



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

**Dubai Scholars Private
School**

Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Date **26th – 28th September 2023**

Inspection number **20230926**

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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, nearly 80 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Nicola Walsh. The team members were Lee Davis, Sherine Eletriby, Jane Goldsack, Glyn Kilsby and Joanne Wild.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school offers a British style of education with strongly embedded systems of summative assessment. Pupils do well by the end of Key Stage (KS) 5 and are confident and enjoy school. An enriching curriculum in the early years builds a strong foundation for the youngest pupils so that they are well equipped to face the demands of primary education. Pupils in the secondary section are highly motivated to succeed. They take on responsibility for aspects of their learning and consequently are very well prepared for life beyond school. Communication between home and school is excellent, and the school holds a very high reputation in the local community.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including:

- Confident and articulate pupils who enjoy school.
- Pupils in KS4 and 5 who demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning and a strong motivation to succeed.
- Leaders who are committed to overcome the challenges that the school faces to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- Strong systems of care and inclusion.
- Communications with parents.
- Provision in Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- A strong focus on the use of summative assessment systems to inform parents and pupils of their achievements.
- Pupils progress in reading in primary.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. To further embed the British character of the school in the ethos, curriculum and methods of teaching.
- ii. To ensure that the school invests in ensuring systems around health and safety are effectively promoted, and risk assessments are carefully attended to.
- iii. Ensure primary teachers are trained in methods that engage all pupils and encourage them to become active and independent learners.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Dubai Scholars Private School		
Address	Behind Lulu Hyper Supermarket, Near Stadium Metro Station, Al Qusais, Dubai		
Telephone number	+9714 706 9000		
Website address	https://dubaischolars.com/		
Main email address	principalsoffice@dubaischolars.com		
Headteacher/principal	fscarcelli@dubaischolars.com		
Chair of board of governors/proprietor	Ms. Janet O'Keeffe		
Age range	2-18 years		
Number of learners	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
	2384	1253	1131
Learner numbers by age	<i>0-2 Years</i>	<i>3-5 Years</i>	<i>6-11 Years</i>
	15	472	1027
	<i>12-16 Years</i>	<i>17-18 Years</i>	<i>18+ Years</i>
	767	98	1
Total number of part-time learners	0		

The school is situated on the border between Dubai and Sharjah and has been providing an education since 1976. The school has grown considerably and provides now for a large majority of pupils and teachers who are nationals of India but live in the locality.

4.1 British nature of the school

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- the leadership of the school replicates a British school structure
- the school is organised into key stages and year groups
- the school's assessments are sourced from the UK
- the school is resourced in materials that are in use in English schools
- the school has a uniform policy, like many English schools
- the school's house point and rewards system reflect those used in English schools
- the academic calendar replicates that of a British school.

5. *Standard 1* The quality of education provided by the school.

The quality of education meets the standard required by BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum meets the standard.

The curriculum at Dubai Scholars is delivered in English and adapted to include the requirements of the Ministry. Across the school the curriculum effectively meets the needs of the pupils. The broad offer of subjects enables pupils to make progress and be well prepared for the next stage of their education. This includes effective use of technology such as iPads and online learning platforms to support curriculum delivery.

The curriculum provided for pupils under the age of 5 follows the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Long term and medium-term plans are in place. These are supported UK published schemes for reading and phonics so that progression is clear, and plans are structured. Collaborative short-term planning ensures teachers cover the seven areas of learning and meet individual pupil's needs. These are based upon themed plans over six weeks, selecting themes which are relevant and engaging to pupils. Specialist teachers deliver lessons in the UAE subjects, dance and PE. Outdoor areas and indoor corridor areas are creatively adapted and resourced to extend learning beyond the classroom. However, areas for pupils' physical development are limited. Currently the timing of the school day limits delivery of the EYFS curriculum. Plans are being considered to lengthen the day which will enable fuller coverage of the EYFS.

