



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

**International
Community School
Branch 1, City Centre**

**Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates**

Date
Inspection number

**28th – 30th September 2022
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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

During the inspection visit, over 80 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Colin Dyson. The team members were Justin Blakebrough, Sarah Curran, Penny Koutsantonis and Edward Pearce.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The International Community School, Branch 1, City Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE (ICS) 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).

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3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they have positive attitudes to school. Teaching and assessment are developing areas; they are focus points for the school improvement plans. The school recognises that assessment practices and the use of data to track pupils' progress and attainment do not yet provide a complete picture over time. The care and support offered to pupils helps to ensure they feel safe and grow into confident, responsible young people. Relationships across the school are a strength. Overall, the quality of education and care provided at ICS is at least satisfactory and there are good features. Pupils, parents and staff are highly committed to the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced.

The management and leadership have been through significant changes in the past two years and is now developing the strategic direction of the school. There is good pastoral care and welfare, health and safety. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is a strength.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the following:

- Pupils learn the English language quickly.
- There is high-quality pastoral care, which means pupils are safe, secure, supported and happy.
- Spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development are a strength
- The provision for the health, welfare and safety of pupils is a strength of the school.
- The strong focus on safety during the pandemic was greatly valued by parents.
- Pupils are happy at school as can be seen in the high attendance figures.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning and display empathy for others.
- Highly positive relationships between both teaching and non-teaching staff are a key feature of the school.
- The support provided by the school's owner for the financial and strategic development of the school.
- The school's strong focus on British Values such as respect, inclusion and pastoral care.
- The leadership of the principal in developing a staff commitment to successful outcomes during a range of challenges including staff turnover, appointing new senior and middle leaders and the impact of the pandemic.

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3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Enhance and develop the shared vision of excellence in teaching, learning and assessment for all teachers across the school, leading to the development of:
 - high levels of challenge and expectations in all lessons, particularly for the most able pupils.
 - suitable differentiation of learning and support to better meet the wide range of pupil needs.
 - greater opportunities for creativity, collaboration and critical thinking.
- Fully utilise the facilities and resources including the available IT to develop continuous provision and creative, inspiring learning opportunities.
- Provide the appropriate resources to ensure middle leaders are equipped to successfully undertake their key roles in ensuring the continuous high-quality development of the school.

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4. The context of the school

Full name of School	International Community School, Branch 1, City Centre				
Address	Najda Area - Facing Economic Dept Abu Dhabi UAE				
Telephone Number/s	+971 2 644 4003				
Fax Number	N/A				
Website Address	www.icschool-uae.com				
Key Email Address/s	Br1principal@icschool-uae.com				
Headteacher/Principal	Sharon Davis				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Dr Qasim Alom				
Age Range	4 – 18 years				
Total number of pupils	1,476	Boys	765	Girls	711
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	361	
	3-5 years	267	17-18 years	0	
	6-11 years	848	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

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The International Community School Branch 1 City Centre campus was a primary school, The school is now growing into a through school, adding one secondary year group per year. The school follows the English National Curriculum from Early Years Foundation to Key Stage 3, then offer a range of IGCSEs and GCSEs to Key Stage 4 and year 12 (currently taking AS levels).

The school is based in the heart of Abu Dhabi in City Centre and have pupils from a wide range of countries including the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon.

The school has been open since September 2013. They are part of a growing family of ICS schools. City Centre was the second branch of ICS to open in Abu Dhabi. The leadership team has a strong focus on laying the foundations to ensure pupils, parents and staff, work together to create a positive and modern learning environment with opportunities for all pupils to succeed.

