



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report**

**School of  
Research Science**

**Dubai**

**United Arab Emirates**

Date **21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

Inspection **20210321**

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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 250 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team were in school for three days, plus an introductory visit on the day before the inspection started.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Zeina Abu Monzer, Lewis Baillie, Hussaina Begum, Elizabeth Clancy, Claire Crew, Mohsin Ibrahim, Dalia Kamal and Ryan Reaney.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The School of Research Science, Dubai meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The School of Research Science (SRS) is an outstanding school.

It offers high standards of academic attainment. Teaching is very strong. The behaviour of the students is exemplary. The leadership provided by the director of education, the principal and other school leaders, the care and support offered to students, and the curriculum provided for all, are excellent.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

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

- The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection.
- Academic and extra-curricular standards are very high.
- There is an outstanding curriculum, which provides for, supports and challenges students.
- Students learn the English language quickly.
- Teaching is excellent: a large proportion of lessons are outstanding, and very few are less than good.
- The best lessons are inspiring, challenging and fun.
- There is very high-quality pastoral care, which means students are safe, secure, supported and happy.
- Spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development are excellent.
- The board, the director of education, the principal and the senior and middle leaders' continued drive for school improvement, built around a strong shared vision, is excellent.
- The detailed support and rigorous critical analysis provided by the board is unique in its format and outstanding in its impact.
- The provision for the health, welfare and safety of students is a strength of the school.
- The strong focus on safety in the current pandemic is exemplary.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Further improve the already excellent quality of teaching, so that all teachers and teaching assistants are able to challenge, innovate and sustain engagement in learning;
- Enhance the monitoring of teaching time for all students, to ensure that the amount of learning available is the same for all;
- Work with other outstanding schools to continue to raise expectations of staff and students.

#### 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	School of Research Science				
Address	Next to Mushrif park, Nouakchott Street, Al Warqa Al Warqa 4 Dubai, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	+971 4 601 1011				
Website Address	www.srsdubai.ae				
Key Email Address/s	principal@srs.ae				
Director of Education & Principal	Michelle Thomas Nan Billingham				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Najla Saif Alshamsi				
Age Range	3 to 18 years				
Total number of students	3,214	Boys	1,732	Girls	1,482
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	632	
	3-5 years	766	17-18 years	96	
	6-11 years	1,709	18+ years	11	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Established in 1998, SRS is a private international school in Dubai that was founded to provide high quality British and Arabic education for the local and expatriate communities of Dubai. The principal aim is to ensure all students achieve well and are confident learners, by placing first rate personal development on par with academic excellence. The school moved to its current site in Al Warq in 2014; since then, there has been a rapid expansion in the number of students on roll. The students are mainly Muslims and English rarely their first language. There are currently 76% Emirati, 12.4% Middle East and North Africa, 5.6% Asian sub-continent with the remainder British, European and North American heritage.

The school is unique in that it is one of the only schools in the UAE with such a high number of local families in a British curriculum school. Parents report that they choose SRS for its British curriculum but also because of its strong Islamic culture and ethos. The school has a gender split from Year 5; in the 6th form, classes are sometimes mixed to allow a wide subject choice and balance.

In June 2020, SRS had an evaluation of its distance learning provision by the local education regulator: the school awarded the highest grade.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

SRS clearly has a British ethos and values that are modelled on the very best of UK schools. Policies are based on the expectations and procedures of British education, underpinned by the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). The school follows the National Curriculum of England, as well as the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance. Students continue their academic journey to GCSE and A-Level examinations. A wide range of UK resources and educational programmes are used to support learning.

The school uses a range of DfE accredited programmes like *Read Write Inc* (RWI), *Maths No Problem* (MNP) and *White Rose Maths* (WRM). It has also achieved UK based accreditations like the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) and the Green Flag Award.

Assessments are based on national standards and curriculum endpoints as enshrined in the English programmes of study and those defined by the school's preferred examination boards. With the exception of Arabic Language Studies and Islamic Studies, all teaching is delivered in the medium of English.

The teachers (apart from for the subject mentioned above) are native English speakers; they have UK and international experience. Displays and lesson observations demonstrate that teachers maximise opportunities to reinforce British links.

The school aims to use creative and interactive cross-curricular approaches where the emphasis is placed on educating the whole child. This ensures that attention is paid not just to developing students' intellectual abilities, but also to their social, emotional and physical growth. Teachers take part in regular professional development programmes that are at the forefront of the latest educational thinking and methodology from the UK and beyond. In particular, the model at the forefront of the school's CPD is *High Performance Learning* (HPL).

