



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection Report
Cairo English School
Egypt**

Date **20th - 22nd February 2022**
Inspection number **20220220**

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, over 100 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Abigail Fishburne, Amanda Herron, Nichelle Jackson and Simon Sharron, with Akin Alufa working online.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The Cairo English School (CES) meets all standards for British Schools Overseas¹.

¹ Except those that are against the law in Egypt.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Cairo English School provides a high quality education that meets the needs of its pupils. It has many outstanding features and is continuing to develop further through the investments of its owners, and the hard work and innovation of its leaders. The school is oversubscribed.

The school provides a high quality of British-style education supported by an outstanding level of pupil care. The school's curriculum is broad, balanced, and innovative: pupils are engaged in their learning. Teachers make good use of resources and outdoor spaces, to plan interesting lessons across all subject areas. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they really enjoy coming to school. As a result, nearly all pupils make at least good progress across all key stages becoming highly confident, articulate and successful learners with many exceeding expectations.

The school is supported by a board that is very effective in providing strategic direction and support.

3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths including:

- outstanding spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of the learners
- the ethos of the school which has helped to build a harmonious learning community that enables pupils to feel safe and valued
- excellent premises, with rigorous attention to detail and robust security
- the strong emphasis on the pupils' welfare, health and safety
- positive relationships between staff, learners and parents
- excellent day-to-day organisation and logistics
- the highly effective leadership by the director who is passionate about school improvement, which enables pupils to succeed
- strong links with parents and the community
- the commitment of staff, including administrative and ancillary staff, to the well-being of pupils
- strong and effective governance
- the robust response and highly appropriate protocols to guard against infection during the pandemic

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Further improve the quality of learning and teaching by sharing the best practices of the outstanding teachers to create even more innovative learning opportunities for all pupils, no matter what their level of prior learning, for example by
 - ensuring all teachers are confident using data to develop learning at an appropriate level
 - seeking and using pupils' feedback on their learning
 - monitoring the impact of continuous professional development on learning and teaching
- Enable middle leaders to be more effective in their monitoring of key aspects of school, empowering them to hold others to account, thus ensuring that inconsistencies in the quality of learning, planning and teaching are minimised.
- Develop stronger communication processes with and for parents, including improving the school's website.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Cairo English School				
Address	PO Box 8020, Masaken Nasr City 11371, Cairo, Egypt				
Telephone Number/s	+(202) 2249 0200				
Website Address	www.cesegypt.com				
Key Email Address/s	bmeldrum@cesegypt.com				
Director	Ms. Beth Meldrum				
Operated by/ Board member	ESOL Education Mr. Hazem Girgis				
Age Range	3 – 17 years				
Total number of pupils	2,039	Boys	1,077	Girls	962
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	640	
	3-5 years	319	17-18 years	150	
	6-11 years	930	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Cairo English School is a well-established school in Cairo. It was established in 2005 and is oversubscribed. The school is in the growing development known as New Cairo. The school site is extensive and currently hosts 153 classrooms, a full size running track and a multi-purpose sports field, along with an indoor gymnasium and full-size auditorium.

4.1 British nature of the school

CES has a strong British flavour and ethos:

