



NEWSLETTER

2023-24 - EDITION 1



CEO UPDATE



Dear BSME Colleagues,

Welcome to another BSME Newsletter with updates on BSME's recent activities, along with news from our school and partner members.

BSME HQ

Lots has been happening at BSME HQ since our last Newsletter. We are delighted to have welcomed a number of new additions to the BSME Team and you'll find introductions to our new Team members on the following page. BSME HQ has also moved offices. We remain in the Dubai Silicon Oasis HQ Building but have moved to larger premises to better accommodate the expansion in the BSME team since the core team's move to Dubai. We can be found at Office D-309 in DSO HQ so if you are in the vicinity do feel free to drop in and say hello.



Accreditation

BSME's transition to a fully-accredited organisation has moved on apace with 68 more schools now meeting BSME's accreditation requirements than one year ago and a further 7 schools scheduled for visits before the end of the school year. In addition, many of our new member schools are meeting accreditation requirements well within the two-year permitted window. This is very positive progress and adds significant value to BSME membership status for all schools. The few schools that are choosing not to complete accreditation are being removed from membership.

UK Government Representation

BSME's relations with the Department for Education (DfE) and Department for Business and Trade (DBT) continue to go from strength to strength. The newly created British International Schools Associations Meetings (BISAM) gives BSME and other school membership associations, AoBSO, COBIS, FOBISIA, LAHC and NABSS, a timely opportunity to meet with representatives from DfE and DBT to discuss planned events and activities and give our input on behalf of our members. As a result, BSME school representatives in Saudi Arabia have taken part in a number of Trade discussions and Sir Steve Smith is liaising with the Saudi Ministry of Education on areas of concern for BSME schools.

UAE Teacher Training Partnership

BSME has signed an agreement with Abu Dhabi Global Markets Academy to support their newly created UAE Teacher Programme. The programme will offer PGCE training to Emirati Nationals in conjunction with Nottingham University. BSME schools in the UAE will, in due course, be given the opportunity to offer teaching practice placements to these PGCE students.



Safeguarding Update - BISSC

BSME is extremely proud to be a founding member of the newly established British International Schools Safeguarding Coalition (BISSC).

The purpose of BISSC is to establish and promote a unified strategic and coordinated approach to strengthening global safeguarding systems. This initiative comes from a joint commitment and passion to drive forward global safeguarding standards from:

- The Association of British Schools Overseas (AoBSO)
- British Schools in the Middle East (BSME)
- Council of British International Schools (COBIS)
- Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA)
- Latin American Heads Conference (LAHC)
- National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS)
- The Safeguarding Alliance (TSA)



BISSC was officially launched at the AoBSO Conference in November with the joint signing of a Statement of Intent. Together with colleagues across the globe, we are joining forces to address critical international safeguarding issues and work collaboratively to drive change. By engaging with policymakers and elected representatives, BISSC aims to ensure global safeguarding risks, challenges and concerns are given the utmost priority in order to protect those most vulnerable.

The key objectives of BISSC will be to lobby the UK government to provide greater and more effective safeguarding support and guidance to the British international school sector, including:

- The establishment of the International Teaching Regulation Agency (ITRA)
- The establishment of the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme for International Schools (MDSIS)
- The creation of a shared resource hub for British international schools
- The strengthening of safeguarding partnerships between BISSC, the Government and regulators

BISSC's commitment to safeguarding is underpinned by the following core principles.

1. Collaboration and Partnership
2. Pioneering change
3. Sharing best practice
4. Growing a culture of safeguarding
5. Child-Centred Approach
6. Impact Measurement

Together we are one voice united in safeguarding.



BSME Welcomes New Team Members

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Nalini Cook as BSME's new Business Manager. Many of you will already know Nalini from her work with BSME schools. Nalini has lived in Dubai and worked throughout the region since 2003 and brings a wealth of knowledge about Middle East schools to our organisation.

For the last 10 years Nalini has been directly involved in international education, initially as an education consultant, assisting new arrivals to the UAE in finding appropriate school places. She then joined ISC Research, initially as a qualitative researcher and progressing to Head of Global Research.

Outside work, Nalini is an enthusiastic promoter of initiatives related to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and is an organiser and host for Women in Education events. She is also an avid reader of both fiction and non-fiction and is always on the lookout for great book recommendations.

The role of Business Manager at BSME is a broad one, and Nalini will be spinning many plates as she supports the team in every area of our work. She will be a key figure at our conferences and is looking forward to deepening existing relationships and developing new ones.



Ashuntha Monteiro was appointed in November as Events Administrative Assistant. Ash is an addition to the BSME Team and will be supporting on both Student Events and Professional Learning Events. This increased capacity will allow us to widen our offerings in these areas. Ash is no stranger to the school environment since she has previously worked as a Learning Assistant in one of our member schools and has a PGCE.

Alexandra White has recently joined us as our new Digital Marketing and Design Lead, replacing Sinead du Plessis who left us in December. Xandra has worked in Digital Marketing in the UK and the UAE, having led Digital Marketing at one of our member schools. Xandra has also experienced the benefits of BSME as a student whilst attending school herself in Dubai.