4.1 British nature of the school

- The school follows the Oxford International Curriculum which is based upon the English National Curriculum and prepares pupils for the GCSE and A-level qualifications. The lessons are taught in English.
- The highly positive attitudes to learning displayed by almost all pupils.
- A phonics programme based on UK approved methodologies is taught to pupils in EYFS and key stage 1.
- There are displays around the school relating to the UK including for example a poster on the royal family. In form time, there were lessons relating to the Beatles and Banksy.
- The value of tolerance and respect is evident in the pupil body with a large number of different nationalities in which there are good relations with pupils from minority nationalities and cultures who comment on how welcoming they have found the school.
- A school council demonstrates the importance of democracy and free speech.
- The majority of staff hold UK recognised teaching qualifications.
- The incorporation of knowledge regarding the UK such as British music, art and culture was seen in many lessons.

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5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is satisfactory. The school meets the standards for BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

The English national curriculum is delivered alongside the UAE curriculum for Arabic, Islamic, Arabic Social Studies (Civics) and moral education.

The foundation stage curriculum provides a range of teacher led and play-based learning experiences. This is delivered through a themed curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy within lessons and this includes the teaching of phonics. Teaching assistants are used effectively to deliver tasks to small groups of pupils well matched to their needs. Long term and medium-term plans highlight opportunities for progression in acquisition of skills and knowledge. The programme of activities on offer is appropriate to their educational needs in all areas, including personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.

In the best lessons, learning objectives are clear and referred to throughout the lesson. Appropriate learning activities are planned and the pace of these lessons ensure that learning time is maximised. Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques are effectively applied but there is too much variation in practice and quality. In the good lessons teaching assistants were able to engage with children and impact their learning by asking open ended questions.

The effective delivery of the EYFS is enhanced with 'in the moment planning'. Teachers need to respond to the needs of the pupils and modify the learning for the individual and provide a wide range of child-initiated learning experiences and opportunities for growth. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 adequately meets the needs of the pupils. Whole year group planning was observed across core subjects and includes the prior attainment of pupils, however little evidence of this being used to inform personalisation for pupils was observed (e.g., extension opportunities for more able pupils or support/scaffolding for lower ability). Satisfactory coverage of curriculum objectives was observed, which was evidenced through year group planning. However, in conversation with teachers there was some confusion with regards to the use of Oxford International Curriculum (OIC) and the rationale behind this.

The school follows the statutory UAE curriculum for Arabic, Islamic, Arabic Social Studies and moral education. Pupils sit the Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of

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Key Stages 1 and 2 and also the GL progress tests in mathematics, English and science, in line with the UAE National agenda. Data is used to inform planning and discussed regularly with year level and phase leadership.

In Key Stage 3, the curriculum is broad and balanced and is based on the Oxford International Curriculum which gives a suitable foundation for GCSE courses. There is good provision for personal, social and health development. The curriculum in key stages 3, 4 and 5 is not sufficiently enhanced with the use of ICT, though lessons are timetabled in Key Stages 3 and 4 to deliver the skills necessary to pass the ICT GCSE. Only a very small proportion of lessons observed were practically based and not enough use was made of the facilities available. At times the curriculum is not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.

The range of extra-curriculum activities have been planned and they had only just started at the time of the inspection. The school provides a varied but slightly limited after school activities programme. Participation would be encouraged if, for example, more girls could participate in more sporting activities, such as volleyball and football or swimming, which are already available to boys.

Key Stage 5 subjects on offer currently are mathematics, sciences and business and the school is looking into broadening the provision in the future, including EPQs should they be deemed beneficial for the pupils.

There is recognition of pupils with special needs as well as those how are gifted and talented. The employment of a full time SENCO as of this academic year is expected to further support the implementation of appropriate strategies to enhance the learning of SEN and G&T pupils. Across the school a PSHE curriculum developing moral and social education is in place and reflects the values of the school. A highly effective assembly delivered on 'values' was engaging for pupils and provides a range of classroom follow up activities.

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5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. There were a range of lessons ranging from inadequate to outstanding but with the majority of lessons being satisfactory and a few lessons that were inadequate.

In the Early Years/Foundation Stage (EYFS) the programme of activities on offer is appropriate to the youngest pupils' educational needs in key areas, including personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills. With a focus on Physical development of fine motor skills.

