

# The School Of Research Science

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

**16 – 19 Feb 2015**

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**Age Group: 3-18**

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from CfBT Education Trust who spent four days at the school. CfBT is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and 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 DSIB (Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau). 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 KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority) in Dubai.

#### **Key for inspection grades**

**Grade 1      Outstanding**

**Grade 2      Good**

**Grade 3      Satisfactory**

**Grade 4      Inadequate**

#### **Proportions used in the report**

97–100% Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all

80–96% Very large majority, most

65–79% 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**

Established in 1998, The School of Research Science is a private, multi-national school in Dubai. At the time of the inspection, there were 2718 pupils on roll aged from three to 18 years. It is of a similar size to schools of the same type. Of these, 339 pupils have been identified as having some form of special educational need, including those with particular gifts and talents. The school is structured in four phases: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), primary, secondary and post-16.

The school comprises pupils of over 20 nationalities, but the large majority are Emirati nationals and most pupils speak Arabic as a first language. A notable feature of the school is its commitment to bilingualism, whereby from Foundation Stage 1 onwards a number of lessons are taught in both Arabic and English. This strengthens pupils' facility in both languages and supports their understanding of technical terms, notably in science. Teachers are well qualified with the great majority being trained in the UK. The school's aim for its pupils is to encourage them to strive for excellence in all they do, develop independent learning skills, value differences, cherish diversity and creativity and develop life skills.

The school follows the English National Curriculum. Pupils sit international examinations: IGCSE in Year 11, AS Level in Year 12 and A Level in Year 13. 2014 was the first year pupils sat A Levels and they are now studying at universities in the UAE and the UK.

## **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 seven DSIB inspectors. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base. In total, inspectors visited 140 lessons and observed 90 teachers. They held 60 meetings including those with the Principal and other school leaders, staff and parents and the Chair of the Board. Inspectors attended assemblies and talked with pupils in formal interviews, in lessons and as they met them around the school. Inspectors also assessed the work of the school by reviewing self-evaluation and improvement plans, pupils' reports, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by parents, pupils and staff and followed up on issues that were raised.

## **Evaluation of the school**

This school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Many of its features are excellent. Leadership and management are outstanding and have an excellent view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. This underpins the school's excellent capacity for improvement.

The school's effective provision combines good British educational standards and methodology with high standards in Arabic and Islamic Education. Pupils' attainment is above average and compares favourably with standards reached in British independent schools.

The school's key strengths are its successful bi-lingual teaching, its high quality of management, its pupils who are enthusiastic and committed learners and its constant striving for improvement. The school's leadership acknowledges that it needs to be more consistent in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and increase opportunities for pupils to learn about British institutions.

Most children start school with skills that are well below those typical for their age. Very few arrive in school with fluency in English. Children of all abilities generally make outstanding progress during their time in the early years and leave working at levels that are broadly average. Increasing proportions of children exceed these expectations in the different areas of learning.

The high priority given to improving children's speaking and listening is reaping dividends. It helps to ensure that rapid progress is made in these areas, often from low starting points. Children want to talk because adults are interested in what they have to say and help them find the right word. Progress in reading and writing is excellent, confirmed not only by the school's data and inspection evidence but by children's positive responses to the varied opportunities provided for them. The standards they reach in these areas remain lower than their oral skills. Children listen attentively at story time and many are keen to retell their favourite stories. Signs around the classroom help children begin to make sense of letters and the sounds they make and to practise reading words.

Children make good progress in developing mathematical skills. Consequently, children are confident in using and applying their knowledge of number and shape in other areas of learning. This was illustrated by children working out how many visitors they were able to serve in their 'restaurant', how much they could charge for the meals and the best shape for the tables needed to 'fit in the customers'.

Children show a growing interest and curiosity in the world around them. Their attainment in this early years area is good and the progress they make during their time in school is excellent. Most demonstrate a growing confidence in talking about why things happen and how they work. For example, as part of a class topic on fish, children were able to examine closely different species using magnifying glasses. Explaining that they all must be dead, one girl pointed out that, 'They've got to have water to live in, they can't survive without water.' Other members of this group were able to describe the look, feel and smell of these fish and talk about differences and similarities that they had spotted.

