

# Dubai English Speaking College

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020

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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 3 inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent 4 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 its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on Edubase.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

**A policy update was issued by the DfE in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.**

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment)
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff
5. The premises and accommodation
6. The provision of information
7. The manner in which complaints are handled
8. The leadership and management of the school
9. The quality of provision for boarding

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.

## 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

Established in 2005, Dubai English Speaking College is a large secondary school situated in the Academic City district of Dubai. It currently has 1712 pupils on roll. Since the last BSO inspection in 2015, the numbers on roll have increased substantially with a new site opening adjacent to the existing site. This provides the base for a very large post-16 sixthform, educating 463 students, one of the largest in the Gulf region.

A majority of students come from a United Kingdom background but there is a wide variety of nationalities represented, a minority of whom speak English as an additional language. The school has identified 137 of the pupils as having some form of special educational need and/or disability.

The school is a not-for-profit organisation established in the Academic City area of Dubai in 2005. It is owned by an independent board of trustees who also govern the Dubai English Speaking School that is situated in the Oud Metha district of Dubai.

The English national curriculum is followed throughout the school. Pupils sit GCSEs, IGSCes and BTEC examinations at key stage 4 and at key stage 5. Students in the sixth form mostly take A level, though there is now a variety of BTEC qualifications available for students. The majority of students move on to study at universities in the UK.

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

This BSO inspection was carried out by three inspectors who were at the college for four days. The dates of the inspection were agreed with the school 10 weeks in advance. The school provided information and documents to the team four weeks prior to the visit. Prior to the inspection, the team examined the school's self-evaluation documents, BSO compliance documents and other information. They visited 50 lessons or parts of lessons. They engaged in

a variety of discussions with the school's headteacher, members of staff, pupils, parents and carers and members of the board of trustees including the chief executive officer. Inspectors also observed the work of the school through examining a range of documentation including improvement plans, policies, assessment information, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined the recent surveys of parents and staff.

## Evaluation of the school

Dubai English Speaking College (DESC) remains an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in every part of a dynamic, British-style curriculum. Equally, the school helps them develop as thoughtful and mature members of society.

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

The attainment and progress of pupils and students at DESC is outstanding. Throughout all age groups and across all subjects, pupils routinely perform to the best of their ability and achieve high standards. Both GCSE results at key stage 4 and A-level results at key stage 5 are improving and compare very favourably with 2019 average performance in the UK

### **In English, attainment and progress are outstanding across all key stages.**

In 2019, pupils achieved high standards at both GCSE and A level with particularly strong performance from girls. The high results compare very favourably with UK averages and in terms of 2019 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) rankings. This is equally true for both English Language and English Literature courses.

Pupils show a love of literature. Their writing consistently displays a depth of knowledge of chosen books and texts, just as their verbal responses show nuance and awareness of setting, character and historical context. For example, Year 10 pupils are able to explain confidently how some of the themes in Mary Shelley's novel 'Frankenstein' might link to Milton's 'Paradise Lost'.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. This begins in Year 7 when pupils are instructed to write analyses of texts from 'The Tempest' using increasingly challenging language. A structure for teaching this analytical writing is consistently used throughout the school, helping students build on skills and knowledge from year to year.

Excellent use is made of the school's highly appealing library. The leader there ensures that all pupils up to Year 9 read each week and that their progress is tracked carefully. She is resolute in making sure that no pupils are left behind with their reading. For all pupils, the school's clear and consistent guidance assists them to achieve fluency and higher-order reading skills as they progress through the school.

The quality of teaching in English is outstanding. For example, the questioning of pupils is highly effective because many teachers insist on detailed explanations or deeper knowledge, not simply accepting a first, more generalised answer.

Pupils' writing is consistently expressive and accurate in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Their literary analysis, often framed around the school's common policy, shows a deep

understanding of a wide range of literature. Presentation is mostly very good but a minority of pupils write in a script which is difficult to read. The school is helping these pupils to improve.

The unit plans for each topic area contain very helpful information for pupils. This allows them to retain information well. For example, Year 10 pupils were using the word 'juxtaposition' accurately in their writing, a word that had been highlighted as crucial to that unit.