Simon Hoza joins us as Professional Learning Lead and has hit the ground running as we prepare for three Professional Learning Conferences in Term 3. Simon has many years of experience in the event management field, including 2 years working for EXPO Dubai. Simon also has BSME experience having previously attended our Annual School Leaders Conference whilst working with one of our partner members.

The BSME Team



BSME - By Members For Members

We welcome Alison Peterson, Principal of The English School Kuwait, to the BSME Executive Committee.

In a change to Executive Committee portfolios Alison Lloyd has taken over the Professional Learning portfolio, with Matthew Burfield picking up the new portfolio of Digital Marketing. The Membership portfolio has been split into School Membership, which is retained by Craig Halsall, and a new Partner Membership portfolio, with Alison Peterson.



Alongside the BSME Executive Committee, our Country Representatives continue to support the work of BSME more locally and act as focal points for the BSME network in each of our member countries.

We welcome John Smith of Park House School as new Country Representative for Qatar and are seeking a UAE Northern Emirates rep to replace Albie Huyser following her move to Abu Dhabi.

As always, our thanks go to our Executive Committee members and Country Reps for the time and effort they dedicate to BSME - epitomising our 'by members, for members' ethos.



Revisoning BSME

Input was sought from BSME Members last year the revisoning of BSME. School Leaders were asked to consider what BSME meant to them and their school, what its main purpose should be, what culture they felt important for BSME and what values should underpin the organisation.

The valuable input collected was then used to create new BSME Guiding Statements, which can also be seen on our [website](#).

BSME Guiding Statements

Purpose

The purpose of BSME is to connect, support and represent our community of schools, enriching the educational experience of tomorrow's global citizens towards purposeful, fulfilling lives for a better world.

Culture

The BSME community strives for excellence through a forward-thinking culture of collegiality, collaboration, communication and innovation.

Values

BSME is a professional organisation underpinned by the values of integrity, respect, inclusion and a drive towards sustainability.

We are proud to represent the very best of British Education in the Middle East.



Membership

School Members

As our membership expands, we are pleased to extend our geographical coverage to include ten countries, with the addition of our first school from Iraq. We are delighted to welcome the following new schools to the BSME community, taking our total number of schools to 162.



English International School
Baghdad



Partner Members

With well over 100 Partners, we have strengthened the support offered to our school members significantly. A new Partner benefits package has been in place since September. One of the aspects of the new benefits package is that Partners can select specific focus areas to be featured in our new Theme brochures. These are posted on our social media every fortnight. Our current partners can be also viewed in our [Find a Partner page](#).

A Future Ready Curriculum at St Christopher's School Bahrain

In September 2021, St Christopher's School Bahrain launched its **Future Ready Curriculum (FRC)**, an innovative and creative approach to a new whole school curriculum that embeds six key elements including Academics, Meta-cognition, Service, Enterprise, Digital and Wellbeing at the heart of the school's provision.

The [Future Ready Curriculum \(FRC\)](#) is a holistic framework to equip students with modern knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to serve as 'Role Models of the World' and to ensure success in further education and future careers. Through subject-based and experiential learning opportunities (such as enrichment, theme days, assemblies, overseas trips, etc.), students receive clear and specific opportunities to develop competencies in one or more of the six domains.

As part of the School's Mission of 'Education for a Shared Humanity,' this learning journey includes activities to engage student-centred learning within the context of the school and global community. The Competencies are designed to interrelate and support interdisciplinary learning in order to develop real-world occupational skills that go beyond academic knowledge and to promote independence of mind, self-identity, and self-directed learning. Examples of this include contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting internationalism & interculturalism, understanding positive psychology (PERMA) and how to support wellbeing, developing spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding (SMSC) within ourselves and others, and much more.

The objectives of the Future Ready Curriculum are to ensure that all six elements of the FRC are carefully planned for, tracked, embedded and evaluated throughout the school, comprising in-class lesson activities, assemblies, PSHE and Enrichment, trips, events, activities and ECAs.

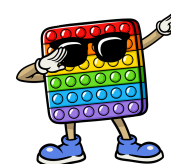


The FRC is supported by a bespoke planning system that stores and organises the whole-school schemes of learning, as well as mapping FRC competency opportunities across each subject and all age-phases. This not only demonstrates subject-based learning sequencing and progression, but it also provides all stakeholders with easy access to view learning activities, learning objectives, high-quality resources, assessment methods, and FRC competency coverage.

The planning of the FRC was a collaborative exercise. St Christopher's School's teaching staff identified the FRC domains as essential skills, knowledge, and understanding that students require to be successful in today's world. Such skills are not always taught as part of a subject-based curriculum but they are equally important as qualifications for students to be successful in life. Among them are leadership, teamwork, public speaking, charity and service, metacognition, and how to be physically and mentally healthy. The competencies are areas that can never be completed, only improved upon, and therefore are continuous for life-long learning.

The competencies are available for any educational establishment via our free access to our [Future Ready Curriculum Competencies](#) (click on a hexagon to view the competencies).

Aspen Heights British School's Oasis Class



We are excited to share with you the latest news from Aspen Heights British School's Oasis class, our specialist provision for children with autism in Abu Dhabi. This academic year, we are proud to have welcomed six amazing students into the Oasis class. They have made tremendous progress in their academic performance, social skills, and overall wellbeing, thanks to the dedicated support of our team of experienced educators and specialists.