Programmes like NPQH, NPQSL and NPQML are offered to staff to ensure they keep up to date with the UK market in educational leadership. The school's curriculum is based on the latest thinking and educational research from the UK in terms of conceptualisation, design and delivery: staff have been trained by practicing lead Ofsted inspectors in sequencing, pedagogy and assessment.

SRS has a strong house system, a school uniform and a school council, all of which contribute towards the Britishness of the school. Fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law underpin the operational aspects of the school council and the house system. British practice is also evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting, and annual review meetings.

## 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.

There is full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age, meeting local regulations. The principal language of instruction is English. The school has a written curriculum policy that ensures across all key stages breadth, balance, subject-focus and innovation. This is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. The policy is implemented effectively, with the aim of ensuring high expectations are made for the progress of all students. The curriculum is rich and varied, and enables students to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The national curriculum of England provides the framework for teaching and learning, but is reflective of its being in the United Arab Emirates and the school's international context.

The SRS curriculum has a clear rationale based on shared values. Its program and activities are coherent and promote personalisation of learning, enjoyment and the holistic development of the learner. It includes creative, physical and practical experiences to strengthen knowledge and skills of all students. Topic and social sciences include a wide range of information and skills delivered to students.

The curriculum allows students to attain knowledge across the seven areas of learning. The embedding of cross-curricular links is evident in plans. 'Knowledge organisers' provide an overview of the curriculum as a study guide for students and parents across all key stages and subjects. One-to-one iPad deployment model has enabled teachers to embed ICT opportunities throughout the curriculum.

There is a strong collaborative approach to planning. Teachers and leaders meet weekly to plan lessons. The teachers use the 'super learning' strategy at the end of a cycle to consolidate learning, as well as to review and embed knowledge. There is an effective system for curriculum review on a termly basis, followed by curriculum adaptation. Transition among key stages is reinforced through ensuring that students experience what the learning will be like when they transition from one key stage to another. Flowcharts to parents explaining the expectations for the year group and key stage were reported to be very useful to them.

In EYFS, there is a strong focus on the development of language and communication which is evident throughout RWI and phonics lessons. Class teachers are well trained

in the teaching techniques of RWI programs. Implementation of a bilingual curriculum approach is effective with these younger children: this was evident in the role played by the teachers' assistants (TAs) in each class as two TAs were deployed in every class to link Arabic and English teaching and learning. Even in Arabic classes, teachers support this bilingual approach by translating key vocabulary into English. Hands-on activities and a broad range of resources that meet all students' needs were evident in the mathematics and science plans. The mathematics curriculum is based on the WRM program and teachers are well-trained in the high-quality delivery of these lessons. Learning continues outside the classroom in play areas that are designated for exploration and free play.

In primary, planning in the core subject areas of English, mathematics and science, systematically depicts elements such as success criteria, questioning, innovation and HPL opportunities across all subjects. Curriculum resources including *Accelerated Reader* and RWI in English and iPad applications in mathematics such as *Brainingcamp* are embedded in the curriculum; they further support learning. In science, plans are built around enquiry and investigation.

In secondary, the curriculum planning is also strong. It is broad, balanced, interesting and relevant which is well suited to meet the needs for different groups of students: this ensures progress is made. The 'focus five' is an identified group of students who are not currently 'on track'. They are given personalised and structured support to move them on in their learning. The HPL framework is gradually being embedded into the schemes of work, and thus aligns with the latest pedagogical research. Daily plans are implemented effectively, language rich with many real life links. Middle leaders ensure there is clear progression in skills in the delivery of the curriculum across the school. Teachers meet weekly in departments to plan collaboratively.

Many students have opportunities to compete in both internal and external competitions, for example the Emirati literature festival, Model United Nations, Debating, mathematics, science, a poetry festival and a story writing competition.

Until the outbreak of Covid-19, enrichment of curriculum provided by a whole school co-curricular activities (CCA) programme. Under current restrictions, no after school provision is permitted. However, under normal working conditions, the school runs almost 60 after-school activities. These include chess, English homework, French language, football, hockey, karate, maths, *Minecraft*, netball, primary Arabic speech and Spanish language.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is excellent: almost all teaching seen was good or better, and a large proportion was outstanding.

The school has high expectations in terms of good behaviour and engagement. The students display positive attitudes towards learning. Systems and procedures for managing students' behaviour have been highly effective - they are challenged to do their best. The teachers' sound subject knowledge is applied across the key stages. This lends confidence to their teaching style and resources, which engages students and encourages them to work independently. Teaching promotes responsible behaviour in lessons.

