



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Sharjah English School

Sharjah

United Arab Emirates

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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 UK. 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, 47 full- or part- lessons were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, a range of teachers, representatives of the governors and group of students. Two and a half school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Colin Dyson. The team members were John Cranfield, Neil Hudson and Alison Stevens.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides an outstanding quality of education.

Sharjah English School (SES) has high expectations of all its students and they respond by making good or better progress in their lessons and external examinations.

The quality of the students' personal development is excellent throughout. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. It is supported by excellent pastoral care and robust welfare, health and safety policies and procedures. Staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

The school is highly successful in enabling all students to develop their personal skills and qualities: students are thoughtful, well behaved, treat others with respect and have well-developed social skills. The emphasis is on providing appropriate support for every individual student. The quality of relationships is exceptional. Students show genuine concern for each other, and grow in both self-awareness and self-esteem.

SES has implemented a curriculum that engages students effectively and matches their needs, interests and aspirations. Students in the secondary school are provided with a broad range of subjects based on their needs and desires.

The school is held in high regard by the wider community and parents. The students are proud to be members of the school and value the opportunities it provides.

The high quality of governance, leadership and management is a key factor in the students' success.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths. They include:

- Highly effective pastoral support and a positive inclusive ethos, underpins the work of the school.
- Students' achievements are well above average. The school has implemented a broad and balanced curriculum, proactively responding to the need of students, providing challenge and encouraging all students to excel. A wide range of extra-curricular activities provide students with the opportunity to develop their interests.
- Senior leaders under the guidance of the principal provide outstanding leadership and management. The vision of the school is shared, and is focused on the continued drive to further enhance the high standards already achieved.
- Students show genuine concern for the needs of others and display a high level of self-awareness and confidence. Students listen to their teachers and each other, taking a shared responsibility for their learning. Behaviour is exemplary.
- Teaching standards across the school are high. The large majority of lessons monitored were good or better. None was unsatisfactory.
- The most successful lessons were clearly planned and delivered, demonstrating secure and enthusiastic subject knowledge. A brisk pace and confident use of appropriate technology engaged students in their learning. In the best lessons, teachers used a range of questioning skills, differentiation, and appropriate challenge. In addition, they provided opportunities for students to develop as independent learners.
- Teachers and support staff provide a high level of care and guidance to all students, helping to create a positive atmosphere that celebrates each individual's achievements.
- Administration staff are highly effective in supporting the smooth running of the school.
- Appropriate policies and procedures regarding the health, safety and well-being of students are in place.
- Highly effective communications between all stakeholders ensures information is shared and opportunities for participation in decision making maximised.
- The school provides high quality accommodation. The site is inspiring: learning is celebrated everywhere.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Develop opportunities to ensure that the many examples of excellent practice in teaching, are embedded in all areas.
- Build on current practice, to formalise the school's performance management process to further raise standards.
- Ensure governors are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support the leadership team successfully in effective long-term strategic planning, that will secure the sustainability of a school of excellence.

4. The context of the school

Sharjah English School (SES) is a co-educational independent school for children aged 3-18 years. It operates under the auspices of the Sharjah Education Zone of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The school is designated as a 'private community school', which recognises that it was established to cater for the large British community of Sharjah, to provide an education that accorded with UK needs and requirements. The school is required to follow certain federal and local laws and directives, for example on the allocation of curriculum time to Arabic language and Islamic Studies.

The board of governors devised the school's constitution in 1975, updating it in 1978. It operates as a non-profit organisation.

The school opened a secondary section in 2005 and just afterwards, moved to a new site. It and some of the facilities were provided by the Ruler of Sharjah. The latest phase of building, the Performing Arts Centre, was completed in September 2011 and opened for students later in the year. The final sections of the building, the library and auditorium, were officially opened in May 2012.

The opening of the secondary section was in response to parental pressure, concerned with their children having to commute to Dubai. The first enrolment in secondary was 33 students, rising to 260 this year.

