



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **Modern English School Cairo**

## **Egypt**

Date 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Inspection 20220327

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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 120 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' work was 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 Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Tara Foster, Jennifer Gilchrist, Karen Hanratty, Mohsin Ibrahim and Larry Thaxter.

## 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

Modern English School Cairo (MES) provides a very high standard of education and care: the distinctive atmosphere, attention to detail and family culture lead directly to excellent focus on individuals' needs and outstanding learning.

The quality of learning and teaching is excellent. Outstanding leadership and governance ensures that students thrive. The students are proud to be members of the MES community and they value highly the opportunities it provides. The progress the school has made since the last inspection, in spite of the pandemic, is commendable.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at MES, including the following:

- The school culture is positive, warm and welcoming.
- The students feel safe and secure and have wonderful relationships with their teachers.
- There is a true family feel at MES which is rare, distinctive and highly conducive of excellent learning and care.
- The school has a strong feeling of Britishness which can be seen in lesson observations along with having British values closely tied in with local values, students at MES take great pride of wanting to go to universities in the UK.
- Outstanding provision of open-ended and enquiry-based activities to promote critical thinking and problem solving in Early Years.
- Outstanding provision of career guidance given to students from Year 8 onwards.
- Predominantly good or excellent teaching, emphasising independent learning skills, self-guided learning, excellent support for students to seek further information, leading to a 'flipped' approach where students are in charge of their learning.
- In many lessons, there are great opportunities for differentiation, managed by the students themselves.
- Truly integrated use of technology, including 'bring your own device' (BYOD) from Year 3, leading to enhanced learning, rather than IT for IT's sake.
- The attainment levels achieved by students across the school is outstanding in comparison to 2018/19 data: the blended learning approach is clearly effective.
- Across all the key stages of the National Curriculum, student attainment and progress is recorded and analysed well, through regular teacher marked assessments, hard copy and online.
- Social skills of the students are highly developed, leading to excellent mutual support.

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- The school focusses very emphatically on the welfare, care, health and safety of the students
- Unity of vision and purpose of the owners, the board, senior leadership team (SLT), primary leadership team (PSLT) and secondary leadership team (SSLT), based on leaders' accurate knowledge of the school and ability to use knowledge to set key priorities, success criteria and action plans, are real strengths.
- The passion of the owners and the board for and commitment to the school, and their ability and willingness to challenge and support senior leaders effectively lead directly to a very successful school.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Further development of learning, teaching and assessment, including by
  - sharing best practice
  - ensuring a variety of teaching techniques
  - review the function and role of classroom display, which is excellent in some parts of the school, and less focussed in others
  - continued embedding of the mastery approach to learning
  - consistency across the school on how data supports planning and the ownership of data shared across all stakeholders that includes teachers and members of SLT
  - further raising of standards of students' attainment and progress in all subjects
- ii. Further enhancement of the curriculum to ensure it is consistently innovative and supportive of a high level of challenge for all pupils
- iii. Enrich middle management support and training, to drive the school even more and to boost succession planning

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Modern English School, Cairo				
Address	South of Police Academy New Cairo PO Box 5, Tagamoa, Khamis, 11835 Egypt				
Telephone Number/s	+20226189600				
Fax Number	+20225379400				
Website Address	www.mescairo.com				
Key Email Address/s	mescairo@mescairo.com				
Principal	Mrs Nicola Singleton				
Chair of Board of Governors/ Proprietor	Mrs Sawsan Dajani				
Age Range	3 – 18 years				
Total number of students	2,192	Boys	1,158	Girls	1,034
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	803	
	3-5 years	401	17-18 years	51	
	6-11 years	937	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	None				

MES was established in October 1990 as a British curriculum international school. From a school with just 27 students, the school has grown to accommodate over 2,000. It is an independent school offering international curricula taught by an international, predominantly British staff. The school is situated in a modern suburb on the eastern fringe of Cairo. In 2000, the school relocated to a purpose-built facility.