Across the school, lessons are appropriate to the age and aptitude of the learners. Lessons are well structured using the 'SRS way' and high performance learning model to promote a positive attitude to learning. In the best lessons students' individual needs were planned and catered for to ensure progress was made. Teaching assistants support SEND within lessons. Challenge opportunities and open questions are provided in lessons to extend learners. In the secondary school, sequences of lessons are planned to allow opportunity to reflect on feedback and close gaps in learning.

The stimulating learning environment of the school created collaboratively by teachers and students contributes significantly to students' learning. This is particularly evident in the infant and junior areas, with themed learning environments highlighted by a range of different ecosystems through focused floors such as 'Under the Sea', 'The Rainforest' and 'Meadows', enhancing the learners' experience.

Questioning is highly effective, promoting higher level thinking and critical responses. Dialogue engages students in thoughtful discussions and reflection. Teachers check students' understanding using a variety of different strategies. These include older or more able students teaching younger, less able students, which has had benefits for both groups in terms of extending and embedding learning. In a Year 6 English creative writing lesson, students explored a newspaper article relating to a train crash. Students were encouraged to work collaboratively to create a suitable headline and provided with a framework scaffold to support them individually in writing their own articles. Key words and vocabulary were introduced to support EAL students. They are independent learners and can find things out for themselves using a variety of sources.

In EYFS, and Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching enables students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress across all key stages. Consistency in the approach to teaching and learning of numeracy and literacy has been a central focus of leadership: this is clearly having impact. These subject areas have also benefitted from the implementation of high quality numeracy and literacy programmes. The embedding of

literacy throughout the school supports accelerated progress. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, students learnt how to express fractions as decimals in addition to pictorial form and the concept of place value of decimals. Excellent progress was demonstrated by students' level of response, application and understanding. Shared planning provides a good level of consistency and resource quality assurance.

Continuous play and learning areas within EYFS and Key Stage 1 allow students to explore concepts effectively through both child and teacher initiated activities. Some examples of sustained shared learning are evident. In most lessons, students demonstrated full engagement. However, in some classes in EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, when students were not directly monitored by the class teacher, additional support of teaching assistants was not as effective, as there were limited explicit written instructions and time frames to complete set tasks given. The use of challenge and stretch activities was not always evident, leading to lost learning time in class whilst students await teacher feedback or guidance.

Excellent questioning and skills development are key features in lessons across the secondary school. Questioning is used to develop critical thinking, for example in a Year 11 mathematics lesson that used exam-style questions, but encouraged students to discuss. Similarly, a Year 7 English lesson that used 'think, pair, share' elicited some high order thinking. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Classroom resources are of a high quality and utilised effectively. In secondary science, ICT technology was used innovatively to involve the distance learners in practical investigations. Students in class were effectively modelling investigative skills. Teachers produce resources, such as the 'Knowledge Organisers' across all phases to enhance the acquisition of key vocabulary and subject specific content for all learners. Lead practitioners in different areas are used to cascade information throughout the secondary subjects. Class resources are used effectively throughout the school, within Covid-19 restrictions.

The students are keen to interact and respond to the teacher, and support each other. Strong teacher and student professional relationships are evident throughout the school and are fundamental in supporting excellent learning. Real life contexts to learning clearly supported engagement, especially evident in the secondary school.

Throughout the school, outside of lessons, students demonstrate a clear understanding of Covid-19 regulations and show adherence to social distancing whilst moving across the site safely. Verbal praise is used regularly.

High quality learning opportunities and provision of resources were evident through the whole school. The implementation of the HPL model has accelerated most students' acquisition of new knowledge. Teachers' subject knowledge across the school is a strength that allows for skilled questioning strategies to develop learners' understanding.

The team that support students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) liaises closely with teachers across the school, to provide necessary information. CPD supports the school's ethos that 'every teacher is a teacher of SEND'. Differentiation of pace between classes is used to support or accelerate students in secondary. To support the access of learning during the pandemic period, all lessons are recorded to allow access to learning outside of lesson time. Students' attendance and their submission of work is monitored to allow a flexible approach to learning. For long term distance learners, the school allocates specific full distance learning classes, providing full access to the curriculum and individual class support.

Assessment and its use is strong. Across the school, baseline and CAT4 testing is effective in highlighting students in need of extra support. The school's internal assessment process implemented by the school leadership team, is very effective. For example, in the EYFS, there is a significant focus on staff "feedback in the moment". This provides students with the opportunity to receive immediate verbal feedback and was observed in action across most subject areas.