In primary, published schemes of work in maths and reading support teachers in planning and curriculum coverage. Lessons are timetabled for all subject areas and timings strictly adhered to as they are delivered by specialist teachers who move between classrooms. Pupils study English national curriculum subjects of English, maths, science, computing, PE, art, combined history and geography, and performing arts including dance. In primary performing arts and music and dance lessons lay the foundations of creative expression, although these lessons are not continued past year 7. Pupils talked about how much they enjoyed these lessons and dance lessons observed indicated a strong appreciation of the subject. In addition, pupils are taught Hindi or French as a modern foreign language. A combined science, technology, English, arts, maths (STEAM) session is timetabled for 40 minutes weekly. These incorporate a cross curricular active approach and are enjoyed by pupils. There is a strong focus on ensuring pupils develop the skills in language and literacy through

the curriculum, with weekly reading, writing and library sessions in addition to 4 sessions of English. Maths is well represented with 7 sessions weekly including mental maths. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated. However, schemes of work that were new to the school were not yet fully embedded across year groups or key stages such that their use by teachers was not consistently applied. Most recently there has been the introduction of a creative writing scheme, new reading and maths curriculum resources and literature festivals, to bridge gaps identified by the curriculum heads and teaching teams.

In KS3 pupils are provided with a broad curriculum up to the end of year 8. Secondary pupils are frequently encouraged to research topics related to global events, politics, science, technology, and the environment, which they enjoy and talk enthusiastically about. This builds upon the primary curriculum and enables pupils to make progress. At the end of year 8, pupils choose their option choices which determine a course of study in year 9 and up to the end of their schooling. Science is a popular choice however the recent introduction of new IGCSE subjects has broadened the schools offer. A third of pupils at IGCSE choose to study psychology, and more than half studying environmental management.

Pupils in KS5 study advanced level qualifications at A2 and AS level with a broad choice of twelve subjects at AS. Subjects offered include mathematics, the three separate sciences, business studies, economics, accounting, psychology, media studies, IT and English language. Progression routes to year 12 are clear and the most popular subjects at AS level are mathematics, physics and chemistry. Least popular subjects at sixth form level are English language and psychology. Overall, there is a limited choice of creative subjects in sixth form and fewer curriculum pathways for the less able, but the secondary school management are reviewing this. Debating and performing arts are a strong feature of extracurricular activities. Pupils' strengths across all subject areas and in areas where they have specific talents are celebrated in assemblies and events.

Careers guidance is provided by a newly appointed careers counsellor and enhanced by visits from outside speakers, careers fairs, and careers related workshops. Collaborations with outside agencies such as the Rochester institute of technology and the University of Waterloo, assist pupils when making choices and choosing learning paths beyond year 13.

Pupils' personal health social and economic (PHSE) education is met by the inclusion of moral education for all pupils and weekly timetabled PHSE sessions for non-Muslim pupils across the school. Moral education lessons follow a clear and progressive ministry curriculum and effectively meets the needs of all pupils irrelevant of their background. PHSE lessons are based upon the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials, developed in the UK and which have

a broad coverage of social and emotional issues relevant to pupils in their year groups. However, the use of these materials was rarely applied; In a year 5 PHSE lesson pupils were creating an emoji that best describes empathy and sympathy. In a year 7 PHSE lesson pupils were asked to discuss their partners strengths. Both approaches did not draw upon the SEAL materials. Tasks failed to engage pupils who were noisy and distracted. However, pupils in KS1 enjoyed learning about what makes us different. Assemblies and whole school events further support the PHSE curriculum for all pupils across the school and these are of a good quality.

The curriculum for SEND is well matched to the needs of the individual pupils who are identified as requiring support. This may be through intervention programmes or with 1:1 in class support. A newly appointed SENDco has an up-to-date register of pupils identified and is closely monitoring the support they receive and their progress against curriculum targets. Shadow teachers were observed working alongside individual pupils in lessons.