The Oasis class offers personalised learning that caters to the unique needs of our students with autism. They also benefit from regular speech and language therapy and occupational therapy to further support their learning and development. We are thrilled to share that this year, our students have also attended more events mainstream events, including house sports days, assemblies and swimming lessons, as well as international and national day celebrations. Our students have shown remarkable progress in these activities, and we are proud of all their accomplishments.

We understand that supporting our students' unique needs requires a holistic approach, which is helped by our recently opened sensory room. This room has been specifically designed to meet the needs of our students and provide them with a safe and supportive environment to explore and engage their senses. In the sensory room, our students have access to a variety of equipment and resources that help them to develop their gross motor skills and meet their sensory needs. They can climb, jump and roll using the climbing structures, swings, and other equipment. They can also engage with sensory activities, such as light tubes and sensory toys, which help improve their attention and focus.

The Oasis team have developed sensory circuits programmes, tailored to the individual needs of each student, with activities and exercises to help regulate their sensory processing. This provides students with the best possible support for their unique needs, helping them to achieve their full potential.

The sensory room is a fantastic addition to the Oasis class, and we are confident that it will provide our students with an invaluable resource to support their learning and development throughout their time at school. We are proud to offer this state-of-the-art facility to our students and look forward to seeing the benefits it brings to their education and wellbeing.

In addition to providing an excellent learning environment, we also believe in fostering a strong sense of community within the Oasis class. This academic year, we have organised community events where parents and caregivers can learn more about their child's education and meet with other families in the Oasis class.

We have also organised two school trips this year, to Emirates Park Zoo and Umm Al Emarat Park. These trips have been a great success, and our students have had a fantastic time learning outside the classroom. Our next trip is to Bounce Abu Dhabi and we are confident that our students will enjoy it just as much.

The Oasis class at Aspen Heights British School is a fantastic example of how schools can provide tailored support for students with autism. We hope that by sharing our experiences and the success of our students, we can inspire other schools to develop their own specialist provisions and support their students with unique needs.



Teaching Phonics at Jebel Ali School Using Voice AI with Browzly Phonic Bear

It was a regular Monday morning made a tiny bit magical when Year 1 Phonics learners at Jebel Ali School, Dubai, sat down to read to [Browzly](#) Phonic Bear. Miss. Kirina Joannou, their teacher got to see instant reading assessments by Browzly Phonic Bear, thanks to its Voice AI.

Later, she was able to play the ones that were highlighted, so she could instantly know what was going on with each child, without having to spend time individually.

That morning, Ms. Kirina had planned to review words with the grapheme 'ee' in her class; words like flee, bee and tree. Her plan, like always, was to play a video from her chosen Phonics Program for the whole class to say out loud together. But today, she decided to also do something new.

In line with her reading plan for the day, she took just two minutes ahead of her class time, and set up the same 'ee' words for individual readings by simply selecting them on her Browzly dashboard. Friendly Phonic Bear made sure to ask the children to sound-out each word and show the sound buttons to them, just how Kirina wanted. Now, Browzly bear was all set to present words with the grapheme 'ee' with sound buttons presented to each child to read.

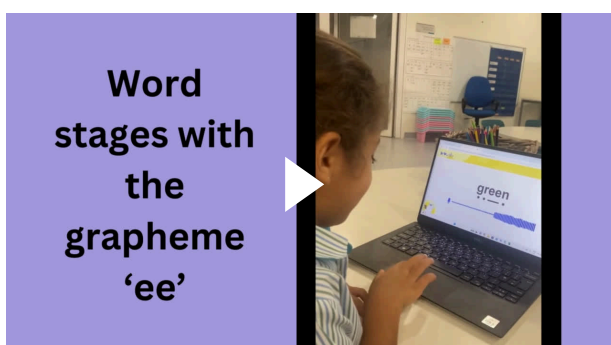


So while the whole class sat in front of the video that was playing with 'ee' words, children took turns to read the same individually to Browzly Bear. Watch the video on this page to see what happened then and what Ms. Kirina had to say about her experience!

"Jebel Ali School fosters an environment where tradition and heritage are celebrated and future thinking, and innovation in teaching and learning is embraced.

Browzly Phonic Bear is a cutting-edge educational tool that reflects an approach to personalized learning and supports thoughtful teacher expertise. Focusing on the core learning of each student and utilizing 'real-time' dashboards to track student progress. The Browzly Phonic Bear is a commitment to identifying achievement and building capacity within a classroom"

Mr. Simon Jodrell Principal, Jebel Ali School, Dubai



Biodiesel and School Buses - A Case Study by BSME Partner TASS

Every day, tens of thousands of school students in the UAE commute to school in school buses that run on fossil fuel, emitting roughly 800-1,000 g of CO₂ per kilometre. Not only is this not aligned with the goals of the Paris Climate Accord, it sends the completely wrong message to our children.

