

Deira International School, Dubai

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 24 to 27 February 2025

Lead Inspector: Nadine Powrie
Team: Mike Gaunt
Alison Hedley
Danny McGorry

Age Group: 3 to 18

Report Published: 25 March 2025

Report Reference Number: 3/59/2025

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 four 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 (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be added to the register, 'Get information about schools'.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO) accreditation. 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 updated the standards in August 2023. The new standards aligned the BSO standards with the Independent School Standards (ISS) and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding applied to schools in England; clarified and reiterated the relationship between the UK and host country laws and reshaped staff recruitment standards to ensure international applicability.

The British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

- Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
- Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.

- Part 5. The premises and accommodation.
- Part 6. The provision of information.
- Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.
- Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.
- Part 9. The quality of provision for boarding.

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 carers 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

The Al Futtaim Education Foundation (AFEF) founded Deira International School (DIS) in 2005. Located in Al Badia, Festival City, Dubai, the school serves families from Festival City, Mirdif, and Warqaa.

The school has 2,037 pupils on roll aged from three to 18 years, making it larger than many similar all-through schools in the region. There are 190 children in the early years provision, 871 in the primary school, and 976 in the secondary school, of whom 228 are in the sixth form.

The school is an international community with pupils representing over 95 nationalities. The largest ethnic group is Arab, about one third of pupils. The school is inclusive in nature, catering for pupils with a range of abilities and aptitudes. There are 231 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is 1,275, representing almost two-thirds of enrolments.

Children in the nursery follow the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum. Pupils in primary school and key stage 3 follow the national curriculum for England (NCfE). In key stage 4, pupils choose from a wide range of GCSEs or IGCSEs. In the sixth form, students have the option to pursue the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), Careers Programme (IBCP), and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) level 3 National Diploma. Most students progress to universities in a range of countries.

Over the previous four years, the school has seen significant growth in pupil numbers, increasing from 1,662 in 2019–20 to a current population of 2,040. Most of this growth has occurred in the secondary school, and the school is now at full capacity. During the academic year 2023–24, 344 new pupils joined the school against 331 in 2024–25. Many children arrive throughout the year in foundation stage (FS) 2.

In September 2023, the school welcomed 35 new teachers and created five new roles. In September 2024, the school welcomed another 48 new teachers, fifteen of these in new roles. There are now 173 teaching staff. Staff turnover has significantly decreased from 48% in 2020 to 11% in 2024.

The school has made substantial improvements to its infrastructure, expanding classroom space and enhancing technology since the last BSO inspection.

Deira International School is accredited by British Schools Middle East (BSME) and the Council of British International Schools (COBIS). The school won the SEND Inclusion Award in 2023 and the Well-being Award for Schools in 2024.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by four Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed 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 73 lessons. Fourteen of the lessons visited were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. There were 29 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents, and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies, and strategic plans. They inspected the school's safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also considered the views of parents, pupils and staff expressed in the BSO survey, which was sent to parents and teachers just prior to the inspection.

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

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding.

Pupils from all starting points make outstanding progress in English, including those identified as SEND and with EAL needs.

By the end of the EYFS, almost all children make rapid progress to achieve outcomes which are above the England average in literacy, communication and language, as a result of carefully planned and personalised specialist support.

In the primary phase, almost all pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In Year 4, pupils confidently exchange ideas on the contents of a persuasive letter which outlines the benefits of artificial intelligence. By Year 6, 91% of pupils attain or exceed curriculum standards, compared to an England average of 72%. Pupils plan, write, and edit persuasive letters with confidence and precision. They structure their arguments logically, choose powerful vocabulary, and use rhetorical devices to engage the reader. Older pupils successfully use digital technology to support their independent literacy learning. For example, in Year 9, pupils use an online application to improve their reading skills. Across the school, pupils learn to use a range of literary devices and employ ambitious vocabulary to develop their creative writing.

IGCSE results for English language and literature are significantly above international averages, with almost half achieving the higher grades of 9 to 7 compared to 29% in England. Over the previous three years, pupils have performed consistently well in both language and literature examinations. Pupils make exceptional progress, exceeding expectations by achieving, on average, one and a half grades higher than their predicted grades.

International Baccalaureate (IB) students demonstrate exceptional collaboration and analytical skills as they engage in a deep textual analysis of 'The Great Gatsby'. They critically examine key extracts, drawing on historical and social contexts to develop insightful and perceptive interpretations, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of the text. IB outcomes in Studies in Language and Literature are significantly above the international average, with students achieving an average point score (APS) of 5.6 compared to 4.8 globally.