The whole school reporting system provides a termly report for students and parents outlining subject progress, attainment and effort. In secondary, the specific reporting of subject grades is less clear. Upper secondary parents have highlighted this as an area for development. Across the school, a data tracking sheet is shared with all teachers on the data dashboard. At the end of each cycle, data is reviewed. In EYFS, students are assessed in a variety of ways to measure progress across the seven learning areas. Students are assessed against the *Good Level of Development* framework. Progress is regularly monitored to ensure progress from emerging to expected and above expected. Parents are invited in at the beginning of each year to meet teachers, gain understanding of the learning that will take place that academic year and ask questions relating to student progress. Parents are kept well informed on a daily basis regarding student performance in lessons and progress towards outcomes.

Throughout the school, the *padlet* app provided a strong visual record of student learning opportunities. Student work is also assessed through the *Showbie* app. Teachers in designated teaching pods complete regular moderation of student feedback which is completed on a tri-weekly basis as well as at the end of term. Consistent written feedback was observed that linked learning to the lesson objectives. 'Next steps' are an integral part of the feedback cycle, as seen in students' books, online and in follow up activities completed. EYFS and Key Stage 1 staff complete weekly planning meetings which utilises learning from the prior week to adapt content and ensure students make progress. The school uses regular assessment points that identify any gaps in knowledge and then a 'super teaching' week is used to address these areas of development.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

Academic attainment, based on a strong curriculum, good and outstanding teaching and high-quality care means that the standards at the school are excellent.

The attainment levels achieved by students across the school are outstanding. Given that 94% of students enter the EYFS not speaking English as a first language, significant progress is made, especially in English language but also in numeracy development. On entry to Key Stage 1, overall progress levels are maintained, with a continued particular 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 being 'not on track' are labelled as 'focus 5' and are given targeted and structured support across the school, by both teachers and teaching assistants.

Across all the key stages of the national curriculum, student attainment and progress 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 GL, Cat 4, GCSE 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 suggests that children are arriving at SRS with low attainment in the core subjects. There is evidence that the pandemic restrictions may well have reduced attainment on entry to the school. For example, in English and mathematics, from a low starting point, achievement is broadly in line with UK standards, and progress is outstanding.

Students continue to make very good progress. In Year 2, the 2021 internal data for students in reading attainment indicates a score of 71% compared to the score of 72% obtained in 2020, and progress data suggests the score in 2020 was 84% with an increase in 2021 to 97%. Data for writing, mathematics and science show similar positive impact by the school. Students in Key Stage 2 show a rapid development of understanding and skill. For example, in Year 3, students showed understanding of command verbs and were able to discuss the expectations required of them from written task instructions, discussing terms such as "describe" and "record".

Externally assessed academic standards at SRS have improved markedly over recent years, too, clearly indicated by IGCSE examination data at the end of Key Stage 4. Over a three-year period, the school results in 2018 have gone from 81% A\* to C to 2020 pass rate to 98%. These higher standards are predicted to be maintained.

Similarly, the school has also seen considerable improvement amongst the lower ability groups at this level. The number of entries awarded D to F grades has been reduced from 15% in 2018, to fewer than 3% in 2020. Students failing (with a U grade) in 2018 was 4% and has been reduced to 0% in 2020.

Overall, the progress achieved by students in all phases of the school is above UK expectations. Data for GCSE and A-Levels show students' attainment significantly above UK results. Assessment data shows that nearly all students make at least expected progress and significant numbers make above expected progress.

External GCSE exams results in English, mathematics and science are all above the UK national average for grade 7 and above and for grade 4 and above. Mathematics results are significantly higher (34%) than the UK average of 19% for grade 7 and above.

Good careers guidance is given. 2019-2020 cohort showed 44% of students going to UK universities, with 25% taking courses in medicine and 33% courses in engineering. Students reported that their teachers inspired them into these career choices and felt their teachers really supported them.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding: it is a key strength of SRS.

SRS is very successful in helping students become responsible, respectful and active citizens. It does this by providing excellent opportunities of understanding how a democracy works. The school has included age-appropriate material in its curriculum on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law works in Britain in comparison to other forms of government in other countries. The school ensures that students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate how democracy works through actively promoting democratic processes, such as an elected school council. In this way it ensures that students have a meaningful voice. The United Nations Universal Rights of the Child are also actively promoted by virtue of the fact that SRS is a designated Rights Respecting school.

Through HPL, the moral education programme (MEP) and curriculum and daily lessons, students learn to reflect on their achievements and to understand the values which underpin the ethos of the SRS. Students' character and emotional well-being is nurtured in positive learning environments. Students know about their rights, can exercise them, feel valued and can recognise the rights of others. Student voice is gathered through surveys and the Student Leadership Team which has representatives from Year 1 to Year 13.