Few people know this, but biodiesel made from waste vegetable oil is one of the lowest carbon transport fuels available today at scale. And it's manufactured in the UAE. In its pure form (B100), it cuts carbon emissions by 84%, although it is commonly used in blends of 20% or less. Biodiesel from waste offers schools several quick wins. It reduces carbon dioxide emissions while also promoting sustainable waste management – among other things, the recycling of used cooking oil from the school canteen. And it's easy to implement – biodiesel can be used in school buses as a “drop-in” replacement fuel that doesn't require any modification to the engine.

[The Alliance for Sustainable Schools \(TASS\)](#) estimates that if all school buses in the UAE were to start using a 20% blend of biodiesel (so-called “B20”) it would avoid about 25,000 tons of CO₂ annually. This is equivalent to taking 5,500 cars off the road for a year.

In the UAE, TASS has been working with The Arbor school and Neutral Fuels to demonstrate that biodiesel really is a practical, environmentally-friendly and cost-effective alternative to fossil fuel for school buses.

Despite the obvious merits, not all bus companies are willing to come to the party right away. So, with the help of its student ambassadors, TASS is also running a campaign to engage bus company executives in a conversation about their plans to provide green school transport.

As a concrete action that all schools can take right now to lower their carbon footprint, getting the school buses running on biodiesel is a no-brainer. It mightn't be the sexiest technology out there, but you've got to admit there's a certain elegance about the notion of students commuting to and from school using a low carbon fuel made of waste from their canteen.



Student Enrichment - Beyond British School of Bahrain (BSB) Programme

It is widely accepted that schools worldwide recognise the significance of extending learning beyond the classroom, but translating this recognition into practical methods can be a challenge. When we discover effective approaches, they should be shared.

We are delighted to report a highly successful first half term at the British School of Bahrain (BSB), and one of the facets of this success has been our thriving 'Beyond BSB Programme'. In an ever-changing world, in a constant state of transformation, we continually seek opportunities to expand our students' horizons beyond traditional methods. Part of this comes from seeking the wisdom of industry professionals.

The Beyond BSB guest speaker programme features a diverse range of guest speakers. By harnessing our local community's support and thriving parental network, we have organised a series of weekly sessions, lectures, and talks. Through these, our students have gained insights into various career paths, asked about the complexities of real-world challenges, explored innovative solutions and asked chocolate makers what their favourite snacks are.

Our guest speakers, from local and multinational organisations, have been a true source of inspiration and knowledge for our students.

To name but a few, we've had logistics companies, mechanical engineers, cybersecurity experts and architects come in to spend some time with our 6th formers and Key Stage 4 students. After a presentation, time is offered for a Q&A session, which can range from the sensible to the humorous but is always productive. It's proved immensely popular and is enjoyed by all. The sessions have been really informative and they've offered a glimpse into the inner workings of multi-national companies and the career paths people took to get there. It's felt like real-life guidance from the professional world.

Taha Tajuddin - Lower 6th Student

The Beyond BSB programme's core values are student enrichment, enhancing future prospects through additional activities, and developing new skills and passions. It ranges beyond guest speakers to university counselling and autonomous student-led forums and committees. It requires whole-school buy-in, from tutors to operations, but its success is tangible, and it's a pleasure to be part of such impactful learning beyond the classroom.

Beyond BSB

Discover the Power of HR

Shaping Success from Recruitment to Development

with *Alya Tanada*
HR Business Partner at Aramex

The Beyond BSB lecture will delve into the pivotal role of Human Resources in shaping business success, with a special focus on recruitment and training. We'll explore how HR practices impact a company's growth, from sourcing top talent to nurturing employee development, and how these strategies drive success in today's competitive landscape.

Tuesday, 3 October
08:00
BSB Campus

Beyond BSB

Shaza Merza

Talent acquisition advisor
Mondelēz International

Hasan Sawrat
Production Planning and Logistics

Shobit Saxena
Business Development and Engineering

Ali Kadavalam
Technical Lead

10th October 08:00 6th Form Centre

Join us for an enriching lecture featuring distinguished industry speakers. Shaza Merza, Talent Acquisition Advisor will introduce; Hasan Sawrat from Production Planning and Logistics, Shobit Saxena in Business Development and Engineering, and Ali Kadavalam, Technical Lead.

They will share their invaluable insights on career pathways, industry experience, and the history of Mondelēz. Explore the dynamics of brand engagement and awareness, while gaining a deeper understanding of culture, historical insights, and the power of community within this renowned global company.

Improving Critical Thinking and Analysis - P4C at Gulf British Academy, Kuwait

At Gulf British Academy (GBA), we place great emphasis on helping pupils become effective, critical and creative thinkers whilst encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning within our caring and collaborative environment. With this in mind, we explored a variety of pedagogies that develop critical thinking and analysis which could then be embedded into our curriculum without too much disruption. We finally settled on [Sapere's Philosophy for Children \(P4C\)](#) approach.

What is P4C?

In P4C, pupils are encouraged to ask questions and find answers through discussion so as to develop the ability to recognise differences and explore these constructively. To do this, we set up a lesson environment termed a "community of enquiry", where pupils feel they have the freedom to explore ideas and ask questions.

Within this environment we focus on the 4Cs of P4C. These 4Cs are central to the values and practice of Philosophy for Children at GBA and are developed not only in our weekly timetabled P4C lessons, but in all areas of school life.