- The links with the UK stem from the intake of UK teachers that are employed at CES.
- This ensures the school is up to date with curriculum developments and pedagogical approach of British style teaching, including working closely with the British Council and UK examination boards such as Cambridge and Pearson.
- There are primary and secondary student councils.
- The school has a uniform policy, similar to many British schools and school events would be familiar to UK teachers, including house events, swimming galas, sports days, house team games and activities, school plays and visits to local places of educational interest
- Students attend after school activities (ASAs) which follow a pattern similar to a typical British school in offering team sports, swimming, athletics, choir, drama and artistic activities.
- CES has representative teams in football, basketball, netball, basketball and swimming. The school plays local schools and partakes in the BSME games. It has also taken part in cultural events such as Remembrance Day which was organised by the British Embassy.
- The school values and principles are linked to British values such as honesty, fair play, justice, mutual respect, positive relationships, tolerance, cultural awareness, integrity and empathy.
- Many of the students go onto an international university in the United Kingdom.
- School celebrations follow a British model with assemblies and prize days. Productions are given by all year groups in FS1 to year 6 and these are well supported and attended events along the same lines as a British School with Ramadan and Christmas style productions, musicals and plays.
- Celebrations are held for Ramadan and Christmas with fundraising events as well as school dances and dressing up days for Halloween and Valentine's Day.
- Historically, school trips are a key part of the school offering, such as a French trip and a trip to London.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is consistently at least good and there are significant outstanding features. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum provided at CES is excellent: well balanced and broad. It is well resourced and allows teachers to deliver outstanding results both academically and pastorally. The development of the learning zone and well-being hub helps to ensure that learners are able to access the curriculum.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum for England, and structured to exceed expectations, including in early years and foundation stage (EYFS).

- Early years – Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2
- Primary Key Stage 1 – year 1 - year 2
- Primary Key Stage 2 – year 3 – year 6
- Secondary Key Stage 3 – year 7 - year 8
- Secondary Key Stage 4 – year 9 - 10
- Secondary Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form) – year 11 & year 12 (Both A Level and IBDP)

Curriculum, planning and resources are focused upon the needs of the students. Resourcing and facilities enable good quality teaching and learning across the entire breadth of the curriculum. The highly-qualified Inclusion team supports students and teaching staff to provide good provision through specific programmes of intervention. Technology is embedded in most areas of learning. Students learn to use it as a tool to enhance and extend their learning.

Planning of the curriculum is outstanding with detailed long-term plans which allows for adaption by teachers to deliver the curriculum. Planning is not always by the teachers themselves, however, which limits opportunities for innovation. Cross-curricular links are increasingly being built into the curriculum.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities covering social, cultural, scientific and athletic pursuits and large majority involved-no barriers to participation. Participation is monitored. The curriculum appropriately includes emphasis on the history and heritage of Cairo and of Egypt.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Overall, the quality of teaching and assessment is highly effective with many outstanding features.

In the best teaching, the focus is on learning for all, even when that meant leaving the lesson plan, adapting, innovating or improvising. These lessons are briskly paced and engaging. Teachers are highly responsive to the students and the context at that particular moment. For example, in a year 4 English poetry class, the students recapped features of poetry and read two poems to identify structures and give opinions about the poet's choice of language and structure. This led to deep thinking and discussion. Similarly, a year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils developed confidence with using UK money. Supported by practical resources and paired activities, pupils accurately and enthusiastically select coins and notes to represent a given amount. They demonstrated secure fluency of number facts and quick recall of addition facts to support their work. The teacher modelled key vocabulary very effectively: her explanations and modelling of the partitioning method ensured that pupils progress well, and had fun too.

In these lessons, a wide range of resources and activities are used, keeping the students highly engaged. Students are highly involved in their tasks and there is a strong personal bond between teacher and learners. In a year 8 mathematics lesson on probability for example, the teacher had clearly developed warm and supportive relationship with the class. Very good behaviour for learning and classroom management skills using non-verbal routines to regain students' attention, if anyone wandered. The lesson structure was well structured and demonstrated a high level of preparation. Clear differentiated tasks explained to the class: "If you feel comfortable in bronze, you can move up to silver and gold, but you must complete a minimum of three before you move up. If you are still in bronze, that's fine." The teacher's support of individual pupils revealed potential gaps in understanding which the teacher then addressed.

Another example of excellent learning and teaching was in a year 10 French lesson. The lesson was preparation for both an oral presentation and for the 'listening' component of the upcoming, IGCSE examination. The teacher was enthusiastic about what she was teaching and spoke fluently and naturally in both French and English, constantly switching between the two languages. The lesson was based on the students watching a promotional video for a Canadian hotel and answering questions on it; this was challenging listening material but the students were encouraged to "have a go" (which they did). The worksheet given to the students had questions in both French and English which reflects the requirements of the exam.

