the highest performing schools in the UK and provide an excellent preparation for students to enter or re-enter the UK educational system at the appropriate level.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. Students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is heavily supported by a very strong school ethos, well-targeted enrichment days, along with visiting speakers and assemblies. All PSHE development days are designed with personal development at the heart.

Students spiritual awareness is excellent. Students grow in self-esteem and develop a strong sense of identity, thanks to the safe, caring and secure environment created for them. This is summed up succinctly by a senior students: 'The school is like our home'. At ease with themselves, students have a caring attitude towards other students, whose opinions they respect and listen to. There is a very strong sense of 'looking out' for one another and supporting each other as necessary. The very high participation, in an extremely wide range of activities, allows students to grow in self-awareness and self-confidence. Through discussion and the debating of values, playing sports, the very strong programme of visual and performing arts, and through the enjoyment of cultural experiences, students come to appreciate the non-material sides of life. Students were able to perceive layers of symbolism in a Year 8 English lesson, for instance, and the importance of a spiritual life was discussed in a sixth-form class.

Students show a highly developed sense of moral awareness and moral responsibility. The very popular debating societies and the two model United Nations groups, for instance, help students to develop a clear sense of right and wrong, both on a personal and political level. Almost all students believe that bullying either does not exist in the school or that it is dealt with quickly and effectively on the rare occasion that it occurs. Students behaviour, both in the classroom and when they are less closely supervised between lessons and at break times, is excellent. At all times, students are courteous and welcoming. Numerous students -led initiatives in charitable fundraising have shown students moral sense in action. The encouragement towards charitable giving is in evidence on student-owned noticeboards throughout the school.

The social development of students is outstanding. They are eager to partake in roles of responsibility and are actively involved in setting up and running societies. Students say there are an increasing number of opportunities for them to take initiatives and to lead. Students -run activities include both senior and junior charity committees and student council committees. Peer mentoring gives opportunities to those in Year 11 and above to help younger students as they progress through the school. Relationships within the school are excellent, both among students and between students and staff. There is a very successful Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, with over 100 students in Year 10 achieving the Bronze award and over half of Year 12 involved with the Gold Award. The very popular introduction of the 'Home Alone' course for sixth formers prepares them very thoroughly for life at university after they leave school.

The cultural development of students is also outstanding. All students participate in some form of cultural activity on a regular basis. There is a plethora of overseas links, exchanges, trips and tours which broaden cultural horizons. The school also hosts a regular number of inter-school events, inviting both local and international participation. Students display a clear understanding for, and interest in, the history and culture of the UAE and the school ensures that students develop a deep understanding of UAE culture and history. There is a wide range of nationalities and students respect the different cultural traditions within the school.

The school promotes a very wide general knowledge and understanding of modern British life in relation to social issues and the values of tolerance, democracy, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights. Plasma screens in many school buildings stream news from the UK. The school follows a British curriculum and examination system. The library is well-stocked with British novelists, reference books and periodicals. During the inspection, there was a 'James Bond' themed concert and Year 7 re-enacted the Battle of Hastings.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. Procedures for promoting the welfare, health and safety of the students are outstanding. Students are exceptionally well cared for. Robust policies exist to safeguard the students, as well as excellent practice. All arrangements meet the same high standards as in the UK, while also acknowledging the requirements of Dubai. All teaching staff are trained at least every three years in safeguarding principles and procedures and a member of the board of governors has recently been appointed to oversee child protection. The school is very conscious of the importance of e-safety and a three-day conference was recently held to inform teachers, students, parents and members of other school communities.

Caretakers, cleaners and bus drivers are directly employed by the school and many are housed at the school, allowing them to build up a deeper sense of belonging and commitment than might otherwise be possible. The school has 24-hour surveillance and there is a lock-down policy, which is regularly practised and recorded, as are fire evacuation drills. Students are well supervised while at school and are not present when outside organisations use the school's premises.

Students understand very well that they can turn to a variety of staff if they have a problem. The new student support area provides a welcoming base for those who wish to see a qualified school nurse, the counsellor or the special educational needs coordinator. The school is an inclusive community in which all students feel safe and valued and where they are free from bullying.

