

# Dubai College

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021

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Age Group: 11 - 18  
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by 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 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.

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## Key for inspection grades

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

## 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

Dubai College is situated in the Al Sufouh area of Dubai and opened in 1978. It is an independent, co-educational, not-for-profit, academically selective school. At the time of the inspection, there were 1045 pupils on roll, aged from 11 to 18 years. It has grown since the previous inspection in 2016, when there were 870 pupils on roll. It has a target to grow to 1076 pupils on roll. The school operates in two phases with 786 pupils in the secondary phase (11-16 years) and 261 students in the sixth form (post-16). The school population encompasses 57 nationalities. While most pupils speak English as their main language, 186 pupils are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL). Seventeen pupils are identified as Arabic-first-language speakers. Seventy-four pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school follows the English national curriculum in key stage 3. Pupils then take a combination of GCSE and IGCSE examinations at the end of the secondary phase and A-level examinations at the end of the post-16 phase. In the year of the inspection, 96% of Year 13 students (127) moved on to higher education establishments in the UK, USA and across the world. The remaining 4% (6 students) took a gap year.

The school actively welcomes applications from pupils with SEND who would be able to cope with the academic rigour of the whole curriculum. SEND pupils whose academic profile fits with the selective entrance criteria are supported fully if successful.

The school's ethos is based upon an aspiration to be a community of excellence at the heart of Dubai. Its vision is to be 'leading British education overseas'. Leaders suggest that the school's reputation is based upon its consistent and sustained excellence in what they see as the four pillars of the school: sporting, creative and philanthropic, as well as academic endeavour.

The pupils' academic performance has been strong over many years, with 90% of GCSE results consistently recorded at grades 9-7. As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, between 2020 and the date of inspection, it has been necessary to measure outcomes with Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) and in the year of inspection 94% of GCSE results were recorded at grades 9-7. Post-16 results show that 60% of A-level grades are A\*/A.

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The school's leaders and governors have a ten-year strategic plan to be the leading British School Overseas. Their drive to develop this leadership at all levels is illustrated by the fact that the plan was devised with the assistance not only of staff and governors, but also of the student leaders.

## 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 August 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 51 lessons. There were 26 meetings with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board, including the governor responsible for Students of Determination (SEND) and another responsible for safeguarding.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and more commonly that which was produced and assessed digitally. They analysed a wide range of policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements and central record of appointment checks were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered.

The focus of the inspection was to evaluate how successfully the school meets the needs of each individual, including students of determination, those with EAL and those with Arabic as a first language.

## Evaluation of the school

Dubai College remains an outstanding school as it provides an outstanding quality of education for all its pupils, irrespective of any individual challenges or obstacles to learning.

The school accepts pupils who have a strong enough grasp of the language of instruction and who illustrate that they will meet the rigour of the academic curriculum. Pupils who have EAL and those with SEND are suitably supported to ensure that they achieve this.

The school 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. Therefore, there are no action points specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required in relation to these as a result of this inspection.

Attainment and progress in **English language** and **literature** are outstanding. Pupils' achievements in public examinations place them among the very best in the UK and internationally. The ambitious English curriculum ensures that teachers build on the high level of attainment of pupils on entry to the school.

Pupils are exceptionally articulate and use an extensive vocabulary when speaking and writing. From the start of Year 7, teachers insist that pupils employ a range of literary and linguistic terminology to criticise and analyse fiction and non-fiction. Older pupils compare and contrast authors and texts with growing insight and a maturity beyond their years. They passionately express their opinions about contemporary, controversial and sensitive themes. As they progress through the school, they read a wider and wider range of literature with excellent understanding.

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Teachers' skilful questioning draws out higher-level thinking skills, which enable pupils to make connections across the breadth of their reading and with the other subjects that they study.

Pupils' creative and analytical writing is extremely good. They write persuasively with increasingly sophisticated sentence structure and syntax. A love of reading is fostered throughout the school, with time built in for extended reading for pleasure at key stage 3. Teachers are excellent role models in this respect. Their very strong subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm for literature are a great source of inspiration for pupils. The wide range of texts that teachers choose gives pupils a strong appreciation of English literary heritage as well as an understanding of the diversity of the modern English-speaking world.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding. Throughout the school pupils' examination and assessment outcomes are comparable with the best independent and selective schools both internationally and in the UK. Pupils from Year 7 make accelerated progress from above-average starting points and by the end of key stage 3, have reached a level of outstanding attainment. For example, during a Year 8 lesson pupils undertook challenging work to predict sequences from different distance/time-line graphs. Throughout key stage 3 pupils develop their capacity to ask excellent questions that illustrate their higher-level mathematical thinking and understanding.