At the time of the inspection very few pupils were registered to attend extracurricular clubs as it was at the start of the academic year. However, pupils were actively involved at the start of the school day playing basketball, as an early morning club for secondary pupils. The planned provision of extracurricular clubs due to start later in the term offers pupils creative and physical activities to enhance the timetabled curriculum. Pupils take part in drama and whole school productions. An assembly led by secondary pupils on international languages day demonstrated pupil's high level of performance in music and drama.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment meets the standard.

Teachers plan tasks that are matched to the needs of most pupils and based on prior learning. Across the school there is extensive use of questioning by teachers to check on pupils understanding. Summative assessments are a strong feature of learning, and robust systems track pupils' attainment and monitor progress.

In EYFS teachers plan activities, ensuring a play-based approach that caters to individual levels of development. Regular professional development sessions, both internally and externally, support teachers so that they are well equipped to provide a stimulating and engaging learning environment. The head of the EYFS provides daily support through meetings, and teachers document and share their experiences. There is a culture of sharing good practice. Teachers assess children's progress using internal baseline assessments and observations. Based on these assessments, individual plans are developed to meet the learning needs of each child. Teachers work closely with parents such that links between home and school are strong and learning milestones are celebrated.

In KS1 teachers use questioning to check on understanding. Pupils can talk generally about what they are learning to do in their lesson because teachers routinely share learning objectives and success criteria on the interactive whiteboards. Where teachers employed consistent behaviour management strategies pupils were engaged. In the strongest lessons teachers planned tasks that were active, such as in a year 2 English class. Here pupils had opportunities to mime a verb. Most teaching in KS1 is teacher led, such that teacher talk dominates, and pupils are receptive learners. In instances where teachers tried to address this and gave pupils opportunities to talk as talking partners this was not always effective. Pupils talked over one another and the teacher.

Teaching in KS2 is good in some respects. Teachers employ many opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning and are well equipped to do this. Pupils enjoy using iPad as research tools and to access online materials. In one lesson pupils were observed using iPad to research cave ecosystems and then recorded this learning on a diagram. However, teachers are not yet planning sufficient tasks for pupils to be active in their learning and rely upon pupils being passive and receptive learners. PowerPoint presentations are used extensively so there is limited opportunity for pupils to learn through doing or making mistakes. In lessons where pupils are active there is a higher level of engagement. In a year 3 STEAM lesson pupils were actively engaged in constructing ramps out of paper to make a ball roll slowly. Overall, in most lessons pupils are very eager to talk and low-level disruption of learning is evident. Teachers employed strategies to deal with this, but with mixed levels of impact and consistency.

In secondary teachers utilise their subject knowledge to plan activities that are suitably matched to the ability of most pupils. Motivated pupils with a mature attitude to learning enable teachers to impart knowledge easily. Such that pupils in a year 10 chemistry lesson were able to explain their understanding of chemical formulae and demonstrate a deep understanding of both word and balanced chemical equations. In many lessons observed teachers and pupils made effective use of technology. Lessons are well planned, and information is frequently presented on interactive whiteboards and also shared on pupils' own devices. This enables learners to access information through a variety of mediums. Summative standardised assessments are used regularly and the results of these are shared with pupils such that they are clear where they are in their learning. A sharp focus on the use of standardised assessments against exam rubrics particularly in years 10 and 11, helps pupils to improve and learn from making mistakes.

Teachers in KS 5 have established strong relationships with pupils, so that discussions are useful and help pupils to make progress. Lesson objectives and success criteria are shared so that pupils understand what is expected of them. In the best lessons observed pupils were inspired, different learning styles were catered for and there were multiple learning resources used. Teachers plan a mixture of tasks that enable pupils to work independently and in groups. However, there is limited differentiation in classes, and this is somewhat reflected in the spread of final examination grades at AS and A level. Pupils appear to cope well with the subject material they are given but more attention needs to be checking on the understanding of all pupils and not just those who are responsive and articulate in class. Teachers make very effective use of summative assessment results and cognitive ability test scores to give useful feedback to pupils.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils.

The standards achieved by students meet the standard.