Internal and external assessments indicate attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding across the school. All groups of learners, including SEND and EAL, make similar rates of progress from their starting points.

In the early years, almost all children make strong progress from their starting points. The rich variety of resources provides opportunities for practical and investigative activities. As a result, children quickly acquire skills in number, shape, and

measurement and develop a secure understanding of number patterns. By the end of FS 2, most children achieve a Good Level of Development and are well-prepared for transition to the next stage phase.

In primary, pupils continue to make strong progress, and daily arithmetic practice enhances their calculation skills and confidence in learning new concepts. In Year 1, pupils enthusiastically engage in activities to measure length, weight, and volume, accurately using terms such as longer, heavier, and full. As they advance through primary, they deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and can analyse data from surveys using bar charts and pictograms. By Year 6, pupils apply simple formulas to solve algebraic problems, with most achieving significantly above expected levels. About 95% of pupils attain or exceed curriculum standards, compared to the England average of 73%.

In secondary, pupils continue to make excellent progress. Their grades in GCSE are consistently high year on year, with outstanding results that surpass England averages, achieving a score of 66% at grades 9 to 7 compared to 57.6% in the UK. Pupils take ownership of their learning by actively reflecting on and evaluating their progress. They collaborate effectively to solve complex problems, developing deep mathematical understanding and resilience in their reasoning. By Year 10, pupils can solve quadratic simultaneous equations and apply this understanding to real-life situations, such as defining the shapes of lenses or satellite dishes. Students following the IB programme achieve outstanding results that are significantly above international averages.

Science standards, judged by both internal and external assessments, are exemplary, demonstrating outstanding attainment and progress for all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL. Disparities between boys and girls are minimal. High expectations, expert instruction, a rigorous curriculum, strategically deployed teaching assistants, and thorough assessments ensure that all pupils achieve success.

In the EYFS, children enter with diverse pre-school experiences and make rapid progress. A smaller proportion of SEND children in EYFS are on track compared with other groups. Provision personalises learning, engages children, and responds to individual needs. The learning environment is stimulating and fosters scientific inquiry. For instance, children in FS 1 describe the movement of balloons as a result of applied forces.

By Year 6, 95% of pupils attain or exceed curriculum standards, compared to a UK average of 81%. They actively engage in scientific investigations. High-quality interventions ensure that SEND and EAL pupils achieve at the same level as their peers. Lessons emphasise skills' application through dynamic activities, including artificial intelligence (AI)-driven digital learning. Teachers rigorously evaluate problem-solving strategies, while targeted questioning promotes higher-order thinking. For example, a Year 6 class uses laser pens and mirrors to design a light maze before applying their knowledge to construct a periscope. Most pupils confidently handle scientific equipment thanks to their extensive practical experience.

Consistent recall of prior knowledge, independent and collaborative work, and deep questioning drive continued rapid progress into secondary education. By Year 9, pupils are preparing for GCSE studies, mastering topics such as ion formation and explaining the bonding mechanisms of ionic compounds. Their attainment at GCSE is above the England average, with a score of 75% at grades 9 to 7, against 44% for England.

Students pursuing the IB curriculum develop a strong command of complex scientific concepts. Students demonstrate this by accurately using diagrams to explain the mechanism of electrophilic addition or describing oxygen transport by haemoglobin through dissociation curves. Their attainment is above the global average, with an average point score of 4.9 in physics, 4.6 in chemistry and 5 in biology compared with a point score of 4.5, 4.3 and 5 respectively. These outstanding outcomes have been consistent over recent years.

Pupils make outstanding progress in a range of **other subjects** across the curriculum. Overall, there is no significant gap between girls and boys. Pupils with SEND or EAL make similar rates of progress to their peers, relative to their starting points.

In primary, pupils consistently achieve outstanding progress in art, design and technology, geography, history, music, French, performing arts and physical education (PE). Almost all pupils make above expected progress in computing by the end of Year 6, reflecting a vibrant digital learning environment where forward-thinking teaching, computational ability, and digital problem-solving cultivate robust computing skills and spark pupils' passion for innovation.

Pupils develop a rich and diverse range of skills across non-core subjects, including critical thinking in history, creativity and technical proficiency in art and design, and teamwork and resilience in PE. These subjects are expertly planned and delivered,

ensuring pupils acquire deep knowledge and transferable skills that prepare them exceptionally well for future learning and employment.