In key stage 4, pupils continue to make outstanding progress and reach world-class levels of attainment. The positive relationships between pupils and teachers promote high levels of engagement. Pupils' responses to teachers' challenges and the quality of their own extended questions illustrate their capacity to understand and to explain mathematical concepts learned. By year 10, pupils are able to explain factor theorem to each other and year 11 pupils grasp the properties of three-dimensional shapes using digital resources. Pupils' progress is very well supported by teachers' accurate assessment and very detailed feedback which offers next-steps guidance.

In the sixth form, students in Year 12 are able to undertake complex statistical analysis while Year 13 can apply problem-solving skills to predict moments of a beam during their study of mechanics. For example, skilful modelling of how a beam works in a real-world context enabled the students to understand the problem more clearly. All teachers support and assess pupils' performance regularly while they work, ensuring that all make very good progress.

The outcomes in **science** are outstanding in external and internal examinations and in the acquisition of knowledge and skills during lessons. All teachers have very good subject knowledge. The pupils are all very able higher-level thinkers.

Relationships in the classroom are positive. They are the product of the pupils' commitment to learning and their teachers' capacity to empower them as learners. Excellent use is made of information technology resources, ranging from the comprehensive use of online assessment records and accessing virtual laboratories and other online resources, to use of mobile phone applications in conjunction with probes to measure PH values.

The school aims to develop independent learners. Science practical lessons are well used to develop experiential learning. However, there is a tendency at all levels: key stage 3, key stage 4 and sixth form, to provide written or on-screen directions for experiments, so that pupils are following a recipe. As a result, opportunities are missed to develop further pupils' independence and higher-level thinking by devising their own hypothesis based upon a real-world context and then developing their own methodology. This would be a natural application of the Dubai College Learner Profile. Some elements of this were evident during one sixth-form lesson when the teacher suggested the students consider how they might improve their method to increase accuracy during their next practical.

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External and internal data indicate that outcomes in **other subjects** are equally good. There is no discernible deficit for any pupils with SEND, those identified as Arabic first-language speakers or others identified as having EAL. These groups are supported sufficiently well to overcome any obstacle to learning at an early stage.

All teachers observed have very good subject knowledge and most encourage higher-level thinking. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive. All teaching observed reflected teachers' passion for their subject. The range of subjects available empowers pupils to make individual choices. For example, the three Latin pupils in year 10 chose the subject because they love it, but each also had an individual reason; one because it was intellectually challenging, the second because it assisted learning of other languages and the third because it would support her university application.

There were opportunities for paired and group interaction during every lesson observed, be it history, drama, languages, classics or physical education (PE). Self and peer review as a natural element of almost every lesson mean that pupils develop their social skills and, by critiquing each other, they develop their own thinking and improve their own work. Teachers' use of stimulating resources was a strength of each lesson visited. During PE pupils were provided with different challenges to match their capabilities, ensuring that the more insecure learners were not disheartened and each felt confident in their ability.

All pupils at Dubai College are academically able. A small number have EAL. Some have SEND, including medical needs, autistic-spectrum disorder, dyslexia and dyspraxia. Leaders and teachers ensure that these pupils follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. The special educational needs coordinator has developed individual education plans in conjunction with the pupils themselves and with the support of their parents. Teachers are well aware of these plans and implement them extremely effectively so that these pupils make at least very good progress and reach their full potential. There is no difference between their educational outcomes and those of their peers.

## 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 in full. (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.**

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## 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.

Therefore, the quality of education provided is outstanding and the school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The curriculum is outstanding, driven by an innovative research culture that strives to improve practice constantly. It closely follows the requirements of the English national curriculum and prepares pupils very well for examinations used in UK schools. The curriculum has been designed to reflect traditional British education within the Middle East. The schools' strong ethos of equity and inclusion is woven into a vibrant and dynamic curricular and extra-curricular programme that promotes diversity. The school has been proactive in its steps towards developing its own contemporary curriculum in response to evolving cultural needs and a changing world landscape.