The youngest pupils follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum working towards the Early Learning Goals. The school has invested in training as they introduce the Oxford International Curriculum (OIS curriculum). In the best lessons, learning objectives are clear and referred to throughout the lesson. Appropriate learning activities are planned, and the pace of these lessons aims to ensure that learning time is maximised. In the most effective lessons Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques are effectively applied.

An outdoor learning area provides a safe and stimulating environment. Pupils in EYFS and key stage 1 are taught phonics through a range of strategies. The EYFS curriculum ensures that all pupils have access to a range of opportunities to encourage and support their learning needs. Detailed planning identifies characteristics of effective learning. In the more effective lessons teaching assistants were able to engage with children and impact their learning by asking open ended questions. In the best lessons observed a carousel of activities are delivered and children are encouraged to choose the activity taking responsibility for their own learning.

Strong partnership with home/school allows children to share home experiences in school. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the pupils displayed positive learning behaviours and a good attitude towards learning. In lessons judged to be good, pupils were encouraged to work collaboratively and independence was promoted, however this wasn't consistent across the key stage. Planning was conducted across the whole year group with prior attainment used to group pupils accordingly, although little evidence of the impact on teaching was observed. In the vast majority of lessons observed there was no evidence of differentiated instruction, resourcing or outcomes.

Excellent behaviour was consistently strong across both key stages and the teachers and pupils formed strong relationships based on mutual respect. Phase leadership discussed their awareness of an over-reliance on slideshow and worksheet teaching and that plans are in place to encourage more practical and collaborative based activities in the classroom. This was evidenced during some lesson observations.

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Marking is inconsistent across Key Stages 1 and 2. In good lessons, the marking was detailed and feedback was provided that was personalised and purposeful. In the majority of lessons observed the feedback consisted of “two stars and a wish” that was not personalised and provided the same highlights and development points for every child, irrespective of the progress made.

School tracking systems need to be enhanced to ensure teachers have a clear understanding of pupil’s attainment and progress.

There are strong and productive relationships between teachers and pupils. They praise pupils’ efforts and this encourages pupils to participate with enthusiasm, promotes excellent behaviour and results in a very positive atmosphere for learning. Lessons run smoothly and incidents of unacceptable or disruptive behaviour are very rare. Teachers planning identifies sequences of learning activities but they do not always match well with pupils’ individual needs, interests and abilities.

Across the secondary school teachers have good subject knowledge but there is often an insufficient range of activities in lessons and an over-reliance on worksheets and PowerPoints and little independent thinking on the part of pupils. Little practical work was seen, and pupils would benefit from more practical work both in terms of developing practical skills and also in making the lessons more relevant. In a large majority of lessons there was little differentiation and so not all pupils’ needs were met. In lessons which were good, there was good questioning, including follow on questions with teachers asking a range of pupils. There was the effective use of pair work and a high level of challenge.

The better lessons involved teachers that asked a variety of questions to ensure understanding and provided some challenge. They ensured that key vocabulary was understood by all, pace was maintained, timed independent activities meant that teachers could move around the classroom to see how individual pupils were progressing. Success criteria at the end of the lessons were adequately assessed particularly in Key Stage 4. However, in one practical Year 12 lesson the pupils showed true enthusiasm and engagement for their learning, as it was one of the few lessons where teaching was pupil-centered, pupils were working independently and collaboratively, with considerably less teacher talk than in most lessons observed, where there was an overreliance of PowerPoints and worksheets.

In a small minority of the boys’ classes, where the quality of teaching was less good, there were some issues with the management of behaviour. However, in general pupils’ behaviour in lessons was very good and pupils were very compliant and keen to learn. Marking did not give sufficient feedback to pupils in a reasonable number of lessons. There was little evidence of the use of target setting in lessons. There seemed to be little progression in PE lessons with very similar lessons in Years 7 to 10. There was little use of ICT in lessons. Despite a large number of EAL pupils, there was little evidence of

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checking pupils' understanding of vocabulary and ensuring that all pupils understood key terms.