In English, attainment is above average in primary, secondary and post-16 phases. Progress is outstanding in all but the secondary phase, where it is good.

Children enter the early years with very limited skills in English and make outstanding progress. That progress continues in the primary phase where pupils quickly acquire communication skills using a mixture of Arabic and English. By Year 6 those same pupils, particularly girls, speak fluently and confidently. Using phonics, they rapidly learn how to match sounds and letters to develop their reading skills. Pupils follow a highly effective reading scheme and, by Year 2, can read story and information books with understanding. They listen well and build a useful vocabulary. Many Year 6 pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and the skills they acquire help them to learn in other subjects.

Writing skills develop alongside pupils' reading skills and younger pupils can form letters and write words. They start to learn correct forms of spelling and grammar until, by Year 6, most pupils can write acceptably using descriptive language and complex sentences. Pupils enjoy English and participate eagerly in lessons.

This enjoyment continues into the secondary phase. Here, pupils develop their oral skills further, listening and responding to questions and making presentations to the class. Most read for pleasure, including whole books, and can glean information from a variety of sources and summarise what they have read. A strong emphasis on reading for understanding leads to the ability to comprehend and interpret different styles of writing.

Pupils acquire a wide vocabulary and learn to craft paragraphs and structure essays. They can write letters, factual accounts, descriptive essays and arguments. Their study of literature enables them to discuss character, think and write critically and express their own ideas. Pupils enjoy texts like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and, by Year 11, many are adept at analysing texts carefully. The best can use quotation to exemplify their arguments and express their appreciation verbally and in writing.

From average starting points when pupils join Year 1, they make rapid progress in mathematics so that by the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils reach standards that are in line with or above those expected for their age. This represents good progress which accelerates through the secondary phase. Consequently, by the time pupils sit their IGCSE examinations they are very well prepared. This is illustrated by the impressive and improving results they achieve. In 2014, pupils at the school achieved 86% at IGCSE compared to the UK average of 74%. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels of A\* and A was 40% compared to the UK average of 18%. Ninety per cent of pupils made better than expected progress during their time in the secondary phase.

Only a small number of students, 10 in total, completed Year 13 and took their A levels in 2014. Indeed, 2014 was the first group to take A levels at the school. Nevertheless, 100% of students achieved a pass at rates close to the UK averages. Seventy per cent of students made better than expected progress when compared to their targets.

Strengths in mathematics include pupils' ability to reason, apply their mathematical knowledge and solve problems. This was due to the emphasis given to these important aspects and the opportunities afforded to apply this learning in many other subject areas.

Older students demonstrate an excellent grasp of complex and abstract mathematical concepts and approach investigations confidently. Consequently, they are prepared very well for their external examinations and for the next phase in their education or transition to the work-place

Attainment in science is good in the primary phase and outstanding in both secondary and post-16 phases. Progress is outstanding in all three phases. In primary, pupils' attainment in science is above pupils of a similar age in the UK. They rapidly develop subject-specific language which they use to relate to the world around them. For example, pupils were able to predict on which surfaces microbes would be most likely to collect and to design an experiment to test their hypothesis.

By the end of the secondary phase, pupils have developed their scientific thinking and can apply their scientific knowledge accurately, drawing on prior learning. They are able to use their knowledge of hydrophilic and hydrophobic molecules to confidently explain why soap would help to remove dirt and grime from clothes when they were washed. Over the past three years, attainment in the sciences at IGCSE has shown an upward trend. In 2014, 84% of pupils at the school achieved A\*-B grades in the separate sciences compared to the UK national average of 72%.

