

Deira International School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 10 – 13 October 2021

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Age Group: 3 – 18 years
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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.

The DfE issued a policy update 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

The purposes of BSO 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

Deira International School was founded in 2005. It is situated in Al Badia, Festival City, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The school serves the areas of Festival City, Mirdif and Warqaa. It is owned by the Al Futtaim Education Foundation (AFEF).

The school is large with 1695 students on roll. It caters for students from age three years to 18 years. There are 201 students in the foundation years, 733 in primary, 600 in secondary and 161 in the sixth form.

The school is an international community with pupils from over 80 nationalities. The largest ethnic groups are Arab (27%) and Asian or Asian British – Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (18%). The school is inclusive in nature, catering for pupils with a range of abilities and aptitudes. The school has 287 (17%) pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The number of pupils for whom English is not their principal language is 815 (48%).

The school follows the English early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum and from Year 1 to Year 9 the national curriculum for England forms the basis of what pupils learn. In Year 10 both GCSE and IGCSE courses are available. At sixth-form level the students follow a programme leading to the International Baccalaureate (IB). Most students progress to universities abroad.

The school is led by a director and an extended leadership team. There are 158 teachers employed. The majority are either British or Irish. In the academic year 2020/2021, a new director and both heads of school were appointed together with 39 teachers new to the school.

The school's response and provision to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic is led by the guidelines set out by Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). These regulations have been evaluated by KHDA and were most recently inspected during the BSO inspection. Arrangements for distance learning, including assessment arrangements, were put in place during the closure of the school and were assessed by KHDA in May 2020 and found to be 'developed'. All stakeholders received information on the school's response to the pandemic.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in September 2021 and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 58 lessons. Four lessons were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff.

Four learning walks took place and involved examining the school grounds and buildings and visiting classrooms and storerooms.

There were 32 meetings with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board, including the director and heads of school.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered.

Evaluation of the school

Deira International School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years. The school prepares pupils exceptionally well to re-enter the UK education system. It meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of legislation in the United Arab Emirates. 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.

In **English** pupils make outstanding progress and attainment is very high. The large majority of children arrive in the early years with English as an additional or new language. Through the systematic development of children's phonics, supporting their fine motor skills for pencil control and exposure to children's literature, most children make rapid progress to achieve high levels of communication and language. Children become increasingly proficient in the use of English, beginning with developing an understanding of text direction. By the time children leave the early years, the large majority know their phase 2 sounds, can blend two sounds together and are able to write short sentences.

Across the primary school, pupils make outstanding progress and by Year 6, their attainment is well above UK expectations. The focus on the development of discrete reading skills across the primary school has led to confident readers who are able to retrieve and interrogate information from texts. Their vocabulary is developed through exposure to a variety of fiction and non-fiction, as is their love of literature. These skills support the development of their writing and a large majority can, stimulated by their extensive reading, express their own voice and create extended imaginative pieces of prose.

In the secondary school and sixth form, pupils and students continue this outstanding progress, as reflected in their performance in IGCSE examinations and in the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Most pupils achieve well above UK standards. The dual focus on reading for pleasure and the analysis of authors' literary styles leads to well-read individuals who can analyse

demanding texts. The intensive focus on the development of writing has led to sophisticated text-analysis skills which enable most pupils to analyse literary motivations. For example, Year 13 students can sensitively describe the physical and emotional impacts of war, expressed by Wilfred Owen's poetry, and link these to current issues of war and poverty.

In **mathematics** pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points on entry to the early years. When students leave the school at the end of Year 13, their attainment is outstanding.

Typically, children enter the early years with skills and abilities below those typical for their age in mathematics. These include areas such as understanding numbers, shape, space and measurement. However, children make outstanding progress over their two-year period in the early years.

As soon as children start in the early years, teachers begin to build solid mathematical foundations, preparing children well for their work in the primary and secondary schools.