The student roll comprises predominantly children of Egyptian nationality.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The school offers a great sense of 'Britishness' throughout the school. It follows the English National Curriculum and the school's values are aligned very naturally to those articulated by the best schools in Britain. The school has a 180 teachers, most of whom are UK trained and an SLT that has achieved or is working towards the National Professional Qualification in school leadership. The school also supports newly qualified teachers through early career pathways, following the Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

The school adopts the National Curriculum for England and policies follow guidance set out by the DfE. The school also follows the Early Years (EYFS) Framework in the Foundation Stage. The school has introduced Jolly Phonics within Key Stage (KS) 1 to support development of English language and literacy. The primary school follow Guy Claxton's UK driven global initiative, the '5Rs' which underpin value-based learning in primary.

Secondary students continue their studies journey through iGCSE and A-level examinations. The school implements pastoral structures including uniform, behaviour policy, student council and a house system and English is the language of instruction across all National Curriculum subjects, other than in foreign languages and those subjects required in Egypt (Arabic language, religion and social studies). Students at MES graduate and often go on to universities in the UK.

The school has strong community links with British agencies in Cairo, the school was the first school in Egypt to obtain 'Independent Centre Status' with Cambridge International Examinations (CAIE) in 2019. The school supports British community initiatives including the annual Remembrance Day observance and the British Embassy Christmas carol concert.

MES Cairo is a long standing and active member of the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME).

## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is outstanding: the school fully meets the standards for BSO.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is excellent.

Full-time supervised education is provided for all students of compulsory school age. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and the English National Curriculum, adapted as appropriate to fit local context. Curriculum policies are supported by separate subject outlines and detailed schemes of work. In Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students follow the syllabi for iGCSE and A levels across an extensive range of subjects. The school complies with local statutory requirements by delivering the Arabic curriculum and faith lessons for Muslim and Christian children. The language of instruction is English in all English National Curriculum lessons. The curriculum policy is implemented effectively across the school.

In Early Years, the children work towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of Foundation Stage 2. The curriculum delivered ensures children experience high quality activities that encourage exploration and experiences of their world in a creative and personalised learning environment. An example of this is a Foundation Stage 1 class where children were simultaneously hatching dragon eggs, searching for letters, making crowns, fashioning cupcakes from dough, writing lists and washing teacups. In Early Years, continuous and enhanced provision are outstanding. Where appropriate, the provision is linked to themes and is levelled to meet the needs of the children in each class.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum ensures that the children have access to a wide range of learning opportunities. 'Jolly Phonics', 'Letters and Sounds' and 'Read, Write Inc' are used to support progress and attainment in literacy. 'Mastery in Maths' is being promoted with the introduction of White Rose Maths. This is not yet fully embedded into teaching, learning and assessment but continuous professional development (CPD) is being provided to support staff. A focus on mastery, problem solving, and critical thinking is evident in all planning and is a strength.

The secondary curriculum meets the needs of all students and enrichment offers numerous opportunities for them to develop life skills and become well-rounded individuals. Thorough planning and excellent teaching ensure students are well prepared for external exams in Key Stages 4 and 5. Teachers make exceptional use of Google Classroom to support the curriculum. Information, learning resources,

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explanatory videos and vital feedback are uploaded and available for the students to access in every subject.

A reinvigorated learning development department (LDD) ensures early identification of children with additional needs and works with teachers to provide targeted support in line with the LDD policy. The LDD team offers a variety of intervention strategies and in some cases, fulltime one to one support is provided. Individualised Education Programmes are written where necessary. These are reviewed regularly to meet the changing needs of individual children. Robust tracking and monitoring systems assess the impact of interventions and inform next steps. With the support offered, all children have the opportunity to learn, make progress and be successful.

In primary, the needs of gifted and talented children are met through differentiated learning activities. In secondary, OLSAT and CAT4 testing are used to identify gifted and talented students. Those identified, are invited to join a gifted and talented after school activity where they are presented with real world problems which they try to solve using their skills.

A range of enrichments enhance the curriculum. From Year 2, a rich variety of age appropriate after-school activities are available, including music, sport, Escape Room and Model United Nations. In addition to the after-school activities, a limited number of children from Years 5 to 8 have the opportunity become Pioneers. The Pioneer Programme is designed to develop their skills and attitudes and to inspire them to do their best. Community outreach is part of the programme, with projects such as packing donations for the Egyptian food bank. Becoming a Pioneer is a prestigious achievement within the school. From Year 10, students can participate in the International Award (IA) which encourages them to further develop many of the skills and responsibilities they will need when they leave school. Theme days and weeks, such as Pink Day and Keep Egypt Warm, further support the curriculum and students noted these events made learning exciting and memorable. As pandemic regulations relax, the school will reinstate the local, national and international trips and resume team sport competitions.