Standards in behaviour and attendance across the school are good. Pupils enjoy school and this is evident in high levels of attendance across the past 3 years. Pupils are confident and articulate. They are very respectful of teachers and value their education.

In early years pupils behave well and enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities. They are very responsive to teacher's commands. Pupils enter the school with mixed levels of English and there is a strong focus on developing language. Such that progress in communication and language is strong and pupils enter KS1 ready to learn. Phonics is beginning to be embedded through regular practice.

In KS1, pupils are confident and articulate in English. Pupils work broadly in line with age related standards across the key stage. At the end of 2023 the schools summative test data indicates that standards of attainment in maths are in line with age related expectations and reading slightly below. The school pays close attention to pupils' attainment in reading through regular testing and any pupil who falls below their reading age receive targeted support.

The school's data indicates that pupils attain in line with UK standards in summative tests in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2. A sample of pupils in 2021 achieved a significantly high score of 613 in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), this is higher than the average score for schools in Dubai. Standards in reading were high due to the close attention paid by the school to establishing reading habits early. However, the close attention paid to standards in reading is not yet reflected in the work the pupils completed during lessons in notebooks. There was very little evidence of pupils' recording work in lessons observed, or since the start of term.

In secondary pupils demonstrate a strong motivation to succeed and are efficient independent learners. Progress tests show that overall attainment in secondary, is strongest in science, followed by mathematics and English. Standardised progress tests are used in years 7 to 10 to track progress in English, mathematics and science. An analysis of these assessments show that girls are outperforming boys year groups 7-9 in English, but there is a more mixed picture, with less gender difference in mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment is high by the end of KS4, with 78% of pupils gaining five IGCSE at grade C and above. This is above the UK at 54%. Pupils attain well in mathematics (98%), physics (95%), biology (95%), French (95%) and chemistry (93%).

Overall, the percentage of pupils attaining grades A* - C at advanced level is high and in line with the national average for England. However, at AS level the results are much lower at 61%. At A level, pupil achievement at the highest grades (A* and A) at A level is strongest in mathematics, economics, and accounting. Although overall results are good, there are a significant number of pupils failing or achieving low grades in AS and A level subjects. Alternative curriculum offerings such as BTEC and more vocational AS and A levels could be explored for pupils who would be better suited to a different route.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development meets the standard and is a strength of the school.

British values are promoted through the curriculum PHSE and moral education lessons and also through a variety cultural and faith days, such as Diwali, Christmas and Eid. These are regular features of the school calendar.

Pupils are articulate and contribute their opinions they are given opportunities to be reflective and influence events in the school. Primary and secondary student Councils talked confidently about their role in school. Across the school there is a feeling of mutual respect and tolerance.

Pupils' behaviour in the school is often exemplary and this is most notable in the upper year groups. Pupil's attitude to school life supported by survey data, is positive. Pupils in KS4 and 5 are given high levels of autonomy and independence such that they are independent and mature in their approach to all aspects of school life. School awards such as the badges of honour and certificates of achievement and merit are issued as part of the school's rewards policy. Pupil achievements are featured in the weekly parents' newsletter and pupils are also given badges for positions of responsibility they hold such as wellbeing ambassadors.

Pupils lead school events to raise awareness of environmental issues and have formed a 'Girl Up Club' which empowers female pupils to have a voice' about important world issues. Pupils have also started the YUSA'ID initiative. This initiative supports blue collar workers within the school community, encouraging charity and caring for others. There is evidence through these activities that the pupils engage in collaborative projects that enhance their ability to work harmoniously with others and that they are self-motivated and eager to learn. In a recent event hosted by the British Council, pupils were invited to attend an annual 'Schools Now' conference where participants from around the world discussed wellbeing and the influence of students' voice.

Pupils are socially and culturally aware in demonstrating high levels of consideration, mutual respect, and tolerance. One such example was an event organised by the inclusion team and student council, 'Ripples of Joy' where students with special needs from Manzil, a special needs Centre in Sharjah took part in activities arranged by pupils. Secondary pupils who study business and accounting are a part of an entrepreneurship league. Last year they handmade items and sold it to the community. The proceeds were donated to the Red Crescent to support the earthquake victims of Turkey and Syria in 2023.