In the primary school, teachers focus on consolidating pupils' understanding, through repetition and developing their fluency in using numbers. Typically, activities are closely linked to pupils' individual skills and abilities. This supports their outstanding progress and attainment.

By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are expert at solving problems and applying their mathematical knowledge to real-life situations. They are highly skilled at using different methods and conventions in mathematics, including column addition, calculating fractions, long multiplications, working out square roots, and they can explain their reasoning precisely.

In the secondary school pupils continue to make outstanding progress. Pupils are confident and highly skilled at using data and information for a range of different purposes. They are fluent in using numbers and use a wide range of strategies to solve complex problems. At the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment in mathematics is well above the UAE and UK averages.

Many students in the sixth form are gifted mathematicians who enjoy using their own initiative to solve complex problems. Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress and achieve high standards in relation to the world average for IB.

In **science** pupils achieve standards that are high and above those expected in England. Progress is outstanding in all phases of the school.

In the early years children enter the school with standards of attainment which are lower than those typical for their age. As a result of excellent teaching and regular opportunities to experiment, the children make rapid progress in their use of scientific language and their understanding of how to carry out an investigation. Projects such as bean planting and exploring features of the soil, allow the children to develop their understanding of the stages of an experiment. The children demonstrate a real desire to find out about how the natural world works. They delight in seeing the results of their investigations.

In the primary school the pupils continue to attain very well and to make rapid progress through Years 1 to 6. A carefully planned curriculum combined with superb teaching allow pupils to reach high standards and to progress quickly through a range of scientific topics and concepts. Pupils are increasingly confident in establishing an hypothesis, testing it and recording the results. In a Year 4 lesson on the water cycle, pupils hypothesised how it worked and tested their ideas to see if they were right. They carefully recorded their results, organised their findings and presented them clearly to each other.

In secondary classes the pupils deepen their understanding of scientific concepts and processes because the curriculum is interesting and progressively more demanding as pupils move through the year groups. In a Year 8 lesson, very skilled teaching allowed pupils to develop a detailed appreciation of chemosynthesis. The progress pupils make is outstanding and by Year 11 pupils are completing work more usually associated with post-16 studies.

Sixth-form students are highly competent learners of science. As a result of an excellent grounding in all aspects of the secondary science curriculum, they reach very high standards in their IB studies. They are both competent and confident learners and make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding. Attainment is high when compared to IB world averages.

Very effective teaching across the school ensures that pupils' attainment is high in other subjects when compared to standards internationally. The progress made by pupils in other subjects is very good.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of 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 October 2021, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas 2017 except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the United Arab Emirates. 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

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 UK Equality Act 2010.

The **curriculum** is outstanding. The school's vision to help its pupils 'become confident, knowledgeable and intellectually open-minded global citizens' is effectively achieved through a well-planned, well-delivered curriculum. It is regularly reviewed to reflect adaptations and updates arising from UK curriculum developments. For example, the early years are already delivering the new elements of the EYFS curriculum, focusing on early language and vocabulary development.

At every phase, the curriculum is planned with precision, is well sequenced and systematically builds on pupils' prior learning. Every effort is made to match daily learning experiences to pupils' personal aspirations and abilities. At the heart of the curriculum are the school's ten learner

attributes, which every teacher plans for and refers to in every lesson. These have been adapted successfully for children in the early years and younger primary classes as 'learning mascots'. As pupils become familiar with these attributes, they thrive as learners, reflecting on their own abilities and skills and identifying how to improve specific skills. Pupils are provided with multiple opportunities to explore different cultures and beliefs.