At GCSE, pupils consistently achieve results well above England averages in the vast majority of other subjects at grades 9 to 7. For example, 55% of pupils achieved grades 9 to 7 in psychology compared with 23% in the UK and 87% in history compared with a UK average of 37%. Most pupils achieve at least one and a half grades higher than their predicted grade in the vast majority of other subjects. Over the previous three years, pupils have significantly exceeded England standards in most other subjects, notably in psychology, computer science, design technology, drama, French, history, information and communication technology (ICT), fine art, photography, business studies, and economics.

In the IBDP, the majority of students attain standards above world averages, most notably in business management, computer science, economics, French, history, digital societies, and Spanish. In the IBCP, all students successfully completed their BTEC level 3 diploma qualification in business travel and tourism.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Part 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken between Monday 24 February and Thursday 27 February 2025, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Part 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 quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

The curriculum policy provides an overview of the school's framework and is regularly reviewed. It is broad, balanced, and evolves to meet the changing needs of a diverse international pupil population, including those with EAL and SEND who require more personalised planning. Teachers seamlessly integrate digital learning, including AI, across the curriculum, equipping pupils with essential future-ready skills. It prepares pupils well to enter the British educational system, including university.

The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is seamlessly embedded across all key stages, providing a meticulously planned and progressive programme that equips pupils with the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to thrive. It fosters exceptional personal development, well-being, and social responsibility, ensuring that pupils are confident and respectful. Lessons are designed to promote a deep understanding of compassion and fairness, with a strong emphasis on respect for diversity and inclusion. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop a secure understanding of the protected characteristics as outlined in UAE law, including age, disability, race, religion or belief, pregnancy, and maternity. While certain characteristics such as marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex, and sexual orientation are not addressed due to legal restrictions, pupils are actively encouraged to celebrate and appreciate different cultures and beliefs. For example, through initiatives such as Tolerance and Diversity 2025, pupils actively engage in

celebrating different cultures and beliefs, deepening their understanding of inclusion and mutual respect.

In the foundation stage, teachers design a curriculum that aligns seamlessly with the learning statements from Development Matters. They create richly-resourced indoor and outdoor environments that inspire children to explore, investigate, and engage in purposeful, hands-on learning experiences. The careful deployment of support staff and the use of individual learning strategies help to ensure that all children are well prepared for their move to primary.

In primary, leaders design a curriculum that aligns rigorously with the NCfE while making purposeful adaptations to reflect the diverse pupil population and the local requirements of the UAE. Events such as Mathematics Week, World Book Week, and Arabic Immersion Days raise pupils' awareness of the relationship between what they are learning and the world they live in.

In secondary school, pupils choose courses from 27 options in IGCSE or GCSE. In the sixth form, students select pathways for the IB such as the diploma programme, and the career-related programme. The school ranks as one of the top IB schools in the UAE and in the top 1% compared to UK IB schools. A small number of students select a BTEC pathway because business, travel, and tourism courses better align with their future education or employment goals. An outstanding experiential learning programme, in partnership with Al Futtaim Group, offers pupils in Year 11 hands-on opportunities across the automotive, retail, legal, healthcare, and real estate sectors.

British values are explicitly stated in the school's core beliefs and implicitly woven into all subjects, in particular PSHE where age-appropriate content promotes tolerance and diversity with an emphasis on physical and mental well-being.

Digital displays in the school emphasise mutual respect, cultural tolerance, individual liberty, and personal responsibility. The curriculum deepens pupils' understanding of British life, including the influence of celebrated British authors on historical and contemporary literature, and the contribution of British scientists in medical advancements, such as understanding the human genome. In subjects such as mathematics, elements of British life, for example, the London Eye and Kew Gardens' glasshouses, serve as examples of regular polygons. Visits from notable British figures in athletics and performing arts spark inspiring discussions among pupils.

Pupils develop resilience and leadership through the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Junior Duke, and Forest School initiatives. They engage in 163 weekly sporting, artistic and academic extra-curricular activities. Pupils actively promote mutual respect through leading assemblies, organising anti-bullying events, and engaging in charitable initiatives. This fosters a strong culture of inclusivity, empathy, and social responsibility across the school. The pupil voice programme encourages pupils to share their views on school matters, while TEDxYouth events provide a platform for them to express opinions. Pupils deepen their understanding of democracy by participating in council elections, voicing their beliefs, and engaging in debates.

Pupils receive strong support during transitions from foundation stage to primary and then to secondary. Sixth-form students and their parents value individual mentoring from school counsellors and senior staff, receiving tailored career guidance on university course choices.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** across the school is outstanding.

