



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

GEMS Cambridge International School

**Dubai
United Arab Emirates**

Date **14th to 18th March 2022**
Inspection number **20220314**

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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 students; 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 students and students' 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 136 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team were in school for three days. The lead inspector was Colin Dyson. The team members were Bernie Babkirk, Alistair Downes, Jennifer Gilchrist, Nan McKeon, Peter Smith and Sheila Smith.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

Cambridge International School Dubai 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

Cambridge International School, Dubai (CIS) successfully sets high expectations for all its students, and they respond by making good or better progress in most lessons. It provides a good standard of education and care, with some significant outstanding aspects. Levels of attainment by the time students leave the school are high: students are articulate, thoughtful and resilient learners.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at CIS, including the following:

- The principal is outstanding, providing clear guidance and direction for the school.
- There is a passionate team of leaders and managers providing guidance and support.
- The commitment of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching to the wellbeing of every student.
- The happy, articulate, and confident students who display an infectious enthusiasm for all to achieve their best.
- The commitment and dedication of staff; reflected in the high staff retention.
- The expanding pastoral care provision that secures outstanding wellbeing for all students.
- The parents recognise and celebrate the highly effective avenues of communication that the school provides.
- The commitment of the whole school community to outstanding levels of cleanliness and hygiene throughout the school.
- The highly appropriate focus on the development of English language acquisition across the school - from the rapid development in reading for younger students to the high use of correct terminology in all subjects.
- The school demonstrates a high level of commitment to each staff member's professional development.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Ensure the school immediately addresses the known health and safety issues.
- Review how the school develops the premises to ensure the foundation curriculum is appropriately enriched through teaching areas and resources to provide the highest quality learning environments to support creativity in learning.
- Enable teachers to feel more confident in taking risks within the framework for learning and teaching, to create even more memorable learning experiences.

4. The context of the school

| | | | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Full name of School | Cambridge International School | | | | |
| Address | Damascus Street, Al Twar, Dubai, United Arab Emirates | | | | |
| Telephone Number/s | 971 (0) 4 282 4646 | | | | |
| Fax Number | Not Applicable | | | | |
| Website Address | www.gemscis-dubai.com | | | | |
| Key Email Address/s | info_cis@gemsedu.com | | | | |
| Headteacher/Principal | Mr. Lachlan MacKinnon | | | | |
| Chair of Board of Governors / Proprietor | Sir Michael Peat | | | | |
| Age Range | 3 – 19 years | | | | |
| Total number of students | 2,739 | Boys | 1,395 | Girls | 1,344 |
| Numbers by age | 0-2 years | 0 | | 12-16 years | 1,349 |
| | 3-5 years | 371 | | 17-18 years | 214 |
| | 6-11 years | 1,019 | | 18+ years | 119 |
| Total number of part-time children | None | | | | |

4.1 British nature of the school

The ethos, nature and appearance of Cambridge International School (CIS) School is recognisably British, mirroring what would be found in the independent sector in the UK. The school aims to provide an education that has similar characteristics to an independent school in the UK.

- The ethos, nature and appearance of the school are recognisably British. The school is well organised according to the normal structures found in a good English school.
- Policies and practices are based on the expectations and procedures of UK education, underpinned by the use of the Department for Education (DfE) guidance.
- The school is highly effective in promoting British values through the school's vision, curriculum, displays, events, and teaching.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is embedded in lessons throughout the curriculum, supporting British values and the understanding of others.
- A robust and fair appraisal and line management system is securely in place.
- Student progress is monitored by recognisable baseline, formative, and summative assessment methods. Student progress is reported to the parents through detailed written reports.
- There are extensive bright, creative displays, celebrating student achievements. There are a range of whole school events, a range of interest days, assemblies, and other appropriate celebrations.
- The curriculum supports students to become well rounded individuals who are knowledgeable about a wide range of issues and are able to develop and pursue new interests to a high level.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is good with significant elements that are outstanding. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum is good and meets the standard: there are some excellent features.

The Early years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum offers opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge required to reach a good level of development in relation to Early Learning Goals. This is enhanced by theme days, events, and school wide challenges. The focus on communication and language is key in enabling the children to be as successful as they are in the six other areas of learning. A regular cycle of staff training has ensured that the new Early years framework is embedded in planning and provision.

Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and balanced and closely aligned to the National Curriculum for England. Arabic is taught as a specialist subject with provision for Arabic native speakers and streaming for ability in Key Stage 2. PE and music are also taught by specialists.