A rich and varied programme of co-curricular activities successfully supports the formal curriculum, providing opportunities for all pupils to develop their personal interests and skills to a very high level. These include a vast array of sporting activities, digital and creative technology clubs as well as well-being and arts experiences. There are several additional pupil-led projects and challenges, for example an entrepreneurship week that enable pupils to develop critical thinking and leadership skills. Throughout the curriculum, there are activities to help pupils to learn about the experiences of being British. These include comparative studies about climate in science and projects about British artists, authors and entrepreneurs. Digital literacy development is emphasised as the school prepares its pupils to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

In the sixth form, there is an emphasis on enabling students to explore their personal ambitions and develop strong inter-cultural identities as they find their rightful place as leaders in the world. There is a strong focus on equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their further education and employment. Consequently, the IB pathways programmes are diligently supported by rigorous academic guidance from senior leaders. This enables students to make thoughtful and mindful choices, supported by extensive academic counselling. Students also receive high-quality guidance from the careers counsellor to support them in making informed choices of universities. Parents are appreciative of this one point of contact relating to their child's future choices. Almost all students participate in the extensive AI Futtaim Internship Programme, engaging in a wide range of opportunities to develop an understanding of the world of work. This includes opportunities to work in the world of fashion, engineering, finance and the technology industry in the local community.

The school's support for pupils with SEND and those pupils whose first language is not English is outstanding. As soon as a concern is raised, a team of highly qualified professionals ensures that there is accurate identification of the pupil's specific needs, carefully planned support, adaptation of learning activities and regular monitoring of progress and excellent communication with the pupil and parent. Pupils working well above age-related expectations are also well supported in lessons with additional challenging learning activities and opportunities to carry out independent research. This was evident in almost every lesson observed by inspectors.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** across the school is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations and demonstrate expert subject knowledge. Consequently, most pupils achieve high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers' planning reflects their detailed knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and assessment expectations, as well as the individual needs of every pupil in their class.

Staff in the early years are cognisant of how young children learn. They ensure a supportive and inclusive environment which helps children feel secure yet excited during their first experiences of formal school. This is achieved through an environment rich in language and literature which promotes a sense of wonder about the wider world. The variety and continuous provision of activities, supported by a wide range of play equipment, help to develop independent learning skills.

Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive, respectful and trusting. Pupils' behaviour in all lessons is exemplary, as is teachers' management of behaviour. This enables pupils to take risks with their learning to deepen their understanding. In most lessons, pupils demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively, asking questions and challenging others' responses in thoughtful

ways. Teachers actively encourage high levels of peer support and challenge and as a result, most pupils' higher-order thinking skills are developed well above age-appropriate expectations. In a Year 12 English lesson based around a poem about Medusa, two students spent a great deal of time challenging one another to justify their viewpoint through the critical analysis of the poet's language. There was a high level of academic rigour in their challenging of each other.

Lessons are well paced. The routine use of technological devices as part of the school's 'Bring Your Own Device' scheme and the recent focus on online lessons has resulted in a sophisticated digital literacy on the part of pupils and teachers. Pupils are highly adept at the use of technology to support their learning. They are aware that lesson plans and activities will be available on their learning portals well in advance of the lesson and many use this as an opportunity to conduct personal research before the lesson. This enables them to set their own challenges, design and solve problems and accelerate their out-of-school learning.

Almost all teachers make very good use of assessment information gathered from internal and external assessment activities. In lessons, formative assessment opportunities are rarely missed. As a result, learning activities are almost always well matched to pupils' needs. Levels of support for the least able and challenge for the most able are routinely monitored by the learning support team as well as senior leadership. Teachers also plan challenging activities to support the learners who have English as an additional or new language so that the cognitive challenge remains high while their language needs continue to be supported.

Implementation of the school's feedback and marking policy is highly effective. Teachers routinely provide high-quality feedback on pupils' work, commenting on whether the learning objective has been met and what each pupil needs to do to achieve or be challenged further. Self and peer assessment are actively encouraged and pupils take on this task earnestly. Pupils from Year 1 upwards are adept in the use of their purple pens to respond, review and make appropriate changes and adaptations. The power of the purple pen is remarkable.