The school has a passionate and effective student leadership team. They go through a rigorous selection process and are elected by their peers. They have very positive views about their school, teachers and senior leadership team. SRS has a real sense of community and team spirit.

Students are confident, self-assured and show respect for teachers and their peers. The school is very effective in integrating the HPL values, attitudes and attributes that prepare students to learn well and to achieve in life. They are often a key focus in lessons. A weekly focus is targeted in lessons and highlighted in pastoral assemblies. Students speak confidently and articulately in lessons to verbalise their opinions on a range of topics. Learners' skills are supported well including developing independence and confidence in all subjects. There are opportunities for paired/group work, within the restrictions of the pandemic. A positive behaviour management approach has been adopted by the whole school. The 6Cs associated (character, citizenship, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication) are incorporated into lessons and learning opportunities to allow students to develop their self-knowledge.

The student leadership team is actively involved in supporting lower years. Prefects attend Year 7 break and lunch times, to build relationships and to model appropriate behaviour. Anti-

bullying week was promoted around the school and included an anti-bullying art competition. Students feel safe to discuss concerns with staff or prefects.

Moral development is excellent. EYFS students are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour through restorative techniques. In a Year 4 moral education class, the students were shown a case study and then shared experiences of when they have had to take responsibility giving real life examples. The school has a sustainability club that promotes recycling initiatives. The PROUD (Prepared and ready to learn, Respectful of the environment, Open minded and aspirational, Understanding and accepting and Disciplined) system in the school allows for students to identify and improve characteristics such as respect. This is used in the reward system to gain PROUD points. Students also use this in homework and reporting to identify work they are PROUD of.

Last year, leadership responded to student feedback by setting up the democratic election of student leadership across the school. Debate club, debating skills and humanities lessons support students to learn about public institutions and services in England. This is also evidenced in primary topic lessons. In Key Stage 2 lessons, students have collaborated on passport design, the study the UK history and are aware of British currency. In a Year 12 sociology lesson, students could identify the different types of schools in the UK and link this to their learning.

Early morning Quran classes and afternoon prayers sessions are conducted daily. Students know how to pray by themselves and this good behaviour is embedded in this practice. Student voice is encouraged throughout the school to empower learners to know their rights and responsibilities. Students articulated that they felt their voice was heard. Moral education lessons in secondary demonstrated students giving examples of how they should tolerate and respect people that are different to them. The student leadership commented that the balance of British values of the school and the local culture is one of the reasons they enjoy attending the school. The school has been involved in an exchange programme where students from China have been hosted. National day is a highlight of the year for students where students can dress in their own national dress and share food from their home country.

Cultural development is excellent. Students demonstrate broad and balanced views in class discussions. Respect for diversity is celebrated within the context of the UAE. Students are well aware of British values and how they relate to international culture. An English literature A level lesson demonstrated respect and empathy when examining the experiences of Windrush migrants. A Year 9 humanities lesson identified and evaluated different forms of government, including democracy, communism, republicanism, monarchy and dictatorship. Year 8 used critical thinking skills to investigate segregation in the USA and share their thoughts. IGCSE religious studies lessons include descriptions of the UK today to include human rights, equal rights and multi faith society. The student leadership newsletter 'The Spectacle' shares news headlines from around the world, as well as promoting the pastoral house systems activities. Topical content is explored, such as in the March 2021 edition and

article written by a Year 10 student explored the controversy behind using embryonic stem cells.

Social development is excellent. Students of Year 4, from different nationalities, speak in English at school to collaborate with one another. Students are provided with many opportunities to learn about nationalities using a passport design activity, which emphasised social interaction. Throughout their time at SRS, students develop high order personal and social skills, which enable them to make a positive contribution to the society in which they live. It prepares them effectively for the next stage of their lives. The school ethos is underpinned by inclusivity and a mutual respect of culture. The school actively promotes tolerance, a respect for human differences and acceptance of a range of lifestyles: this is achieved within the laws of the UAE. The school precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school.

## 7. Standard 3

### The welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Students are inspiring ambassadors for their school and have excellent relationships with their peers, teachers and with external visitors. The whole school approach to promoting the emotional well-being of students is evident in everyone's practice, whatever their role. Safeguarding is a high priority and effective systems are in place which are clearly communicated to everyone including visitors and parents. The nurturing ethos, supported by structured teaching and the learning environment, ensures students feel safe, listened to, cared for and valued in their school.

The students are exceptionally well cared for. The school has a strong pastoral system in place where there was a welfare "team around the child" approach that follows each child from EYFS through their entire learning journey to Key Stage 5. This team around the child is a comprehensive team consisting of all concerned stakeholders including the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and welfare personnel. The relationships between staff and students ensures learning takes place in a safe, trusting, calm and purposeful environment.