### **Attainment in mathematics is high and progress across all key stages is outstanding**

Pupils attainment in mathematics is high at both key stage 4 and key stage 5 and compares very favourably with results in the UK. Good links with the primary school ensure pupils' smooth transition to Year 7. From the outset pupils are challenged to solve problems and to demonstrate and explain their working to others. They are able to do this because teachers provide very clear explanations and demonstrations, followed by very effective questioning which elicits the main points from pupils. They are frequently asked, 'How do you know that?' and are articulate and confident in their explanations. They are not afraid of making mistakes and are adept at checking their answers for errors.

Teachers routinely provide answers to problems and challenge pupils to work out how that answer was arrived at. As a result, as pupils progress through the school, they are increasingly independent. The teacher becomes the 'facilitator' providing support where necessary, usually giving guidance by posing questions designed to help pupils to think things out for themselves or by asking them to justify their responses.

By Year 11, and subsequently in the sixth form, pupils are confident mathematicians who savour opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems, often through collaborating with others. On occasions, lower-attaining pupils in key stages 3 and 4 make slower progress than their peers because, although their progress is good, they are more dependent upon support from their teachers.

This emphasis throughout on problem solving and increasing the independence of learners is highly effective and extends to day-to-day assessment. Pupils are expected to check their own work and identify where they went wrong and how to put any errors right. Teachers check pupils' own evaluations and identify the need for intervention in this way and through close monitoring of progress in lessons. They are there to challenge pupils further so that by Year 13 students take the lead in lessons and challenge one another or consider alternative ways of solving often complex problems, for instance through the maths challenge or applying their knowledge to identify circles on a graph.

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

Science GCSE and post-16 examination results are strong. They have been sustained at a high level over the past three years and are well above the averages found in UK schools and colleges. Most groups of pupils make impressive progress, both in lessons and over time.

The science curriculum is continually tested and refined and new permutations are devised to suit students' needs. It is well sequenced, progressively challenging and consistently demanding. For example, in Year 12 pupils work collaboratively to cultivate an understanding of cell recognition and the immune system. They challenge each other for detailed responses that test a deeper understanding of factors causing ovarian and breast tumours.

Science lessons are underpinned by four clear teaching approaches: a good use of assessment and challenging questioning, personalised learning with clear guidance, a motivating use of problem-solving and investigative techniques and the use of technology to actively engage, inspire and develop meta-cognitive thinking skills. For example in a Year 7 lesson, pupils used their phones for research, their iPads to create jingles and then an oscilloscope to explore the effects of pitch and loudness on sound waves.

Across all **other subjects** in the curriculum, progress and attainment are outstanding. In 2019, GCSE and post-16 results for all subjects were well above UK averages, in particular for History and Geography. The introduction of extended project qualifications (EPQs) in key stage 5 has led to high standards of achievement through the completion of research projects in a variety of subject disciplines.

### 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 are outstanding overall. (see Standard 1 below)
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Leaders are working on developing a greater understanding of British institutions, particularly at key stage 5. (see Standard 2 below)
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding. (see Standard 3 below)
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met. (see Standard 4 below)
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard. (see Standard 5 below)
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this standard. (see Standard 6 below)
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard. (see Standard 7 below)
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. (see standard 8 below)

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2020, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.**

## Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

Most of the standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the provisions of the UK Equality Act 2010.

The **curriculum** is outstanding, underpinned by evidence-based research, innovative approaches and effective use of technology in all subjects. In all key stages, it fulfils the requirements of the English national curriculum and prepares pupils extremely well for external examinations commonly used in schools and colleges in the UK. These include GCSEs in Year



11, AS in Year 12 and A level and BTEC in Year 13. Pupils, therefore, are able easily to enter or re-enter the UK system. Students can choose from a number of pathways in the sixth form, including traditional academic GCE A levels, a more vocational BTEC route, a combination of A levels and BTECs and a foundation year consisting of level 2 courses.

The cumulative impact of the curriculum on pupils' holistic development is exemplary and achieved through an outstanding level of breadth, depth and balance. Pupils show an outstanding level of maturity and conduct. Physical education is particularly strong, securing an enviable record in sports competitions. For example, in a year 8 athletics lesson, precise technical guidance and sharp feedback improved take off, flight and landing.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is outstanding. Leaders have improved the use of information and instilled a high level of accountability. With skilled support provided across all subjects, rates of progress are similar to those of other pupils in the college or better, especially from lower starting points. Clear guidance from the department is provided for teachers in using progress information and planning and overcoming barriers to learning. Through an active partnership with UAE accredited professionals, an effective provision has evolved and is underpinned by a well-trained team.