Resources and planning result in activities which are generally suitable to most pupils' abilities and needs. Special Needs and Gifted pupils are identified and that is clearly visible in lessons plans. Whilst the need for differentiated teaching is identified, this was not evident in the vast majority of the lessons observed. Pupils would also benefit from consistency in marking and more detailed feedback that would allow them to clearly know how they are performing in relation to targets set.

Teacher/ pupil relationships are a strength. Teachers are eager for their pupils to do well and utilise praise and encouragement, which is appreciated by pupils. Even when lessons were not highly engaging, pupils were well behaved and mostly remained on task.

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5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory and frequently good at the end of the secondary years.

For the youngest pupils', data shows 42% of pupils in literacy and 47% in mathematics achieve the early learning goals. School baseline data shows significant number of children make good progress. Pupils' fine motor skills were poor, but all teachers had recognised this and classes had opportunities for this to be developed. A strength across EYFS was the Personal and Social Development of pupils and how they have settled quickly into school life. Nearly all pupils quickly develop good learning behaviours, and they speak confidently.

The school's internal data shows that standards of attainment in English and mathematics in year 4 have consistently been slightly above age-related standards. In year 6 there has been a improvement over the last 3 years in the percentages of pupils attaining or exceeding age related expectations in English, mathematics and science. In 2021 the school's data indicates that pupils at the end of key stage 2 were attaining in line with age related standards. The school's internal assessment systems are not yet consistently reliable. A closer analysis of the data by a subject specialist leader is required before the data can be seen as a reliable source of information regarding pupils' attainment across the school. However, in pupils' books and in lessons most pupils were working at the age-related expectations and following the curriculum standards. Pupils talked about making progress in learning new knowledge in mathematics and science.

The school had its first cohort of Year 11 last year which was relatively small (18 pupils) and the attainment of these pupils was good. However, the school was not able to present any value-added data for this particular cohort.

The school makes use of GL assessments which show that attainment and progress is variable in different year groups and is overall satisfactory. Attainment and Progress is good in Science and Maths but in English an average of 54% of pupils showed attainment below expected international age-related expectations and progress in line with international expectations.

The school indicated that there was less progress made by more able pupils and a common theme of observed lessons was that there was insufficient differentiation and challenge for more able pupils. The school did not provide progress data on less able / SEN pupils. A large proportion of pupils are EAL and this is an area that the school will need to continue to work on to ensure that pupils' potential can be realised.

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Critical thinking, independent learning and problem-solving skills are less well developed.

There is a focus in Year 11 on preparing pupils for examinations but there is limited use of tracking and target setting to enable the school to further raise achievement and attainment. The school only has limited analysis in terms of the progress of different groups of pupils.

In terms of wider achievement beyond examination results such as achievements in Sports, competitions with other schools and the arts there is limited evidence. This is partly due to Covid but it would be good to see the school consider providing more opportunities to pupils to highlight achievement beyond examination results. The school is considering offering the Duke of Edinburgh Award and this would be a good addition to the school's provision.

The school indicated that there was less progress made by more able pupils and a common theme of observed lessons was that there was insufficient differentiation and challenge for more able pupils.

Attendance is consistently above 96% and previously identified lateness has been successfully addressed.

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

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils are polite, thoughtful and helpful and have a very positive attitude towards their school. Teachers model good behaviour and emphasise to pupils the importance of good manners including the use of "please" and "thank you".

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their average attendance which is over 96% and 100% attendance of pupils is celebrated with certificates.

The school makes use of the Oxford International Curriculum as a basis for a well-being curriculum in form-time and assemblies and includes a focus on values such as respect. In primary, use is made of yoga and meditation. Attention is paid to the well-being of staff and this trickles down to pupils. There is a family atmosphere and pupils help each other regardless of race, culture, religion or disability. In primary during anti-bullying week, there is an odd-socks day to demonstrate that everyone is unique and the importance of people being different.