In key stage 3, the curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of different subjects and learning experiences. It is well planned to ensure that learning skills are consolidated and cross-curricular themes are fully explored. At key stage 4 and continuing to the sixth form, the curriculum places an emphasis on developing pupils' transferable learning skills, such as communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and resilience. These skills are strongly evident in pupils' work throughout the school.

To balance the academic curriculum and promote deeper learning, the school has developed an extensive range of cross-curricular and extra-curricular enrichment programmes. This is an outstanding feature of the school and includes activities as diverse as Craft Club, Model United Nations and the Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Society. Additionally, older pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of academic competitions and visits, which include Space Camp and geography field trips, although these have been curtailed currently by the pandemic.

The curriculum strongly supports pupils with SEND and those with EAL.

British values are reflected in the school's ethos and permeate many subject areas within the curriculum. During English lessons pupils discuss texts that are representative of diversity, tolerance and British cultural values. The understanding of these values is also developed through the moral education programme in which pupils celebrate different religions and festivals such as Diwali and explore issues such as racial discrimination through whole-school projects on black history. British culture is referenced throughout the curriculum and careful attention has been paid to equipping the school's library with a diverse range of culturally diverse material which promotes British values.

To support the development of pupils' life-skills, well-being and health awareness there is a well-organised and award-winning Positive Education Programme. This dynamic programme equips pupils with a broad set of skills for a successful, healthy and fulfilled life. In the sixth form, students undertake the Home Alone unit that explores life after school and university and the challenges this brings.

Careers information, education, advice and guidance is strong. As well as the focus on entrance to higher education, the school has introduced other initiatives to widen pupils' horizons. For example, it has initiated a connection with an external UK-based organisation, through which pupils will pair with high-level female professionals for advice, support and mentoring.

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During the pandemic, the school was highly successful in adapting its curriculum to support learners at home. High-quality ICT provision and support have enabled strong provision for online learning.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

Teaching is outstanding in all phases of the school ensuring that pupils make excellent progress in all subjects. Pupils with SEND and those who have EAL receive teaching which effectively supports their needs. As a result, they often make exceptional progress.

Refined planning ensures that lessons are well organised and always build on prior learning. Lessons are often creative, varied and engaging. They include teacher-led discussion, collaborative work between peers, presentations by individual pupils and many opportunities for practical work.

Teachers throughout the school display outstanding subject knowledge which contributes to their delivery of inspiring lessons and to the engagement of the pupils. During a chemistry lesson in Year 12, the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and high expectations ensured that the students engaged fully with a challenging exercise to draw the bonding diagram for compounds they had selected. They each succeeded through in-depth collaborative discussion and teacher support. Teachers use skilful questioning to ensure pupils' understanding, consolidating new ideas and the skills of problem solving and critical thinking.

Teachers in each key stage have a secure understanding of how pupils learn. The school has been highly proactive, using its Learn Ed platform to ensure that teachers maintain consistent and effective professional practice and explore new methods of learning.

The school regularly reviews its systems for ensuring that pupils maximise their progress. The learning-skills programme and tracking system enable target setting, against which progress can be measured and supported. Secure learning environments support behaviour for learning which is consistently very good and enables pupils to achieve outstanding outcomes.

Independent learning is encouraged from an early stage through a range of activities. During most lessons, pupils are provided with the opportunity to take ownership of their own learning and to guide the learning for themselves and their peers.

Pupils' learning is enhanced by widespread use of ICT. Pupils intuitively use digital technologies to produce work and to complete assessments. This was a particularly successful element of online learning during the pandemic.

Teachers use a wide range of assessment-for-learning approaches, including projects, presentations, peer assessment and to appraise pupils' oracy skills. Some assessments have been designed in consultation with pupils, enhancing further their ownership of the learning process. All assessments are based on rubrics, enabling the pupils to evaluate their own progress alongside their teachers' constructive and personalised written and verbal feedback.

The school's assessment practice is reviewed regularly.

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## 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.

Inspection activities showed that school's policies, curriculum content and implementation promote respect for the protected characteristics outlined in the UK Equality Act (2010) in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. However, the school is unable to meet fully the requirements in respect of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation due to the laws of the United Arab Emirates.