The needs of the most able pupils are met well through a varied academic enrichment programme. The EPQ has been a highly successful introduction to the college curriculum. Thirty-six out of the 37 students finishing the EPQ achieved A\* to A. The EPQ offers students a variety of opportunities to develop character, emotional intelligence, talents and skills through, for example, the World Scholar's Cup programme, the COBIS World Student Debate Championships (won in 2018), Model United Nations and Harvard Model Congress.

The few pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language are very well supported and their needs are fully met. They make similar, outstanding rates of progress to those of the other groups of pupils in the school.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well planned and effectively delivered through the 'Getting Ready for the Outside World' (GROW) programme, Tutor Choice sessions and moral-education programmes in the secondary phase. A British ethos is skilfully threaded through the curriculum. For example, in a Year 13 economics lesson, students researched gender pay gaps in the UK and debated the resulting issues thoughtfully.

An impressive range of extra-curricular activities leads to high pupil participation rates across all areas of college life. They are stimulating and promote holistic development through social, cultural, scientific and aesthetic opportunities.

The careers-guidance provision is a cutting-edge feature of the school and recognised widely for the high-quality support offered to all students. It helps them in their career aspirations and to secure places at top universities globally. The 'Spotlight' sessions, in particular, delivered through 150 professional visiting speakers last year, provide parents and pupils with much clarification, insight and empowerment. The school offers a safe experience of the world of work for students choosing to take a gap year. This helps to develop their professional work ethic.

The quality of **teaching and assessment** is outstanding. As a result, pupils in secondary and students in the post-16 phase make outstanding progress in all subjects.

Teachers' have an excellent knowledge of the subjects and courses they teach. This has a direct impact on the strong progress made by pupils. Teaching skills are continually improved because leaders encourage a reflective approach and offer exemplary support. Challenge and support are factored into all lessons to inspire, engage and demand more intellectually of students.

The Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) Model developed by the college Teaching & Learning Technology Team ensures that technology enhances independent learning.

Across all subjects, teachers employ technology innovatively to challenge pupils and enable them to carry out research and reflect on their work. For example, in Year 12 media-studies lessons, students record, review and improve the quality of the content of their news cards using a variety of technological devices.

Teachers use excellent questioning to challenge thinking and understanding. This process creates an interactive learning climate which pupils relish. For example, in a Year 13 biology lesson, learning moved from pupils describing the differences between oncogenes and tumour suppressor genes to explaining how they develop and then how oestrogen levels can cause breast and ovarian cancer.

The 'Four to Grow' initiative provides a structure for students to improve their skills across all subject areas using the key ideas of 'dare to challenge', 'excel to exceed', 'share to synergise' and 'create to innovate'. Teachers plan sequenced learning experiences which encourage pupils to think critically and effectively. For example, in a Year 7 dance lesson, pupils improvised creatively and then prepared and performed the 'Song of the Weird Sisters' from Macbeth. They collaborated to enhance their performance and review key dramatic techniques of movement in unison. This develops so that by Year 13, students can work unsupervised to complete work in a range of subjects during independent-study time. They show high levels of maturity towards their learning and do not disturb each other. Mobile technology is used for the sole purpose of their research.

The quality of assessment is outstanding. Appropriate external assessment systems have been selected which rigorously measure pupils' performance. Tests are aligned fully with the English national curriculum and ensure accurate external validation of pupils' work. Teachers assess regularly during their teaching and against minimum expected progress to ensure that teaching is configured to address misconceptions.