The school follows the UAE Moral Education curriculum in which pupils discuss and reflect on a range of moral issues. During Ramadan, there are collections of food and money for those who are less well-off and fund-raising for the Red Crescent.

Attention is given to British life and values. School council demonstrates democracy in action and freedom of expression. The school held a minutes silence for the death of Queen Elizabeth II and pupils follow GCSEs as well as IGCSEs in which pupils need to be familiar with various aspects of the UK. There are a SENCO, girls' and boys' supervisors, a counsellor and an inclusion manager who all contribute to ensuring that there is a strong element of inclusion within the school community.

International day as well as a series of form time sessions in Year 11, give pupils the opportunity to celebrate and explore different cultures. The school has the advantage of having a large number of different pupil nationalities.

Careers education is at an early stage and is an area that the school is working on. The school has embarked on VESPA for Year 11 and 12 pupils to help develop study skills which will help pupils both now and in the future.

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

The provision for pupil's welfare, health and safety is Good.

The school's care for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good. Pupils settle in well to ICS City Centre. A new pupil talked with real emotion how supported he felt and how many friends they had. Pupils say they feel safe. When speaking with parents a strong reason why parents choose the school was for the procedures the school has in place to keep their children safe. They also liked the high visibility of the principal and other staff. Staff outside for beginning and end of day were easily identified with their yellow jackets.

Pupils know the consequences of not complying with behaviour codes and accept sanctions, along with guidance about how to address unacceptable behaviour, as outlined in the school's rewards and sanctions policy. Weekly pastoral meetings ensure that any child protection, safeguarding and wellbeing issues are continually monitored and discussed. There is a phased approach for dealing with behaviour, children on the yellow list are dealt by the class teacher, the orange list by the Head of year or phase leaders and red by the principal. The Inclusion Leader has introduced a range of initiatives that have identified pupils of concern and strategies to support them. One example of this is meeting with pupils who have 5 demerits a week and asking them to reflect on their behaviour by asking – "I am here today because..., I can avoid this happening again by .., The highlight of my week has been ..., Sketch how you feel" This and other strategies now need to be embedded and need to be evaluated to ensure positive change. Pupils are placed in one of 4 houses, and this helps support positive behaviour for the majority of the pupils.

The health and safety team have robust systems in place to ensure children are safe and roles are identified on who has what responsibility. ICS has a purpose-built medical room and two qualified nurses. The school nurses provide nursing care through the school day and are equipped to deal with both sickness and physical injury. Records are maintained and serious injuries are investigated by the health and safety team. First-aid kits are located throughout the school and checked regularly.

Most pupils are keen to achieve a healthy lifestyle and the school is looking at ways to develop this further and have asked for football for KS5 girls. A new catering team started this term and there has been positive feedback. In EYFS children bring their own snacks and teachers use snack time as an opportunity to discuss healthy choices.

Safeguarding arrangements, including training for staff and pupils, are rigorous and well monitored. They meet and exceed UK requirements. All staff are trained in-house and are aware of the procedures involved. Arrangements for safeguarding of pupils are robust and regularly reviewed, including safeguarding refresher training for teaching assistants. The

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school takes well-being and mental health seriously providing support to families when needed. This is lead by a committed team.

Displays and information from “Common Sense Education” supports pupils when using technology and the internet is supported by its E-Safety Guidelines.

Attendance is above average and is recorded carefully. Robust systems record late arrivals at the start of the day. Pupils are supervised well while relaxing and playing spontaneously during breaks. They take responsibility for managing their actions and know how to play safely. School transport is of high quality with children putting on seatbelts. Careful planning ensures pupils travel on the correct bus and are met by an approved adult.

The school is tidy and clean but incident of children tripping over the bags in the classroom needs to be addressed.