The school's house system promotes competition in sports and academic challenges, which fosters teamwork, joint responsibility and a feeling of belonging. This was not fully embedded

across the school and requires further development to establish it as strength and increase its visibility in the school's ethos and curriculum events.

Extracurricular activities are provided by outside companies who offer five different physical activities to pupils together along with music, robotics and coding, parkour and kung fu. Pupil uptake of these activities at the time of the inspection visit was low but the clubs had only started very recently and there is a cost involved for parents. Offering activities which do not involve a cost to parents, run by school staff may be an opportunity to increase pupil participation. Sibling club, after school club and tuition are offered to pupils in EYFS, and early morning sessions for school sports teams to practise before school starts are well attended and appreciated by the pupils.

Pupils participate in whole school productions, and these are a strength of the schools offer to parents. Drama, music, dance and cultural events are built into celebrations, assemblies and productions for parents. These build upon the performing arts and music timetabled sessions in primary and KS3 and give pupils an increased level of confidence in presentation and English. Examples of recent school productions include Matilda, Jekyll & Hyde, Taming of the Shrew, The Picture of Dorian Gray, Cats, Mary Poppins and Robert Louis Stevenson. Examples of primary presentations include Fairy Tale Rap, Encanto and Descendants.

The school actively promotes pupils' moral and cultural development by focussing on the school's core values in assemblies and through a wide variety of themed days and events such as Earth Day, Hindi Day, World Sibling Day, Wellbeing Days, Gratitude Walks, International Day of Sign Language. These activities broaden pupils understanding of the world and their role in it. The Junior Duke award in KS2 also provides pupils who opt to participate, a broader understanding of self and how they can contribute to the world around them. Spirituality is promoted through Islamic lessons, provision of prayer rooms and in mindfulness exercises incorporated in a few lessons.

Pupils are aware of the five values which the school promotes: respect, integrity, compassion, empathy and community. They are proud of their school and confidently express their positive opinions of it. The pupils listed social relationships and friendship groups, extra-curricular events in school, and the practical application of learning via activities such as the 'Academic Expo' as their favourite things about the school. Pupils are welcoming and polite to visitors, motivated learners and by the time they reach KS5 they are well prepared to make choices about the next stage of their education.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils meets the standard.

The school promotes pupils' welfare very effectively. The team of designated safeguarding leaders (DSL) are well known to pupils and understand their role. They are trained to level 3 standard and remain updated in their duties around keeping pupils safe. A close relationship with the school's nurse enables of leaders are fully informed and can act quickly of concerns are raised by the school nurse or any staff member. A robust process is in place for the reporting of concerns by staff and students and this process has a strong emphasis on confidentiality. All staff are all appropriately trained, and a school governor oversees the work of the safeguarding team. The principal is part of the safeguarding team and is part of the decision making when intervention is required. External agencies are sourced when required and the school works hard to ensure parents are fully supported. Whole school activities and assemblies share with pupils how to stay safe and are led by the safeguarding team.

A behaviour policy is in place and effectively implemented. On the rare occasions where pupils do not abide by the school rules a supportive approach is in place. Close monitoring and follow up by all staff in the school has resulted in a calm and relaxed atmosphere around the campus. Where any misbehaviour occurs, it is addressed immediately, and a record is kept of serious incidents and any sanctions imposed.

There is a strong ethos of anti-bullying, and the pupils participate in a wide range of activities, including assemblies, lessons and pupil-led talks. There is a culture of encouraging pupils to report incidents. A newly appointed school counsellor and DSL leads are available to support pupils who wish to speak about concerns regarding bullying incidents if they occur.