In post-16, students make rapid progress and attainment is high. Students acquire a depth of understanding in their science subjects which they are able to draw upon to communicate complex ideas with confidence. Students are able to carry out practical investigations with precision and draw appropriate conclusions based on their observations and secure theoretical knowledge. A small number of students took sciences at A level for the first time in 2014 with a 100% pass-rate. The majority of grades were above expected levels.

Strengths in science include pupils' ability to relate their learning in science to the world around them, deepen their understanding of scientific concepts and use scientific language with increasing confidence and accuracy to justify their hypothesis and to communicate their ideas. A-level students demonstrate a high level of

confidence in practical laboratory skills. They are able to carry out investigations to test complex scientific theories.

It is a similar picture in other subjects with attainment being at least above average and progress outstanding. This was observed in IGCSE history, AS art, AS psychology and IGCSE physical education (girls). As an example, in an IGCSE physical education theory lesson, pupils developed their analytical skills, using data from the practical session, to assess current skill and fitness levels. They then made rapid progress in creating a six-week fitness and skills' plan to measure improvement over the period.

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The curriculum is outstanding and the standards of teaching and assessment are at least good (see Standard 1 below).

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

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good and the pastoral care of pupils is 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 are outstanding in quality (see Standard 5 below).

Information for parents is of high quality and easily accessible (see Standard 6 below).

The school's procedures for handling complaints 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 February 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 quality of the curriculum is excellent. The content of the curriculum is imaginatively designed to ensure that all subjects interest pupils and meet their needs. Teachers modify the curriculum to challenge the most able pupils, for example, by entering them early for examinations. All pupils' progress is tracked and a rigorous early intervention programme leads to the identification of pupils with special educational needs followed by a programme of individual support. A special educational needs coordinator works closely with pupils with complex needs and a team of learning mentors supports pupils with learning difficulties in the classroom. The school has good systems to identify and support pupils with special educational needs. However, this was not always effectively and consistently delivered across all phases to affect progress. The impact and effectiveness of support in some classes was inconsistent.

The language of instruction is English although, for the vast majority of pupils, Arabic is the first language. Language skills in the school are developed in tandem, leading to many pupils attaining high levels of skills in both languages. However, to ensure that pupils benefit from an understanding of scientific terms in both languages, one lesson a week is taught in Arabic in the final two years of Key Stage 2 and all three years of Key Stage 3.

Pupils receive personal and social education through curriculum subjects, including Islamic studies, and in assemblies. Pupils learn about healthy living in science lessons, as well as from the medical team and outside speakers. Careers guidance begins early; for example, Year 6 pupils enjoy work experience on site while older pupils offer guidance to younger ones thus enhancing both their life skills. A formal programme of information and guidance, high-quality work experience and partnership with universities helps pupils to make wise choices for further education.

Pupils of all ages have access to a rich programme of activities. The 'Learning without Boundaries' programme offers sport across the age groups as well as clubs such as puppet making in the primary phase and debating in secondary. School camping expeditions and trips to, for example, Singapore, and opportunities for volunteering and leadership extend pupils' experience and prepare them very well for adult life.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Some aspects, such as systems to assess pupils' progress, are outstanding. The overwhelming majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and this supports pupils' learning well. It helps to explain why results achieved in external tests are improving year on year and why the different groups of pupils represented in the school make excellent progress.

Detailed planning underpins the most successful teaching. It identifies what the pupils should be achieving and explains how the different groups will be provided with tasks that will challenge them. Planning provides a consistent structure to lessons and also suggests ways in which 'cross curricular links' could be introduced so that pupils are able to use and apply the core skills that they have learned. Where pupils' learning is most effective, teachers adapt and respond to their ongoing assessment of how well pupils are engaged and motivated. This was well illustrated in a primary science lesson where pupils were learning about 'how germs could be

transmitted'. The teacher's introduction of 'glitter' onto pupils' hands to represent how germs could be tracked really grabbed pupils' interest and helped them think more deeply about the topic. As a result, they confidently drew out scientific conclusions from the evidence that they collected.

Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. A strong work ethic is apparent in most classrooms with pupils keen to support one another. In primary and post-16 classes, teachers often act as the facilitator supporting and challenging students at the very highest level. Consequently, much of the outstanding teaching and learning was observed in these parts of the school and was confirmed by the scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken by inspectors. When the tasks set are less demanding and pupils are given too much support, their learning slows and they often make good rather than outstanding progress. An example of this was seen in a class with younger children where they were completing an 'ocean theme'. Some of the pupils were offered 'pre-cut shapes' instead of being encouraged to cut them out themselves with the scissors provided. It was a missed opportunity for them to practise their fine motors skills.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils learn in attractive, spacious learning environments. Staff make excellent use of the information and communication technology within this new school to support and enhance pupils learning. For example, in many lessons, interactive whiteboards were used very effectively to capture pupils' interest and illustrate points that the teacher was making. Less evident was pupils' own use of computers or tablets as a tool for learning.

Assessment systems in the school are outstanding. As a result, all staff have an excellent understanding of the levels of attainment and progress made in each of their classes. This also enables teachers and school leaders to identify any potential underachievement early and provide the necessary interventions to keep pupils on track. In almost all respects assessment is well used to target work at just the right level. Occasionally, this high quality assessment is not used well enough, particularly in the secondary phase, to identify and support pupils with special educational needs.

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

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding.

Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities provided by the school to take on responsibilities, building their self-confidence and self-esteem. This was illustrated when older pupils helped younger members of the school community with their reading in class or organised sporting activities for them. Pupils' ability to reflect on their lifestyle and their own beliefs is very well developed and enables them to understand and respect the views and opinions of others. Many pupils talked about their responsibilities to others who might be less well off or who needed their support. This was translated into action through the charity events that they organised for international relief agencies and by visits some made to the Dubai Special Needs Centre.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in and around the school. In discussions with inspectors, pupils were able to explain how this had improved in all parts of the school with almost all of their classmates behaving well in class. There was a clearly stated expectation among pupils that their school rules would be followed and that any actions they took could have a direct impact on others around them. 'I know what I need to do to get to my target grades so I can't afford to let anyone mess around', was how one secondary pupil described his attitude. He was confident that the school's systems to celebrate hard work and excellent behaviour were working well. This was confirmed during a very successful Key Stage 3 assembly for boys where individuals were congratulated for the progress they had made both academically and pastorally. Pupils enjoy school and recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality if they are to continue to make the rapid progress found in so many subjects.

Pupils show excellent social awareness and understand what is the appropriate behaviour expected of them in different circumstances. For example, they understand why teachers can be more relaxed when they meet them outside of the classroom, but pupils never attempt to take advantage of this. Both pupils and staff show mutual respect to newcomers to the school and extend a warm welcome to them. In their debates and discussions, pupils are keen to express strongly and convincingly their views and opinions on a wide range of current topics. For example, in a discussion held with older pupils about it was clear that they understood their responsibilities to listen carefully to other viewpoints. They also respect those views even if they disagree with them. Pupils work extremely well both as members of a team and as 'learning partners' in classrooms. These approaches to learning are paying dividends in both pupils' personal and academic development. Similarly, team teaching strategies adopted by teachers are a real strength of the school and help to 'model' for pupils how cooperative approaches to learning, and in life in general, can produce real benefits.

Pupils show an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures and how the public institutions operate in Dubai. For example, they talk eloquently about how Islamic values influence their lives in Dubai. In many subjects of the curriculum, pupils readily make direct comparisons between life in Dubai and in the United Kingdom. In a discussion about geography topics they were studying, pupils spoke convincingly as they explained why there was 'wave erosion in Lyme Regis'. Regular visits are undertaken by groups of older students to British universities as they decide where they will continue their studies in higher education. Indeed, of the current Year 13 group, half of the students are applying to join British universities in September 2015. Although most pupils understand how British public institutions compare to those in Dubai, the school acknowledges that more work needs to be undertaken in this area so that such comparisons are systematically built into the school's curriculum.