Teachers create very positive relationships with pupils, who trust their advice, care and guidance. As a result, they ask questions confidently and have a 'can-do' attitude to their learning. Teachers ensure that lessons are orderly and productive and that no time is wasted. This is typical of the high expectations that teachers have, and those that pupils have of themselves.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. There is a highly inclusive culture in which pupils and staff have great respect for each other. Inspection evidence,



including discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work and examination of curriculum plans, confirms that the school encourages respect and tolerance in relation to the different groups described in the Equality Act 2010. It fully meets the requirements set out in the Act in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. However, it is unable to meet fully the requirements in respect of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation due to the laws of the host country. The school promotes the understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures through a wide variety of local field trips, events and trips abroad. The promotion of fundamental British values and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, cultures and lifestyles are strong features of the school.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with their teachers. In lessons they display high levels of interest and concentration, savouring the high level of challenge provided and displaying a real love of learning.

Pupils attend school regularly and their clear enjoyment of school life is reflected in high levels of attendance, in line with UK averages, and the high participation rates in the wide range of extra-curricular activities which extend and enhance their learning. They arrive punctually for the start of the day and for lessons. They settle down quickly, prepared for work, with no fuss. The school's vision of 'Dare Excel Share Create' is tangible across all aspects of school life.

Pupils are proud of their school and take care of the environment and the equipment. There is no litter and students move around the school in a calm and purposeful manner. They are regularly asked to work collaboratively with others and to solve problems, which they do with enthusiasm, listening carefully to others and justifying or adapting their own views when challenged as well as posing challenging questions themselves. Work in books, including homework, is complete and mostly presented with care.

Pupils are concerned to make a meaningful contribution to the world and are regularly given opportunities to take the lead in projects, for instance as school ambassadors, or to use their initiative and take responsibility both in school and in the wider community as volunteers and as fund raisers for the 'Adopt a School' project to found a school in Uganda. They are very well informed and concerned about their responsibility for the planet and act upon their environmental concerns through, for instance, the Eco Club's initiatives to reduce plastic in the canteen. Pupils have a very good understanding of moral codes and an appreciation of right and wrong which underpins their exemplary behaviour. They reflect and think deeply about moral issues and those related to mental well-being. For instance, in a house assembly, pupils reflected on the impact smiling and humour has upon their well-being and that of others by experiencing that impact for themselves. Pupils' work in books provides further evidence of how values such as tolerance and mutual respect are regularly discussed.

British history and culture are explored in many subjects, as is the democratic process. Pupils keep up with and discuss current events in the UK on a regular basis in daily form time, expressing carefully considered views on Britain's imminent exit from the European Union, for example. Pupils of all ages take responsibility and are elected to leadership roles. The school is aware of the need to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of British institutions and culture right the way through to key stage 5 and is already developing ways to do this.

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

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

Arrangements for welfare, health and safety ensure that all pupils, staff and visitors are exceptionally well cared for. The house system reinforces the 'family' atmosphere students and parents speak of and value. New students are welcomed and settle quickly as a result of this and the 'buddy system'. Pupils have excellent relationships with adults and are confident in sharing any concerns they may have, knowing that someone will listen and provide support. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe, including of issues related to e-safety and a healthy lifestyle and say they feel '100% safe' in school. Parents agree and are confident that the school looks after their children exceptionally well. Incidents of bullying are very rare and dealt with quickly, appropriately and sensitively.

The school maintains a very strong partnership with parents. Parents say they are exceptionally well informed. The school listens to their suggestions and acts upon them. The 'open door' policy, team of advisers, as well as the presence of senior staff at the school gates at the beginning and end of the school day, ensure that parents and pupils can always talk through their concerns at any time and get advice, including careers guidance. All policies, procedures and information about students' class and homework are available on the school's website and through the school portal, making them easily accessible to parents.

The school is diligent in its approach to health and safety. A team of three nurses and a doctor check pupils' health and well-being regularly. Medicines are kept securely. First aid is administered promptly when needed according to the first-aid policy.

The mental well-being of both staff and students has a high priority in the school and is regularly explored in assemblies and personal-education lessons. Pastoral staff monitor the progress and well-being of students closely on a regular basis and act promptly to address any concerns, including poor attendance and punctuality.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet UAE and British expectations. All staff complete an extensive training programme covering aspects of welfare, health and safety with regular updates. The school complies with fire regulations, holds emergency drills regularly and fire equipment is routinely checked. These precautions are as stringent as those in the UK and meet UAE regulations and legislation fully. The site manager and external specialists monitor and maintain equipment and facilities to a high standard. Thorough risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action is taken to address issues and minimise risks.