Teachers set high expectations in their lessons. They consistently use an effective range of approaches and resources, often involving the sophisticated use of digital technology to support the learning process. Teachers are particularly adept at using AI to inspire learning and develop pupils' self-assessment skills. All teachers actively share best practice in digital technology through the 'Digi knows' bi-weekly publication, fostering a culture of continuous professional learning and innovation.

Teachers plan lessons meticulously with clear learning intentions and detailed success criteria which they share with pupils. Lessons include a range of activities to engage and challenge all pupils' learning. Teachers have a secure, detailed knowledge of their subjects, and the curriculum. They show an excellent understanding of examination specifications that benefits all pupils.

In lessons, teachers and pupils have a strong and productive working relationship. Mutual respect between teachers and pupils, as well as among pupils themselves, is deeply embedded in the school's culture and consistently evident in all interactions. Pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement and resilience when challenged by their teachers through expertly guided, focused, and formative discussions. They respond with confidence, articulating their ideas clearly and deepening their understanding. Teachers demonstrate a high level of skill in their use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and extend learning. For example, in Year 12, students

studying Othello engaged in high-level critical discussions, exploring the presence of racism in Shakespearean times and drawing insightful comparisons with contemporary perspectives. This deepened their analytical thinking and strengthened their ability to evaluate complex social themes.

The school's commitment to personalised learning is clearly outlined in the learning and teaching policy. The 'DIS 10' toolkit for excellence is core to the school's approach and fully supports highly effective teaching and learning. Teachers systematically gather and analyse assessment data from expertly designed assessments and standardised tests. This ensures precise tracking of progress and leads to high-quality responsive teaching. Teachers integrate all assessment data, including pupils' prior achievement and diagnostic test results, to create a highly-detailed and personalised learning profile. This ensures precise identification of strengths and areas for development, allowing for targeted support and challenge. Teachers use this to personalise learning and ensure activities meet the needs of all their pupils. Specialist teachers from the inclusion team work with colleagues to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, leading to lessons which are challenging for all. As a result, almost all pupils achieve outstanding outcomes in public examinations showing no significant variations between groups of pupils, including gender, SEND and EAL.

Pupils rapidly develop their ability to self-assess from an early age, quickly learning how to use success criteria and other checkpoints to review the quality of their own work and that of others. In Year 7 PE, the use of peer coaching and self-assessment fosters independence and accountability in learning. High levels of physical engagement and resilience are evident, with pupils displaying excellent teamwork, communication, and sportsmanship. The school harnesses digital technology exceptionally well to provide instant, high-quality feedback, enabling pupils to recognise their strengths and target areas for improvement with precision. This enhances engagement, accelerates progress, and fosters a culture of continuous learning. Pupils use this feedback to improve their work using a green pen to confirm any edits.

Across the school, there are well-planned reward systems that motivate pupils to achieve their best, for example, younger pupils receive certificates for being a 'reading millionaire'.

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

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

The **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** development of pupils is outstanding.

All staff strive to create a nurturing environment that places the individual child at the centre of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils grow into independent and confident young people who are respectful and considerate towards each other. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary across the school, and mutually respectful relationships between pupils and staff contribute to the strong sense of community throughout the campus. Pupils' attitudes towards learning at all stages are very positive. Teachers actively encourage independent learning and collaboration from the earliest stages. In a SMSC studies lesson, pupils applied British values by developing business proposals that promoted democracy, mutual respect, and individual liberty. 'Ultimate Chaos Day' encourages respect for different roles in society, while reusable plastic spoons promote pupils' responsibility for sustainability. These projects actively promote inclusivity by valuing diverse perspectives and ensuring all pupils have equitable opportunities to contribute, thrive and make a meaningful positive impact.

The school consistently embeds its core values, respect, excellence, collaboration and integrity, into all aspects of school life. These values drive high expectations, positive behaviour, and a culture of ambition, exemplifying the DIS Way. Staff provide excellent role models for pupils, encouraging respect for others and an appreciation of self-worth. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. In discussions with a representative group of pupils, they mentioned that staff help them understand how their actions affect others, not just themselves. Pupils appreciate the staff's concern and support for their mental health and well-being. Moreover, pupils value the numerous opportunities they have to take on responsibilities, such as eco warriors, well-being champions, and members of the students' council.

