

# **Deira International School Dubai**

## **British Schools Overseas Inspection report**

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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**

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**

Deira International School in Festival City, Dubai, is a private school providing education for boys and girls from the early years to Year 13, aged three to 18 years. At the time of the inspection, there were 1549 pupils on roll with 82 different nationalities represented. Separate lessons for physical education are provided for boys and girls from Years 5 to 13. Over two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum of England. The school is divided into four phases. The school caters for children in the early years, and the primary school includes pupils from Years 1 to 6. In the secondary school, which includes Years 7 to 11, pupils take the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations at the end of Year 11. The International Baccalaureate (IB) and vocational courses are offered during the final post-16 phase, Years 12 and 13. Students receive the IB Diploma at the end of Year 13. Most students who leave the school in Year 13 go onto university courses, either in Dubai or in universities across the world including the United Kingdom and United States of America.

There are 153 teachers, including the Director and senior management team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. There are 39 teaching assistants, most of whom are located in the early years and primary phases.

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

## **Evaluation of the school**

Deira International is a good and improving school that fully meets the requirements of the British School Overseas Standards. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the good teaching they receive. The school has a number of outstanding features including its curriculum provision, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the

leadership and management. Self- evaluation is accurate but, along with current improvement planning, does not always include clear and measureable success criteria. There is a strong capacity to improve still further.

Children arrive in school with a wide range of pre-school experiences but, in many areas of learning, their skills are well below average. This is particularly the case in their communication and language skills where almost three quarters of children are learning English as an additional language. Their personal, social and self-help skills are often underdeveloped with many needing extra help with dressing and undressing. Staff in early years rightly focus on these areas, providing children with numerous opportunities to practice their emerging skills. In many areas children make outstanding progress towards reaching the Early Learning Goals.

By the time children leave early years, their attainment in communication and language is above average and their progress is outstanding. Children are able to listen with understanding and recall the main points and some of the details of a story. For example, they used their knowledge of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears to develop their understanding of mathematical language such as 'small', 'medium' and 'large'. Many join in conversations, sometimes with support from visual clues to prompt a response. The majority can write simple words that they recognise from their reading and which are phonetically correct. Most children can write a sentence or two with some appropriate punctuation, while a minority can write extended pieces which can be understood.

Children's attainment in mathematics is above average and progress is outstanding. Most children can count confidently to 10 and the majority can count beyond 10 to at least 20. Many identify missing numbers in a sequence and can calculate with some help. They can do simple addition and subtraction sums using blocks to help them count and then link the learning to 'real life' contexts. For example, they were able to identify which size cup a thirsty bear might drink from and how many drinks the whole family might need each day.

Children's attainment in understanding the world is high and their progress is outstanding. Children are curious about their world and show a positive attitude in 'science' activities. They enjoy exploring and investigating their environment and finding things out about their world and how it works. For example, children confidently used magnifying glasses to study the mini beasts they had collected. Most were able to explain that animals, including their mini beasts, needed water and food if they were to survive.

Pupils' attainment in English across all phases is above average. Progress is good and, in some areas, outstanding. Results in IGCSE and IB show an improving trend overtime. In the primary phase, pupils successfully build on the outstanding progress they make in the early years. They enjoy their lessons and contribute readily to discussions using an increasingly wide vocabulary. Pupils' reading skills develop very well; some Year 5 pupils can read fluently and with understanding, making inferences and recounting the events of a story. Writing develops more steadily. By Year 6, most

pupils can write factually, imaginatively, and use figurative language, though many still struggle to write accurately and at length.

By the time they reach secondary phase, a majority of pupils listen and respond confidently to teachers and their classmates although some are still operating at the level of second language learners. However, pupils of all abilities attempt the same sophisticated texts, for example, Wordsworth's poems in Year 8. Pupils in Year 9 demonstrate understanding of character when analysing staging techniques. By Year 10, most pupils have studied a wide range of texts including plays by Shakespeare and novels, for example, Lord of the Flies. International Baccalaureate students demonstrate critical understanding when reading challenging contemporaneous material as well as classics of world literature.

Pupils gradually acquire more mature writing styles through practising the construction of paragraphs and learning how to structure different types of essays. They tackle a wide variety of writing tasks and most make good progress in learning how to express their ideas in accurate English. The most accomplished can write fluently and persuasively with a sense of style.