Curriculum policies and appropriate plans enable teachers to provide a wide range of experiences for all students in primary. The curriculum meets the local requirements and provides students with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding across a broad range of subjects. Alongside English and mathematics, science is prioritised with all classes benefiting from three lessons each week. A wide range of subject specific learning weeks ensure a balanced curriculum; however, students could benefit from opportunities to enrich the curriculum further, increasing engagement and enabling students to develop an even greater understanding.

Opportunities are planned into the curriculum for students to work collaboratively and co-operate with their peers. Planning is detailed although there was at times a lack of evidence of differentiation, particularly to stretch and challenge the most able students. In many lessons students were encouraged to make cross curricular links, for example creating story settings in English linked to their science lessons on space.

Wellbeing has been prioritised by the school and is carefully planned into the curriculum. Students in primary benefit from daily wellbeing lessons in which they were observed discussing topics thoughtfully and in detail.

The school has achieved the SEND Inclusion Award and provides some provision for SEND students. The Take 3 initiative and invitation only extra-curricular activities (ECAs) ensures students from each class who require additional support and/or intervention are targeted. It is important that progress is tracked regularly, and targets are reviewed as scheduled.

In addition to the class-based curriculum students have the opportunity to participate in a range of ECAs and the school has formed a link with the Special Olympics to offer Cycling Proficiency to students in year 4-7. Students in primary spoke enthusiastically about specialist learning weeks, specifically STEM Week and the STREAM Challenge. Research Based Learning is prevalent in Social Studies lessons as students tackle questions such as the 'merit of social media' and 'if there has been an improvement in living standards in the UAE'.

The English National Curriculum provides the framework for teaching and learning in Key Stage 3. Students in year 9 are able to make a choice of one subject from a block of 5 subjects. At Key Stage 4 all students follow a comprehensive IGCSE programme where students study a mandatory core of subjects and a choice of a further four from a wide range of thirty-two subjects. At Key Stage 5 students are supported when deciding between an A Level or BTEC route. The school's commitment to its post 16 education is reflected in the fact that it offers students a choice from thirty-six A Levels as well as the BTEC Qualification. There are detailed curriculum brochures for each year group.

The wide-ranging enrichment programme runs throughout the school. This builds from Early years to year 13 and covers all aspects of the personal development of the students. There are a number of weeks where the school has a particular focus; for example, reading week, innovation week, healthy eating week. A detailed and extensive programme of extra -curricular activities runs last period on Tuesday and provides students with the opportunities to broaden their experience by attending a subject of interest as well as offering extra time in a subject for those who require it. The impact of this programme can be seen across all key stages.

There are a range of high-quality displays across the school that celebrate students' achievements as well as an awareness of the world at large, and key elements of the High-Performance Learning (HPL) programme. Transition from key stages is managed well with effective pastoral and curriculum cross-phase liaison supporting a near seamless move from one stage to the other. Interviewed students reported feeling well advised prior to making their choices for Key Stage 4, 5 and onward pathways.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features

The teaching across the EYFS is satisfactory with some good features. In the best lessons, students are independent learners, motivated and require challenge. Learning is active and energetic, with provision for free flow activities. The students are confident when trying new things and happily engage in a variety of learning activities however, elements of awe and wonder were not seen.

The teachers' planning is detailed but lacks strategies to keep children engaged and extend the learning objectives. A new phonics programme and reading scheme has been introduced to ensure consistency and progression.

There are currently no outdoor activity areas for EYFS. There are plans for the school to install outdoor early years provision in the upcoming summer holidays. Effective provision of care ensures that students feel safe to take risks in their environment. Behaviour of the children is good, and they genuinely show caring attitudes to their classmates and teachers. The students' academic, social, and emotional and physical needs are met and well supported. Students with additional learning needs are identified and intervention is being provided daily.

There is a robust system in place to track and record student progress. Continual assessment both anecdotal and photographic provides assessment against the Early Learning Goals. The data showed significant improvement between the FS 1 and FS 2 year groups and the majority of children meet or exceed Early Learning Goal expectations. The leadership team analyse data and underachievement triggers a range of intervention strategies.

As the school returns to the pre-Covid-19 teaching and learning, teachers are adapting to the challenges of engaging each student and encouraging self-directed learning as well as group / pair learning. Under the strong leadership they have in place, the EYFS team have the ability to provide outstanding teaching and learning. Opportunities for professional development are available internally and across the GEMS network and are actively promoted. A focus on developing engagement in lessons will further improve attainment.