All staff actively value and promote the pupils' voice. This school-wide approach encourages pupils to express their opinions, with their views gathered through surveys, meetings, and suggestion boxes. Quick response (QR) codes on posters throughout

the school provide links to current areas of debate. As a result, pupils make a significant impact on the school's policy and daily life. For example, the planning and performing of professional school musical productions, charity events, and school celebrations are primarily organised by pupils. A student committee recently designed and oversaw the construction of a new IB cafeteria, which now provides a valuable study and leisure space for current and future year groups.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of life in the UK. Younger children learn about symbols associated with the UK, such as the flag and famous London landmarks; the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye, for example. They can compare and contrast these with the buildings of the UAE and other countries that reflect the many nationalities in the school. As pupils move through the school, they develop a strong understanding of British values. Tolerance and respect for different cultures and religions are integral to daily life. In subjects such as moral education, pupils actively engage with concepts, including democracy and the rule of law. Pupils actively demonstrate these values by electing their peers to leadership roles.

In the foundation stage, weekly 'Around the World' lessons develop children's understanding of the many countries represented in the class. Children contribute various artefacts that represent their countries to create attractive and informative displays, which they then compare and contrast with those of other countries. The UK features the Beefeater Guard, a London taxi, and a red telephone box, while the UAE showcases desert life, the Burj Khalifa, and Emirati dress. Pupils see themselves as part of a global community, eager to explore and compare life in other countries with that of the UK. They participate in activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh and Junior Duke Awards, as well as British Science Week. An inter-house design challenge concentrated on the recent coronation of King Charles III.

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

The **welfare, health and safety** of pupils and staff are outstanding. The school fully meets the requirements of this standard and remains in full compliance with all safeguarding and welfare regulations of the host country.

Policies and staff training for child protection and safeguarding are robust. In addition to initial training, weekly safeguarding meetings and regular bulletins maintain all staff's awareness of best practice in child protection, and staff recognise that safeguarding is a collective responsibility. Parents are fully briefed on the school's

safeguarding procedures and express confidence that attentive and dedicated staff keep their children safe.

The school's campus provides a highly secure and nurturing environment where respectful relationships between pupils and staff are evident. A friendly and diverse international community welcomes pupils from their first day and prioritises their well-being and ensures a safe learning environment. Upon enrolment, all families visit the school and meet with key people, ensuring that pupils become familiar with the school and the way it works. The school makes clear that it has high expectations for all pupils and offers guidance to parents on how they can support this. This well-established partnership between school and home fosters a strong relationship, contributing to an attendance rate of 97%, exceeding the national average for England. Pupils are rarely late for school or for lessons.

The school conducts systematic reviews of policies concerning pupils' welfare, health, and safety. All aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, class excursions, and residential experiences, undergo rigorous risk assessment. The fire safety policy is strictly enforced, with well-maintained equipment. Evacuation and lockdown procedures are regularly evaluated. The school systematically takes appropriate actions to reduce identified risks. Trained first aiders and fire marshals are well known within the school, ensuring that assistance is readily available when required.

The school's policies on behaviour emphasise respect and tolerance. As a result, incidents of bullying are rare. Teachers have a deep understanding of pupils' academic and developmental needs. The well-established pastoral care system reflects the school's philosophy that pupils' happiness is fundamental to academic and personal success.

Pupils are thoroughly informed about the school's safeguarding procedures and the designated staff members who are available for support. Leadership development is actively promoted, and older students contribute to the school's caring ethos by mentoring younger peers. Pupils feel well-supported and secure within the school and while using school transport.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school fully meets the requirements of this standard.

The school employs a dedicated human resources (HR) team of four that conducts all necessary background checks to meet the required safeguarding standards for staff working with pupils. The school upholds exemplary safeguarding standards by comprehensively recording every staff member's details in a rigorously maintained single central record (SCR), including individuals not directly employed by the school, such as governing board members, contractors, and outsourced companies. The SCR covers checks on start dates, identity verification, medical fitness, the right to work in the host country, qualifications, criminal record checks, and references.

The safeguarding and child protection governor works closely with the human resources team to ensure that all checks remain current and accurate. They review it regularly to ensure full compliance and confidentiality, ensuring that records remain up to date and reflect the latest safeguarding requirements.

The school implements a robust safer recruitment policy, ensuring a rigorous selection process that prioritises the safety and well-being of all pupils. All senior leaders along with governors involved in recruitment complete safer recruitment training to maintain the highest safeguarding standards.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard and provides an outstanding learning environment for pupils.

The school ensures accessibility by including ramps, lifts, and clearly identified separate washrooms for staff, pupils, and individuals with physical disabilities, with hot and cold water clearly labelled. Pupils have constant access to fresh drinking water throughout the school, promoting their health, well-being, and readiness to learn. The clinic employs a full-time doctor and three nursing staff and offers treatment and isolation rooms for sick or injured pupils, including washing and toilet facilities. The school's cafeteria serves healthy food to both pupils and staff.