In mathematics, pupils successfully build on the impressive progress that they have made in their early years classes. By the time they leave the primary phase, most are confident in solving number problems and have a good grasp of shape, space and measure. A particular strength is the way in which they are able to apply what they have learned in practical situations. For example, most Year 6 pupils were able to calculate perimeters of irregular shapes and then test this knowledge out as they measured objects and spaces around the school.

Younger secondary pupils use their understanding of Pythagoras well and apply it successfully to problems. They are fully conversant with square numbers and show a solid understanding of square roots. The most competent Key Stage 3 pupils are highly proficient in data analysis and presentation. Final year secondary pupils show their capability to operate with matrices, suggesting the links between algebra and geometry. IGCSE results are improving year on year with pupils in their 2014 examinations exceeding both local and international benchmarks.

Post-16 students could identify the effect of amplitude on sine graphs and most were able to articulate their learning with confidence. Students show great confidence in interpreting and solving a given problem, organising data and using appropriate mathematical strategies and techniques. The attainment of students taking the IB examination in 2014 was high and their progress was outstanding.

Attainment in science is above average in both primary and secondary phases; progress is good. In early years and post-16 phases, attainment is high and progress

is rapid. In the primary phase, pupils' attainment in science is above that found with pupils of a similar age in the UK.

Children develop subject specific language from an early age which they use to relate to the world around them. For example, pupils in Year 2 are able to sort different materials based on their magnetic properties, and could make predictions about the magnetic properties of other untested materials. In Year 6, experiments on 'How we see things', pupils were able to make deductions about the properties of light using appropriate scientific vocabulary.

By the end of the secondary phase, pupils have developed their scientific thinking and can apply their scientific knowledge, drawing on prior learning. They are able to use their knowledge of materials to predict and test for the products in combustion reactions. Over the past three years, attainment in the sciences at IGCSE has shown an upward trend. In 2014, 68% of pupils achieved A\* - B grades in the separate sciences or in integrated science.

Post-16 students have a wide range of science knowledge, skills and understanding. They are able to design an investigation based on their own hypothesis and collect and analyse the data from that investigation. They can communicate their results and conclusions in a variety of ways.

Students can take International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) Higher and Standard level courses in the separate sciences. In 2014, 75% of pupils achieved grades 5 and above; results in the higher level courses are over 85% but the numbers of students taking these courses are low.

Strengths in science include pupils' ability to relate their learning in science to the world around them, apply scientific concepts in their laboratory work and use scientific vocabulary confidently and accurately. IBDP pupils demonstrate a high level of confidence in practical laboratory skills. They are able to design their own experiments to investigate complex scientific theories and, in the analysis of the results, demonstrate a high level of critical thinking.

Pupils' attainment is at least above average and progress is good in other subjects of the curriculum. In IGCSE business studies, for example, Year 11 pupils tackled 'cash flow' for the first time. They were able to turn a 'profit and loss' account into a cash flow and then made rapid progress in analysing why the company had a cash deficit in some months. Similarly, in a Year 7 geography lesson, pupils were able to develop their critical thinking on the Antarctica Treaty. Pupils decided which were the most important sections of the treaty and could give sensible reasons for their choices.

### **Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:**

The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).

The standards of teaching and assessment are good overall (see Standard 1 below). Set against a very positive picture, there are some areas that could be improved. Pupils do not always have time to consolidate and reflect on their learning in lessons and, occasionally, teachers do not check on what pupils have learned and understood. Not all teachers make good use of the wealth of data available to them when they plan activities for the different ability groups represented in each class or set.

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

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

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

The premises and accommodation 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 school curriculum is outstanding. The curriculum followed is the National Curriculum for England but students in Years 12 and 13 study for the International Baccalaureate. The curriculum is well-planned, mapped and modified by, for example, the addition of psychology and computer programming for older pupils.

From their earliest years, pupils enjoy a rich full-time education. All lessons except Arabic are delivered in English and the curriculum enables pupils to acquire rapidly communication skills in English as well as Arabic. A full programme of humanities, mathematics, science and technology is available and pupils are very well served in the creative and aesthetic fields. The displays of pupils' artwork in the primary phase demonstrate how the curriculum fosters creativity. The fact that all Year 6 have free



instrumental lessons indicates the high value that is placed on aesthetic development. A high priority is also placed on physical education as shown by the many opportunities for sport both in and outside of the curriculum.