In Key Stage 1, teachers are proficient in their subject knowledge of their curriculum area. Teachers uniformly plan and deliver effective lessons with clear learning objectives so that students know what they are learning to do. Teachers' lesson planning is consistent across the primary school. Cross curricular links are explicit in lessons. Values are emphasised in all lessons observed. Questioning is used routinely by teachers to check students' understanding. Self-checking is used

routinely. In the best lessons, teachers gave students time to think and consider. This allowed for students to use their well-developed language skills to collaborate and discuss their learning. In a year 4 Humanities lesson on food waste, students applied their learning to real life situations, displaying empathy for others who are less fortunate. In a year 5 mathematics lesson, the ingredients on cereal packaging were used to depict percentages in decimals and fractions.

In the most effective lessons, learning activities and resources are differentiated to appropriately extend students. However, in some lessons the level of challenge is limited.

In primary, the majority of teaching is satisfactory or good with some outstanding. Teaching of mathematics, English and science is strong. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. Teaching is well paced and in the best lessons there is a good balance between direct teacher input, independent work and group collaboration.

In many lessons prior learning is reviewed at the start of the lesson and links are made to other subjects. Teachers extend learning through questioning and students are encouraged to ask questions of their peers, showing high levels of interest and engagement. "Bring your own device" (BYOD) is used effectively to enhance learning, however in many lessons' students lacked hands on learning opportunities and could benefit from additional resources. In all lessons observed in primary High-Performance Learning (HPL) was well embedded and students were able to clearly link skills to their learning. For example, one student said, "I have used Hardworking Hannah's Perseverance to complete all tasks related to Classification." Students also had the opportunity to create their own Superheroes to further embed HPL, with Ambitious Adam, Punctual Paul and Imaginative Isaac being developed by the students themselves. Assessment and tracking are robust and include GL, Pass, CAT4 and NGRT assessments. Marking is up to date although often does not have sufficient direction to improve learning.

Teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 is good with some outstanding lessons. In Key Stage 3, behaviour for learning is a significant strength. Therefore, students make good progress in their lessons and demonstrate significant learning over time. Teachers' lesson plans include clear learning objectives to take account of students' strengths and areas to improve. Teachers know their students very well and there are strong and productive relationships between teachers and students. They praise students' efforts, and this encourages students to participate with enthusiasm, promotes excellent behaviour and results in a very positive atmosphere for learning. In Arabic lessons student contributed highly effectively and made excellent progress as they discussed the topic of Birthdays. Good lessons were often characterised by the encouragement and correct use of subject specific vocabulary, reflecting the competent subject knowledge of the teacher. In a science

lesson on magnetism for example, the teacher encouraged a high level of student interaction that was very supportive in the development of specific technical language.

Teachers encourage students to reflect on learning and not simply to acquire knowledge. Students in year 9 displayed highly insightful reflections based on the study of the poem Sympathy by Laurence Dunbar. They discussed and reflected on the views of others with empathy and understanding. When lessons incorporated group or collaborative work, this encourages students to become more independent, improves teamwork, leadership and communication skills. Teachers manage students' behaviour very effectively. In the best lessons teachers typically use a wide range of teaching techniques: group work, paired work, individual work and class learning. Lessons could be further enhanced by using a wider range of resources and practical activities to create memorable learning activities. The students communicated confidently with each other and with the adults in the room.

The teaching and learning in Key Stage 4 is good or better. Lessons are well structured and contain a variety of tasks and activities. Group work encourages discussion amongst students, something they engage in enthusiastically. Students are confident and very articulate. They are keen to share their ideas and contribute well to discussion. In the best lessons teachers are not constrained by the established lesson template but use it more as a framework and are prepared to explore ideas developed from student contributions. There is good use of questioning to ensure understanding and a thorough process of continuous assessment and tracking is in place to ensure progress is maintained. Work is marked regularly and positive, constructive feedback is given. In a year 10 moral education lesson, students displayed insight when exploring their core values as demonstrated by an intense discussion between two students on the value of freedom. In a year 10 English lesson, students were confidently able to analyse the poem On finding a small fly crushed in a book.