Dubai College is a highly inclusive school, with examples of exemplary practice. Pupils from all cultural backgrounds and faiths feel fully accepted in the school, including those with SEND. During lessons and around the school, pupils exhibit confident and respectful relationships towards each other and their teachers. The high expectations set by the school contribute to an environment where pupils are relaxed, respectful and excel both academically and personally.

The school encourages pupils' ownership of many areas of its work, including the removal of barriers to equality. In the sixth form many English literature students have selected themes such as repression and violence towards women so that they can reflect on solutions to current problems of gender equality.

Pupils' confidence, self-esteem and awareness of healthy living are well addressed through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, including the Positive Education Programme. To support pupils' social development further, the school participates in many projects and competitions, including the DC Stock Market Challenge and the Butler Prize for politics. These opportunities are supported by all teaching staff, but many are organised and run by older students. Participation in these and other activities is very high, by both boys and girls.

The Dubai College Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Impact Report highlights the school's strong commitment to the UK Equality Act and the development of a school that celebrates diversity and respect for the host nation. The school celebrates special cultural events throughout the year. It hosts an Iftar during Ramadan and festivals such as Holi and Christmas are celebrated through a range of exciting activities. To promote pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and philanthropy the school has undertaken charity work to build a new school in Nepal. For this work, in partnership with United World Schools, the college was winner of Best International School Award in 2019.

The pupils have a strongly developed sense of right and wrong and accept responsibility for their decisions. The school encourages their resilience through programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, where initiative and commitment are explored.

Pupils are actively encouraged to take positions of responsibility and leadership in a range of areas. Some are formal roles such as that of the school prefects, but others support the running of extra-curricular activities and curriculum initiatives such as environment days. Many senior students mentor those in key stage 3, for example reading regularly before school with pupils challenged by dyslexia.

British values are woven into the school's planned work. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of democracy and citizenship. This is demonstrated in the elections of head boy and head girl but are also discussed in the Law Society and political forums. These values are displayed through pupils'

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respect for others, their good manners and deep pride in their achievements, resulting from highly positive relationships throughout the school. Various political and ideological views are treated sensitively and always addressed with balanced argument.

Life and society in Britain are explored through geography, history, literature and science. Pupils in history learn about the Battle of Hastings, slavery and the British Empire and make comparisons between historical and contemporary Britain.

Attendance rates are exemplary and have been strongly maintained, even during online and hybrid learning, during the pandemic. A robust system to address attendance and punctuality is in place and is well supported by parents.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding and permeates all aspects of school life. The importance given to this aspect of the school by leaders, including governors, is reflected in the high level of resourcing allocated to it, including staffing, accommodation and the provision of high-quality training. There are well-devised up-to-date policies and procedures which reflect current local requirements and the requirements of the UK. Specialist areas, including PE, science, and design and technology, have prominently displayed health-and-safety policies and procedures which are well known by pupils and staff. A large number of staff have undertaken first-aid training. For all activities, on and off site, teachers complete thorough written risk assessments.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for by the school's staff. They cite the varying ways they can choose to report a concern, including anonymously, as key to their safety. Strong liaison, especially between pastoral, medical and academic teams, ensures that staff quickly spot and act upon patterns of behaviour which may indicate that a pupil is in difficulty. Incidents and concerns are recorded well, held securely online and shared appropriately. The school's pastoral, medical and counselling teams also reach out to pupils' families when they are in need.

Leaders reacted swiftly and effectively to the challenges presented by the Coronavirus pandemic. Extra staff were employed, including a full-time school doctor. The building was adapted to introduce a one-way system with clear signage. There is an abundance of hand-sanitising stations, and drinking fountains have been adapted to allow bottle filling only.

All staff regularly undertake training in safeguarding principles and procedures. Parents are given the opportunity to undertake safeguarding training too. Pupils feel safe in the school. The Positive Education Programme teaches them how to keep themselves safe from physical and emotional harm. From their very first ICT lesson onwards, they are taught how to keep themselves safe online. In Years 12 and 13, the Home Alone programme gives students clear guidance on managing the potential risks to their health and safety when they move away to live independently. The Positive Education Programme also ensures that pupils are well aware of what constitutes bullying, including racist and sexist bullying. They do not hesitate to report the very rare bullying incidents which occur and know that the school's leaders will take them seriously and act immediately and decisively. All pupils take part in regular sporting activities and maintain good fitness levels. Their attendance and punctuality are outstanding.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The work undertaken by the recently appointed head of human resources (HR) has resulted in an exemplary single central record of appointment checks.