The school meets the requirements for health and safety from the local authorities and civil defence inspectorate. All certificates regarding the maintenance and routine inspection of key services including all utilities and fire are in place. A health and safety policy is in place, however there were noted aspects of the school's standards falling below what was expected, such as unlocked gates to out of bound areas. Staff with the responsibility for the health and safety must be more vigilant around the campus between external inspections, and to conduct regular inspections of the premises to ensure that standards are maintained consistently every day.

Although the school's accommodation is being continually updated to meet the needs of growing school population, health and safety considerations must be maintained to a high standard. At the time of the inspection gas supplies to the science laboratories were not in place. The secure and safe storage of combustible waste materials, cleaning chemicals and pool chemicals also needs to be reviewed. Security on external perimeter gates must be tightly controlled so that staff have a clear list of who is on site at any time. Parents of pupils

in EYFS enter school at the end of the school day and it is recommended that their access to school is restricted to parents who can be identified by wearing a lanyard with photo ID.

The school is compliant with local fire safety requirements and has the required certification. There is a fire safety policy in place and selected staff are trained in the use of firefighting equipment. However, there is currently a need to unify the fire alarm system across all buildings as new buildings have a different system to the original buildings. In the event of a fire occurring in one building, manual activation is required in other adjacent buildings to evacuate the whole premises. Although regular drills indicate that this system is working it could be improved.

The first aid provision meets the expectations of the Dubai Health Authority and is up to date in all areas of inspection. The clinic facility offers a number of specialised areas such as waiting, triage and isolation. Four qualified nurses and a doctor address the pupils' needs and appropriate records are kept. A first aid policy is in place and is followed and staff receive first aid training. Wellbeing is promoted including the implementation of healthy lifestyles with lunch box checks being made on a regular basis. 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' are promoted, and healthy choices are advertised and available in the canteen. Personnel serving at the canteen have appropriate certification in health and hygiene and are regularly inspected by the local municipality inspectors.

During the day the school supervises the pupils appropriately with a number of support staff, teaching assistants and teachers allocated to specific duties at specific times. Where staff are in areas which could be considered a risk, such as car parks and gates high visibility vests are worn. The systems at drop off and pick up for pupils who travel on the school's buses is on site, and smooth.

All students are registered on entry into the school using an electronic register. This is accessible to the teachers in lessons during the day so pupil attendance can be checked. In KS3, classrooms a visible grid is also marked each day by teachers.

The school does have a risk assessment policy but does not have a comprehensive set of risk assessments in place to ensure the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted. Where risks are identified prompt implementation is often restricted by changes to the buildings use. Currently due to the relocation of the science laboratories the science preparation room is housed in an area that was not designed for this use. Therefore, there is an urgent and immediate need for a science preparation room to be commissioned. This to include the correct storage of chemicals and hazardous materials. In line with risk assessment for the new science laboratories teachers must ensure pupils wear appropriate safety equipment when handling hazardous substances and that the laboratory is spacious enough for safe and careful movement when in use, particularly for practical tasks.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

All members of staff undergo appropriate checks to ensure their suitability for the role when they are appointed to the school. This includes staff hired locally and those recruited from overseas. Identity, medical, qualifications and police check, or ICPC checks and references were in place for all staff appointed to the school and recorded on a single central register (SCR). This includes teachers, administration staff, teaching assistants, and supply teachers. Details of contractors such as bus nannies, cleaners and security guards who work at the school are also stored on the school's central record. Staff details are held in individual files and on the single central record held by the HR manager in the school. Volunteers who work with pupils in the school are also required to provide a police check and identity check and are on the SCR. All information is stored securely and confidentially.

The school's proprietors oversee the business of three schools in Dubai and are resident in the UAE. They are well established and are listed on the school's register. The school recruits many new teachers from teacher training colleges in Mumbai, India. These staff provide a police certificate and are subject to approval from the ministry where thorough checks against suitability to work with children are also made. Staff who are recruited locally must undergo the same checks as expatriate staff regarding identification checks, police checks, medical, qualifications and references. A disclaimer letter for local staff is sought from the previous place of work in line with ministry requirements.