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

The requirements of this standard are fully met.

A highly effective human resources (HR) department ensures that all the required checks are in place. While on site, inspectors saw documents which stated that staff could work in Dubai and that they were suitable to work with children. Staff are very complimentary about the induction

procedures, commenting on the attention to detail of all such arrangements. The HR department maintains meticulous records that are checked routinely by a sub-committee of the board of trustees. These included the relevant checks on the proprietor and trustees. Every step is taken to ensure that staff are fit to work at DESC and great effort is made to attract high quality staff to the school.

The safeguarding and child protection procedures are very thorough and mirror the expectations of both UK legislation and of the host country.

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

The requirements of this standard are fully met.

Pupils enjoy an outstanding and inspirational learning environment. The accommodation is scrupulously clean and tidy and maintained to a very high standard by the team of support staff and external specialist contractors, as well as by pupils and staff. For pupils and visitors with physical needs, ramps and lifts allow access to all levels of the school.

The school's environment is exceptionally well thought out and used well. The house blocks promote the 'family' atmosphere that both parents and pupils value highly. The auditorium is well used for assemblies and performances. The new sixth-form centre provides excellent facilities for teaching, private study and social activities. In addition, it has its own auditorium for assemblies and performances. Thanks to this excellent learning environment, students develop a mature, resilient and balanced approach to their studies and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Classrooms are spacious, well ventilated and generously resourced. Specialist subject rooms and facilities for science, dance, art, music, technology and physical development are exceptionally well organised, equipped with high-quality equipment and provide a very high-quality learning environment. Well-thought-out displays reflect the school's high expectations for pupils' attainment and teachers' passion for their subjects.

Excellent sporting facilities, including two swimming pools, and a gym in the sixth-form block, further enhance pupils' experience and promote their health and well-being. Extensive shaded areas and the provision of drinking water ensure that pupils are protected from the heat and the sun.

The focus on reading is extremely well supported by an extensive range of fiction and non-fiction books and on-line materials both in the library and through the school portal. Sixth-form students are also very well supported through their own library. The school has an impressive range of digital equipment such as 3-D printers, QR (Quick Response code) readers and multi-media equipment.

Learning support assistants and additional adults are effectively deployed to meet pupils' needs and reduce barriers to learning.

The procedures for food hygiene are robust. Canteen staff are highly trained and the storage and serving facilities for food and water meet expected standards. Food options are healthy and varied. Medical facilities and support are provided by a team of three nurses and a doctor who

deal with medical emergencies and provide advice and guidance on healthy eating, lifestyles and medical concerns raised by pupils.

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

The requirements of this standards are fully met. The provision of information for parents and others is outstanding.

Parents feel most welcome at DESC. Since the last inspection, a spacious lobby area has been opened which is particularly for parents' use. There, a dedicated member of staff is on hand to deal with any queries and concerns. Results from parent surveys viewed by inspectors point to a very high degree of satisfaction with the ways in which parents are welcomed and supported. Comments such as, 'We feel incredibly lucky our children go to DESC' were typical of the variety of comments received.

Parents say how responsive the school is to any concerns. They are highly appreciative of staff for their quick action, for example during a recent critical situation on an international trip. Leaders ensured speedy communication and a compassionate and proportionate response in difficult circumstances.

The school's website is easily navigated and contains a clear section for parents. This contains a wealth of curricular information which is relevant and informative. School staff increasingly use a range of technologies to allow even easier access for parents.

Regular opportunities are provided to allow parents to meet teachers and discuss their child's progress. Developments are in hand to make this even easier through phone/online drop-ins. A Year 13 parents' evening took place during the inspection and gave first-hand evidence of the time and effort invested in timely feedback to parents.

School leaders pay special attention to the views of and requests from parents. There are a number of actions that show how the school has responded to several suggestions from parents, for example by changing the drop-off and pick-up arrangements outside the school at the end of each day.

A particular improvement has been the increase in curriculum information, for example the 'recognise sheets' which summarise core learning for each unit of work. This has helped parents know what their child is studying and when. Parents spoke of how this has assisted them with monitoring their child's studies and consequent progress. Staff ensure that formal pupil reports are completed for parents each year and these celebrate achievements as well as suggesting ways for pupils to improve.