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

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 UK Equality Act 2010.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is inclusive, where pupils appreciate the importance of treating all groups of people equally and with respect. Discussions with pupils, board members and senior leaders, together with careful observation of pupils' behaviour around the school and an examination of the school's curriculum in action, means that the school does pay due regard to the protected characteristics of race, religion, belief, disability, pregnancy and maternity and age (as laid out in the UK Equality Act 2010). It cannot meet fully the requirements of the act in relation to marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation and gender assignment due to the laws in the United Arab Emirates.

Pupils are proud of their achievements as learners. They understand the importance of regular attendance and hard work and enjoy participating in all aspects of school life. Pupils are very welcoming, polite, curious and work hard to maintain the orderly and peaceful nature of the school. They are sensible, responsible citizens, who value their learning, friendships and relationships with staff.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of British values, such as fairness, honesty and the rule of law, and enjoy putting democratic principles into practice. For example, pupils demonstrate their leadership skills as 'DIS Bio Heroes' where International Baccalaureate students lead and work alongside their primary school peers on school projects such as the 'Your Choice, Your Voice' leadership initiative designed to give the pupils a strong say in school developments and changes.

Pupils contribute positively to the lives of people living in the local community. They are involved in a wide range of charitable events. They collect money and clothing during Ramadan, which they distribute to families in need. They are aware of global issues and actively engage in events during International Day, Light it Up Blue (Autism awareness) and Downs Syndrome Awareness Day.

Teachers identify and make links between British values and those within the Islamic and UAE culture. For example, pupils and students abide by UAE law and respect members of local communities. They regularly engage in activities linked to, for example, The Year of Tolerance, The Year of Zayed and The Year of Giving.

All members of the school community behave well when moving around the school. No aspect of school life is disrupted through poor behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible, disciplined and considerate. As a result, the school is a calm, purposeful and collegiate place, characterised by mutual respect and tolerance.

A wide range of lunchtime clubs and extra-curricular activities, including chess, music, mathematics and drama clubs, are available to pupils. Leaders' monitoring of participation rates indicates that most pupils take part in a wide range of clubs.

Senior students participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Younger school members enjoy Mini Dukes and Junior Dukes outward bound programmes, through which they develop self-reliance, confidence and excellent team-work skills. Pupils participate in a wide range of competitive sports such as football, swimming and table tennis and actively engage in themed events such as 'Sports Week'.

School leaders keep a close check on attendance. Attendance is high with an average of 97% attendance compared to 94.6% in the UK. Any long-term absences or extended periods of absence are closely monitored and followed up. Attendance was very high across most of the school in 2020 – 2021 despite the COVID19 pandemic.

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

Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are outstanding. There is an exceptionally strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All members of the school community make the health, welfare and safety of pupils and students an absolute priority. Leaders' work in this area is supported by a set of suitable policies, which are shared with staff and made available to parents.

Through a comprehensive induction procedure, new staff are made aware of the school's principles and approaches to maintaining the welfare of pupils and students. New pupils are helped to settle into the school very quickly.

All new staff are familiar with the British government's most recent guidance on keeping children safe in education. Staff are also aware of the school's policies relating to protecting pupils and students from harm when using the internet. Staff are vigilant and aware of issues including child exploitation and neglect. They are also fully aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders have ensured that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of comprehensive health and safety policies and risk assessments.

Leaders have undertaken a fire risk assessment and taken appropriate steps to ensure that the school complies with local fire-safety regulations.

School surveys indicate that parents and carers are of the view that their children are safe at school. Pupils and students say that they feel safe. They know that they can talk to any member of staff, including the school counsellor if they have a concern or worry. Support is also available for school members experiencing conditions such as post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Staff are highly vigilant. They know exactly what the procedure is for dealing with a welfare or safeguarding concern. They use an electronic system to register any concerns they have about pupils' and students' safety. Such concerns are scrutinised by a highly trained team of safeguarding leaders.

The school doctor and nurses help pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They give regular presentations to develop pupils' appreciation of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. The medical team make sure that appropriate staff are aware of pupils' illnesses or allergies.