In most lessons, teachers create a positive, warm learning environment in which students feel safe and are able to articulate their thoughts and feelings. They feel confident and comfortable about asking for help from their peers and readily offer that support when it is required.

In the less successful lessons, there is a lack of challenge and thus the students do not get as involved. Lesson objectives and intended learning outcomes are not clearly stated. Teachers do not always make clear notes or diagrams, and this affects the quality of pupil responses, especially when questioning is based on short closed questions. IT resources are not always fully exploited.

In these few lessons, what occasionally holds students back are missed opportunities to extend and expand on the planned learning, because the teacher stays strictly within the confines of their planning. Learning objectives are not always as clear as they could have been. There is more limited interaction and support from the teacher, and more limited occasions for differentiation, which means the most able students are sometimes not sufficiently challenged.

Assessment approaches are consistent across the school with a range of internal and external testing, and data gathering mechanisms. Teachers recognise the importance of effective feedback in supporting student learning. There is generally consistent and skilful application of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies underpinned by marking, which supports students' understanding.

Diagnostic testing with PIPs and InCAS allows the school to predict and benchmark itself against other British, Independent and International schools. Attainment tracking with mark books is consistent with a focus on student progress and intervention.

The predominantly teacher-testing approach and use of non-standardised assessment for summative assessment are not yet sufficient to measure value-added: this misses the opportunity to gain data on year-on-year progression and value-added, in comparison to British national averages.

Teachers' testing in the classroom does not yet include all subjects across the curriculum; but the current regular testing does allow the school to identify students who are underperforming and need additional support, from the core subjects.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Standards at CES are excellent.

The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is outstanding and is a genuine strength of the school which enables learning to take place in a very positive environment. Pupils in the EYFS are assessed on entry ensuring they have a proficient level of spoken English. Baselines are measured using CEM PIPS, these assessments provide end of Key Stage (KS) 1 predictions. The CEM data indicates that for most pupils, attainment baselines are in line or above UK expectations. The EYFS leader shares the data with parents and provides interventions for those pupils identified. The CEM data is also used to track progress and to inform target setting and interventions. The very large majority of pupils are predicted to exceed UK standards by the end of KS1.

The school has recently introduced the formative assessment tool *Tapestry* in EYFS for the ongoing monitoring and measurement of pupils' progress against the Early Learning Goals. Teachers observe and record students' progress periodically, as they work and play. In the last three years, pupils achieved a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) in line with UK averages and this has steadily increased year on year. Due to the pandemic GLD was not calculated in the UK therefore comparisons cannot be made for 2021. Pupils in the foundation stage are happy, secure and enthusiastic about their learning. In lessons they develop knowledge, understanding and skills that lead to strong progress.

The development of early literacy skills is high on the school's agenda and significant time is dedicated for these lessons. At the end of 2021, almost all pupils pass the phonics screening check. End of year data for 2021 indicate that by the end of KS1 pupils' attainment in reading and writing are below what is expected, with a majority of pupils not meeting curriculum standards for reading. The school is well aware of this and there are appropriate plans in place to rectify the situation. Mathematics attainment was broadly in line with UK standards although fewer pupils attain levels above standards. These results reflect the interruption Covid-19 has brought to education. In lessons observed, pupils demonstrated standards in line or above curriculum standards. In lessons the large majority of pupils are confidently reading levelled texts in line with expectations. Many pupils speak confidently demonstrating a strong command of the English language.

Standards of attainment improve as pupils progress from KS1 to the end of KS2. In reading, writing and maths, most pupils attain at or above curriculum standards. Pupils progress well across all subjects exceeding the targets set for them. The standard of writing in pupils' workbooks evidence pupils applying ambitious vocabulary, having a strong grasp of punctuation and using neat joined handwriting.