Qualifications are checked by the ministry and attested for overseas staff. Two references, one from the most recent place of work, are sought from an organisational email, which are followed up by the school by telephone if required. VISA details are stored centrally on the single central record for all staff. The school completes social media searches to ensure that all staff are suited to work with children. If there are any concerns, then these are thoroughly investigated before appointment to ensure that the person appointed is suitable.

Advertisements of job vacancies promote safer recruitment practices. The school places adverts on social media sites and corporate websites. All advertisements include a tag line that state the school is committed to keeping children safe. Interview procedures include a question to check on the persons suitability for the role.

Induction processes take new staff through the policies and procedures related to keeping children safe. A staff handbook and a period of induction ensures staff are fully understanding of the school's child protection policy. Staff new to the UAE receive guidance on living in the UAE. A probationary period enables the school to be cautious before issuing long term contracts.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

Premises and accommodation of the school meets the standards for BSO.

The site is secured by a high perimeter wall with two access gates. The accommodation has recently been increased by the addition of a purpose-built secondary building on land adjacent to the original buildings.

The school's accommodation is well equipped to deliver the curriculum. It includes ample facilities for sport with outdoor astro turfed areas, a swimming pool which is securely locked when not in use, and a large indoor gymnasium. This is also used as the school's auditorium with collapsible seating and provides a suitable area for whole school events and productions. On site the school offers a school cafeteria open to older pupils and a school book shop.

The school's accommodation suits the age and stage of pupils. In the original buildings the youngest pupils occupy ground floor areas and EYFS staff have creatively adapted indoor corridor areas to promote all aspects of the curriculum. However, there is limited outdoor space for pupils particularly in the hotter months of the school year.

The accommodation for primary pupils is acceptable. Classrooms are at their maximum capacity in primary, particularly noticeable with the oldest pupils. Key stage 1 teachers ensured pupils bags were stored outside classrooms and this good practise should be encouraged across primary. Corridors in KS2 are wide and could be further developed to provide extra learning areas for pupils. KS2 PE sessions are creatively timetabled during the summer months to ensure lessons can take place in the gymnasium and not in classrooms. Corridors and shared areas of the primary school are clean and tidy and have a range of displays that promote the values and ethos of the school. The primary library has recently been moved from the central library: this closer access will improve access for primary pupils.

Secondary pupils are accommodated in the new and adjacent older buildings where specialist facilities for ICT and Science are available. One of the new buildings contains three science laboratories but these lack specialist equipment. The gas taps in the chemistry laboratory are not connected to a gas supply and an emergency shower is not yet plumbed into a water supply. There is not yet provision for a sixth form area, but older pupils make creative use of corridor space. The school's library has recently been split into a primary and secondary library. This has left the secondary library with reduced stock and over time it is hoped that the stock will increase with books more suited to secondary pupils.

Washrooms are available and clearly signed throughout the school. These are clean, hygienic and well maintained. A well-equipped clinic is provided, centrally located close to the administration block and has good access to a toilet. Drinking water stations are available.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers and others.

The school has successfully met the standard in terms of providing transparent information to parents, carers and other stakeholders. The school's commitment to openness, accessibility and effective communication has fostered a trusted relationship with the wider community.

Dubai Scholars Private School has established strong lines of communication that facilitate regular and interaction between the school, parents, carers and stakeholders. Channels such as newsletters, school website, parent portals, and Microsoft Teams among others are used consistently to share information. This open line of communication ensures that parents and carers are kept up to date with school events, updates, and opportunities for involvement. It also serves as a platform for parents and carers to connect with the school and share their thoughts and suggestions.

Parents and carers have access to curriculum details on the website and parent portal. These provide details of the subjects taught, learning objectives and assessment methods. The school also ensures communication of its policies and procedures to parents and carers. The school provides information on key areas such as admissions, behaviour management, child protection as well as health and safety. By sharing these policies with parents and carers the school ensures that they are informed partners in their children's educational experience.