The 4Cs of Philosophy for Children:

Caring Thinking - listening to the opinions of others and showing interest and sensitivity to their experiences and values.

Collaborative Thinking - responding to others' ideas and shaping common understandings and purposes.

Critical Thinking - questioning and reasoning to seek meaning, evidence, reasons, distinctions and good judgements.

Creative Thinking - connecting ideas, making suggestions, providing comparisons, examples, criteria and alternative explanations.

4PC's Wider Impact

By taking an all-in approach to P4C within our primary department we have found the benefits and

skills learned from the discrete lessons have spilled over into the classroom and wider school community. Pupil feedback has shown that, not only is P4C a much loved lesson, pupils also feel they are now more confident in speaking and listening in their usual classroom setting. To add to this, quieter pupils have shown increased confidence when speaking in front of an audience and asking questions of others. It has also been evident during restorative behavioural conversations that the pupils' caring approach to thinking has made finding resolutions easier.

One of our teachers commented that, "P4C has absolutely enhanced the pupil's critical thinking across all subjects. In my classroom, this is particularly evident in History where pupils have become much more analytical when exploring historical sources and thinking about how we construct an understanding of the past. Pupils have become far more confident in questioning credibility whereas before they would have perhaps focused purely on more factual information. P4C has also enhanced my own practice, most notably in Mathematics where I now allow more time for thinking and listening. Through this, I have been able to guide discussion, using P4C language, about the theory behind a skill as children tackle increasingly challenging reasoning problems, or facilitating conversation between pupils to deepen their understanding."

We are looking forward to continuing our P4C journey towards Sapere Silver Accreditation. If you would like to find out more please reach out: v.martin@gulfbritishacademy.com



Drop Everything And Read at GES Cairo

Providing novelty is an excellent way to further hook and inspire GES Cairo students who are no strangers to the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) initiative.

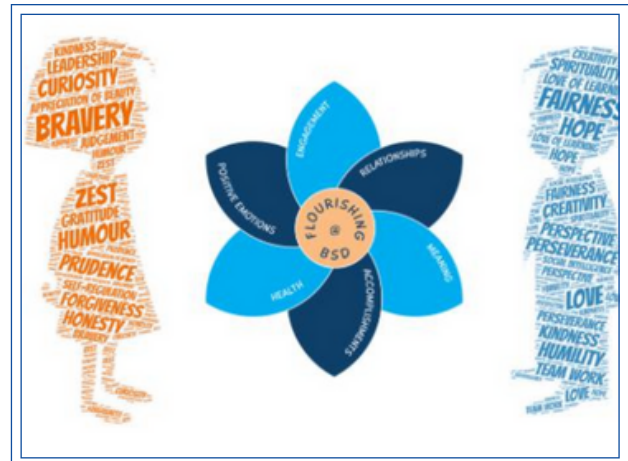
This year's DEAR sessions integrated some story-telling. Members of our SLT visited classrooms around school at the time, books in hand, and told a story of their choice for 10-minutes to the excited and expectant classes.

Students are always encouraged to be ready for this initiative. They must have a reading book whether brought from home or borrowed from the wide range of available fiction and non-fiction books at the school library to stop and read at the scheduled DEAR time.

Just like a smile, DEAR doesn't cost anything, just agree on a time to give it a try.



Positive Education at BSD



To enhance the holistic development of their students, the British School of Dhahran has integrated Positive Education principles into their primary school curriculum. With a particular emphasis on VIA Character Strengths and the PERMAH model, the school aims to nurture not just academic excellence but also emotional well-being, resilience, and positive mindset among its students.

Positive Education is an innovative approach that combines traditional education with the science of well-being. Central to this initiative at the British School of Dhahran are the Character Strengths that each child possesses. Through various activities and assessments, each student's unique profile of Character Strengths are identified, celebrated and nurtured. By acknowledging and developing these strengths, students can build confidence, self-esteem, and a positive self-identity, laying a strong foundation for their future endeavors.

The PERMAH model, developed by renowned positive psychologist Martin Seligman, serves as a blueprint for enhancing the well-being and life satisfaction of students with its focus on fostering positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and health. By integrating these principles into the learning environment, the British School of Dhahran aims to prepare its students not only for academic success but also for a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Raising Parent Engagement at Reach British School

We passionately believe that any school that warmly integrates and respects parents as an invaluable member of the community will best meet the needs of its students. It is of little surprise therefore that one of our three strategic objectives is to maximise parental engagement, such that parents feel Reach British School (RBS) is *their* school, that they are included in and understand decision-making around our educational offering, know how they can support their child's learning and, critically, feel proud of their school.

Our context and aim

A number of issues made our strategy to enhance parental engagement challenging, including time due to parents' work and personal commitments, financial challenges and limited or inaccurate knowledge about modern educational methods, UK curriculum, policies and procedures. Ensuring effective messaging within this context was particularly challenging as parental feedback suggested the school had over communicated, been inconsistent and, at times, confusing in our communication.

What did we do?

We introduced a '*surround sound*' communication philosophy, using communication platforms parents had identified as their preferred methods of communication, to ensure they were consistently exposed to the same key messaging online, around school and in dialogue with teachers.