Appropriate checks are made for all ancillary and administrative staff as well as teachers. Police checks are undertaken in candidates' home country and anywhere that they have been resident prior to arrival at Dubai College, as well as UAE police checks for all staff and governors. The biennial visa renewal is used to review all checks of suitability. Three references are sought for each candidate. Statutory UK Disclosure and Barring Service checks and prohibition list checks are undertaken for all teachers from the United Kingdom, including Section 128 checks for senior staff and governors where appropriate (if they have links with the UK).

Everything possible is done to safeguard the pupils, staff and the institution, ensuring that appointees are appropriately qualified, considered to be medically and emotionally fit to work and, within the terms of their visa, have a right to work in this context.

The counsellors provide support for staff, should they need it for any reason, in order to ensure that they remain safe and suitable to work with the pupils.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The high-quality use and organisation of the premises and accommodation contribute significantly to the quality of teaching and learning and to pupils' achievement. They allow teachers to address fully all areas of the English national curriculum and examination specifications. Buildings are very well maintained. Specialist areas, including those for science, technology and creative and performing arts are well designed and equipped. Classrooms are well lit and ventilated.

Teachers use displays to support learning, to celebrate pupils' work and to promote their subject. The school employs an experienced librarian who ensures that the library is well stocked with a diverse range of books to match pupils' interests and the demands of individual subject areas. Social spaces, including outdoors, allow pupils to relax and socialise. There are shaded areas and gardens as well as seating and picnic tables.

There are excellent sports facilities, including cricket nets, football pitches and tennis courts. Project Campus 2030, a rolling programme of refurbishment and replacement of buildings, aims to make new buildings more sustainable in relation to construction materials and the economic use of energy. The Space is the newest building. It provides state-of-the-art facilities for sport, including a six-lane covered swimming pool, and for performing arts. In addition, it houses the medical and counselling teams in a well-equipped clinic. The next phase is the creation of a Centre of Excellence for teaching and learning to enhance the school's notable work as a hub for sharing good practice across British Schools of the Middle East.

The school site is completely secure and monitored regularly by security staff and surveillance cameras. Procedures for emergency evacuation and lockdown are regularly practised and logged,

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within the limitations of current Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Authority COVID guidance. The school's policy of directly employing staff such as carpenters and electricians allows leaders to deal with health and safety issues as soon as they are identified.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Through an extensive range of channels, the school communicates very effectively with parents about all aspects of school life. Parents are particularly appreciative of how the school keeps them informed in times of difficulty, such as when the school was closed during the Coronavirus pandemic. Throughout this period, the headteacher sent daily emails to them to give them up-to-date information, guidance and reassurance. As well as organising formal parents' evenings to discuss pupils' progress, the school arranges less formal awareness-raising events such as coffee mornings on topics including the importance of reading for pleasure and building relationships with teenagers.

All staff, but particularly medical, counselling and pastoral staff, liaise with and give guidance to the parents of pupils who are vulnerable or at risk. The student support service works very closely with the parents of pupils with SEND when planning to meet their children's individual needs. Parents feel that leaders and staff listen to their views and take them seriously. They appreciate the speed with which staff respond to communications.

The parent portal gives easy and speedy access to current information about pupils and the school. There are daily bulletins with practical information including a physical and emotional health section. There are electronic forms, for example to report absence. Via the portal, parents have access to a plethora of information about their children's academic progress and attainment as well as their physical fitness, behaviour and attitudes. Parents find access to the electronic mark books particularly helpful.

The school's website is exemplary. It is highly informative, interactive and easily navigable. It contains all required information, including the full range of up-to-date policies as well as information about the school's curriculum and academic performance in every subject. The exceptional range of extra-curricular activities is also detailed. An admissions policy, supplemented by extensive information including photographs and videos of school life, gives prospective parents a clear indication of the school's selection criteria, ethos, curriculum and expectations. The admissions policy very clearly outlines how the school supports pupils with SEND. The website has useful electronic links, e-bulletins from staff and a regular podcast by the headteacher on current educational issues.

The school ensures that its news and the celebration of its considerable successes can be found across the full range of appropriate social-media platforms. The Friends of Dubai College includes parents, former pupils, teachers, staff and the school's supporters within the wider community. This group makes a significant contribution to the exemplary relationships which leaders have generated across the whole school community.