The school consistently provides up-to-date performance data, including examination results, progress reports and relevant measures of pupil achievement. Parents reported that this information is presented in a format that is easy to understand, allowing parents and carers to closely monitor their child's academic progress and make informed decisions regarding their education.

In addition, the school arranges events and workshops where parents can meet school staff members and discuss updates and policies. These informal gatherings provide an opportunity for parents to engage in conversations with representatives from the school further strengthening the partnership between them. The school has an active parent teacher association who are involved in supporting school events and activities.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

Dubai Scholars Private School has a complaints policy in place, and it is implemented effectively. Concerns or issues raised by parents and carers are addressed promptly.

The policy states defined time scales. Parents are given the option to make an initial informal complaint by informing the class teacher or form tutor. The school accepts both formal and informal complaints through various channels, such as phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings. The school is committed to providing timely resolutions, aiming to offer a solution within 7 days, depending on the specific matter at hand. If a parent remains unsatisfied with the response, they have the option to submit a formal complaint in writing.

The school maintains a comprehensive complaints log, ensuring all complaints are documented, while prioritising confidentiality in handling correspondence, statements, and records related to individual complaints. A parent liaison officer manages the complaints log and ensures that complaints are resolved quickly. In the event of a resolution not being found the school's senior leaders can support to achieve a satisfactory outcome. The parent liaison officer is appreciated by parents as an independent and non-biased listener.

Parents reported that complaints were dealt with promptly. Parents reported that the school is accessible and that an open-door approach ensures informal concerns can be dealt with quickly. This was most evident with parents of EYFS pupils at drop off and pick up times.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school meet the standard required for BSO.

The school has a committed leadership team who understand the challenges that the school faces. An executive principal works closely with the head of school and senior leadership team to support the schools ongoing development. This is mainly focussed on improving and further developing the quality of education across the school. Recently there has been a very positive impact in EYFS through intensive staff training on continuous provision such that the standard of teaching is good in EYFs, and pupils make strong progress. The school's owners are represented in the school on a daily basis by the school's principal who is co-owner and oversees the business of the school.

A board of governors meet three times a year, but their discussions focus mainly on facilities. Their constitution is developing over time and is not yet fully replicating a wider British board of governors. The board influence the strategic development and continual improvements of the site and its facilities.

The school's improvement plan is based on the UAE Common Inspection framework and is colour coded to indicate the status of actions. It is not yet measuring outcomes against British standards and lacks measures overall, so the impact of actions taken are difficult to assess.

The school invests time and resources in ensuring teachers are supported and equipped to deliver the English national curriculum. Many teachers are recruited from India and have limited knowledge of the English national curriculum or the ethos of working in a British curriculum school. Strong induction programmes and continuous support through in a triadic mentorship programme enables teachers to feel supported. There is very strong use of sharing of best practice. Continual professional development programmes have been led recently on STEAM, high order questioning and safeguarding. An external provider from the UK trained primary staff in the use of a new maths scheme of work, however its consistent implementation has yet to be embedded.

The school employs a distributive leadership approach 'All from within' and middle leaders are being developed to take on increasing responsibilities. A robust teacher performance appraisal framework is based on regular observations, conversations and this having a positive impact on improving teachers' professional development. Teachers talked of observations and the feedback discussions improving their practice. Initiatives with the sister school in Sharjah are in place and these are enabling the sharing of good practice. However, a closer link could be made between teachers' performance and the wealth of pupils' performance data to develop teachers practice further. The strong use of pupils' performance data is being used effectively by leaders to identify individual pupils who may need further support but is

not yet looking at overall patterns in teaching. The summative assessment data also is used very effectively with parents who are very supportive of their children's studies in school.

Staff talked of feeling supported by the school and there was a strong sense of loyalty to the school community. The school's leaders and a large team of administration staff ensure that the school runs smoothly day to day and there is a high focus on pupils' care and welfare. The school has a good reputation in the local community for academic success and all stakeholders are fully committed to ensuring the school retains its high reputation.