Classrooms create exceptional learning environments with spacious, well-lit, and acoustically sound designs. Every room includes ample resources, excellent interactive

technology, and high-speed Wi-Fi. Attractive and informative displays throughout the school celebrate pupils' achievements.

In the foundation stage, classrooms incorporate indoor and outdoor spaces that foster active learning, fine motor skills' development, and social interaction through play and free flow activities. Primary and secondary pupils benefit from exceptional resources that challenge and stimulate learning across all core and specialist subjects. High-quality science laboratories support the development of scientific inquiry skills necessary for outstanding examination results. The design and technology area includes state-of-the-art machinery, such as two three-dimensional (3D) printers, allowing pupils to research, design, and create. The school actively encourages pupils to develop musical and creative talents, leading to highly successful performances, including the production of 'High School Musical Jr.'.

The well-stocked libraries provide physical and electronic books in multiple languages, fostering a sense of belonging for pupils. They can borrow books or use them for reference, and additional reading areas cater to all age groups throughout the school. The spacious auditorium serves as a multifunctional venue for meetings, assemblies, celebrations, and performances. The school offers extensive indoor and outdoor PE facilities that promote physical and mental well-being. The sports halls and pools include designated changing areas and showers.

The onsite facilities team maintains the highest standards of cleanliness and upkeep. The security team actively oversees the safe and orderly arrival and departure of pupils and staff, ensuring a secure environment throughout the day.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard, demonstrating a strong commitment to transparency and accessibility.

All essential policies such as safeguarding, admissions, curriculum, SEND, EAL, behaviour and sanctions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, medicines, complaints, are available on the school's website. Parents can access them easily or request copies if needed. These policies are clearly written, reviewed annually, and specify the

appropriate contact person for different concerns. The website also provides key information such as term dates, timetables, and access to the parent portal, along with frequently asked questions and guidance on arranging a school tour. It includes a direct link to the latest inspection report, reinforcing the school's commitment to high standards. The website references contact details, the DIS board of governors' chair, and the school's vision and mission, helping parents understand its ethos and leadership.

Parents view DIS as an outstanding institution and value the strong communication between home and school. Teachers keep parents well informed about their child's academic progress and well-being, keeping them engaged in their education. Many highlight the caring atmosphere as a key strength, noting that staff address concerns promptly. Written reports further support this by giving clear insights into their child's attainment and progress. Parents appreciate the structured parent and teacher meetings, where they review written reports, ask questions, and discuss progress. Parents confirm that teachers know their children well, recognise their strengths, and are committed to helping them reach their potential.

In both primary and secondary, parents receive regular academic and pastoral updates. They feel well informed about their child's progress and appreciate teachers' guidance on how they can support improvement, whether through additional practice or encouragement. In EYFS, parents receive frequent digital updates, including visual records of activities, keeping them connected to their child's learning. Parents of pupils with SEND express high satisfaction, praising teachers for their dedication in providing the necessary support. They feel that their involvement helps them to understand their child's needs and to collaborate effectively with the school.

School leaders actively seek parental feedback through various formal and informal channels, including chat groups, surveys, meetings, and emails. Parents describe DIS as a welcoming and supportive community. New families particularly appreciate the structured approach to helping children settle into the school smoothly.

The vast majority of parents confirm that their child enjoys school and feels safe, highlighting the school's success in fostering a secure and nurturing environment.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has a highly effective and well-structured complaints' policy, ensuring a clear, transparent, and systematic approach to dealing with parental concerns. The policy is easily accessible to all parents on the school's website. The policy follows a four-stage process, allowing for swift and fair resolution of concerns. It clearly sets out defined timeframes for each stage. Teachers encourage parents to address concerns informally at first, fostering open communication and early resolution. Where necessary, a formal written procedure is available for escalation.

To uphold fairness and impartiality, the school provides a hearing before a panel of at least three independent individuals, ensuring no direct involvement in the matter under review. At least one panel member is entirely independent of the school's leadership and operations, reinforcing the integrity of the process. The school invites parents to attend the hearing and allows them to bring a companion for support. The panel carefully reviews all evidence before making findings and recommendations, then shares them with the complainant and, where appropriate, the individual concerned.

The school meticulously maintains records of all complaints, whether resolved informally, formally, or escalated to a panel hearing. Thorough documentation maintains accountability by recording all actions, regardless of the complaint's outcome.