The arrangements implemented by the school for the welfare, health and safety of the students are of a very high quality. Effective policies and procedures are in place to promote the welfare of all students in the school. The school has up-to-date policies for health and safety, safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, first aid and risk assessment. All procedures are fully compliant with the government regulations: there is a robust system for monitoring and reviewing these policies and procedures.

Safeguarding is at the heart of the school. All staff are aware of the importance of safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety. Information is provided for all visitors to the school regarding safeguarding. Sources of safeguarding and wellbeing information include QR codes around the building, posters, school publications and the school website. The school has adapted its safeguarding policy to ensure best practice is implemented with regards to the challenges faced by students due to distance learning and the global pandemic. Student welfare is embedded in the culture of teaching and learning with clear evidence of in-class discussion, visual displays and student activities.

At the beginning and end of the school day, staff including the security team, supervise the safe arrival and departure of students. Security officers monitor the entrances and exits of the site and complete daily inspections. CCTV is in place with access given to members of the senior leadership team as and when necessary. Internal security doors restrict entry to the teaching areas and can only be accessed with a security card. The school swimming pool, science laboratories and access to chemical substances have an additional security door and access is restricted to students. All visitors to the school site are always required to sign in at

the reception desk. They wear a visitor sticker or lanyard to identify them as visitors on the school site. All staff are subjected to background checks in line with government regulations.

The school has three doctors, five nurses and two clerical workers. They provide first aid and emergency aid when this is required. They manage three medical centres which are located on the campus. The clinic team has won awards for the work they do. There is a vigorous CPD program in place. The school is a member of the National Online Safety (NOS) hub. Staff are trained in first aid. Accidents are logged using an accident report form. Injuries and illnesses are treated by the doctor or the nurse; each being logged on a central record.

School transportation is managed inhouse; the bus drivers and supervisors have training for security, safety and safeguarding. The system in place for the handover of students at the beginning and end of the school day is efficient for a school of this size. In the infant school building, parents must contact the class teacher via *Class Dojo*. A class supervisor collects that child from the classroom and drops them off with the parent. During the pandemic, more support staff were recruited and deployed to manage this system effectively.

Senior leadership made staff welfare a top priority during the lockdown climate. They are accurately aware of the demographics of their staff. They have managed to put an effective support system in place for staff mental health and well-being that included quiz nights for teachers of class pods within the same year group across the primary school. Other examples of support included home visits by senior leadership, online cross-fit sessions, and mental health webinars made available through *The Lighthouse* in Dubai.

Staff report feeling appreciated: there is a whole school drive to celebrate and share best practice. Examples include the 'Teacher of the Month' award, 'Tuesday Treats', 'Sundays Sweets', and leaving notes under the keyboards of staff with positive comments. The leadership team is keen on meeting teachers and staff all the time to ensure that they are well catered for.

During the pandemic, specific additional support has been put in place for parents. The school also maintained open lines of communication. A rigorous system for monitoring attendance and punctuality is in place. Some students do leave school early for various reasons: it is unclear what impact this has. Parents are contacted in the event of a child being late or absent. With distance learning, extra measures were put in place including a distinction between attending an online lesson and participation within that class. Parents feel the school is a safe place; this is evident in the high attendance rate as most of the students have returned to school.

An effective behaviour policy is in place, including guidance on sanctions, exclusions and rewards. Welfare of students is ensured through regular sanitation of facilities, accessibility to personal protective equipment and awareness of social distancing. For example, FS2 and primary cohorts of students organised themselves into socially distanced lines, prior to accessing outdoor play.

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

SRS meets the BSO standards for suitability of the proprietor and staff.

A single central register (SCR) is in place to report and record all relevant pre-employment checks. This is a comprehensive list of all staff and volunteers who currently work in the school, showing the dates when they commenced and ceased working in the school. It also keeps and made available for inspectors, records of all checks completed in respect of staff and volunteers who currently work at the school or who have worked at the school since the date of the last inspection. This is an excellent and appropriate working document.

The school has an effective pre-employment checklist that is worked through diligently before an offer of employment is made. This is an integral part of the 'safer recruitment' procedures. There is only one supply teacher used, very infrequently. The same checks and pre-employment standards are applied.

No visa is issued by UAE without security checks being met. All staff appointed must have appropriate qualifications as per SRS criteria, including two references and security checks in place before appointment.

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

SRS premises and accommodation are excellent. They easily meet the BSO standard.