We streamlined our communications, reducing the number of communication platforms to focus on clasdojo for daily communication with class teachers, a weekly newsletter for sharing whole school news and a parent portal for sharing key policies and procedures and always maintaining an open door culture. We also deliberately increased the time and frequency of face-to-face interactions in school, including changing parent evenings to family consultation days, introducing a whole school house system, based around community,

activities that parents could participate in, extending an online 'glimpse into the classroom' initiative provided regular opportunities for parents to visit their child's classroom and share their learning experiences, and critically, introducing a weekly parent coffee morning comprising a ten minute presentation on a topic of parental choice followed by one-hour of open 'town hall' discussion with the Principal and SLT. The latter proved to be particularly popular with an online streaming link to enable parents to join sessions from home or the office.

How did we do and what does the data say?

Our family consultation day (FCD) survey confirmed 100% of parents felt all aspects of the day were successful. Our weekly coffee mornings are attended by over 100 parents and we have witnessed significant improvements in the quantity and quality of their comments and questions, showing a much improved understanding of the school and our educational offering. The number of parents attending community based activities including Iftar, celebration events, FCDs, glimpse into the classroom and assemblies has increased exponentially. It has been reassuring to observe a significant increase in the number of positive online reviews contributing to an improvement in the school's average review rating from 3.5 to 4.2 reflecting parents' satisfaction with our offering.

Finally, we observed record improvements in re-enrolments and new student enrolments this academic year, which taken together with online and offline feedback, we hope is indicative of the improved awareness and confidence within our community of the school's reputation and ability to truly enhance parental engagement.



A Qatari's School's Courageous Leap into Student-Centred Learning

Launching a journey of change within the educational landscape is neither simple nor spontaneous. We found a unique opportunity to enact real change at our Qatari school, steering its course from traditional teaching to an active, student-focused pedagogy.

At the outset, a comprehensive audit revealed existing strengths and weaknesses, a process Principal Maha Teema labelled an eye-opener. What came next were professional development (PD) sessions unlike any other, driven by key mechanisms recommended by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) such as goal setting, revisiting prior learning and action planning.

We found inspiration from unlikely sources, such as the YouTube video *First Follower: Leadership Lessons from Dancing Guy*. This video encapsulates the essence of pioneering change. Just as the first follower in the video transformed a lone dancer into a leader, the first teachers who embraced our new pedagogical approach became the champions of change within the school.

Resistance to new ideas is natural, especially in a domain steeped in tradition. We tackled resistance head-on by creating shared objectives and fostering a collective sense of mission. Principal Maha Teema stated, "The staff now see this not as a risk but as a collaborative effort for collective growth."



The impact of this shift is substantial: parental support has surged, as noted in recent surveys. Students feel empowered, taking greater ownership in aligning these new teaching methods with the school's broader educational goals. As we celebrate these early wins, we know the journey ahead is long but promising. It's not just about the quiet moments of success but also about navigating through the storm, guiding and inspiring each other towards a shared vision.

Principal Maha Teema puts it succinctly, "Your PD sessions have acted as a carefully planned catalyst for sustainable change." It wasn't just the training, it was the active follow-up, ensuring implementation was not only happening but happening consistently. This was effort embraced by all the leaders in the school.

In summary, our work in Qatar is far more than a project; it's a paradigm shift in educational practice, demonstrating what is possible when courage meets evidence-based strategy. The benefits are tangible: motivated staff, engaged students and a community of parents actively involved in their children's education. The narrative unfolding in this Qatari school isn't just a success story; it's a blueprint for what educational courage can achieve.

As we look towards the horizon, it becomes increasingly clear: we're not just shaping pedagogy; we're shaping the future, one courageous step at a time.

Iram Myford - [CEO of ILM Education Consultants](#)



The Green Power Electric Car Project - A Powering Endeavour by Gems Winchester School, Dubai

GEMS Winchester School Dubai has taken a significant leap towards promoting environmental sustainability by successfully completing the Green Power Electric Car Project, guided by CEO/Principal, Mr. Matthew James Lecuyer, and implemented by Director of Innovation and Technology, Ms. Fatima Aamir. The project team comprised of a project lead, two staff members, and twelve dedicated students.

The project encompasses a multifaceted approach involving a spectrum of subjects crucial to the successful development of electric vehicles. Physics plays a pivotal role, elucidating the dynamics and forces that come into play during vehicle movement and the optimization of energy consumption. Engineering and design are integral, focusing on the mechanics of the vehicle, aerodynamics, and the integration of sustainable components.

Mathematics is indispensable for calculations related to power requirements and performance assessments. Environmental studies and principles of sustainability are woven into the fabric of the project, emphasizing the importance of clean energy and eco-friendly transportation. In addition, vital soft skills of teamwork, communication, and project management are cultivated throughout the project, simulating a real-world engineering venture. The project thus provides a holistic educational experience, encompassing a rich array of subjects that coalesce to shape future engineers and advocates for sustainable mobility.