Relationships between staff and students are very positive and are a strength in the school. Students are positive about their experience in the school and demonstrate a love of learning. This is reflected by the enthusiasm the teaching staff have for their students and their desire for them to achieve highly.

In Key Stage 5 teaching is good or better. The students are enthusiastic, mature young people, keen to be successful and achieve in their field of study. They are highly focussed on their learning. They are confident and articulate. Across the full breadth of subjects offered post 16, teaching is thoughtfully planned and grounded in excellent subject knowledge from teachers. Students receive excellent careers advice and support and nearly all students' progress to university.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

Overall, the standards achieved by students are good and sometimes outstanding.

The school has comprehensive systems in place to assess and track students' attainment and progress and as a result has significant data which is analysed carefully by senior and middle leaders.

At the end of academic year 2020/21 the school reported that the vast majority of students in EYFS (FS1 and FS2) made better than expected progress. By the end of FS2 48% of students had exceeded the Early Learning Goal (ELG) for writing, with the figure rising to 53% for reading. In mathematics the percentage of students exceeding the ELG for Shape, Space and Measure; and Number was 52% and 65% respectively. The percentage of children achieving a 'good level of development' was 81.6% which is above the UK average.

Levels of attainment increase in the primary School and are at an outstanding level, particularly in Upper Key Stage 2. At the end of academic year 2020/21 80% of students in Key Stage 1 achieved above expectation in English. The figure was similarly high in Key Stage 2. Science is a particular strength and students benefit from a significant number of weekly lessons. Across all Key Stage 2 groups at least 85% of students achieved above expectation, with this rising to as high as 94% in year 5. The results mirror the quality of teaching observed in the primary school, with the majority of outstanding lessons observed in year 5 and 6. High standards in science continue through to Key Stage 5 where students' achievements at A-Level in biology, chemistry and physics are all significantly above world averages. In mathematics the majority of students in the primary School achieve above the expected level, however the levels are lower than in science and English. Leaders are aware of this and have already taken numerous steps to ensure attainment in mathematics aligns to the high standards in other subjects.

In Key Stage 3 the majority of students achieve above expectation in mathematics, English and science. Across Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 girls outperform boys in English, while boys outperform girls in mathematics. There was no clear disparity between girls and boys' performance in science.

Good levels of attainment continue into Key Stage 4 where 87% of students achieved A*-C in the 2020/21 GCSEs. Results over the past three years, although below the world average, have improved year on year. Those students who had been at the school for five or more years achieved above the world average.

The standards achieved by students at A-Level are outstanding. At the end of academic year 2020/21 89% of student entries achieved A*-C, significantly above

the world average. This rose to 92% amongst students who had been in the school from the beginning of Key Stage 3. As with GCSEs, results have improved year on year over the past three years.

The overall pass rate for BTEC was 98% in 2020/21 with 22% obtaining the highest grade of distinction. Almost all students move onto university and are prepared well for further study and successful adult lives.

The school participates in international benchmark assessments. TIMSS data shows that year 8 mathematics has improved between 2011 – 2019. Similarly, PISA scores in Reading and Science have improved between 2012-2018. Both TIMSS and PISA results are consistently above the average for Dubai UK Schools.

Behaviour for learning is outstanding, and students are highly motivated learners. Students regularly participate in presentations and lead the learning taking place in the classroom. They are confident, articulate, and polite, and display excellent spoken language skills.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is excellent and is a strength.

Positive relationships exist between all members of the school community and a family centred ethos is evident. The school has succeeded in creating a caring and welcoming atmosphere where students thrive. PSHE is a high priority. Pastoral systems support students in all aspects of welfare. Daily Well-being lessons are held. There are 2 PSHE lessons a week, and the Upstart App is effectively used to check in and monitor students' welfare.

The school's values are central to the personal development of the students and are followed in their daily life. The Positive Education Enhanced Curriculum of Perseverance, Responsibility, Honesty, Empathy and Respect, underpins all the school does. The British Values of Rule of Law, Democracy, Individual Liberty, and Respect are continually reinforced in lessons. There is a strong UAE cultural awareness.

Students are provided with many opportunities to develop their confidence and collaborative skills through both classroom learning and enrichment activities including assemblies, celebrations, subject weeks, theme days, competitions, sports events and special projects. Students are provided with a wealth of leadership opportunities including Eco Council, Student Council, Prefects, and Happiness Ambassadors, further developing their self-awareness and social confidence. The Junior Duke Award has recently been introduced with an encouraging uptake of over 130 students taking part. Students from secondary effectively support primary students using the Big Bro Little Bro transition system which eases them into the next phase of their education.