Across all key stages, provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PHSE) reflects the schools aims and ethos. PHSE is planned for and taught explicitly in Early Years however, it is also clearly embedded into the daily routines of every class. Comprehensive planning is in place for PHSE in Key Stages 1 and 2 which is enhanced with focused assemblies and excellent preparation and support for transition between key stages. In secondary, PHSE is provided through the Homeroom Community Forum (HRCF). Planning and lessons promote the values of the MES Graduate Profile and the school culture. The success of the PHSE programme is visible across the school in the behaviour and attitudes of all students.

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Career guidance through the 'Plan for Graduation' initiative is outstanding. Students in Year 8 get a taste of the options available for them to choose from and are given individual counselling support to discuss their future pathways. The pathways are revisited in Years 9, 10 and 11 with the support of senior leaders. Three counsellors are available to guide the students through the final university application process.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is excellent. Most lessons were good or better and a large number were outstanding. Outstanding practice is evident throughout the school.

Teachers are positive, confident, knowledgeable and they have warm working relationships with students. There is a great deal of praise and encouragement. Management of students' behaviour is highly effective, and often unnecessary, because the lessons are interesting, so the students are naturally engaged. Learning time is well managed and pace is appropriate. The teachers' energy levels are often noticeable. For example, in one Year 8 geography lesson, the teacher displayed a high level of enthusiasm and energy that had a positive impact of student engagement. There was excellent use of probing questions that created many opportunities for the students to expand the discussion beyond the initial plan. Many teachable moments came from this which enhanced the lesson. All the students were engaged. The teacher was highly active moving about the classroom, monitoring student activity and learning.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the English National Curriculum and they plan purposeful lessons which sustain students' interest and challenges their thinking. Classrooms are attractive, especially in EYFS and primary, and provide environments that really support learning and promote high standards. Resources are used creatively by teachers to enable students to learn and embed concepts quickly and to make excellent progress.

Teachers at MES are supported with excellent resources and make the best use of them during lessons. Students have online platforms that can be accessed from home to support their learning and are often set as home learning tasks. Challenges are provided to the more able learners and they perform well.

Students who have special educational needs are well supported through diagnostic assessments, personalised resources, and interventions. As English as the medium of delivery throughout MES, outstanding support is provided for the many students who speak English as an additional language, from EYFS onwards.

Lessons are well planned, and there is effective use of different teaching methods. In EYFS and primary, in particular, there are suitable activities which are well organised. One mathematics lesson in a Year 1 class, for example, was delivered at great pace and really engaged the students.

The best lessons are fast paced and dynamic, with ample challenge for all students. Students were well-motivated to learn and were thoroughly engaged in their learning: in one Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher had excellent subject knowledge and addressed misconceptions confidently. There were high levels of personalisation, particularly through the use of targeted questions. The teacher provided a safe learning environment whereby students were encouraged to challenge and support

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each other and learn from their own and others mistakes. The lesson was briskly paced. Students were thoroughly engaged in their learning

Teachers often encourage students to use technology to excellent effect, to secure and extend their learning. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, students accessed the teacher's slides on their own devices. These included hyperlinks to teaching materials and reading matter, which students could use to check or extend their understanding of water resistance and buoyancy.

Senior school design technology and also drama lessons were very student centred, and thus the students were very engaged. In one Year 7 drama lesson, a student said "I'm not a confident person, I'm usually very shy but this lesson helps me build my confidence".

Students collaborate effectively in lessons, working effectively in pairs or groups. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, students worked in small groups to decide if they agree with a statement, and then find evidence to prove or disprove it. Students shared responsibility in a mature manner for writing as well as researching their ideas. Early years classes also supported and promoted this paired or group working, when appropriate: the very well prepared classroom activities in EYFS lead naturally to students wanting to work together and they develop their social skills from this, as well as learning academically.