Currently, the project is at an exciting juncture, with the team diligently working on finalising the design of the car body. This stage marks a critical step towards the fruition of their hard work and dedication. The upcoming endurance race, where the students will compete with 10 other GEMS

schools, adds a thrilling element to the project. It is a platform where their efforts and ingenuity will be put to the test, and the resilience of their creation will be showcased.

The success of the Green Power Electric Car Project at GEMS Winchester School Dubai stands as a testament to the power of education in driving sustainable initiatives forward. The visionary leadership and expertise by the Project lead and mentors in fostering innovation have not only empowered the students but have also set a precedent for future sustainable endeavours within the school and the wider community. This pioneering project has undoubtedly inspired the students to become change-makers and advocates for a cleaner, greener future.



Student Events



The 2023-24 students' event calendar broke new ground with the introduction of several completely new events and a sizeable increase in our total student offering. Eighteen in-person events and seven online events have already taken place and there are a further 5 events still to come. Over 11,500 students have been involved in events so far and we look set to break all records and have connected with 12,500 students across the BSME region by the end of the year.

The ever-popular BSME Games events have multiplied to accommodate the many interested schools and a total of eight events this year. We are indebted to our wonderful host schools who step up to help make these great events happen.

New events, Debating, Music Festival, U13/15 Football, U15 Volleyball, E-Sports and Arabic Spelling Bee have made their debut and attracted a great deal of interest so these will now be regular features on the calendar.



The table below summarises student participation in BSME events so far this year.

Event	Schools	Students
BSME Debate Competition	13	192
BSME/Education Perfect Learning Festival	6	406
BSME/Education Perfect Language Championships	16	4339
BSME Golf Open	16	72
BSME Music Festival	7	270
BSME U15/U13 Netball Tournament	17	330
BSME U19 Games	14	336
BSME U15/U13 Football Tournament	14	504
BSME Arabic Spelling Bee	6	75
BSME U11 Netball Tournament	17	200
BSME/Education Perfect Arabic Challenge	14	2330
BSME U15 Games A	11	288
BSME U15 Games B	10	240
BSME U11 Football	16	500
Young Musicians of the Gulf	16	200
BSME U13 Games A	16	384
BSME U13 Games B	12	288
BSME U11 Small Games	10	247
BSME U11 Medium Games	12	349
BSME U11 Large Games	16	511
BSME SRS Art & Photography Competition	22	170
BSME U15 Volleyball Championship	9	144



Good luck to students participating in the remaining events:

- BSME E-Sports
- BSME ECO STEM Event
- BSME Swimming Championships
- BSME Dance Invitational
- BSME Quran Competition
- BSME App Design Challenge



Professional Learning



The 2023-24 Professional Learning year got off to a fantastic start with the success of BSME's inaugural SEND Conference. This conference was delivered as a one day, in-person conference, hosted by Arcadia School. 75 attendees were able to share best practice and network with colleagues from schools across the UAE, Kuwait and Jordan. BSME invited world-class speaker, Dr Martin Bloomfield, as the keynote speaker where he discussed the power of neurodiversity. Dr Bloomfield took our delegates through the journey of AI and its evolving impact in the SEND landscape, with a particular focus on dyslexia. Delegates were also given an opportunity to attend workshops that focused on quality first teaching, bullying, trauma, parental support on their inclusion journey and eco-literacy. Thanks go to our exhibitors [Search Associates](#) and [PhilBrit Training Centre](#). Feedback from our delegates has been overwhelming and BSME looks forward to strengthening the professional learning offer for our SEND and Inclusion educators in the future.



BSME also delivered the Wellbeing Conference 2024, hosted by Aspen Heights School. This conference was certainly a popular event on the professional learning calendar with over 120 delegates in attendance. A wide variety of educators ranging from school leaders to counsellors, and pastoral care leads, across both primary and secondary, and all were given an opportunity to hear from industry trailblazers, Matthew Savage and Andrea Downie. The conference also featured many workshop streams for delegates covering themes of defining, measuring, leading and supporting wellbeing in our schools. This allowed delegates to hone in on their own school's unique wellbeing needs and access the right expertise to bridge learning gaps in a specific area. Sharing best practice and case studies from schools in the region, other topics that were spotlighted included: staff wellbeing; the power of student wellbeing leads; how to use PASS survey effectively and the power of Leuven scales. There was also fantastic support from BSME Partner Members with exhibition time factored into the programme. [Komodo Wellbeing](#) were the conference sponsor and were able to speak to schools about their wellbeing software solution through a case study workshop with Safa Community School. Other exhibitors included [Oxford University Press](#), [Cambridge University Press](#), [Harper Collins](#), [The Happy Confident Company](#) and [Mind Your Health](#). Their combined expertise of school wellbeing resources, wellbeing curriculum and mental health first aid training proved to be a valuable asset on offer for delegates looking to take back new ideas and solutions to their schools. The BSME Wellbeing Conference will most definitely be returning in the 2024-25 academic year so keep an eye out for further details to secure your spot!



Benefits of Education Travel

By the time you've left education, there have been so many fundamental experiences that it's hard to pinpoint which have left the biggest mark. However, speak to anyone and they'll often be able to recall their favourite school trip with near-perfect clarity. These experiences are not only academically enriching but character-building too, and they'll stick with students long after the plane has landed on home turf. The benefits of educational travel are endless, but just in case you need convincing – this is why you should book a school trip for your students.