The examinations offered by the school are similar to those found in UK schools with the addition of the International Baccalaureate. Students are thus able to move seamlessly to other British or international schools.

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils of all ages well. The English Language Learners course supports those who have language difficulties and the Learning Pathways programme provides a curriculum appropriate to their needs. Pupils benefit from the challenge offered and some enter for IGCSE examinations early. Examination pupils have an exceptionally wide choice of subjects so that they can follow their interests and maximise their chances of success. Pupils with learning difficulties receive a great deal of support. Each pupil is carefully assessed and a team of special educational needs teachers provides high-quality support. In this way, all pupils are able to acquire communication and numeracy skills. Similarly, the needs of the most able are very well met with pupils having opportunities to extend and challenge themselves through 'open-ended' tasks. In the secondary phase, some most able pupils are offered a fast track to take IGCSE examinations a year early in subjects such as mathematics.

The primary phase provides a planned programme of personal, social and health education taught by class teachers and in assemblies. In the secondary phase, the Skills for Life course enables pupils to consider a range of issues including cultural values, ethics and personal finance. A pioneering personal health course delivered by the school doctor allows adolescents to consider how best to adopt wise choices and lead a healthy life. A fully trained counsellor gives careers advice and pupils receive valuable guidance about higher education, many visiting universities at home or abroad to explore their options.

All pupils have the opportunity to extend their classroom learning through educational visits in the local community and beyond. In addition, the extra-curricular programme of activities provides rich opportunities for personal development and enjoyment. There is a wide range of sporting pursuits after school as well as competitions, enterprise challenges, debating societies, music and drama. Duke of Edinburgh Award students go on expeditions and there are trips to countries like Iceland, Borneo and Vietnam which extend students' experiences and horizons. Work experience, entrepreneurial activities and opportunities for leadership at all ages amply equip students to face the responsibilities of adult life.

**The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall.** Assessment systems to track pupils' learning are impressive and provide a wealth of data. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subject and enthusiastically share this knowledge with

their pupils, thus enhancing pupils' learning by providing appropriate real-life contexts. In a Year 12 history class, pupils were fully engaged with the teacher in discussion of the causes of the war in the Pacific as a result of the teacher's knowledge of source material which he had shared with his pupils. This detailed planning of lessons is common practice, as is making clear the purpose of the lesson and reviewing it at the end of the lesson. On occasions, the review time is cut short, due to too many activities planned for the lesson. This leads to limited checks on how well pupils understood what they had just learnt. Teachers make very good use of resources and encourage pupils to use information and communication technology to express ideas and record their learning.

The interaction between teachers and pupils is excellent. Pupils confidently discuss with their teachers and ask questions for clarification. Teachers encourage dialogue and are adept at questioning to ensure that all pupils are involved in the lesson. This is particularly successful due to the detailed knowledge teachers have about their pupils, so they know which pupil requires a sharply targeted question. A good match of work to pupils' work to ability is evident in most, but not all, classes with suitable extension work to meet the needs of the range of individual needs, including those of the most able. Teachers frequently praise pupils' successes and challenge any lack of ambition, thus reflecting the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils in the school.

Many classrooms are 'active environments', where pupils enthusiastically participate in well-planned tasks, often in a carousel, which ensure pupils are not confined to their desks. Teachers use well-judged activities and resources to ensure that a wide range of pupils' needs are met. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils built food webs and understood the interactions within the web. This lesson also typified the successful way in which lessons are linked to an understanding of the real world. Pupils are challenged and encouraged to be independent when the situation demands as well as to learn collaboratively. When learning is most successful, pupils have time for reflection, consolidation and critical thinking, but this is not always the case. On occasions, too many activities are planned, leaving too little time for pupils to reflect on, or consolidate, what they have just learned.

Pupils are active learners who derive much enjoyment from their lessons and from making progress. A hallmark of pupils' learning is their awareness of their progress. By knowing their levels of attainment in each subject, pupils use the success criteria, posted at the start of the lesson, to measure how well they have achieved. Pupils' knowledge of their current levels and their targets is exemplified by the 'reach for the stars' rocket diagram pasted into the front of exercise books in the primary phase.

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning, are curious and wish to learn and take responsibility for their own learning. They show increasing skills as learners and these were well developed in students in the diploma and careers-related programmes in Years 12 and 13. Pupils throughout the school are increasingly able to make connections between prior learning and new learning. They are confident users of technology to assist with their learning, as observed in a Year 6 science lesson where pupils made notes on their phones or tablets to share with the whole class.