Leaders and all staff know how to spot signs of neglect and abuse. They are also aware that sometimes pupils suffer from anxiety, nervousness, sadness and depression. For this reason, staff prioritise the maintenance of pupils' mental health and well-being. For example, mindfulness classes are available for all pupils as well as yoga and talking therapies. This was also the case before the pandemic.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Safer recruitment policy and procedures equal those to be found in British schools. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and extensive.

A single central register is in place which includes all the measures needed to secure the safer recruitment of staff, contractors and board members. It is both clear and comprehensive in nature. It contains all the essential information required to employ individuals, including identity checks, medical fitness checks, a person's right to work (through the granting of a visa), a person's qualifications and a Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate for British teachers. Police checks are carried out on all staff every two years irrespective of previous checks. The single central register is regularly reviewed and updated by a very effective human resources team.

The school provides up-to-date training for teachers, administrators, school contractors and board members on keeping pupils safe. This training takes place on an annual basis for all staff and is an integral part of the school's continuous professional development programme. There is a school board member responsible for safeguarding who regularly reviews safer recruitment policy. Fourteen senior leaders and four administrators are trained in safer recruitment. The school is firmly committed to maintaining the best practices associated with safe recruitment. It is continuously given the highest priority.

Procedures for staff appraisal are firmly in place. These are clear, focused upon the performance of the individual and allow for development and improvement.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard. It provides a safe, secure, welcoming and spacious learning environment which serves to support students in reaching very high levels of achievement and enjoyment.

The site is secure as a result of an external wall that is well maintained. Entrances and exits to the school are restricted to clearly identified points. These are continuously monitored by security staff on a seven-day week, 24-hour basis. There is extensive use of CCTV. All visitors are required to wear identity badges. Pupils arriving at and leaving school are carefully managed to ensure safety at all times.

The grounds are spacious and well laid out. Very good use is made of the space available to create a well-organised and welcoming environment. The buildings are very well maintained. There are a number of separate areas accommodating early years, primary, secondary and the sixth form. There is a specialist early years area that accommodates both indoor and outdoor learning and sixth-form students enjoy a bespoke sixth-form centre encompassing a common room, study hall and kitchen-dining area. There is also a 700-seater auditorium available for productions.

Throughout the school, signage is very clear allowing pupils, parents and visitors to locate rooms and services easily and to remain safe while on site.

There are separate facilities for boys and girls and entrances to these are clearly marked. Separate changing rooms, including showers, are provided for pupils engaged in physical education and extra-curricular activities. There are a number of drinking water stations available to pupils and staff. The temperature of water is carefully controlled. All toileting and washing amenities are maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness. Toilets are cleaned every 30 minutes.

There is a purpose-built medical centre on site. This consists of an examination room, two treatment rooms and an isolation room. It is staffed by a doctor and two nurses on a full-time basis.

Pupils with complex needs are provided with a range of specialist resources. These include a large sensory room, a 'calming' room and lego therapy. There is a hoist for access to the swimming pools and a ramp and sliding doors to allow access by wheelchair users. Toilets and changing rooms have been adapted to meet the needs of pupils with complex needs. All outdoor areas including gardens and break-out spaces are fully accessible to all pupils. Specialist staff are available to ensure an inclusive access to learning opportunities.

Classrooms are bright, airy and well maintained. They are clearly identified, grouped together in subjects and benefit from being spacious and well lit. Furniture in classrooms is suitable for learning and is well maintained. There is a good supply of specialist rooms for subjects such as science, music and drama.

Information technology (IT) resources are plentiful and distributed throughout the school. Classrooms have interactive whiteboards and all have internet connectivity. There are two specialist computer rooms and the libraries have a number of computer stations.

There are two libraries on site (primary and secondary). Both have a large stock of books and considerable IT resources and these were used effectively to support online learning during the pandemic. The librarian regularly ran online book-sharing sessions.

School corridors and classrooms display pupils' work as well as information on events, clubs and pupil welfare. This serves to create an environment that promotes a message that pupils' achievement is valued and celebrated.