Broadening Knowledge and Academic Development

School tours present unique opportunities to promote academic development among students. Moving beyond pure classroom learning, educational trips offer practical application to what students have already learned and can be tailored to inform subject curriculums. By providing students with access to historical landmarks, museums, and key cultural sites, school trips provide invaluable opportunities to help students immerse themselves in their studies in the real world.

Cultural Understanding and Global Awareness

School trips are vital in helping young people develop an understanding of the world. By exposing them to diverse cultures and traditions through immersive experiences, they're able to gain a firsthand appreciation for the richness of the world around them. The knock-on effect of this is a greater empathy and tolerance, as students interact and learn to respect individuals from different backgrounds and their perspectives.

Independence and Self-Confidence

While tours serve to improve academic learning, one of the most important benefits of educational travel is the sense of independence that travel fosters in young people. Encouraging them to step away from their comfort zones and embrace new experiences, school trips often involve adjusting to unfamiliar or new environments and cultures. The knock-on effect of this is growth in decision-making abilities and confidence when problem-solving, as students are presented with real-life challenges and changes.

Case Studies with other BSME Schools

As recently as October 2023, BSME member schools such as Nord Anglia International School Dubai and DBS Jumeirah Park have taken trips to Thailand and Japan respectively. These trips focus on a holistic approach combining academics, physically challenging activities & teamwork, culture and community service.

If you'd like to learn more about what school tours [The Learning Adventure](#) can offer, contact [Junaid Ahmed](#).



Kinderpedia: The All-in-One K-12 School Management and Communication Software

What is the secret of driving impact with technology?

Teachers in the Kinderpedia community say it's day-to-day usage. And this is precisely what sets us apart from alternative solutions.

We built an end-to-end solution that helps you gather all school related data and activities in one place. Everyone within the school community obtains easy access to the info they need. Available as a web platform and mobile app, Kinderpedia streamlines your financial and admin flows, optimises all classroom activities and strengthens school-parent communication.

No more juggling with software from different providers, and risk losing information and precious time. With Kinderpedia, you get centralised school and financial management features, one-tap student attendance and progress dashboards, and smart school-parent communication modules. The platform's innovative and intuitive functionalities encourage collaboration and empower all participants to take ownership of their own tasks.

Get ready to start using Kinderpedia in days, not months! Our support team is ready to assist you with full implementation, training and support for day-to-day usage.

"I would definitely recommend Kinderpedia! We can see how the parent interaction is going, how the revenue reports are generated, and how the child's progress is happening."

Saurabh Narain, CEO Maple Bear Gulf Schools



All-in-One school management and communication platform for K12 and...

Kinderpedia simplifies classroom interaction, offers a full perspective on school activities & financials,...

Kinderpedia / Apr 30

Engage and Empower Parents: Elevate Student Success

Parental involvement is a game-changer in education. If you're not actively fostering parent engagement, you might be missing out on a significant catalyst for student achievement.

Research consistently highlights the power of parental engagement in boosting school performance. It's not just students who benefit; schools also experience a multitude of advantages. From enhancing community connections to elevating school profiles, successful parent engagement is a win-win for all stakeholders. However, engaging parents effectively remains a perpetual challenge for schools.

Surprisingly, research shows that schools are often perceived as "hard to reach" by parents. While both sides acknowledge the value of parental engagement, they often have different expectations regarding its purpose. Parents seek simplicity, consistency, and efficiency in school communications. They don't want to juggle multiple platforms for payments, newsletters, reports, and other information.

So, how can schools communicate consistently with parents while offering swift and convenient access to vital information? The solution lies in introducing a centralized hub for parent engagement.

Education technology, like Engage MIS, offers parent portals and communication apps hosted within School Management Systems. These tools empower parents with the insights they need to support their child's education effectively. Crucially, they provide easy access to progress reports, attendance records, and teacher feedback, all in one place. This complete visibility reassures parents and eliminates the need for constant questioning. One school using Engage commented, "Having our parents feel involved in their child's school life is extremely important to us. Engage connects parents and teachers through the parent portal and provides instant notifications." Engage simplifies parent-teacher communication, streamlines access to relevant information, and enhances parent involvement.

To effectively reach parents, schools should meet them where they are – on their mobile devices. A school app facilitates communication through push notifications and alerts, keeping parents informed even during their busy schedules. Parents can use the app to read newsletters, access event calendars, and check their child's timetable whenever they have a free moment. They can also manage absences, update contact details, view payment history, and budget for upcoming expenses seamlessly. Our new parent app, Uplift, takes this convenience to the next level. Parents can access attendance data, assessment reports, account balances, school notices, and timetables. They can synchronize their personal calendar with the school calendar and receive push notifications for important updates.



A robust parent portal and app not only enhance parent engagement but also provide invaluable support for students' educational journeys. At Education Horizons, we've been delivering premium solutions to independent schools for over 40 years. Our expertise and technology empower schools to optimize every aspect of their operations. Connect with our experts to implement the right platform for your needs. Call +44 1935 403 020 or email sales@educationhorizons.com