In the small proportion of lessons that were not excellent, it was usually because of lack of engaging activity or material for the students, and/or because the lesson was actually a repeat of what had already been done in another lesson, with only limited progression. These lessons were not as engaging, and the students although very well behaved, were not excited by their learning. Sometimes the teacher stood at the front of the classroom and did not move about the class to monitor student activity or learning. In one example, the teacher made a number of attempts to provide instruction to the class: however without gaining their attention, many were not on task.

In the very best lessons, students set their own level of challenge, from a choice of differentiated tasks. For example, in a Year 5 English class, students chose which features to include in their writing, such as fronted adverbials and different types of connectives. They also work in mixed ability pairs, thus providing support to the lower ability students and the opportunity for the higher attainers to reinforce their own understanding.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

The attainment levels achieved by students across the school are outstanding.

Given that almost all of the students enter the Foundation Stage speaking Arabic as a first language, significant progress is made in both English language and numeracy development. On entry to Key Stage 1, overall attainment levels are maintained, with a continued focus on language development. For example, the school has a number of strategies in place to encourage children to converse socially in English during play, as well as within the classroom. At this crucial early stage, children who are identified as underperforming are given intervention and a support plan is put in place with the support of the parents.

Across all the key stages of the National Curriculum, student attainment is recorded and analysed well, through regular teacher marked assessments. This internal data indicates that students are making good progress in all key stages where National Curriculum levelling is progressively being used by teachers to inform students of their current attainment levels and to set individual learning targets to promote the optimum progress rate for individual students. The school uses external assessment data such as Cat 4, iGCSE and A-level data to determine the impact of teaching and assessment on students.

In EYFS, the 2021 internal data for students in Reading attainment indicates lower levels with a score of 83% compared to the score of 85% obtained in 2019. The Writing attainment level has also decreased with 73% in 2021 compared to 77% in 2019. The Speaking attainment levels also decreased with 88% in 2021 compared to 92% in 2019. Whereas in all other subjects there has been an improvement in comparison to 2019.

In Year 2 end of KS1, the 2021 internal data for students in Reading attainment indicates significant improvement with a score of 60% compared to the score of 51% obtained in 2020. In Writing, the internal data of attainment in 2021 indicates a score of 51% which is significantly higher compared to the attainment score of 37% in 2020. In Maths, the internal data in attainment was 59% in 2021 compared to 45% in 2020. The % number of students achieving expected in RWM has increased by 13% compared to 2020 results.

In Year 6 end of KS2, the 2021 internal data for students in Reading attainment indicates a score of 79% compared to the score of 58% obtained in 2020. In Writing, the internal data in attainment was 71% in 2021 compared to 46% in 2020 and in Maths, the internal data in attainment was 68% in 2021 compared to 44% in 2020. The % number of students achieving expected in RWM has increased by 29% compared to 2020 results.

Academic standards at MES have improved even more over recent years. This is clearly indicated through IGCSE examination data at the end of Key Stage 4. Over a three year period, the school results in 2019 have gone from a 76% A\* to C to 2021 pass rate to 81%. This higher standards are expected to be maintained. Similarly, the school has also seen considerable improvement in A-Level results over a three year period, the school results A\*-E in 2019 have gone from 92% to 96% in 2021, the school has also improved significantly on the number of A\*-A results, in 2019 24% of students obtained a A\*- A grade whereas in 2021 that figure increased significantly to 43%.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of students is outstanding: it is a key strength of the school.

The spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of students is a strength of the school. Positive relationships are well established between staff and students. The pastoral team is united in its commitment to ensuring the well-being of all members of the school community. The students say they feel welcomed, understood, cared for, and above all, safe. They talk confidently and positively about their learning and their school. Personal, social, health education (PSHE) is taught effectively. Lessons address several themes and issues relating to SMSC, these include healthy lifestyles, e-safety, and managing feelings. Students show a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them. The 5Rs in the Primary School and The ELEMENTS in the Secondary School, reinforce core values including integrity, resilience, and respect and reinforce the MES motto of '*Care, Challenge, Inspire*'. Those students displaying the core values, receive house points or are awarded 'Star of the Week' in assembly.