Pupils work well collaboratively, discussing their tasks and communicating their findings. They have a range of learning skills that allow them to use their knowledge, skills and understanding developed previously in both familiar and new contexts. They are able to make connections between their learning and real-life situations, as seen for example, in the Years 6 and 7 World Village Day.

Marking of pupils' work and the feedback given are generally clear. At their best, they are detailed, indicating in pupils' workbooks where errors have been made or where there is a particularly good feature of the task undertaken. Most teachers give good guidance for improving a piece of work. Teachers also encourage peer assessment and self-assessment, activities which strengthen pupils' critical awareness and support pupils' understanding of their levels and targets. The philosophy of the school to be 'open' about levels and targets is a major contribution to the improvement in pupils' progress over recent years.

The school has a sophisticated assessment database which is easily accessed by all teachers, giving teachers full data on the previous and current attainment and progress of all pupils they teach. The school benchmarks pupils' progress and attainment against national and international standards. However, while the school has an impressive database providing a wealth of information, there are a few occasions when these data are not used as well as they might be to plan lessons to meet the differing needs of all pupils. School leaders recognise that this is an area to be developed further.

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

The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils gain self-knowledge in assemblies, for example, where they can hear readings from the Qur'an, see them translated and reflect upon their meaning. The good relationships and respectful interactions between teachers and pupils lead to the development of self-assurance and encourage good behaviour and a sound work ethic.

Assemblies also teach pupils to acquire moral values. The primary phase leadership team use issues that arise to inculcate standards in assemblies. Morning tutorials offer opportunities for thoughtful discussions about values and principles. More overtly, older pupils consider the law and its precepts in the Skills for Life programme and in the IB course.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in class, the cafeteria and around the school. The 'house system' is well designed to promote aspiration and achievement and encourages responsible attitudes to, for example, punctuality and attendance. The Michelin Academy in the primary phase involves pupils in thinking about their own and community safety on the roads and the IB students run a 'Buckle-Up' campaign, engaging parents as well as pupils. Year 5 boys took it upon themselves to support

Syrian refugees by collecting and sending items. As one boy said, 'The world is our community.'

The UAE National Agenda is displayed in school and raises pupils' awareness of the government's vision. The six national priorities are shared with teachers and pupils, as was seen in assembly when pupils were encouraged to identify with the UAE's aims, in particular by contributing to improved educational results. The school is an eco-school and a team of teachers and pupils plant trees and raise awareness of the local and national environment. The Skills For Life programme teaches older pupils about UK governmental systems. Pupils in Year 2 learn about international landmarks through the travels of Barnaby Bear.

One of the school's core values is the development of an awareness of diversity and tolerance and it is highly successful in meeting this objective. The flags of 82 countries are displayed in the primary phase, each celebrating a pupil's nationality. Respect for the UAE is inculcated by marking events such as National Day with poetry and festivities and pupils speak of their delight in living in Dubai. International Day is a highlight of the school year and other special days are recognised, thus emphasising the school's multi-national character. The prefects demonstrated international concern by organising 'A day in the life of a Somali refugee', pupils eating only a bowl of rice for lunch while seated on the floor.

While the school is international in every way, that internationalism is underpinned by a British ethos. Pupils absorb this in lessons such as history, and English language is taught through the medium of works such as Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Goodnight Mr Tom. Pupils learn about democracy by applying to be representatives on the school council; they make presentations, stand for election and voting takes place in a formal election process. Debating societies encourage freedom of expression and tolerance and some pupils, through the Model United Nations, shine on the international stage.

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

The quality of welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Pupils enjoy a high level of academic and pastoral care which stems as much from the excellent relationships between pupils and teachers as it does from the systems of support. Pupils and teachers readily engage with each other; pupils report that teachers are always willing to give pupils individual support sessions for academic improvement or discussion of personal issues. Consequently, newly arrived pupils settle quickly into the school. Tutors and form teachers know their pupils very well and the structure of pastoral and academic care enables appropriate sharing of issues so that pupils are supported by all who teach them. Senior pupils in the IB programme report that there is a high level of mutual trust between them and their teachers and they enjoy being treated as mature young adults. Teachers' support for university applications is much appreciated by these students.