Students in secondary are encouraged to volunteer for projects. Innovation and start up ideas are fully supported by the school. Links to international entities have been made by students with encouraging developments. The students' personal development is further enhanced by the extensive range of creative and academic ECAs which they greatly enjoy. In some cases, teachers recommend an activity to students to assist with their subject progress.

The moral education is well developed across the school. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for human differences. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. In year 4 students confidently debated the issue of food waste and poverty. In year 10 students gave a presentation they had prepared about heritage sites in Basra. These had been bombed by both Russian and USA backed groups at various times resulting in their destruction. The students then went on to discuss the ongoing effects of war on heritage sites.

A well-established house system promotes vertical integration across the school. Star of the week, Phoenix and *DoJo* points, and head teacher awards all recognise personal achievement.

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

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

The welfare, health and safety of students throughout the school is excellent: they are a strength of the school. Students are ambassadors for their school. They demonstrate exemplary behaviour and relationships with their peers, teachers and with visitors.

Throughout the school, emotional wellbeing is regarded as paramount and there are many systems in place to support every child from, daily wellbeing classes in Early years to the Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) tracking for year 11. Daily monitoring of wellbeing from year 6 and above is done via the UpStrive App. The value placed on wellbeing is also evident in visual displays, in-class discussions, and student activities. Student health and well-being surveys are carried out regularly alongside the KHDA Wellbeing Census. Any children identified as being at risk are offered support within school from the counsellor or older students who have been trained as mental health first aiders.

Eight mandatory GEMS online courses, which must be completed annually, offer a variety of health and safety training for all staff. Included in this training is safeguarding. Any safeguarding or child protection concerns are logged on the Phoenix system and are immediately sent to the safeguarding leads who will then take the appropriate action. This is a new, more efficient system of reporting safeguarding concerns. The effective systems which are in place to support safeguarding are clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

The school has up-to-date policies for health and safety, safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, e-safety, first aid and risk assessment. All procedures are fully compliant with the government regulations: there is a robust system for monitoring and reviewing these policies and procedures. The behaviour policy was created by students, parents and staff. While behaviour is seen as a strength in the school, any incidents are reported on the Phoenix system and action is taken in accordance with the behaviour policy. The school has a full-time doctor, four registered nurses and two support staff, who work from a spacious and well-equipped clinic. Regular health check-ups are carried out for specified year groups. During the year, the medical staff deliver workshops and lessons to children on health and hygiene. Care plans and records are kept up to date and a detailed clinic policy details procedures that must be followed. Throughout the school the names of trained first aiders are displayed.

The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy. Risk assessments are written for any out of school activity and/or trip and all trips are preceded by an advance visit. Risk assessments are also completed for all events in school. Safety and safeguarding measures are also in place for work experience placements. Fire drills and lock down drills are conducted frequently in line with local regulations and evacuation procedures are evident in all rooms.

Students are taught from an early age how to keep themselves healthy, and this is woven into the curriculum. Children in early years are aware of healthy foods in their lunch boxes and are encouraged to make healthy food choices. Developing a healthy lifestyle is part of the wellbeing curriculum. The school canteen offers a selection of healthy options each day.

A rigorous system for monitoring attendance and punctuality is in place. Attendance is logged by teachers each morning. If a child is marked absent an automatic message is sent to their parents. Late children must enter through reception and are given a late pass which will allow them to enter class. A clear system of escalated response is in place to deal with regular lateness or absence.

Managing transition is another strength of the school. Transitions days are set up at the end of the third term. New joiners are also invited to take part so that they can begin to make friends. Children with additional needs are invited to join transition days at an earlier time when it will be less busy. Extra support is also given to children who are transferring from a different curriculum. A particularly notable provision for transition is the 'Big Bro, Little Bro' initiative. This was established by a student in the school and buddies up a year 6 student with a year 9 student who will guide them through the start of Middle School. Transition from Early years to Key Stage 1 is well planned and offers many opportunities for the Foundation Stage 2 children to become familiar with the year 1 teachers and rooms.

Transport safety is given an appropriately high priority. A large number of students travel by school bus. The bus drivers and supervisors are trained in security, safeguarding and safety. Bus organisation is a strength. At the beginning and end of the day staff, including security guards, supervise the safe arrival and departure of students to the school. Parents are requested to show their parent pass before entering. It was noted that while staff tried to enforce this policy at the gate, many parents were able to enter without their pass. The school needs to audit the use of parent lanyards to control access and ensure safety.