Across KS3, the 2021 internal end of year data indicates that in years 7, 8 and 9, the very large majority of pupils achieve levels equivalent to grades 9 - 4 or A* - C. Pupils progress

well and exceed their CEM targets. Current achievement data indicates that pupils are on track to exceed the previous years' results.

Data for the 2021 IGCSE and A Level examination results demonstrate excellent attainment. The majority of pupils gain 8 IGCSEs. Across a range of subjects, pupils achieve very well. Most (84%) achieve A*- C grades with 47% achieving A*- A grades. Detailed analysis of data is used to provide targeted support and as a result a high proportion of pupils exceed their predicted grades. Current year 10 data indicate that pupils are predicted to surpass baseline expectations. A Level results are excellent, the majority (57%) of pupils gain A*- C in 3 subjects and 44% gain A*- A in all subjects. The pass mark for the IB diploma is 95% with the average points score being 33.3, 9% achieved a score of >40, this is largely in line with international standards.

The school is successful in helping pupils to develop their personal skills and qualities. Almost all pupils are thoughtful and well behaved in lessons, as they move around the school and during breaks.

There is a systematic approach to managing attendance and punctuality. Leaders work closely with parents to improve levels of attendance which is slightly below standards in the UK. Most students are punctual when they arrive to school and lessons.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is a tangible strength of CES and the school fully meets the BSO standard.

The school succeeds in creating a rich ethos of celebrating Egyptian culture and traditions, as well as promoting a learning environment defined by British values of tolerance, respect for the rule of law and an understanding of democratic processes. This ethos is created in large part by the duality of the curriculum in which Egyptian religious and cultural learning sits side by side with the English National Curriculum and UK examination syllabi such as IGCSE and AS/A2 syllabuses.

In the primary school, topics based around English literature texts also allow children to learn about Britain from an early age. The school's daily celebration of Egyptian culture is a vital ingredient of the school's success in building a cohesive and harmonious international community. British societal values have been firmly established by the way that the school has successfully developed a caring, tolerant, respectful and listening community where children, parents and staff are heard and valued.

This is underpinned by the school's mission statement that encapsulates the moral, social and intercultural expectations of behaviour in the school. The strong sense of community and togetherness undoubtedly provides a spiritual experience for the students. This is reflected in their delight and enthusiasm arriving at school and moving about its precincts during the day. The students are taught their responsibilities of citizenship in their host country of Egypt but also their responsibilities as global citizens. The school's strong community cohesion is cemented by the effective implementation of its 'Behaviour for Achievement' policy.

Although the law of the country precludes teaching about many of the protected characteristic in the UK's Equality Act, the school does teach that people cannot be treated differently due to individual differences. Using the term 'differences' is used as an overarching term allowing opportunities to teach acceptance, tolerance and empathy. Discussion of sexual orientation or religion can lead to serious legal ramifications in Egypt, but the school does provide both Islamic and Christianity lessons. Both Christmas and Eid are celebrated. During PSHE lessons, the 'value of the month' and in assemblies, the equality of people with regards to age, disability and race as well as gender is promoted and supported.

Student behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. PSHE lessons are embedded in the curriculum and further support the personal, moral and social education of students. The primary and secondary school student councils, as well as recent initiatives developing a tradition of Model United Nations, setting up a student 'Leadership Academy' and being part of international TEDX events, have had the effect of strengthening student voice and participation in democratic processes, accountability and global citizenship. A genuine effort is made to ensure that student voice feeds into school improvement strategies. While there

is a vast array of after-school activities that offer academic enrichment, there may be more opportunities in the future to increase extra-curricular opportunities, whereby students can expand their positive contributions to the lives of those living around them in the locality.

Once COVID restrictions allow, the school will reactivate its varied, culturally rich programme of domestic and international trips to support the wider curriculum and, in particular, its links with the UK.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is outstanding.

The school fully meets this standard. The welfare, health and safety of students is a priority at all times for the school. It goes to great lengths to ensure that safeguarding, its risk assessment as well as its health and safety policies are implemented and monitored to pre-empt complacency.