The process strongly emphasises confidentiality, securely storing all records except when legal obligations require access. Exceptional relationships between the school, parents, and staff create a culture of trust and collaboration, ensuring that most concerns are resolved swiftly and informally. In the previous two years, there has been no formal complaint.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding, providing clear strategic direction and an unwavering commitment to excellence, ensuring an inclusive, high-

achieving environment where every pupil thrives. The school's motto 'Forever Learning, Forever Achieving' is a lived reality, fostering continuous improvement and innovation. A strong values-driven ethos of 'respect, excellence, collaboration, and integrity' underpins decision-making, ensuring a relentless focus on pupils' well-being, academic progress, and personal development. Pupils describe their experience, saying, 'Everyone has something about them they excel at. It's an obligation to do better with ourselves'.

The board ensures exceptional strategic oversight, maintaining legal compliance, clear financial policies, and a well-defined separation of responsibilities between governance and the school's leadership. Leaders and governors drive continuous improvement across the school. Their commitment to coaching, innovation, and autonomy has cultivated a professional culture of collaboration, high expectations, and continuous growth. The school's 'coaching conversations without consequences', reflecting the school's commitment to open dialogue and professionalism, fosters trust, ensuring that all staff feel valued and supported. The executive leadership programme provides an exceptional foundation for strategic vision and leadership, yet there remains scope to extend its impact further in a rapidly-evolving educational landscape.

Leaders promote equality by ensuring all teaching and non-teaching staff actively engage in coaching development. 'Greenlight Focus Weeks' further support this by encouraging staff to observe, share, and celebrate best practice across the school. The school tackles discrimination, for example, by conducting regular school tours to identify and remove any accessibility challenges.

Leaders lead by example, embedding their vision into daily practice. They are highly visible, actively engaging with pupils and staff, including through direct involvement in co-curricular activities. Their dedication to staff well-being is evident in policies such as the '6:30pm to 6:30am' email rule, ensuring a healthy work-life balance that further reinforces a culture of care, respect, and high performance.

The vast majority of staff are proud to be part of the school, describing it as an exceptionally supportive and collaborative environment. They feel valued, well-supported, and highly motivated, with leaders fostering a culture of professional trust and ambition. Regular staff, pupil, and parent surveys alongside the senior leadership coffee morning with parents, ensure that all voices are heard and acted upon. For example, sixth-form students designed the three-storey IB Hub. The active involvement

of the parents' association (DISPA) plays a key role in organising networking opportunities and supporting school-led initiatives.

Staff unanimously agree that high-quality professional development is a strength of the school, providing them with the challenge, encouragement, and support needed to excel in their roles. They say: 'This is a very supportive environment to work in. We have the guidance, training, and resources needed to achieve our goals. Performance management is a conversation about growth and reflection'. The school's recruitment and deployment of staff are highly strategic, ensuring that the right expertise is in place to drive excellence. Most of the middle leaders who participated in the aspiring middle leaders programme have taken on a leadership position in the current academic year.

Safeguarding is at the heart of the school's culture, with highly robust procedures ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils. The safeguarding and child protection governor provides rigorous oversight, ensuring policies are effectively implemented and continually reviewed to maintain the highest standards of pupils' safety and well-being.

The school's leadership demonstrates an exceptional use of data, ensuring a rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring pupils' progress. This meticulous analysis directly informs departmental self-evaluation forms (SEF) and department improvement plans (DIP), ensuring that performance is constantly monitored, interventions are precisely targeted with a demonstrable impact on pupils' outcomes. These insights then feed into the school's improvement plan, creating a continuous cycle of evaluation and enhancement that drives sustained excellence. The director's performance management is dynamic and impact-driven, ensuring leadership continuously evolves in line with the school's ambitious vision. Governors and the director work in close partnership through fortnightly school management meetings, acting as critical friends, both supporting and challenging, to secure continuous improvement and sustained excellence. The board ensures that the BSO standards are consistently met.

DIS's unwavering focus on excellence ensures that all pupils receive an exceptional education, empowering them to achieve their fullest potential in a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

EYFS provision

Most children make fast rates of progress from their starting points. On entry, teachers swiftly and accurately identify a very small minority of children with SEND. By the end of the EYFS, a large majority of children achieve a Good Level of Development. Children identified with additional learning needs benefit from specialist SEND and EAL support. A highly effective bespoke phonics programme meets every child's learning needs by using best practice from a range of well-tried and tested phonics schemes.