Apart from inspection visits by examination boards and local authorities, there has not been a full school inspection or accreditation since 1997.

The school has identified the following as barriers to providing high quality education:

- Pressure of teaching time, caused by the mixture of MoE and UK National Curriculum (NC) requirements.
- The shortage of high quality Arabic language teachers.
- The time involved in obtaining compulsory annual licences.
- The financial constraints inherent in running a small school.

4.1 British nature of the school

The school is outstanding in the quality of provision it provides to ensure the best qualities of a British education are adopted.

The appearance, nature and ethos of the school are recognisably British. An original founding imperative was to provide an education based on UK principles, procedures and a curriculum that would permit children to join or re-join the UK education system without disadvantage at any stage.

UK passport holders comprise the largest student cohort. The majority of students continue their education in the UK, or at other British schools internationally.

All teaching and management posts are advertised in the UK press.

The school is organized according to the pastoral structures used in English schools. The school house system is successfully implemented: children take a keen interest through assemblies, sporting activities and house competitions.

The school council, prefects and house captains contribute towards the whole school ethos.

As well as fully implementing the curriculum for England, assessments are based on national standards from the UK.

British practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting and annual review meetings.

All communications from the school to families and students are provided in English only, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website.

The importance of extra-curricular provision including clubs and school trips, are in line with British best practice.

The school celebrates special events in the UK, for example the Royal Wedding, Remembrance Day and the London Olympics.

Texts, materials, educational equipment and software are UK sourced.

Parents are supportive of the British nature of the curriculum. Interviews with parents, suggested they appreciated the inclusiveness and high quality of education delivered at SES.

The school is an active member of BSME.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

5.1 Curriculum

The school provides an excellent curriculum. It is broad in range and appropriately balanced. All students in nursery and reception follow the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. Differentiated activities and learning outcomes ensure all can access the curriculum, with the required level of support to meet individual needs. Through careful planning, they enjoy a wide range of activities and topics that encourage them to become independent learners at an early age. Teachers plan curriculum activities that stimulate speaking and listening skills and this greatly enhances progress in learning.

Students in Key Stage 1 follow British literacy and numeracy frameworks, alongside a good range of topics based on UK curriculum expectations. A broad and balanced curriculum is offered to the children. It is evident that the school has planned their thematic curriculum in order to maximise the learning time available. Evidence suggests that curriculum management and implementation are strengths: it has been a school priority.

At Key Stage 2, the school follows the National Curriculum for England, in addition to meeting local educational obligations. Students choose between French and Arabic from Year 4 as their modern foreign language. Differentiated activities and learning outcomes ensure all students can access the curriculum, supported by the use of individual learning plans (IEPs) where appropriate.

Students continue to follow the National Curriculum throughout Key Stage 3. The curriculum is enhanced by the addition of music, PE, art, swimming, and design and technology.

At Key Stage 4, the school endeavours to respond to the needs of all students. In addition to studying four core subjects (including a choice of double or triple science), students select four from 11 optional subjects. PE, graphics and textiles are GCSE options added since 2009, responding to students' requests. Able students can take 10 GCSEs in addition to completing mathematics at the end of Year 10.

Provision at Key Stage 5 is flexible, responding where possible to the needs of individual students. Currently students can choose from 16 subjects. There are four possible routes through A levels, culminating in 3, 4 or 5 A-levels, with the possibility of completing A2 Mathematics in Year 12. The school has a thriving extra-curricular activities programme across the school. All staff are involved in the delivery of activities, 88.5% of students across Key Stages 3 to 5 participate in the programme. Sports teams compete outside Sharjah with increasing success - for example the U16 netball team have recently secured a place in the Dubai Premier League. There is a full International Award programme in place from Years 10 to 13 and a range of other clubs for all interests from scuba diving to computer gaming. Students interviewed stated with pride that they have "too much" choice.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Students enjoy their lessons. Across all phases, nearly all students are engaged and focussed. Students were overwhelmingly positive about their learning. In primary school classes, the quality of discussion clearly indicated that students are enthusiastic learners.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the quality of learning and teaching is consistently above or well above the standard. Teachers are highly proficient practitioners, ably assisted by diligent teaching assistants and parent helpers. Well implemented planning systems based on the teachers' good knowledge of each child's abilities and needs, enables them to use a range of skilful interventions to enrich and extend the children's learning experience.