Pupils are well supported and guided in school, due to a consistent and caring approach by all members of staff. They feel listened to and valued as individuals. A highly effective pastoral team ensure that the provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is constantly being reviewed and improved where necessary. CIS recognise the vital importance of student wellbeing and has made it a key priority, embedding it into all aspects of school life. Welfare, health, and safety are seen as the responsibility of all stakeholders.

Highly effective management and provision of pastoral care has been established. The impact of this is evident across the school. Robust policies are in place to ensure the safety of every child. The behaviour and relationships of students are exemplary in every key stage.

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

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

The school ensures that all required checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who are employed to work at the school. Students are exceptionally well cared for. Provision for safeguarding of students is of a very high standard. The school employs safer recruitment processes to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. The school checks the employment history of all staff, including seeking police checks of the suitability of applicants to work with children. Interview procedures are rigorous and led by senior leaders in partnership with GEMS Education. There is no evidence that any member of staff or volunteer carries out work at school in contravention of local, overseas or British disqualification, prohibition, or restriction.

The governance of the school incorporates wide representation from all stakeholders. This includes the owners, GEMS Education, who provide corporate governance in terms of education, safeguarding, inclusion, HR, finance, legal, IT, and procurement support. GEMS internal cluster support visits provide opportunities for evaluation at all levels, leading to improved school standards. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities are identified and planned into the whole-school and PSHE curriculum, encouraging students to become positive members of the community.

Proprietors and governors are actively involved in the school having monthly meetings, lesson observations and walk-through sessions. At CIS every care and attention has been given to promoting students' welfare, health and safety. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are confident in staying safe from abuse and exploitation. Students can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy. Students are very well supervised as befits their age and stage of development.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent.

The accommodation is outstanding and fully and meets the required standard. Staffing levels and resources are good. The school site meets the requirements to enable staff to deliver a wide range of activities for the students. There are sufficient teaching rooms and specialist areas to accommodate all the learning programmes and curricular needs of the students. However, the lack of sufficient specialist rooms results in some practical subjects such as art, music and science being taught in classrooms. This does not appear to have had a detrimental effect on outcomes in these subjects.

The teaching areas are well-resourced with interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. The furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all students. Good use is made of the classrooms and other areas particularly corridors and lobby spaces which are used for display.

There are appropriate outdoor facilities for PE and Games. These are also available for breaks and recreational purposes for the students. The sports hall has one large (or two small courts), in poor condition and there is outside, an old artificial grass area currently used by the PE department. Common areas are well used throughout the school day. Creative display of student work throughout the school is excellent. The school is meticulously clean and hygienic.

The planned developments will further enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for the students as well as providing a safer environment.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided by CIS for parents, carers and the wider community is excellent.

The website is informative and comprehensive. Appropriate policies, curriculum information, essential information regarding premises and facilities, the school's mission and values are all readily available and clearly understandable. The website also provides an example of the British nature of the school.

The school portal provides an up-to-date comprehensive picture of student academic achievements as well as personal, social development. Parents and students always feel well informed through a variety of communication methods such as weekly class newsletters, monthly phone check ins, term reports and an open-door policy encouraged by the school management. Each year group has been provided with curriculum handbooks which outline all information required to prepare for the school year including all about subject targets, Course descriptions, national curriculum objectives and assessments.

A focus group of parents stated their children were fully aware of their attainment levels, efforts, targets, and behaviour expectations. The parents also stated the school had been very proactive in communicating with families especially through the recent Covid-19 pandemic. The principal provides a monthly "Bulletin" to inform the community of recent achievements and encouraging parental engagement and feedback. Regular student wellbeing surveys had been very appreciated and made parents and students feel valued and cared for.

Parents feel that the principal and staff have made a concerted effort to keep them informed and wherever possible to make all stake holders part of the process. This should be considered as a strength in the school. There is a strong belief that the values, concerns and ideas of parents and students are valued and an integral part of the decision-making process.

Stakeholders' ownership in the school routines and plans has become a strength which has created excitement in the parents. Positive examples of the value of the communication include the stakeholder's involvement in the development of the CIS values and mission statements.