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

The school's provision for health and safety is good and its pastoral care is outstanding. A strength of the school is the relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are respectful of the staff but also value the way staff engage with them to help them fulfil one of the school's aims of 'developing life skills'. In the tutorial support programme, pupils benefit from having two tutors, one from each of the British and Arabic teaching teams. Pupils report how much they value this dual support and the individual discussion sessions with their tutors. In addition, senior leaders are a visible presence in the school and enjoy informal conversations with pupils, thus adding another layer to pastoral care. Further support is offered to pupils by the school counsellors who make their own contributions to the work of the welfare team. Teachers' support for university applications is much appreciated by senior students.

Standards of behaviour are high. The school recognised that a few boys in the secondary phase were not maintaining the standards of behaviour expected by the school and reflected by almost all pupils. The strategies that senior leaders put in place to address this have borne fruit. This was important for its own sake, but also because ease of movement around the campus in a school of nearly 3000 pupils is vital. Inspectors noted the sensible movement of pupils in the breaks between lessons and in their use of the canteen. The school's code of behaviour is based on a belief in reward and encouragement, which was observed in all areas of the school from lessons to assemblies. Sanctions are known and, at times, imposed but the prevailing culture is of self-management in behaviour.

The medical support of pupils is excellent. The medical team of two doctors and five nurses offer medical care in two surgeries. They handle day-to-day accidents and injuries, keep detailed records, ensure that procedures for handling and security of medication are thorough and carry out regular medical checks and inoculations. The medical staff also contribute to the school's commitment to healthy living, which is reinforced by the healthy eating programme and the pupils' enjoyment of physical fitness in sport and physical education.

The protection of pupils is a high priority of the school. Security systems, including CCTV, have been developed to ensure pupils are protected from any unauthorised intrusion. All staff and visitors wear badges and family members' passes are checked by the security team who are vigilant but approachable. Procedures for evacuation are regularly practised and recorded. Pupil transport is very well managed. The school bus area has been designed to be well away from any car movements. Pupils enjoy visits and expeditions in the UAE and overseas; these visits are subject to rigorous risk assessments and detailed planning.

Safeguarding and child protection are high priorities for the school and conform to the best of UK practices and those in Dubai. The policy is well understood by staff who have received appropriate training and know how to respond to any concerns brought to them by a pupil. The school's zero tolerance of mobile phones in school is indicative of how seriously they regard protecting pupils from the dangers of the internet and cyberbullying. This is part of the strong anti-bullying culture of the school, where, as pupils report, any bullying issues are swiftly and successfully addressed.

Disabled pupils have full access to the school campus, reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

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

This standard is met. The school ensures that all required checks are in place. Scrutiny of staff recruitment records confirmed that staff have the right to work in Dubai and that they have undergone the necessary screening to be suitable to work with children.

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

Pupils enjoy an outstanding learning environment. The years of planning of the new campus are reflected in the very high quality and design of the buildings. So much thought has been given to how pupils learn and the facilities which best support high level attainment and progress. In addition, planning is well advanced for additional buildings adjacent to the new school for the early years and the lower years of the primary phase.

The facilities include science laboratories, a central library and specialist teaching rooms for art, design technology and information and communication technology. The boys' and the girls' sections each have their own prayer room. Of note is the learning environment for the early years classes, which is exceptional. Sporting facilities include sports halls, artificial pitches and games' areas. The boys' and girls' sections each have their own indoor swimming-pool with a third pool for younger pupils. The design of the corridors and staircases enable easy access and support the movement of pupils around the school. This design feature ensures that pupils never feel crowded and also allows for small breakout groups, including pupils with special educational needs, to work together in spacious atrium areas. The three canteens serve a range of food, including healthy options.