The school has a health and safety officer who is chair of the health and safety committee and reports directly to the director of the school. The health and safety policy includes detailed procedures for emergency evacuation as well as internal and external lockdown. Student behaviour is impeccable in all parts of the school and this is due in large part to the success of the school's 'behaviour for achievement' policy, where achievement is both academic and social.

A system of rewards and sanctions operates effectively throughout the school. Rewards are systematically celebrated and used to promote positive learning attitudes and respectful social interaction. Sanctions are used in a stepped approach with parents informed and involved at all stages. Parents receive live information about positive and negative behaviour through the school's online platforms. There is clear evidence that any occasional misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff supported by the Well-Being Hub which consists of the school counsellors and pastoral heads who, according to students and parents, are skilled in resolving conflicts and restoring relationships.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. The single central register is up-to-date and provides good evidence of safe recruitment procedures. Supervisory and ancillary staff, including bus drivers, are checked directly by the school governing board. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is the director and she is supported by her three heads of school and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) all of whom are fully trained as deputy DSLs.

The school benefits from the availability of two full-time qualified doctors and two nurses who can administer first-aid immediately and advise, where necessary, on child protection issues. The availability of numerous corridor supervisors and car park stewards increases the level of safety and supervision afforded to students before, during, between and after school lessons.

A strong anti-bullying policy is in place. Students, parents and staff report that prevention and interventions are effective. In some cases, the school counsellor may be asked to intervene in order to draw up conflict resolution and behaviour contracts between students and the school. The new student 'Leadership Academy' is beginning to support bullying prevention through a buddy system. The post of SENCO reflects the school's commitment to supporting children with learning difficulties and atypical learning styles. The SENCO organises early diagnosis and sensitive intervention strategies in collaboration with parents. The school is

part of a national on-line safety programme and students have to sign up to the school's IT acceptable use policy. The school complies meticulously with local fire prevention regulations. Fire drills are organised twice a year. A summary of lockdown and evacuation procedures is posted in every classroom. Great care is taken to ensure the safety of children at times of hand-over. The arrival and departure every day of more than 50 buses is professionally overseen by a transportation manager who also schedules regular mechanical maintenance of the vehicles in the school's own workshop. School trips, domestic and international, are impressively risk assessed in accordance with the school's risk assessment policy.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at CES meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

Esol Education is the proprietary body which oversees the running of the school and ensures that it meets all regulatory requirements. The Egyptian Ministry of Education only issues a licence to run an educational establishment to those bodies which satisfy local regulations. An Esol Board member has a full-time presence at the school and is responsible for administration and compliance with local requirements, fulfilling the role of a bursar. The board member works very closely with the director who, with her senior leadership team, is responsible for the educational and strategic management of the school: it is evident that there is a positive, mutually-supportive working relationship between them.

The school follows safer recruitment procedures and there is a robust systematic procedure for recruiting both teaching and support staff. Applicants for teaching posts complete an online application form which includes employment history and qualifications, both of which are thoroughly checked. The director interviews all applicants for teaching positions online after an initial short list has been made by HR: the interviews are recorded for future reference. Written references are required and a telephone call is made to referees if there are any causes for concern. A medical report is required before employment, as are police checks. All teaching staff have qualifications appropriate to their role and some have further academic and/or teaching qualifications.

The director as DSL, gives annual training to all teaching and educational support staff as part of the induction process. She has done a safer recruitment course and also takes an annual refresher course. Trained local supervisors give safeguarding training in Arabic for any domestic members of staff who do not speak English. The school keeps and made available to inspectors a single central register giving details of all staff currently working at the school. The details included full name, the date the staff member started working at the school, their right to work in Egypt and that their qualifications had been verified. There is no evidence that any member of staff working at the school was in contravention of local or British regulations.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent.

The school provides a high quality and safe learning environment. The site is accessible to those with limited mobility having ramps and a lift. The site is enclosed by a perimeter wall and there are three gates for entrance and exit points for pupils at the start and end of the school day. The school places very high importance on security: there are a team of 23 security guards and security presence throughout the building.