Parents especially felt proud of their contribution and that their contributions were embedded in the guiding statements. Parents also mentioned that the "Coffee Mornings" are productive, and they genuinely feel listened to and valued. They mentioned the principal's efforts to show this by introducing an effort called "You Said it / We Did it!" In this effort a display board would be outside the school with a concern brought to the school's attention during the weeks "Coffee Morning" and the action taken by the school.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The schools' procedures for handling complaints meet the BSO standards and is accessible to the public via the school website.

The complaints procedure has both the opportunity to follow an informal and more formal process to ensure that every opportunity is made to achieve satisfaction. The policy details clear timelines for response and provides different and appropriate approaches depending on the type of complaint. There are specific procedures set out to follow a formal process depending on the area of concern: "learning and teaching", "behaviour, emotional wellbeing or support"/ "facilities – external services", "member of staff", "member of leadership team" and "principal". The policy promises confidentiality, respect, and the involvement of only those directly involved.

There is also a process for student complaints, concerns and counselling procedures.

Any complaint that cannot be resolved at the school level will be referred to GEMS Corporate Office and an independent investigation team will provide support and suggestions to the Leadership team in order to find solutions.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are excellent at all levels.

The principal has a strong vision and a powerful drive to move the school forward. He is a charismatic leader who has developed the capacity for distributed leadership throughout the school. Changes in the location of the school have been handled extremely well, in a short time frame a harmonious learning community has been established. Daily routines run very smoothly with leaders confident in their roles and responsibilities. A culture of high expectations permeates everything that leaders do. The determined leadership from the principal inspires leaders at all levels to succeed. Decision making across the school is distributed through teams of people that share the same common purpose and sense of accountability: building positive relationships and morale. Collectively, the leadership and management teams demonstrate a strong commitment to raising standards across the whole school. Student outcomes have shown year on year improvement over the last 4 years improving in TIMSS, PISA, GCSE, A Levels, GCSE and IBT.

The school's leaders articulate and share a clear vision of outstanding teaching and learning at the school. They meet regularly with teachers to define high quality teaching and learning as a checklist of best practice, on which teachers' observations are based. The team are passionate about developing and assisting every student to reach their potential both academically and personally, by providing a caring and supportive learning environment. During the recent school covid closures, collectively leaders at all levels ensured that all students were engaged in online live lessons 80 -100% of the time.

CIS is committed to supporting the well-being and mental health of the community recently being awarded the OPTIMUS Wellbeing Award. Safeguarding is integral to the life of the school with a culture of vigilance where student welfare is actively promoted, and they feel safe. High quality training and support enables staff to ensure students are protected from any extremism or radicalisation. Students are fully supported in becoming empathetic, thoughtful and reflective citizens.

The school's leaders have been successful in recruiting and retaining staff who are proud of the personal contribution they make to the school's success. Effective strategic planning has seen the appointment of deputy head of primary and deputy head of EYFS to strengthen the senior leadership team along with a deputy head of secondary. Faculty leaders have been appointed in the primary school, for history, geography, social studies, French, music. Rigorous self-evaluation, using both internal and external data, ensures all staff have a collective responsibility for driving school improvements forward. Along with the leadership appointments, UK trained teachers have also been employed to enhance the English provision in the school.

Staff turnover is very low and the school provides a range of professional development opportunities to ensure they can retain the best. Around the school, there is a palpable happy, kind, and inclusive atmosphere amongst the staff and learners. The school development plan is based upon a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

The self-evaluation process and the development planning are focussed on the correct issues: the self-evaluation process undertaken recently produced a detailed and accurate picture of the strengths of the school and the areas that can be developed further. There was a clear understanding of the outcomes from the self-evaluation as it had been a whole school initiative. Leaders at all levels contribute to self-evaluation and resulting improvement plans. Leaders operate a careful programme of staff development, linked to rigorous appraisal procedures. Appraisal systems also ensure that teachers have the motivation and opportunity to develop as outstanding practitioners.

There is great confidence in the leadership of the school: this allows innovative initiatives to be tried and tested fairly: if they do not have the desired effect of school life, they are realigned or stopped. The school has implemented *High Performance Learning* in all classes, and this had had a reported positive impact on students' engagement in their learning. The school's vision and mission statements are displayed around the school and on the website. These ambitious statements articulate a commitment to excellence both in students' academic ambitions and their physical, social, and emotional development. Students respect the example that is set by leaders, both through the work they do and also with their behaviour and attitudes around school.