Outdoor learning spaces are plentiful and well-maintained. There is ample coverage of these areas against the sun.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Providing timely and high-quality information for parents about school matters is a high priority for the school. Consequently, the school's website is regularly updated so that parents have access to school policies and practices as well as news, events and information about pupils' performance in external assessments. The website also contains important information about support for pupils with SEND and the various ways in which students in the sixth form can access support to prepare for the world of work or for further study. Details of how to contact the school's leaders as well as its owners are also available on the site.

Communication systems are highly effective in enabling parents to become active partners in their child's learning journey. There are several ways in which parents can find out about and support their child's progress. The parent portal shares regular updates about pupils' learning experiences. The high-quality reports, as well as the regular planned opportunities for parents to talk about their child's learning, are much appreciated by parents as they focus both on pupils' academic and personal development and provide valuable information about the next steps in their child's learning.

Parents also appreciate the many formal and informal meetings that the school organises. Most recently many of these have been online and have provided parents with the opportunity to meet new teachers, discuss the year's curriculum and understand how to access and understand important assessment information. These have generally been well attended and have resulted in a deeper understanding of pupils' learning development. One example of this is a recent workshop for new parents in the foundation stage to help them understand the different ways in which they can support the development of young children's fine motor skills.

Parents report that the director and the senior team are routinely visible around the school building, are approachable and keen to listen to any concerns that they may have. They believe that their views about the school are highly valued and immediate action is taken to deal with any issues that arise. This has resulted in a strong sense of partnership. Parents feel that they are considered to be an integral part of the school community.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard. It has an up-to-date policy on how to make a complaint. This policy is accessible to parents on the school's website. A written version of the policy is available. Both are very accessible. The policy sets out clearly and simply the procedures involved in raising a concern or making a complaint. The procedure constitutes a staged process beginning with a description of how to complain on an informal basis, moving on to the actions required when raising a formal complaint. Formal procedures include panel hearings and the involvement of individuals that are independent of the management of the school. Timescales are set out explicitly. Parents know how to raise a concern and understand that their concerns can be escalated should this be required. They feel that concerns are taken seriously and an empathetic approach is adopted by the school to their concerns. The complaints process is confidential in nature. Records of all concerns and complaints and subsequent actions are kept securely.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels are highly effective in securing excellent outcomes for the pupils and they fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are consistently met. The school operates legally and within set financial budgets.

Board members know the school very well and are driven by a clear vision of excellence in every facet of school performance, together with a set of values that underpin all aspects of school life. They have a strategic plan in place that contains challenging targets for improvement. Many of these targets have been met and have made a significant contribution to moving the school close to its goal of providing a world-class education for the pupils.

Board members are rigorous in their monitoring and evaluation of school outcomes including the performance of senior leaders. Leaders are consistently held to account for their performance by a clear system of appraisal that evaluates the key aspects of their work including the promotion of equality and the tackling of any instances of discrimination. Targets for improvement combined with the provision of resources needed to allow leaders to improve their performance further.

All staff are aware of the school's priorities and how these fit into the school's vision and its mission for the pupils. Board members have been successful in communicating their ambition for the school to all staff and leaders act as inspirational role models in leading and managing change successfully. Managers and teams consistently review the impact of their improvement plans in the light of the board's ambition. Consequently, these plans are frequently adapted as improvements are made. Resources are deployed efficiently and effectively.

The safety and well-being of pupils is given the highest priority by board members, leaders and staff. All staff are tenacious in tackling inequality and discrimination. Programmes are taught which are designed to keep students safe from dangers such as COVID-19 and misuse of the internet. Staff are proactive in promoting the well-being of students and the school's well-being team is seen as being 'brilliant' by the pupils.

The director and senior leaders have a detailed picture of school performance and use it to both hold staff to account and to drive improvement. Self-evaluation by school leaders is accurate and produces a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is a continuous process involving all staff. Staff know what the school does well and what it needs to do to get better. Recent improvement included establishing outstanding teaching across the school.