The school has a designated facilities manager responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance and safety of the school. The site is very well maintained and there are efficient systems for the reporting and follow up of any maintenance issues. There are schedules for equipment requiring maintenance and areas that require regular cleaning and maintenance. The records kept are thorough and up to date.

Outside areas are attractive and enhanced with flowers and plants: these are well maintained by a team of gardeners. Outside areas are clean and tidy, rubbish bins are located strategically, and signage is clear. The decoration of the school and many displays are visually appealing, they display and celebrate pupils' work. Positive affirmations are displayed on the doors of the classrooms in the primary school and these contribute to the positive ethos of the school.

Classrooms are spread across three floors, with the ground floor occupying FS and KS1 classrooms. Classrooms are an appropriate size and are well lit, and ventilated. There are blinds in the classrooms to limit glare from the outdoor sun. AC is available in all areas of the school.

There are specialised facilities and resources which support pupils' participation in a wide range of academic and physical education activities. Pupils have access to specialised rooms such as science laboratories, music rooms, design and technology labs and ICT suites. The 2 libraries are very well-stocked with high quality books and provide engaging spaces for promoting a love of reading. In addition to being a performance space, the auditorium is used for performing arts lessons. There are a wide range of PE facilities, including a multi-purpose hall, a safe surface running track and basketball courts. There is a large swimming pool with changing and showering facilities, it is currently closed to comply with ministry Covid-19 regulations.

There are sufficient spaces for outdoor play for pupils in the primary and secondary schools; there are ample shaded areas at break times and benches for pupils to eat outside. The playgrounds in EYFS and in the quadrant offer slides and climbing equipment. The youngest pupils have access to dedicated outdoor learning environments offering high-quality resources for purposeful outdoor play and physical development.

Toilet facilities are located throughout the school and are clearly designated for use by pupils or adults. All washrooms have an attendant and are recurrently cleaned. There are separate toilet facilities for boys and girls and facilities available for those with disabilities. Toilet facilities and changing rooms have access to hot and cold running water. Ample drinking water is available from the 21 water fountains located around the school.

The school clinic is located on the ground floor and easily accessed. It is staffed with two full-time doctors, two nurses and a member of staff to support with admin. The clinic is appropriately resourced and procedures are well established for using the clinic. The clinic has recently supported the national vaccination drive for Covid-19 and facilitates the annual vaccination programme for pupils and staff.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is good.

CES issues two reports per year in primary and three in secondary, following the termly assessments, and holds two parent-teacher meetings to discuss progress and the general welfare of the students. The reports contain information about progress, expectations and personal development and parents commented that they find these useful. Following the onset of Covid-19 restrictions, parent-teacher meetings have been held online and their success and improved attendance rates indicate that these meetings are a sensible pattern for the future.

Showbie is used as a daily method of specific communication with parents and one parent in the focus group commented “We can’t live without *Showbie!*”. There is also a portal that parents can access for general information: parents in the focus group mentioned that they find this useful. If there are emergencies, parents can contact the school via telephone and find this a reliable method. Parents reported that they were particularly impressed with the level of technical IT support given to them after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and this support included how to access online platforms.

The director sends a monthly newsletter which, in addition to her introduction, has sections written by the heads of each phase, giving both information and celebrating any events or achievements. There are parent handbooks for EYFS, primary and secondary which give practical information and routines. In addition, the parents of all children joining the school receive a welcome pack of information. The school website is completely up-to-date but does have key policies, the previous BSO inspection report, and also dedicated portals for parents, pupils and staff. It also has links to various online resources.

The director has established a parent development group of nine current parents which meets termly with the aim of offering ideas which feed directly into the school development plan. Other less formal parent committees are formed around specific annual events when needed.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, parents had much more physical access to the school, could drop into the school and were invited in for coffee mornings, meetings with staff etc. However, the school has tried to compensate for this by offering online workshops; for example, there have been ones on online safety and another on positive parenting given by a local expert. The success of the latter led to a physical follow-up meeting for 50 parents on a first come-first served basis. There are also year group meetings offered to parents.