Systems of recording are robust and enable teachers and senior staff in meetings with parents to base their discussions on clear evidence of success or areas which need improvement. As an example of teacher support, the atrium of the secondary phase at the end of the school day has such a pro-active and relaxed atmosphere. Teachers regularly engage informally in conversations with pupils and, sometimes, their parents. This high level of care is a major contributor to the success and progress of the pupils and is reflected in the high quality of pupils' behaviour throughout the school.

Medical support is excellent. The medical team of a doctor and two nurses offer medical care in two surgeries. As well as dealing with accident and injuries, pupils' medical details and issuing of medication are fully recorded. The medical staff also contribute to the school's commitment to healthy living through the primary personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and the secondary Skills for Life programme. This is complemented by healthy options in the cafeterias as well as no fries or soft drinks. An annual body mass index check of all pupils is carried out and parents are involved where issues are identified by this check.

The protection of pupils is given a high priority by the school. Risk assessments are thorough and implemented effectively. All areas of potential risk are regularly monitored. Security systems and personnel protect pupils from any unauthorised intrusion. Identity badges are worn by all staff and visitors. Procedures for evacuation are regularly practised and recorded. Pupil transport is very well managed. The school offers pupils many opportunities for visits and expeditions. These are all carefully planned and risk management on these activities is of a high order. Records of the planning of such expeditions are detailed and contain all the necessary checks and communications with parents.

Child protection is also given a high priority for the school and conforms to the best of UK practice and also the requirements of Dubai. Staff not only understand the safeguarding policy and receive regular appropriate training, but, in informal discussions during the inspection, confirmed they know how to respond correctly to a disclosure of abuse. A strong anti-bullying culture is a hallmark of the school. Evidence of this is an awareness of internet safety. In the secondary phase, it was recently agreed by senior pastoral managers to hold a whole-school session on inappropriate texting. Parents showed their support for this by no parent using the 'opt out' choice for their child.

The school has fully appropriate provision for disabled pupils.

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

The school meets the requirements of this Standard and practice in this respect is exemplary. Educational Services Overseas Limited, along with the Director and the head of human resources, ensure that all the required checks are in place when recruiting staff. Scrutiny of records confirms the rigour of these checks and that staff have the right to work in Dubai and that they are suitable to work with children. Members of the school team supervise volunteers who support school activities and events.

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

The school fully meets the requirements of this Standard and also the local requirements of the Dubai authority. It makes excellent use of the premises and accommodation to support the learning needs of the growing school community. The spacious layout of the site provides pupils with good opportunities to move around the open spaces and to enjoy their free time, often in seating areas with canopies. There is a recognition that more hard surfaces for sports are required and these are already planned to be included in the next phase of improvements. Specialist facilities are comprehensive and the recent addition of the auditorium and new classrooms has provided the school with even more facilities. Furthermore, the library provision has been improved following recent audits. The libraries are well used by all pupils who have ready access to an extensive range of age-appropriate materials.

Classrooms are clean, well maintained and equipped with smart boards and access to mobile technology. The quality of the learning environment is excellent, with particular strengths seen in early years and the primary phase. Here, the quality of the displays, which are often interactive, is excellent. They are used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to provide them with exciting opportunities to learn. The school site is largely litter free and this is because of pupils' pride in the school and their sense of 'ownership'. As one secondary-aged pupil explained, 'if we see any litter then we feel guilty because we are all responsible for looking after our school.'

The school's medical facilities are first rate with full-time medical staff available to deal with any emergencies. As well as following up on pupils' ongoing medical needs, staff undertake regular medical assessments. Similarly, site security is strong with 24 hour cover and extensive CCTV coverage to protect pupils and staff. All visitors are carefully screened and security staff are located at the entrance to all buildings. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for all visits outside of school within the UAE and overseas. Against a background of such excellent care and security, it is unsurprising that almost all pupils confirmed that they felt safe in school.

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

This standard is fully met. The school provides parents with an excellent range of information which enables them to become actively engaged in their children's education. The school's website is attractive and easily navigated. It provides parents with a wealth of information about the school and includes all the documents that are required by this BSO standard. In addition, parents are able to log onto the virtual learning environment which enables them to have instant access to their children's results and ongoing assessments. Regular reports are distributed to parents and these highlight their children's attainment and progress. Arrangements are made so that any comments or grades given can be followed up during consultation meetings with teachers. These are well attended with a recent primary phase meeting having a 96% attendance rate from parents.