The results of staff appraisal are forensically studied by school leaders. They are used to inform professional development opportunities for improvement. Leaders have developed a very impressive approach to improving staff performance. At the heart of this approach is a recognition of the need for individuals to identify where they need to improve and for school leaders to offer ways to secure improvement. Consequently, the support offered is varied and designed as a bespoke package for the individual. Mentoring, modelling best practice, and more recently coaching are all aspects of the training available to staff. Staff have recently participated in the SENCo and NPQLM qualifications as well as benefitting from in-house training.

Staff are overwhelmingly proud of the school and believe that it is well led and provides a safe and inclusive learning environment. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and consistently challenge them in lessons and other activities to do their best. Staff enjoy working at the school and believe they are treated fairly, respected and valued.

Early Years provision

The early years provision caters for children from three to five years. Provision is outstanding. The facilities are well maintained and include spacious classrooms and well-designed outdoor areas. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and the early years provision fully meets the UK independent schools' standards. This phase of education is led with a high level of commitment and effectiveness.

Staff are deeply committed to giving the children the best possible start to their education journeys. A carefully constructed and imaginative curriculum designed to meet the needs of the individual child is in place so that all children achieve very well across all the main area of the foundation stage curriculum and enjoy their learning. The early learning goals are supplemented by an emphasis on the personal development of the children and their progress is tracked carefully. Children are confident, work well together and love the opportunity to learn. Staff have recently introduced the latest version of the English EYFS framework as a means of securing even higher standards. Teaching is outstanding. Staff very effectively use their detailed knowledge of how children learn and develop.

Relationships between staff, children and parents are excellent. Communication between staff and parents is regular and frequent and a real partnership exists between the staff and parents in supporting the children's learning. The children are well prepared for taking the next step into Year 1.

Sixth form provision

Students benefit from a bespoke sixth-form centre on campus. This consists of two common rooms, an independent learning suite and a kitchen/dining area. The centre constitutes an excellent learning environment.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) forms the basis of the sixth-form curriculum. This allows considerable choice in the subjects studied, enabling students to acquire a large number of skills and a detailed understanding of a wide range of subjects.

Students enjoy a work-experience programme covering a larger number of careers such as tourism, marketing and finance. Students use the work experience to help them choose next steps including the courses chosen at university.

Teaching is of the highest quality. Teachers are specialists in their fields and use their expertise to provide interesting and challenging lessons. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. They are problem solvers who are confident in taking on a new task or area of study.

The students play a substantial part in all aspects of school life. They are fully involved in whole-school events, charity drives, the student-leadership programme and student council. They act as role models for the younger pupils across the school. They are very proud of the school and take their responsibilities seriously.

The students are high achieving. They are mature and very knowledgeable about current world issues. They see themselves as global citizens and have a deep respect for different cultures and beliefs and a real sense of responsibility for their community.

The leadership of the sixth form is highly effective. It has been successful in improving the range of study opportunities available to the students and has overseen an improvement in standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Deira International School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country's laws. This is likely to apply in Dubai.

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:

The school has introduced a coaching programme for staff that has yet to be fully utilised by all. As a result, some staff are not developing their full potential as leaders. Senior leaders should make sure that the weekly continuing professional development time is used effectively to develop further the leadership skills of staff across 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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School details

Name of school: Deira International School

Type of school: All through

Date school opened:

Age range of pupils: 2 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll (full-time pupils): 1695

Number on roll (part-time pupils): 0

Annual fees (day pupils): 39,938 - 80,465

Annual fees (boarders): N/A

Address of school

PO Box 79043

Al Badia,

Dubai Festival City,

Dubai.

UAE.

Telephone number +971 4 232 5552

Email address: Director@disdubai.ae

Director: Simon O'Connor

Proprietor: Al Futtaim Foundation.

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.

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

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

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

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

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