The main campus opened in 2014 and the new site for the infant school opened September 2020. Features of the school's buildings and premises are innovative and support learning effectively. The school is, therefore, a very well-ordered and stimulating environment, which contributes significantly to the students' enjoyment of their education. Very close attention is paid to external security and to health and safety, including cleaning and hygiene.

The two campuses are purpose built with specialist facilities provided for design technology, science and PE. The accommodation is maintained to a high standard. The classrooms provide impressive space for students. All Early Years classrooms open out onto an outdoor area creating a sense of spaciousness and the opportunity for outdoor learning. The large secondary building allows for individual subject department areas, due to the large size and space of the school. It also provides convenient groupings of year groups in the primary section. The school provides secondary students with areas for private study and small seminar rooms for teaching. The playground benefits from shaded areas. Bathrooms are kept clean and sufficient in number.

The ground floor and first floor area accommodates the sports hall, as well as other teaching rooms. There are clear evacuation signs displayed in all areas of the school. The safety of the students is of primary consideration at all times. Specialist rooms are adequate in size. The ICT, DART and science rooms are well resourced. Whilst the libraries are currently not in use due to Covid-19 protocol, they are well stocked. The teachers all have iPads to use. There are also two covered outdoor classrooms which are utilised during cooler weather.

Shower facilities are provided for students for all swimming pools and PE areas. Appropriate facilities are also available for students who feel unwell. All local regulatory standards are met.

Student safety is a priority. All water coolers at present have been removed due to Covid-19 protocols however, daily classrooms and work areas are provided with sufficient bottled water. At afternoon pick up time, a well-managed system for collection of students is in place. An effective bus collection system provides a transport service for families. No obvious hazards or security problems were observed.

Fire drills take place once a term but due to Covid-19 protocols, at present the fire alarms are carried out as walkthroughs, fire alarms are serviced and replaced if they are not working and are linked with UAE civil defence. CCTV, lifts, hand sanitizers are all regularly serviced.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers, prospective parents and the wider community is outstanding.

The school mission and aims are stated on the website and all other required information posted there too. Many parents suggested that they chose the school especially for its strong British curriculum which they know is infused with Arabic language and Islamic values of education.

Parents interviewed reported that they were impressed with the education provided for their children and the information about it. They suggest that the school is very approachable and that the staff have an excellent understanding of their children's needs. Support for children and parents alike was felt to be excellent. For example, parents praised the school leadership team and mentioned that they are exceed expectations with constant support. Parents were very happy with the start of the year induction meetings which helped families transition year to year.

Parents reported that the school was like a family, embracing, welcoming and inclusive. The headteachers at each phase interact with parents regularly and pride themselves on being very much present in the community. Communication is provided through a variety of channels such as Class Dojo, MS Teams, emails, phone calls and SMS during the beginning and end of the school when students are entering/leaving school. Parents felt that senior leaders and teachers invite feedback, and are happy with the way they are dealt with by staff.

Appropriate contact details are provided for parents and other stakeholders, including the e-mail contact details of the senior leaders. The website and school publications clearly outline the school's philosophy and mission. A variety of policies are readily available for parents and others. There are many photographs that give a clear picture of events, trips and activities that have happened in corridors around the school and the school social media accounts: they give parents and prospective parents a good idea of the day-to-day happenings at SRS.

The school provides parents with access to policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safeguarding, the promotion of good behaviour, and the sanctions the school adopts in the event of students misbehaving. The complaints procedure is outlined along with details of the staff employed by the school. Information is shared by parents, carers and school visitors through high quality visual displays and use of QR codes around the school.

SRS reports to parents regularly on the progress made by students. Across EYFS - Key Stage 2 parents are informed on a daily basis through Class Dojo as to the progress of students. Internal assessments and examination marks are reported at least every term. A full report is

also issued at the end of each academic year. Grades achieved by students are readily available at any time, if requested.

In non-pandemic times, the school offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities, which the parents felt was a strong point of the school. The school has strong links with the local community. It offers some of its facilities to the community, such as the *Majlis* and the separate science museum (still at a developmental stage). Parents report being impressed by the range of opportunities available to students during the transition to online learning including reading competitions, virtual marathons, virtual Junior Dukes (in primary), International Duke of Edinburgh award (in secondary), drawing competitions, anti-bullying and 'single use plastic' campaigns.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

SRS meets the BSO standard. Complaints are rare, but the school has a detailed written policy and appropriate procedures in place. These reflect good practice from the UK.

Complaints received are acknowledged immediately upon receipt if received during term time and as soon as possible during holiday periods. The school aims to treat all complaints seriously and sensitively. They hope to resolve complaints within 48 hours.