The headteacher and senior staff provide regular updates for parents through newsletters. These are detailed and do not just celebrate achievement but also provide more depth regarding curriculum and strategic development.

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

The requirements of this standard are fully met.

The school ensures that procedures for handling complaints are clear and unambiguous. However, such is the culture at the school that all concerns raised by parents are dealt with at an informal level before they reach the formal level. Despite this, the school has the necessary policy and procedure in place.

Central to the policy is a commitment to confidentiality and a respect for the views and feelings of all involved.

Any documentation referring to complaints is stored safely to ensure confidentiality.

## **Standard 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

The requirements of this standard are fully met.

The leadership of the school is outstanding. Daily routines run very smoothly with leaders confident in their roles and responsibilities. A culture of high expectations permeates everything that leaders do. The quietly determined leadership from the headteacher inspires leaders at all levels to succeed. He, and his team of talented senior leaders, successfully implement ongoing incremental improvements, building on things that work, and making changes that are based on evidence and consultation.

A focus on academic performance has seen examination results rise, especially in 2019 when performance exceeded British and PISA averages. However, this focus is not detrimental to pupils' personal development, which leaders also value highly. An outstanding menu of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to be representative is highly valued by pupils and their families. Leaders remain ambitious for their pupils and are aiming to improve the number of offers from Oxbridge and Russell Group universities in future years.

Leaders operate a careful programme of staff development, linked to rigorous appraisal procedures. Leaders at all levels contribute to self-evaluation and resulting improvement plans. Consequently, staff have a high degree of ownership of the overall aims of the school and understand the wider vision of 'Dare, Excel, Share, Create'. It is no surprise, therefore, that staff report a high level of confidence in the leadership at the school. They feel both supported in their work and challenged to make the most of their abilities.

Systems are in place for thoughtful self-evaluation and improvement planning. Planned actions are carefully considered and every opportunity is provided to involve staff in decision-making, ensuring ownership of improvement priorities at all levels.

There is a clear division of responsibilities between the headteacher, the chief executive officer and the board of trustees, helping to make the organisation as efficient as possible. Between them, they have built on the school's enviable sporting reputation while establishing many other areas of the school as examples of excellence, for example the performing arts disciplines or the careers guidance that pupils receive. Inspectors were able to witness rehearsals for a whole-school production of 'West Side Story' that revealed a standard of music, dance and drama which took the breath away. Through such opportunities, leaders have invested in the learning



environment and resources wisely to ensure that pupils have the very best conditions in which to excel.

Pupils respect the example that is set by leaders, both through the work they do and also with their behaviour and attitudes around school. They love their school and contribute well to maintaining such a stimulating learning environment. After break and lunchtimes, for example, there is virtually no litter or waste left in the school grounds, such is the care they take in following leaders' ambitions. There is a genuine culture of mutual respect, where everyone is aware that they are part of something that is bigger.

Leaders are keen to engage with the wider community and ensure pupils are given memorable learning opportunities. A Schools' Maths Cup, inaugurated by the school in 2015, took place during the inspection and attracted 16 local schools. Such initiatives exemplify the school's wider commitment to education in the community.

Leaders pay great attention to the distinctive British nature of the school. This is mostly done through the curriculum, but also in tutor groups, assemblies, trips and visits. Leaders have enabled a culture where bullying is extremely rare and where respect for others' race, religion and background is a systemic feature of the school.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

Dubai English Speaking College meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws.

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

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

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

## What the school could do to improve further

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

1. Ensure that the school's preparation for pupils for life in British society is as broad and deep in the sixth form as it is lower down the school.

## 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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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			
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### The quality of provision for boarding

N/A				
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	Dubai English Speaking College
<b>Type of school</b>	Private
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2005
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1712
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED 79,392
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	N/A
<b>Address of school</b>	Academic City, Dubai, UAE.
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 4 360 4866
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Headteacher@desc.sch.ae">Headteacher@desc.sch.ae</a>
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chris Vizzard
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Andrew Gibbs

## GLOSSARY

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

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

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

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

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

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

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

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

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

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

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

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

**Leadership** – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work

effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

**Learning** – Pupils’ gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

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

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

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

**Standards** –

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

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



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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.

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