Students are keen and motivated learners with high self-esteem who regularly represent the school at events such as the U11 BSME Games. The extensive After School Activities (ASAs) on offer, provide opportunities for students to develop new skills, passions, and interests, these activities include the Pioneers programme, choir, mathematics, cookery, coding, international award, and Model United Nations (MUN). The school encourages and supports opportunities for student voice and to develop leadership responsibilities. There are a range of leadership opportunities throughout the school such as peer mentors, student council representatives, pioneers, house captains, and wellbeing ambassadors. The secondary student council are elected through a fair and democratic process.

Student-teacher relationships are positive. The school fosters and enhances a feeling of togetherness and "family", this is reinforced by a student who stated, "The teachers are very kind, they make me feel special." The school effectively enables and encourages students to distinguish right from wrong, which is seen in the excellent behaviour and adherence to school rules. Bullying is not accepted and students are expected to be kind, helpful, and tolerant. When the need arises, staff take time to implement restorative resolutions to address misunderstanding or conflict and peer mentors support their peers to address behaviour and resolve conflicts effectively. Champion boards, displayed in primary classrooms, support teachers in celebrating positive behaviour, whilst in the secondary school, the ELEMENTS reinforce behaviour expectations and defines readiness to learn. At key transition points in the day, such as outside time and home time, students show high levels of independence and discipline.

Students use a range of social skills both inside and outside the school in their roles and responsibilities. An in-school community service programme means all senior Secondary students are invited to work with Primary children, examples of this are where secondary students regularly listen to primary students read or lead on after school activities (ASAs). Students participate in school productions, cross-curricular enterprise projects and run peer mentor mediation. Annual whole school events encourage students to contribute positively to society. Examples of this are the '24 Hour Run', where money was raised by the school and donated to the Children's Cancer Hospital Foundation, and a community outreach campaign, 'Keep Egypt Warm', whereby students were encouraged to donate food and items of clothing. Students benefit spiritually and educationally from a range of school trips.

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There are many international trips for students throughout the year, including trips to the UAE, Russia, France, and Cyprus to name but a few. Those students who partake in the Pioneers Programme, receive service badges, one of these badges is the Entrepreneur Badge which requires students to find ways to support others less fortunate than themselves.

The school promotes British values in an age-appropriate way. It celebrates the wide range of cultures and respects individual faiths while also celebrating Britishness through literature, commemoration events, and election procedures. Celebrations and festivals are enjoyed throughout the year and students take an active part in several events and learning opportunities such as; Ramadan, Eid celebrations, and a combined schools Christmas Concert at the British Embassy. Throughout their time at school, students are developing high order personal and social skills, which enable them to make a positive contribution to the society in which they live and effectively prepare them for the next stage of their lives. There is a strong alumni group that is celebrated and displayed around the school. Students come back and visit the school once they have graduated to encourage the next university cohort to aspire and achieve and some are now parents with their own children in the school.

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

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

MES is a safe, friendly, caring and secure environment. Students at the school report that they feel safe. Stakeholders report that students' safety and well-being is a very high priority in the school. Students are excellent ambassadors for their school and have strong relationships with their peers, teachers and with external visitors to the school. The whole school approach to promoting the emotional well-being of students is evident in everyone's practice. A nurturing ethos, supported by the teaching and learning environment, ensures students feel safe, valued, cared for that they have a voice. The school has developed and implemented a strong student mentorship programme. The programme provides student mentors in the following areas: peer, academic, athletic and wellbeing. Each group of student mentors have clearly defined responsibilities and are assigned a specific group of students for the academic year. Student mentors are provided training and meet with faculty mentors on a regular basis. Many students have highlighted this as a strength of their school's support pastoral programme.

There is an appropriate and effective system for keeping students safe. Leadership structures in both primary and secondary are conducive to ensuring effective monitoring of students' care and wellbeing. This has ensured clear lines of communication are established and that age appropriate information and training sessions are provided. All staff who have direct contact with students are registered with *Educare* for online training in a variety of child protection and safeguarding courses. The school leadership team monitors the care and protection of all students. A detailed safeguarding and child protection policy is in place and followed. The child protection policy and protection officers' photos are clearly displayed throughout the school. Students, parents and staff are aware of the child protection policy and also participate in the National Online Safety (NOS) programme.