Leaders create a nurturing, ambitious, and inclusive environment for new children by finding out their interests and featuring them in the learning environment. A well-planned programme of activities supports the transition of children to Year 1. Each child takes their individual phonics passport to Year 1 to support ongoing progress. Reading buddies from Year 1 foster a culture of collaboration. They visit the younger children to read their favourite stories and develop friendship bonds.

The school closely involves parents in their child's learning and invites them to a range of events, including informative talks from guest speakers. The school listens and responds to parental feedback, for example, changing the pickup location to an indoors venue during the summer. The school provides parents with frequent and detailed updates on their child's progress through formal reports and anytime access to an online educational platform. Children participate in two shows every year to celebrate new learning with their parents.

Leadership in the early years is highly effective and ensures that provision is carefully planned, and progress closely monitored. Leaders manage health and safety considerations and risk assessments effectively.

Teaching and support staff have regular professional development to reinforce high quality provision. A recent session focused on the characteristics of effective learning.

Children's behaviour is impeccable, and they enjoy making decisions on what to learn more about, dinosaurs being a recent favourite. The school follows the EYFS curriculum and enhances it with specialist teachers in Arabic, PE, and performing arts.

Post-16 provision

The sixth form at DIS is outstanding, with 228 students enrolled and an exceptional 95% retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13. Academic outcomes consistently exceed global IB benchmarks. In 2024, the 98% pass rate significantly outperformed the global average of 80%, with an average point score of 33.7 compared to 30.3 globally.

Strong leadership drives excellence. The head of IB, the IBDP, and IBCP/BTEC coordinators provide exceptional strategic direction, ensuring high standards and unwavering commitment to students' success. Their cohesive leadership fosters a culture of ambition and achievement. Support structures are exemplary, with targeted academic interventions, rigorous attendance monitoring, and a highly effective pastoral framework that nurtures students' well-being.

The school provides outstanding university and careers counselling, securing 100% university placements worldwide. Students gain industry work experience through partnerships with leading companies such as Emirates, Atlantis, and Sofitel, while the IB hub, a three-storey student-designed learning space, provides dedicated study areas that enhance students' academic and social development.

Teaching is highly effective, characterised by expert subject knowledge and innovative approaches. Engaging, ambitious lessons ensure rapid and sustained progress, with expert support preparing students thoroughly for assessments. The strategic use of past examination papers enhances students' examination confidence and subject mastery. Rigorous assessment and personalised feedback drive excellence.

A well-structured pastoral system ensures exceptional students' well-being, with daily tutor time, moral education, and full-time counselling support. The diverse co-curricular programme fosters leadership and personal growth, featuring a thriving house system, student-led societies, and leadership opportunities such as head boy and head girl and the students' council. Creativity, activity, service (CAS) projects empower students to lead initiatives that contribute to the wider school community. The well-being room, designed by the students' well-being council, reinforces the school's commitment to welfare.

Students' behaviour and well-being are exemplary, underpinned by a culture of mutual respect and high expectations. Positive, respectful relationships create an inclusive, nurturing, and highly supportive environment where all students feel valued and thrive.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Deira International School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws. The requirements of the host country take precedence.

It cannot fully meet the standards that relate to 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5(b)(vi). Deira International School encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; pregnancy and maternity; race and religion or belief, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

What the school could do to improve further

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

The executive leadership programme provides a strong foundation for strategic vision and leadership, yet there is scope to expand its impact further in a rapidly evolving educational landscape. Leaders should further shape a culture of aspirational thinking, particularly amongst senior leaders, that will continue to drive innovation, prioritise holistic pupils' development, and ensure that all learners benefit from an ambitious, future-focused education that extends beyond academic success. As a result, pupils will remain at the leading edge of innovative education practice, equipping them with the digital and interpersonal skills, mindsets, and aspirations needed for success in a rapidly evolving world.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			
--	---	--	--	--

Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			
--	---	--	--	--

School Details

Name of school	Deira International School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 2005
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	2029
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 43,592 to AED 87,825
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	P.O. Box 79043, Al Badia, Dubai Festival City Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Telephone number	+971 232 5552
Email address	info@disdubai.ae
Headteacher	Simon O'Connor
Proprietor	Al Futtaim Education 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 His 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 50 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust's vision is a world in which all lives are transformed through excellent education. We strive to improve education for learners globally, grounding our work in research and evidence. We support leaders to raise standards, improve school performance, develop great teachers and open career pathways.

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.

We have built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services. One of our main aims 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.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Education Development Trust
16-18 Duke Street
Reading
RG1 4RU
UK

Report reference no: 3/59/2025