In nearly all lessons, high expectations of behaviour, personal responsibility and achievement, underpin all the lessons and activities. Examples of outstanding lessons were seen across the curriculum. For instance, the younger children touch, feel, explore and talk about materials used in table top creative activities and in practical science lessons.

The good use of effective teaching tools such as interactive whiteboards, enrich the learning and provide opportunities for highly effective student discussion. Effective teacher assessment strategies and marking are informative and contribute to both the children's understanding and the effectiveness of planning. The observed use of peer assessment in Key Stage 1 encouraged all students to try their best and to understand the criteria for success.

In nearly all classes in Early Years and Key Stage 1, the children's learning is highly successful. This is because of the variety of teaching strategies used, accurate and informative assessment and the quality of relationships.

The high quality of outcomes continues into Key Stage 2. Students enjoy their lessons and give their full attention and effort. They are very focused on the tasks set, and work together actively to achieve learning objectives. They are particularly good at working in pairs or small groups, as observed in the majority of Key Stage 2 lessons, for example when students were asked to discuss the differences between schools in England and India in a Year 4 Literacy lesson.

In Key Stage 2, all lessons met the standard required: a significant proportion was well above the standard. Learning objectives are consistently shared with students and revisited in a plenary. Planning is methodical, consistent and differentiates work well for various abilities and this is clearly transferred into practice in lessons. Teaching assistants are used effectively, and work with a variety of ages and abilities. In a Year 6 English lesson, a group led by a learning support assistant acted out the poems studied which helped their understanding and enjoyment.

Students are very well organised, motivated and used to the expected routines, which enables them to progress and achieve very well. Students are kept on task with the use of praise and

rewards, such as House Points.

Assessment for learning (AfL) was evident in some lessons and used effectively; in a Year 5 lesson, where students had to rate their own understanding privately, but for the teachers attention.

The best lessons were differentiated, included AfL, and involved the students working together to achieve the task set. Students are keen to learn and pay close attention to instructions. Teachers encourage students to work independently from the teacher, but with a partner, and this is most effective. Resources are more than adequate and teachers use these very effectively, a key development target is to ensure further use and integration of ICT to enhance lessons even further. Work is marked well and rewards children for their efforts and attainment. The most effective marking, observed in Year 6 literacy, tells the students what they did well, offers thought provoking comments to target the next stage of learning and often has comments from students who have responded to the teacher's comments.

In the secondary part of the school, nearly all lessons were good or better. In a few lessons, where activities were mainly teacher-led or which did not sufficiently challenge students, learning was less effective. Learning objectives were shared with the students. Students were confident in expressing themselves clearly when asking or answering questions. Differentiation to meet individual needs was evident with effective support from learning support assistants. Teachers' subject knowledge was secure.

The best lessons were characterised by high expectations, pace and energy. In these lessons, students were stimulated by active involvement in their learning and enthusiastic teachers. Students were eager to learn, and teachers provided appropriate levels of challenge. Effective questioning techniques facilitated higher order thinking skills. There was a good level of interaction between the teacher and students. Students' contributions were valued and praised. Teachers promoted independent learning. It was enhanced through paired activities and group work. Examples of good practice were observed throughout the key stages and across all subjects monitored.

In a Key Stage 4 science lesson, the teacher effectively employed assessment for learning techniques to ensure students had the opportunity to reflect and refine their understanding. In Key Stage 5, small class sizes enable the teachers to give students more individual attention. Students responded well to the high quality of teaching observed.