Parents commented that they feel that their children are safe at school and that standards of behaviour are high, both of which were supported by observations during the inspection visit. Parents said that any incidents of bullying were handled well and that children were not frightened to report any cases as they knew that they would be handled fairly; students spoken to during the inspection corroborated this point. Parents also commented that, if they had any complaints about the school, they felt they would be dealt with in a fair way.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints meet BSO standards.

There is a formal complaints policy which is shared with parents. It is also available on the school's website. It has a clear statement and differentiates the process from the decisions made regarding exclusions.

The policy is transparent, open and effective. It explains clearly what should happen in the event of a complaint. Parents informed inspectors that they are made aware of the policy and who to contact with any concerns at the school year.

The first point of contact for any parent who is dissatisfied with any aspect of school life is the child's class or form teacher. If they cannot resolve the problem for you then they contact the year leader or head of year or another senior member of staff who will endeavour to solve any issues that they have. The next point of contact would be the relevant head of school, CES school director then the Esol board.

The handling of complaints is in line with the management structure of the school. The complaints procedure clearly states in its guidance that "a written record of all complaints will be kept by the school".

12. Standard 8

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management at CES meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards, and has many outstanding features.

The leadership and management of the school are at least good in all major respects and excellent in significant elements. Leaders and managers have an inspirational effect upon the school community and beyond; they have proved themselves capable of sustaining outstanding outcomes for students, including very high student achievement and well-being. They ensure a high quality of education, and have made rapid improvements to the school. Changes in the school's size or character have been handled extremely well, with no loss to quality and outcomes. Staff morale is high. Through a close oversight of its work, managers at all levels have a very accurate understanding of how well the school functions and what needs improving.

Plans for improvement, including those for professional development, are well judged, goals are challenging and resources strategically harnessed to achieve them. Finances are very well harnessed to the school's priorities, and soundly managed. Leaders and proprietors have articulated a vision and ambition for the school which is committed to achieving excellence in all respects. The school's culture enables pupils and staff to succeed and excel.

Leaders and proprietors have established and maintain an ethos commensurate with the aims and values of the school and its proprietors. This enables pupils of all ages and abilities to flourish, fulfil their potential, enjoy their education and develop their personal qualities to the full. The ethos and culture of the whole school counters any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.

Relationships in the school are exemplary. Leaders have the highest expectations of behaviour, so that respect, courtesy and good manners are the norm. Leaders and proprietors have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this knowledge to plan and drive forward school improvement. Development plans are clear, well-structured, ambitious but achievable and result in benefit to pupils.

There is a firm focus on maintaining the high quality of the school and/or securing its constant improvement. Leaders are able to make and carry through challenging decisions for the good of the school. The actions of school leaders have resulted in substantial improvement in the quality of education and in excellent progress and achievement for all pupils.

Performance management is highly effective and leads to professional development that encourages, challenges and supports staff. Teaching is highly effective across the school, and staff are well motivated.

Safeguarding is integral to the life of the school. Leaders and managers have created a culture of vigilance where pupils' welfare is actively promoted and they feel safe. The promotion of fundamental human values is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders' work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is exemplary. The school responds swiftly where pupils are vulnerable to these issues.

High quality training develops staff vigilance, confidence and competency to challenge pupils' views and encourage debate. Leaders communicate in a highly effective manner with parents, providing them with the information they need about the school and their child's progress. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve. The school involves parents fully in the life of the school, and it enjoys very strong support from parents.

The school is run in a highly efficient manner. However, middle managers are not always as involved as they could and should be in the upholding of these standards, and do not have sufficient time to be so. Otherwise, the director and proprietor systematically hold school leaders to account for the quality of education, effective deployment of staff and use of accommodation and resources, including the use of any government funding, so that pupils benefit.