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

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The complaints policy is available to parents via the website and all parents interviewed know where to access it and how to trigger the process. However, they added that they are confident that any concerns would be dealt with appropriately without needing to trigger a formal complaint. The policy and process follow all expected steps, allowing for review and appeal. There has been one formal complaint during the previous twelve months, which was resolved in line with the policy. Outcomes and evidence provided for a complaint are kept confidential. The governors are aware of their part in the process.

## **Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school**

The school meets the requirements of this BSO Standard.

Senior leaders are exceptionally successful in fulfilling the requirements of all standards expected of a British School Overseas. They take a leading role among British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) and more locally within Dubai. They are proactive in developing leadership at all levels.

Student leadership development is seen as an important element of pupils' holistic education. It is noteworthy that senior students were proactive contributors to the school's strategic plan for the next ten years. Many pupils also take leadership roles in organising events and extra-curricular activities, as well as in a recent response to an online forum, referring to historical bullying. The leaders' swift and robust response to this was valued highly by all the pupils and parents who were interviewed. The changes involved not only the amendment of reporting procedures but also curriculum developments and the establishment of a number of equality societies, with active leadership input by senior students.

Middle leaders are all highly experienced (often with recent experience of the UK or of other British Schools Overseas). Middle leaders are excellent role models for their teams, in terms of the quality of teaching and generating outstanding learning. They clearly have a strong understanding of data analysis, enabling them to be particularly successful in assessing pupils' outcomes and setting targets. They are active in self-evaluation of their departments, enabling them to identify the strengths and areas for development within their areas of responsibility. Academic leaders are currently engaged in developments to internationalise the curriculum.

All leaders are members of relevant UK institutions, which ensures that they understand the UK expectations of a British School Overseas. More importantly it means that they maintain up-to-date knowledge of educational developments to guide their own response to their detailed action plans. The school's approach to leadership development illustrates a good balance between valuing experience within the school and the necessity to introduce 'new blood'. While appraisal was inevitably suspended during the pandemic it is now being reintroduced and the 360-degree appraisal of senior leaders is being applied to middle leaders as well. This forms a key element of the school's succession planning.

The governing board members share a wealth of valuable personal and professional experience, with specific responsibilities including oversight of support for Students of Determination (SEND) and responsibility for safeguarding. Governors have a clear understanding of the difference between governance and management and they are proactive in supporting and challenging senior leaders. They are regular visitors to the school and conduct observations of lessons and other activities. On the global stage, governors also oversee the Dubai College Foundation, which has engaged successfully in development projects including the construction and sponsoring of a new school in Nepal.

Senior leaders not only welcome, but actually initiate external scrutiny and respond positively to formal and informal feedback. Their swift actions following the discovery of disclosures on social media of historical bullying illustrates the professional and urgent manner in which any issue raised is

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addressed. The school has responded to the recommendation in the previous inspection reports to increase the profile of the support available to pupils with SEND and those who have EAL. While acknowledging the need for all pupils to be able to rise to the challenge of academic rigour, the admissions policy clearly outlines the support that can be expected, during the application process and within the school.

Parents interviewed feel that senior leaders managed the school through the pandemic exceptionally well, with the immediate and seamless transfer to online learning and subsequent gradual reintegration of all pupils into school. They also value the daily communication from the headmaster during lockdown, which they found both reassuring and supportive. This particularly reflects the high esteem in which the Headmaster and senior leadership are held by all stakeholders within the Dubai College community.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

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

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

However, it meets all those that it is permitted to outstandingly.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- While pupils attain excellent results in science, on occasions practical lessons do not maximise opportunities to develop their higher-order thinking skills. Teachers should ensure that these very able pupils are challenged even further to develop their own hypotheses and experimental methodologies.

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## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstandin	Good	Satisfactor	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

<b>Name of school</b>	Dubai College
<b>Type of school</b>	Private, independent, co-educational, not for profit, academically selective school
<b>Date school opened</b>	1978
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1045
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	N/A
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED 82,482 - AED 93,399
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	N/A
<b>Address of school</b>	Al Sufouh Road Al Sufouh 2 Dubai
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 4 3999111
<b>Email address</b>	dccommunications@dubaicollege.org
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Lambert
<b>Proprietor</b>	Board of Governors

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## 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.

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

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

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

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

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

**Standards** –

(1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.

(2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

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

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

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