Classrooms are large spaces where pupils and teachers can move freely, thus supporting active learning. Display is vibrant in the first two phases. In the early years and primary phases, regularly updated displays of pupils' work not only enhance the learning environment but ensure that each pupil feels their work is appreciated. This illustrates one of the school's values of creating an environment of 'being the best one can be'. Displays illustrate the commitment to shared cultures in the school with projects on the UAE and Islamic values complemented by projects on the Kenya connection and European cities. Display is not as strong in the secondary phase. The school is aware of this and has strategies to match in this area the quality of display found in the early phases of the school. This is a good example of cross-phase support. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, which both teachers and pupils use effectively to enhance learning.

A dedicated team of ancillary staff ensure that the school is clean and well maintained. The support staff who work 'behind the scenes' are as committed as the teaching staff to the success of the school and are as equally valued by the senior leaders. The premises and accommodation fully meet the local requirements as set out by the Dubai authorities.

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

The provision of information for parents is of high quality. The school communicates with parents by various means. Much of the information parents need is on the school's website, which has recently been upgraded. On the website are the school's policies, regular newsletters and information about pupils' successes and participation in local and national events. In addition, the school publishes The Family Handbook in English and Arabic. This contains a wealth of information which is regularly updated. The most important communication source is direct contact with teachers. At the parents' meeting during the inspection, parents commented on how much they valued this direct contact and how responsive the school is to parental communications. This responsiveness has been enhanced by the appointment of a stakeholder relationship manager. This is a discrete post to strengthen parent communication and to develop the most appropriate instruments to gauge parental opinion. Communication with parents is a strong feature of the school.

Replies to the parental survey, sent out by the inspection team prior to the visit, elicited a 13% response. Of those responding, most parents confirmed that they were happy with the school and with the education their child received. Most agreed that their children enjoyed school and that they found the work interesting and challenging. Similarly, those who responded to the question, felt that the school prepared pupils well to enter, or re-enter, the UK system without disruption to their education. At the meeting held with inspectors, parents were clearly keen to support the school in its development but had realistic views about the challenges faced by the school in settling into the new premises. Parents confirmed that their children were happy and liked coming to school, praised the school for its quality of communication, including the use of the virtual learning environment to support their children's homework. They showed a clear understanding of the time the school needed to make even greater improvements for the benefit of their children's education.

Parents receive reports regularly. In the early years, reports are sent four times a year, rising to five times a year in the primary phase and six times a year in secondary. Reflecting the emphasis in the classroom, reports concentrate on the targets the school is setting for pupils. A few parents said they did not understand these targets, but they are clearly set out in The Family Handbook and are explained at the meetings teachers hold with parents on a regular basis. Parents involve themselves in the life of the school through parent support groups to give advice to pupils on careers for instance. The school also organises 'Parent Workshops' so that parents can learn more about educational and parenting topics.

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

The school meets all the requirements of the standard. The complaints' procedure contains all the necessary elements and is published on the school website. It is also a required section of the DSIB parent contract. School records indicate that the formal part of the complaints' procedures is rarely used and parents confirmed that direct access to school leaders means that most issues can usually be addressed on an informal basis.

## **Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding**

Not applicable

## **Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school**

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. Central to the vision of the school is the desire to 'empower pupils with knowledge, skills and attitudes, enabling them to become national and global citizens and leaders of the future'. Leaders are fully committed to ensuring that this vision becomes reality in the lives of the pupils. One of the leaders' strengths has been their ability to share the vision throughout the school, so that leadership at all levels is committed to the ethos of helping each pupil 'to be the best that they can be'. This has been particularly pertinent in the move to new premises. Leaders have worked hard to ensure the ethos of the school has been maintained in a new physical environment.

Evidence for this abounds. Teachers are highly motivated and, while delighting in new facilities and resources, never lose sight of the school's main purpose, the education of pupils. Senior staff have used their skills to support both staff and pupils to settle into the new premises. Central to this was the induction of a large number of new staff so that they were ready for a new school in new premises. Leaders also ensure that communication at all levels supports the work of the school. Staff report that they are very aware of strategic developments as well as daily details and confirm that this ensures cohesion in what is a large and growing community. Pivotal to the outstanding progress found in the early years is the strong leadership in this part of the school.