The school has a number of health and safety policies with which staff are familiar. There are detailed evacuation, lockdown and earthquake policies. The school exceeds the mandated authority requirements for the number of drills in each of these situations. Logbooks are kept for checks on fire safety equipment, fire and evacuation drills, bus safety checks, science laboratory equipment, and IT equipment including CCTV cameras. Staff have all been trained on fire safety and an identified group have received firefighting training from the Egyptian fire authority. All exits are free of obstruction and clearly marked. The science laboratories have running risk assessments and staff and students are trained on safe chemical handling practices. Dedicated science laboratory technicians ensure hazardous materials for the science labs are kept in a separate locked and secured area. Mandated safety equipment is visible and accessible in science labs.

A detailed student field trip policy is in place which provides clear direction for school endorsed field trips. The policy is comprehensive and is consulted for all student field trips regardless if they are local or international. All field trips require head teacher and school director approval.

There is a comprehensive policy which reflects first aid procedures. A well sourced school infirmary is onsite which is staffed with three doctors and three nurses. There are four medical facilities within a 5 minute drive from the school.

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The school ethos strives to ensure that all students feel cared for, challenged and inspired whilst at school. This is embedded in the school's mission statement. There is a zero tolerance approach to school bullying. The school has a whole school policy specific to anti-bullying. Detailed student behaviour policies are in place for primary and secondary students. The policies clearly identify the sanctions and rewards applicable to student behaviours. A record is maintained for sanctions imposed upon students for serious misbehaviour. Staff, students and parents are aware of this policy. The school strives to promote good conduct. The school has a number of incentives to reward good conduct.

The graduate profile which promotes excellent citizenship and strong morals and values is shared with all students and referenced regularly. Effective steps are taken to address any issues including target setting and working with students and parents. Both staff and students report the effectiveness of this approach. Student behaviour observed during the inspection was exemplary inside the classroom, at transition times, and at social times.

Student attendance is taken at the beginning of each day and also for each period in the secondary programme. This ensures the school has accurate data on attendance. Parents are expected to call first thing if their child is absent. The school text messages and then calls if they have not heard from the parent about the absence. Late attenders to school are marked as such and there is a staggered intervention programme in place to deal with repeated late or unexcused absent students.

The security at the school is excellent. There are a significant number of guards and other school staff who are visible at all access points and throughout the campus. Systems are in place for effective staff supervision at all times. Staff are highly visible at break times and interact with students while they are on break. All visitors must present identification to enter the school and are provided with a school lanyard to wear during the visit. All visitors are escorted to the requested school location and can only enter through the school's administrative building reception area. Student arrival and dismissal is very orderly, controlled and safe. Safety procedures for student dismissal have been enhanced and extend beyond the school grounds and into the parking area.

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

MES was established in 1990 by the Dajani family, and is still led by Mrs Sawsan Dajani, the chairwoman and her daughter, Ghada Dajani, the managing director. Under their leadership, the school has thrived and grown. The owners and other members of the board of directors are active in guiding the strategic direction of the school, taking a measured approach in ensuring a high-quality education supported by an affordable fee structure. The senior leadership team are all experienced school leaders, the majority of them with a long history at the school. There are clear lines of communication between the SLT and the board. The board act as critical partners with the SLT, providing both challenge and support.

The school is well staffed, with qualified and suitably experienced teachers. All staff have clear job descriptions. The school staff is stable, with high levels of staff retention. Recruitment processes are rigorous and thorough. Staff appointed are matched to the needs of the school, taking into account the current balance of staffing in each department. Academic credentials are checked, together with applicants' employment history, suitability to work with children, right to work in Egypt and medical fitness, including Covid-19 vaccination records.

Similar background checks are carried out on all locally employed staff, as well as assistants who provide one-to-one support for individual students, employed by the parents. These include vetting by national security services at the point of employment. Random checks are carried out by the local authorities. In addition to the usual scrutiny, all transportation staff undergo annual toxicology checks.

Promoted posts are advertised internally and externally, to ensure the widest field of suitable candidates. For senior leadership posts, a working knowledge of the school is seen as advantageous to success in the role. Where internal promotions are made, newly appointed post holders are well supported by peers and relevant training opportunities.