Pupil and staff toilets which provide adequate cubicles and washing facilities are regularly cleaned so that hygiene arrangements are always very good. This frequent maintenance ensures the health and safety for pupils, staff, and visitors. Visitors to the school are logged and issued badges with coloured lanyards to denote the different roles of all adults on the premises.

Excursions and day trips have previously been undertaken and are planned to be reintroduced in the school.

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

The suitability of the proprietors and staff fully meets BSO standards.

The proprietors ensure the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for all pupils. Responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are clearly understood and effectively discharged.

The school's HR department are diligent and ensure all checks are made on all staff who are employed by the school. Clear procedures have been put in place to ensure staff appointed meet best practice regarding safe recruitment procedures. All applicants complete a detailed application form to ensure the school has a complete previous employment history. Any gaps are thoroughly explored at interview. Appointments are subject to rigorous background checks which include police checks, checking of identity, proof of address, verification of academic qualifications and the right to work in Abu Dhabi. In addition, the school requires two professional references which include a judgment on the suitability of the candidate to work with children.

All appointed staff must meet Ministry of Private Education employment requirements with regards to having a relevant first degree and teacher training qualification. There is no evidence that any member of staff or volunteer who carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school is in contravention of any local, overseas or British disqualification, prohibition or restriction. There is a list maintained of all staff and volunteers who currently work in the school. This shows when they started and stopped working in the school. Staffing levels are more than adequate for the successful delivery of the curriculum. Recently appointed staff found the induction practices supportive and enabled them to settle in quickly.

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9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The school's buildings and premises including facilities for indoor practical activities are good with some outstanding features.

The indoor gymnasium and swimming pool facilities support the promotion of physical activity with pupils. The outdoor facilities are limited in scope but have suitable shaded areas for pupils.

The curriculum is well supported by a range of specialist facilities, including specialist art, music, drama, IT, design and technology (DT), maker space and science laboratories. Opportunities to collaborate with larger groups of pupils to enhance the curriculum include a 60-seat conference room and 600 seat theatre/auditorium, which are all part of the recent development works that were added to the school site. These facilities provide a safe environment to pupils. The school needs to fully utilize these areas to enhance the contribution to the learning environment for all pupils.

Buildings are spacious and in a good condition and are well maintained by the facilities team. Daily inspections are carried out across the campus and a monthly health and safety audit is documented, with no current outstanding tasks. Staff utilise internal communication channels to report any minor and major repairs or health and safety concerns and all minor and major corrections are outsourced to an external provider. Minor issues are addressed during the day, with any works necessitating contractor support being completed out of school-hours. Natural light is a prominent feature throughout the school and was deliberately utilised in the recently added facilities. Cooling and ventilation is serviced frequently by external contractors and temperature control is managed via a centralised building management system.

External security is provided 24 hours a day and is based at the main school gate. CCTV coverage is extensive and compliant with local regulations and inspected annually. External contractors are not permitted onsite during the school hours and all staff wear security ID tags. This will shortly be rolled out to pupils to support their plans for cashless purchasing in the cafeteria.

Displays are frequent across the school site and display a range of mass-produced resources. To enhance the learning areas further, opportunities to display high quality pupils work could be utilized.

The school buildings are clean and hygienic. Cleaning services are outsourced and standards monitored by the health and safety team, including daily checklists across the campus. The accommodation is well suited to the age and gender of the pupils, and is a good fit to the school's curriculum, with the requisite specialist facilities.

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10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, prospective parents and its wider community fully meets the requirements.

School information is clearly shared on the school's website and in a parent handbook. Parents feel well informed via the school website, newsletters, by phone and email. They reported that the communications from school are timely and appropriate. Parents also value that usually teachers respond very quickly to any issues raised. The principal also responds very quickly via emails or phone so that parents feel that any issues are dealt with very effectively.

Contact details of the school and the governing body are provided appropriately to parents and prospective parents, in addition to a statement of the school's ethos. This is supplemented by particulars of the school's policy on admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions. Parents and prospective parents are made aware of the education and welfare provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's website provides information about the different sections of the school. There is specific reference to the school complaints policy and where it can be found in the handbook or on the website.