A hallmark of the school is the quality of its self-evaluation. Complementing the move into new premises, the three-year strategic and whole-school improvement plan was revised. Staff, pupils and parents contributed to this revision. From this plan, a self-evaluation action plan is developed by middle leaders and their teams. These plans are formally considered three times a year, but are regularly updated so that all staff can contribute to the plans following activities such as lesson observations or departmental meetings. Staff report that they are fully involved in the development of their areas of expertise. They confirm that the self-evaluation action plan is a working document whereby ideas can be shared, leading to improvements in teaching, learning and pastoral care. Complementing this level of self-evaluation is the evaluation of pupils' progress. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' academic performance data. Using this, teachers give a strong focus to pupils' targets and these feature in almost all lessons where targets are known, tasks are set to achieve those targets and, in many cases, to challenge pupils to aim for the next level.

A major focus for the leaders and the governing board is the recruitment, training and retention of high quality staff. Almost all teaching staff are British trained and qualified. This enables them to teach confidently the UK curriculum and to prepare pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK education system. New teachers report that the induction process is thorough and supportive and includes appropriate training in child protection. Teacher appraisal is carefully structured to ensure full involvement of the teachers in the process, but also to identify strengths, which are used to inform lesson quality across the school, and any weaknesses which need addressing.

Continuing professional development flows from appraisal findings. This is a particular focus of the governing board, which ensures financial support is available to give teachers access to courses and experiences which will enrich their teaching skills. Notable amongst these is the school's commitment to team teaching. Governors have enabled teachers to visit Finland to observe this at first-hand and it is now a feature of many lessons with clear benefits of more individual support for pupils' needs.

Senior managers lead by example and engage with pupils informally outside lessons. Equally, managers are often in lessons, so that they can see for themselves the challenges and successes of the classroom. One of the school's values is to 'cherish diversity'. Managers promote equality of opportunity, for instance, by ensuring that individual pupil successes are promoted on the rolling news feeds on the screens around the school. There is an equally strong commitment to safeguarding. Teachers receive regular child protection training and know their pupils well, a combination which supports a strong safeguarding culture.

The governance of the school is outstanding. The excellence of governance is founded on the owner's and Chair's vision for education, which is reflected in all decision-making. The Chair of the Governing Body holds the school to account and gives challenge and support to the senior leaders. Members of the board include education advisors, who work with senior and middle leaders three times a year to monitor developments and evaluate training needs. These advisors are members of the board, but, in their advisory roles, they are not acting as governors. The board actively seeks the views of staff, pupils and parents. As well as face-to-face meetings, the board has instituted a range of survey strategies so that the board can receive detailed opinions from the constituent members of the school population. It is a board which listens, so much so that, following a direct request to the Chair by the physical education department, the size of the new artificial pitch was tripled to enable pupils to participate in local sports' leagues. Governors have a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and support the school's work in this area.

Parents confirm the strength of the leadership and management of the school. In discussion and in their responses to the questionnaire, the very large majority of parents agreed that the school is very well led.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The School of Research Science 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 points for development:

1. Improve the education of pupils with special educational needs by giving more attention to the identification of these needs and by refining the quality of support for these needs.
2. Increase the opportunities for pupils to learn about public institutions in the United Kingdom.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

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

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

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

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

Not applicable				
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	√			
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### School details

Name of school	The School of Research Science
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 1998
Age range of pupils	3 - 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	2718
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 32,069 to AED 68,853
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	P.O. Box : 57442, 27463 Dubai - United Arab Emirates
Telephone number	Tel: +971 - 4 - 6011011
Email address	infosecondary@srs.ae
Principal	Ms Nan Billingham
Proprietor	Mr Abdulrahman Al Shamsi

## **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. CfBT Education Trust has been successful in bidding for the recent tender to manage inspection services on behalf of the office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). CfBT is currently responsible for delivering inspection services in schools (both maintained and independent), the learning and skills sector and initial training education.

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