The school maintains detailed records of all staff who currently work in the school, as well as staff who have left. The records are maintained confidentially. The central register was made available to the inspection team.

## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent.

The current school site was purpose built in 2000 and has utilized all available space very effectively and efficiently. The facility is very well maintained and has an abundance of natural greenery both inside and outside the facility. The core of the primary and secondary buildings has a natural oasis like area at the centre of both buildings. The campus includes spacious learning areas, gardens, extensive sports areas, car parking and bus delivery and pick-up areas inside a walled perimeter.

A stimulating and inspiring learning environment has been created for students. The school is very colourful and presents as a very welcoming environment. Primary school displays in classrooms and corridors celebrate and support learning. There is evidence of such in some secondary classrooms however it is not consistent. The outdoor areas of the early years and primary building provide for learning opportunities outside the classroom. A number of outdoor student learning centres and areas for project learning are evident and in use.

Toilets and washrooms are located throughout the school. They are appropriate to requirements, clean and well supervised by dedicated attendants. They are clearly designated for student or staff use. There is a mobility impaired toilet on the ground floor of the secondary building. Changing rooms and showers are provided in PE and in the school sports facility: there are designated accommodations for sole use of staff and students. The temperature of the hot water is regulated to ensure it does not pose a scalding risk to users.

The school has an onsite infirmary which is centrally located on the ground floor of the Administration building. This makes it accessible to all students and staff. It is attended by three doctors and three nurses. A bathroom is located within the facility. Additional therapy/counselling rooms for use by the school psychologist and counsellor are also located on campus. The rooms have been strategically located to ensure privacy and discretion.

The primary facilities are designed around a pod arrangement whereby year groups are housed together. A number of dedicated specialist classrooms are identified including computer suites, French room, science lab, cooking room, drama/dance studio and a music suite.

The secondary facility comprises two main classroom buildings and also utilizes the top floor of the multi-purpose hall complex for a design technology workshop, ICT lab and a drama studio. Specialist classrooms are present in the secondary facility including art rooms, which include a photography dark room and kiln room, Music practice rooms, ICT rooms, language lab rooms and dedicated science labs.

The classrooms are well lit and have good acoustics. External lighting is provided to ensure the safe movement of individuals after dark. The ground floor of all buildings are accessible for

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mobility impaired individuals. The administration building and secondary building have elevators. The remaining buildings do not have elevators however the school confirms that students who have short term medical conditions preventing them from walking stairs have their educational programme accommodated on the ground floor.

The school provides multiple outdoor water drinking stations that have been strategically located where students gather. All water drinking comes from the main supply and is filtered. The quality of the water is regularly monitored and the school required standard is consistent with that of the World Health Organization. The stations are labelled accordingly.

A natural grass sport field, all weather running track, basketball courts, a swimming pool, sports halls and gym facility ensure that a wide range of sporting activities can be offered within and outside the normal curriculum. These facilities are heavily utilized for daily instruction, athletics and after school activities.

Signage is good throughout the buildings, allowing easy access and all rooms are labelled and numbered. Entrances and exits are well identified and evacuation routes are clearly visible throughout the school and in all classrooms.

## 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 is excellent.

Parents are kept well informed about every aspect of their child's education and school events. A variety of communication systems are used including email, newsletters and Google Classroom. A clear and easily navigated website provides extensive information about the school, its ethos, community and student life. Contact information, clear details of the admissions and concerns processes, the school curriculum and curriculum enrichment information are available on the website alongside accreditation and inspection reports. A focus group of parents stated that they are fully satisfied with the amount, content and accessibility of the information shared by the school.

Parents receive mid 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.

School behaviour and exclusion policies can be accessed by primary parents on Google Classroom and are published in the secondary student's planner. Parents spoke highly of the behaviour policy and the positive impact it has on behaviour management across the school. Health and safety, anti-bullying and first aid policies can also be found on Google Classroom.

Parents noted that before Covid restrictions, they played a more active part in school life supporting events and activities throughout the year. As restrictions have begun to be lifted, the school recently held a 24 hour run which was the first post pandemic whole school event. It was highly publicised and was praised by the parents who hope that similar school community events will become the norm again.