Parents receive termly and end of year written reports. The reports contain information about their child's progress and attainment, attitude to learning and targets. Formal parent teacher meetings are scheduled throughout the year and parents are welcome to arrange additional meetings to discuss their children as needed. Parents noted that it was very easy to reach teachers by email or via the primary link book and that they appreciated the follow up phone calls and how quickly any issues are resolved.

Parents were very appreciative of the support and effort made by staff during the pandemic. They felt that most lessons were effective on-line and that every child's wellbeing was viewed as a priority. All parents interviewed agreed that their children were happy to come to school. They noted the range of opportunities available to every child and how beyond academics, the school has placed developing the individual as a key component of the children's education.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints at ICS meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

A written complaints policy is available on the school's website and on request to the school. The policy sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint at an informal level and at a formal level. The policy also details how to raise a complaint against a senior leader at the school. The school expects that complaints raised by parents are first raised informally with their child's class teacher or form tutor. The school reported that they work hard to ensure that there are always open channels of communication between home and school.

Parents stated that concerns are dealt with quickly and resolved promptly. Parents reported that the principal has brought in positive approachable changes. They felt that complaints are dealt with fairly. If the parent is not satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with to their satisfaction, then parents may raise their complaint with the senior leadership team. It is expected that at both the informal stage and at this stage the parent will receive a response within 24 hours. This ensures that parents concerns are taken seriously and acted upon swiftly. If a parent remains dissatisfied with the response from the school's leadership team, then the matter can be raised with the Ministry of Education at a formal level.

The school maintains records of complaints that are made to the school, and these are kept confidential. At a formal level, complaints were rare. The log of complaints recorded by the school evidence that parents' complaints are listened to and dealt with fairly. In a very few cases complaints were raised with the school that were beyond the control of the school's leadership team.

12. Standard 8

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Newly appointed senior and middle leaders are becoming ever more effective, as they develop a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The ethos and values of the school are evident in the day-to-day life of pupils and staff. The aims and vision of ICS are clearly set out on the website and in school publications; they are also evident throughout the school in corridors and displays. The ethos of the school encourages strong relationships, which are a strength of the school. There is a tangible team spirit and collegial feel amongst staff. Communications with parents are particularly effective. High visibility of the leadership team and an open doors policy ensures that any parental concerns are dealt with rapidly.

After some turbulence, including the appointment of some new senior and middle leaders, the school is now in a period of greater stability. Consequently, structures and many policies and procedures are being updated to reflect the new situation. Key leaders and managers, including the board of governors consistently communicate high expectations and ambition for all.

Relationships at all levels are good. The school has a positive impact on pupil behaviour, in addition to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school has established highly effective strategies for engaging parents and carers. Pupils' learning is seen as a partnership between home and school. The school is effective in recruiting suitable staff, and ensuring safeguarding procedures are in place.

The school principal is focused on ensuring whole school involvement through the delegation of responsibilities. The delegation of tasks to middle leaders around monitoring and evaluating provision within Key Stages is yet to be fully developed across the school. The school has recognised that middle leaders are, in many cases, growing into their roles. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that all middle leaders are equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively discharge their responsibilities and possess the confidence to be held and hold others to account.

Performance management systems are in place for all teaching staff, and these are set in line with UK standards. The school aims to ensure lesson observations are carried out regularly so that professional development can be offered where the school identifies teachers who may need support. The school recognises that the professional development targets for teachers need to be more closely aligned to key priorities on the school development plan.

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Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with significant good elements, but inconsistent. Whilst the school has implemented a programme of professional development and management, it is presently insufficiently rigorous to bring about the intended outcomes.

The day-to-day management of the school is effective: it operates smoothly, with effective lines of communication. The number of pupils on roll has grown considerably over recent years and the changes that this has required have been managed successfully. All stakeholders questioned were supportive of the school and its leaders.