Following resolution of a complaint, the school keeps a written record of the complaint and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. The school reserves the right to keep additional records which may contain the following information:

- date when the issue was raised
- name of parent
- name of student
- description of the issue
- records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- witness statements (if appropriate)
- name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

If a complaint pertains to child protection or safeguarding issues, it will be immediately referred to the school's designated safeguarding lead for urgent review and may refer the matter on to multi-agency safeguarding teams, as necessary. If a complaint is received about a headteacher, the principal or the director of education, it is hoped that the matter is resolved informally. If a complainant believes this would not be possible, the complaint should be sent to the director of education or the board, as appropriate.

Parents also have the right to request that the board of governors hear any grievance that they feel has not been properly addressed by the school's principal and the administrative office, following the KHDA Parent School Contract agreement:

If a hearing is necessary, the governors will set up a committee comprised of a teacher, a parent, a school leader and a member of the board of governors. None of the members of the committee would have any connection to the original concern or complaint. The parent may attend the committee hearing. The committee studies the issue and within 10 working days issues a written report to the principal and to the parent, and where relevant the person complained about.

## 12. Standard 8

### Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

Led strongly, purposefully and sensitively by the director of education, the principal and the three headteachers, the senior leadership team (SLT) has had an inspirational effect upon the whole school community. The shared vision and capacity to move the school forward are exemplary. The SLT work passionately on school improvement with a clear focus on providing outstanding quality education, high student achievement and strong well-being. The SLT is supported by a very effective team of middle leaders and lead practitioners who are well aware of their roles and of the school priorities. The model of distributed leadership among both the academic and welfare teams has facilitated rapid school improvement. There is a systematic performance assessment and appraisal system in place to ensure that leaders at all levels are held accountable for and to learners and staff.

The senior leadership team provide a clear vision and direction for the school. This shared vision supported by excellent teamwork are the characteristics of the leadership at SRS at all levels. Leaders are committed to providing first-class education for the whole school community, ambitious to develop students as excellent leaders themselves and as global citizens, respecting the rights and views of others. This is evident in the SRS *student learner profile* that helps to build attributes and competencies beneficial to students' future life. The student leadership teams join with the adult leaders in promoting care and consideration in the school community, celebrating the evident Britishness of the school's ethos, learning environment and curriculum.

The governing board's commitment to excellence has impacted very positively on school development. They communicate a clear and ambitious strategic direction to the management team, and stay well-informed to support the effective allocation of resources especially during the unprecedented pandemic situation. The model of school support and data analysis used is exemplary. Governors are actively involved in the school: regular visits are undertaken to review the school improvement plan, they take part in learning walks and participate in school activities. The outcomes of these visits are summarised and reported each term. The strategic deployment of governors in this way ensures they are well-informed as well as providing support and challenge, facilitating the maintenance of clear strategic direction by the leaders.

Across all areas of the school, there is clear evidence of a solid framework for the identification, induction and continued growth of practitioners that are new to the role of middle leadership. Middle leader's express clear confidence in the senior leadership team and their vision for whole school development.

Despite the big size of the campus and the large number of students and staff, the school feels like a community school with a vibrant family atmosphere. Morale throughout SRS is very positive. Relationships and communication in the school with all stakeholders is respectful and effective. The school has maintained an open door policy and ensures that stakeholders' voices (especially that of parents) are heard: actions are taken accordingly, even more so during the pandemic. The support that the school provides to parents extended this year to financial support, including providing devices to students during distance learning.

The leadership team promotes the positive ethos and values of the school powerfully. The implementation of PROUD initiative created a positive school culture; one of pride and belonging. Such pride in addition to clear behaviour expectations and sanctions resulted in improving students' behaviour, especially in the secondary school.

The school self-evaluation is comprehensive and collaborative. Senior leaders work with middle leaders to portray an accurate image of the school strengths and areas for improvement while ensuring that the stakeholders' voice is integrated in the process.

There is a whole school approach to continuous professional development (CPD). The priorities for CPD are data driven based on lesson evaluations, student data and school goals. The needs of staff are assessed and supported by the senior management team who offer in house induction and refresher training, in addition to external (currently online) training.

SRS is committed to supporting the well-being and mental health of staff through its commitment to developing efficiencies and tackling workload, as well as promoting good communication and a safe learning environment.

SRS operates very smoothly on a day-to-day basis, because operations are smooth and well understood, with a special emphasis on health and safety measures during the current pandemic situation. The school is highly committed to students and staff well-being. Large investments have been made in human and fiscal resources during the current pandemic. More support staff was hired to support students' safety on the premises. Investment in educational resources like iPads for students and reading platforms like *Accelerated Reader*, *MyOn* and *Showbie* aim at continuing to meet the world class standards that the school is achieving.