Healthy life-style lessons, activities and initiatives are supported and adopted by the students. 'Health and well-being' is the first core theme of the PSHE programme which is delivered very thoroughly through assemblies, enrichment days, PE lessons and a variety of other means. In PSHE, Year 8 look at healthy eating and the dangers of alcohol and smoking. In Years 12 and 13, the 'Home Alone' programme provides guidance, for instance, on sexual relationships and eating on a budget and a health coach regularly addresses sixth-form assemblies. An overwhelming majority of students take part in regular sporting activities and maintain good fitness levels. The school's records of admissions and attendance registration meet both local and UK requirements. Students attendance is outstanding at over 99% and almost all are punctual to school.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The school and governors ensure that all the required checks are in place and confirm that employed staff are suitable to work with children and have the right to work in Dubai. Leaders have undertaken safer recruitment training.

The large majority of appropriately qualified staff are British trained with considerable experience of the UK curriculum, and in helping students to achieve at the highest level.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The excellent premises and accommodation contribute significantly to the success of the students educational experience. The school buildings are attractively laid out and well maintained. Classrooms are bright, airy and well equipped, with excellent displays promoting students work or offering additional learning opportunities. There are 13 science laboratories, three design and technology suites and five computer suites. Facilities for the creative arts are excellent with four art studios, a music centre with 12 practice rooms and a recording studio and a fully-equipped auditorium to seat 900 people in addition to three drama studios. These facilities are used well by a large number of students and considerably enhance students learning opportunities. The school library is spacious, light, and very well stocked. There is a full-time, trained librarian, whose expert services are greatly appreciated by staff and students, who use the library frequently.

Much of the immediate outdoor space offers welcoming opportunities for students to relax. There are picnic benches and tree-lined walk ways, beside a succession of immaculately maintained, sub-tropical gardens. The 19-acre site, in the heart of Dubai, is very well equipped with excellent sports facilities. Students enjoy the benefit of grassed sports pitches, a large indoor sports hall, a six-lane, covered swimming pool, tennis courts and cricket nets, supporting the wide participation levels and excellent record of sporting successes achieved.

Risks assessments are carried out routinely. All appropriate checks, for instance on water safety, catering and the hygiene of washrooms are completed and recorded meticulously. Good provision is made for any students who use a wheelchair to move around the premises. There are very effective systems in place to ensure the security of the school site. The school has two dining areas, one for staff and one for students, where healthy food is served. The food preparation areas are hygienic and meet the high standards expected.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. There is an excellent range of channels of communication between the school and parents, some of which inform parents of their child's ongoing progress and assessment. These include a highly informative website, which meets all the regulatory requirements for information to parents and prospective parents. The website also contains links to the e-bulletins, which are sent to all parents. News from the school can also be accessed on six different social media platforms. One information network stream has been held up as exemplary practice for schools and has been mentioned at international conferences. Parents can access the student/staff portal via their children's access and soon will have their own access. The e-mail addresses of all form tutors and of senior key staff are also available to parents. Parents can also download a communication application to their electronic devices and this contains the school calendar, notices, letters and other information for parents. They also have personal access to the leadership team and other staff as necessary. Parents' views are listened to, and taken seriously; the school is fully open to innovative ideas.

Information evenings, coffee mornings, as well as parent consultation evenings, exist to inform parents further about the school, events and their children's progress. Regular reports on students attainment and progress are sent home and these contain targets for improvement and students comments. Parents say that they are very satisfied with both the quality and quantity of information they receive, which has improved considerably recently. Parents know that the school puts the welfare of the children first.

The Friends of Dubai College are very active in supporting the school and seek to encourage all parents to engage with the school to raise funds to further the school's aims. The school has established extensive links throughout the UAE and internationally, which give the school considerable prominence. Parents are extremely supportive of the school.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets all the requirements of the Standard. The complaints' policy is available on the school's website and parents are aware of it. The school's aim is to do things well and properly, so there is little room for complaint. There have been no formal complaints. School leaders are visible every morning and evening and at events, which means that informal concerns are quickly resolved. Questions can also be asked via email. Parents confirm that procedures are clear and that any minor concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.

Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets all the requirements of the standard. The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The new headmaster has a clear vision for the future and an enthusiasm to improve the school still further, maintaining the outstanding levels of students academic and personal achievement. He has been very successful in seeking the views of all stakeholders, to set the strategic direction of the school. The headmaster is supported effectively in his aims by widely distributed leadership across the school. The ethos of the school is shared by all. This can be seen in the high morale of the skilled staff. Parents, too, in their responses to the survey and in their discussions with inspectors, demonstrated very high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school. Students embody the vision and ethos in their aspirational and self-motivated approach to all aspects of their school life.

Systems and routines are very well established and highly efficient, so that teaching and other activities take place within a calm and purposeful learning environment. Communication is extremely effective. The huge range of events and opportunities at the school are centralised on a calendar so that staff, students and parents are all fully informed.

Systematic and rigorous self-evaluation takes place across the school. Priorities for development are realistic and support the school's aims. Departmental action plans draw on a thorough analysis of recent achievement data, particularly in comparison to international expectations.

They also take into consideration the latest developments in the UK, particularly in terms of curriculum and assessment changes. The school seeks and responds positively to feedback from parents and students through surveys and meetings. Teachers' participation in various working parties, such as teaching and learning, curriculum, welfare and strategic planning groups, has enabled staff at all levels to contribute to continuing school improvement. All improvement plans are periodically reviewed and modified accordingly. The reformed student council, led by sixth-form students, with lower-school subcommittees, gives all students a voice. Through the various committees, students have initiated improvements which have been implemented by school leaders. One such example is the extra sessions for those in Years 9 and 11 to talk to past students who have taken different subjects in order to inform their subject option choices. They also have a say, for example, in reviewing the behaviour policy and one group is actively working with the architects on how improvements to facilities would work best for them.

Rigorous performance management procedures for staff include observations of teaching and learning, leading to personalised targets and opportunities for professional development. Staff are also expected to be reflective of their own performance. Governors appraise the performance of the headteacher. The school acts as a centre for training in the region, hosting events such as middle leader training. It is also part of a local cluster of not-for-profit schools to provide and share good quality training. It is clear that there is a culture of continuous improvement, with no sense of complacency, across the school. This school is very successful in the recruitment and retention of high-quality staff. There is much greater stability found in the teaching staff here than is generally the experience in international schools.

Senior leaders demonstrate a strong capacity to improve and all share a common sense of purpose and determination to excel. They speak of a 'buzz and energy' in the team, which is palpable.

School leaders and the governing board are clear about the separation of responsibilities and this works well. The board of governors is extremely supportive of the school and yet challenging in equal measure. A wide range of expertise is evident within the board and succession planning ensures a variety of skills are represented. Governors have a positive relationship with the school's leadership team and fully support the new headmaster's strategic plan for the future. The board meets regularly, both as a full board and through subcommittees. Members of the education subcommittee now visit the school to observe lessons and report back to departments. Both leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Governors are proactive in making sure high-level staffing and resources are in place. Clear financial management underpins the school's continued highly successful development.

Governors and school leaders have shown their commitment to the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs by appointing a qualified special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), who demonstrates a clear vision for improvement. Governors make sure there are effective policies and procedures in place to tackle discrimination and ensure equality. The introduction of new policies, procedures and effective support for teachers has a positive impact on the consistency of provision for these students. Even so, and within the context of this highly effective school, senior leaders and governors do not fully communicate the inclusive school ethos to prospective students and their parents in the admissions policy.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Dubai College fully meets the requirements for British Schools Overseas.

What the school could do to improve further

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

1. Emphasise, more clearly, the inclusive nature of the school's admissions policy in the wider community.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

n/a	n/a			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	√			
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School details

Name of school	Dubai College
Type of school	Private, independent, co-educational, not-for-profit, academically selective school
Date school opened	1978
Age range of pupils	11-18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	870
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	n/a
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 74,712 – AED 84,600
Annual fees (boarders)	n/a
Address of school	Al Sufouh Road Dubai
Telephone number	+971 4 3999111
Email address	dcadmin@dubaicollege.org
Headteacher	Michael Lambert
Proprietor	Board of Governors

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a students 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 student 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 students.

Standards –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that students 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 students 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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