Parents were very appreciative of the support and effort made by staff during the pandemic. They felt that most lessons were highly 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 character building as a key component of the children's education. This is reflected in a parent survey which shows parents to be overwhelmingly satisfied with provision in all areas.

## 11. *Standard 7*

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The procedure for handling complaints is effective and fully meets the BSO standard. Complaints are rare, but the school has a detailed written policy and appropriate procedures in place, which reflect good practice from the UK.

MES has an appropriate complaints procedure which is published on the school website and is available to students, parents and prospective parents. The policy sets out detailed procedures for handling complaints through three clearly defined stages. Parents are aware of the complaints policy and know who to contact for specific concerns. In order to further assist parents, flow diagrams of procedures are included in the policy.

The timeframes for the management of different types of complaints are distinctly set in the policy. The school prides itself in usually being able to respond to informal complaints with 24 hours. If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of an informal approach, they are able to submit a formal written complaint to the head teacher (Stage 2). Should the matter still remain unresolved, there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel which consists of the managing director and two other directors (Stage 3). Parents have the option to attend the panel and present their point of view. Written records of formal complaints, are held in a confidential file.

## 12. Standard 8

### Leadership and management of the school

Leadership at MES Cairo is a key strength of the school. The owners and board of directors, together with the SLT, set the strategic direction for the school. The owners, directors and senior leaders are united in vision and purpose. The very effective principal sets high standards for herself and others: she provides outstanding leadership and management.

Leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas which require further development. They provide drive and energy, which cascades down to all teachers and other members of staff, and results in high levels of morale across the school. Strong leadership impacts on every aspect of school life.

Most leaders have been in post for many years and are secure, confident and very competent in their roles. At this time, there is no clear picture for succession planning when key leaders move on from the school; this is an area which will need to be addressed.

The school has a clear mission statement, which is known and understood by all stakeholders. “Leadership through Education: Care, Challenge, Inspire” is highly visible, and is palpable in the day to day life of the school. The school’s core values – the *5Rs* in primary and *ELEMENTS* in secondary – are known and understood by students. They provide a structure for the development of attitudes to learning and to life.

Relationships around the school are very strong. There is mutual respect between teachers and students, which is developed through consistent approaches to behaviour management and a genuine feeling of warmth and care. Leaders are involved in day-to-day classroom life, and know students personally. Mutual respect extends beyond the classroom, into relationships between all members of staff at every level, and parents.

The leadership team has conducted a thorough and honest self-evaluation, which accurately reflects all aspects of the school. Whole school development plans have been created based on this self-evaluation, which then extend down into development plans for both sections of the school. These are detailed, and include realistic timeframes and success criteria. The school priorities are also used as the basis for the school development advisories (SDAs). These comprise well-balanced groups of teachers and where appropriate admin and other staff, who focus on core initiatives to develop specific areas, for example, sustaining challenge in teaching and learning. Whilst SLT members sit on each committee, they do not lead them, rather acting in an advisory capacity and as a conduit for communication.

Performance management and CPD is triangulated with school priorities, whilst also taking into account individual teacher’s interests and development needs. Performance management is conducted through the professional development portfolio for all staff, with variations for teaching and leadership staff. This provides a robust system of accountability

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and support, targeted at improving teachers' or leaders' effectiveness in order to raise students' achievement.

The school leadership has a clear understanding of attainment data and how to scrutinise these effectively to identify strengths and any gaps. They ensure that the data obtained is meaningful and manageable. Students' progress is tracked consistently, with students of concern being provided with additional targeted support. Attainment data is also used as the basis for reporting to parents, through written reports and face to face parent-teacher conferences.

The school leadership ensures that the school provides a safe and supportive environment for students. Systems around child protection and safe-guarding are rigorous, including protecting students from online threat. Fundamental human values are upheld, any perceived inequality is tackled to ensure equal opportunities for all.

The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. All members of teaching, admin and support staff are clear of their roles and conduct themselves in a professional manner. There is a feeling of pride amongst staff, taking satisfaction in a job well done. School budgets are managed effectively to provide excellent resources to support teaching and learning, and thus impacting on students' outcomes.