The Director, school Principals and other leaders are readily available to meet with parents if they have any concerns. In addition, the Director holds coffee mornings/evenings where he is able to share information and explain why decisions are being made. These are open to all parents with pupils in the school and are valued by them. In their questionnaire returns, almost all parents believed that their views and opinions were listened to and acted upon. Most believed that the school promotes a good knowledge and understanding of modern British life. They were also confident that the education provided would prepare their children for an education in the UK independent sector if they chose that route.

This positive picture of information sharing on the part of the school was further supported at the meeting that inspectors held with parents of pupils. Almost all were confident that the information they received was helpful and that they would be able to approach their child's class or subject teacher if they had any concerns. Indeed, many commented that when they emailed teachers with a concern or query, they invariably received a prompt response.

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

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

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

Not applicable

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

The school fully meets the standards required in this section. The successes of the school are underpinned by its outstanding leadership and management. Importantly, there is recognition by leaders at all levels that there is always more that can be achieved. Such drive and determination are reflected in the school's motto, 'forever learning, forever achieving'. Senior leaders work well together as a cohesive team and staff throughout the school are able to contribute to the school's vision. This vision is communicated within the wider school community, resulting in a clear sense of purpose and direction. Many middle leaders are new to their post and have already started to make changes. In some subjects, it is too soon to see the impact of these changes on outcomes for pupils.

Systems for self evaluation are excellent. All staff are fully involved in regular reviews of the school's performance and parents and pupils are also able to contribute their comments and ideas for improvement. A rigorous system for managing the performance of teachers is closely linked to a programme of professional support and training that is available for staff. This explains why an increasing proportion of the

teaching and pupils' learning is now good and sometimes outstanding and why there are greater levels of consistency between classes. Good practice is shared effectively across the school and staff speak very positively about how they feel well supported by senior leaders. For example, all teachers and support staff benefitted from the guidance they had received on the key characteristics of effective learning.

Meticulous records are kept of pupils' progress as they move through the school. They are set targets that are challenging and the assessment data are analysed rigorously to spot any anomalies or potential underachievement. For example, they are used well to spot where pupils might need additional support or where there are discrepancies in the performance of different groups. However, not all subject or phase leaders are clear about how pupils' performance at the end of a key stage compares to local and international benchmarks. The school recognises that more work is needed in this area as well as in sharpening the ways in which it evaluates the success of initiatives set out in the school improvement plan.

Governance of the school is excellent. The board contains a wealth of expertise and its members challenge and support the Director and staff in just the right proportions. A strategic direction is agreed with the Director and clear expectations of performance are recorded. School-based staff are then empowered and supported to deliver what has been agreed. Regular meetings are held with the Director to ensure that suitable progress is being made and to hold the school to account. Governance works so well because there is a clear separation of roles and responsibilities from those of the school's professional leadership that is understood by all concerned. In addition, the growing involvement of parents through the year group representation system and regular surveys means that their views and opinions are taken into account during the decision-making process.

The school staff are very well qualified and trained. Most are British trained which enables them to confidently teach the UK curriculum and prepare pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK education system. The school is well resourced and these resources are managed with a high degree of effectiveness so that they have a direct impact on pupils' learning. For example, the pupils' increasing use of mobile technology is enabling them to become more independent and to take greater responsibility for planning their own work.

Efficient systems ensure that all financial, legal and safeguarding regulations are met. For example, the process for recruitment checks is exemplary. As a fully inclusive school, it actively promotes equal opportunities and is rigorous in tackling any form of discrimination.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

Deira International School 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:

Against a background of a good school with good and sometimes outstanding teaching and learning:

- provide more opportunities in lessons for pupils to consolidate and reflect on their learning and for teachers to check on what pupils have learned and understood
- ensure that all teachers make good use of the wealth of data available to them when they plan activities for the different ability groups represented in each class or set
- sharpen the school's self evaluation and improvement planning so that the ambitious and challenging targets contain clear and measureable success criteria.

## 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	NA			
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### Leadership and management

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

Name of school	Deira International School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 2005
Age range of pupils	3-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	1547
Annual fees (day pupils)	31,750 – 63,970 dhs
Annual fees (boarders)	Not applicable
Address of school	Festival City PO Box 79043 Dubai, UAE
Telephone number	+971 4 2325552
Email address	registrar@disdubai.ae
Headteacher	Jeff Smith (Director)
Proprietor	Educational Services Overseas Limited (ESOL)

## **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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