Students across all key stages are aware of their own targets and are confident, articulate and willing to discuss their achievements. In a Year 10 English lesson on "The Crucible", students were able to explain the meaning of their grades and feedback from marking. In the mathematics department, as part of their assessment procedures, students' understanding is analysed at individual question level to inform future learning and teaching.

Opportunities to ensure that excellent practice in teaching is spread across the school are under-developed. Although the school's performance management process is satisfactory, it is relatively informal, which limits its impact on raising standards.

Lesson observations and book reviews confirmed that nearly all students were given guidance about how to progress to the next level. The quality and effectiveness of the advice however, varied across the key stages and subjects. Parents and students are given summative information about progress and levels or grades through established reporting procedures. Formative feedback and on-going assessments are well established.

Students are adept users of technology, and many examples were observed of the effective use of the interactive white board. In a Year 3 class, the board was used by groups of students to answer challenging questions on perimeter and area. The school has recently introduced 'Edmodo', a secure educational social network site which enables teachers and students to work and collaborate on line. Students interviewed spoke highly of the opportunities afforded by 'Edmodo' to broaden and deepen their knowledge base in science, history, geography and PE.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

The quality of students' achievements is excellent. They are educated in accordance with the school's aim to maximise the potential of each individual, and are well equipped for re-entry into the British educational system. Standards across the school are high, progress made by many students is at least good and in some cases exceptional.

At Foundation Stage, outcomes are consistently high. The majority of children achieved 7+ on the EYFS profile, with the number of children achieving 8+ for both reading and writing increasing. This is despite more challenging cohorts with lower average attainment, recently joining the school.

At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above or at least in line with that of students in the UK. The percentage of learners attaining level 2 and above in mathematics and English (reading and writing) in the last 3 years has been consistently higher than the UK average.

The good progress made throughout Key Stage 1 is maintained during Key Stage 2. Standards are above or at least in line with that of students in the UK. Those attaining level 4 and above in mathematics and English (reading and writing) is higher than the UK average. In 2012, 45% of students achieved level 5 in Key Stage 2 SATs tests compared to 39% in the UK; in literacy, 66% of students achieved level 5 compared to 36% in the UK. Students with SEN achieve to a comparable standard. The mathematics department is currently modifying the curriculum to provide level 6 learning opportunities.

The percentage of students achieving the top levels at the end of Key Stage 3 has shown consistent progress and has nearly doubled over the last 6 years. Attainment at the end of the Key Stage 4 is significantly above average compared to the UK. In 2011, 89% of SES students achieved 5 A*-Cs compared to the UK figure of 69.8%. In addition, 42% achieved the top grades, A or A*, compared to the UK average of 23.2%. Effective learning and teaching strategies within and across departments are increasingly allowing students to maximise their learning and progress.

Despite this good attainment, target setting is not as challenging as it could be, for students or for teachers. The school has identified this as an area for development.

At Key Stage 5, attainment is above average compared to the UK. 86% of SES students achieve A*-C grades compared to the UK average of 76%.

Students are gaining new knowledge, understanding and skills at a good rate across all key stages. High achieving students are provided with an appropriate level of challenge. A rigorous whole-school tracking system is being embedded across both the primary and secondary phases: the traffic-light system is used to assess levels of progress and value-added. The analysis of data across all key stages shows that most students achieve or exceed their targets.

6. *Standard 2*

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The quality of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is excellent. The school's aim to encourage high moral standards, self-discipline and mutual respect for the cultures, opinions and values of others is very well met.

SES places a high priority on ensuring that the well-being and personal development of all students in the school are at the heart of any school policies, strategies and initiatives which are developed. It prides itself on being an inclusive school. The positive impact of this on students' attitudes and personal qualities is seen in lessons and around the school.

Student attendance is high. Attendance on day 2 of the accreditation visit was 92.5%, for example. The school has rigorous procedures in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Class teachers in the primary school and form tutors in the secondary school record attendance: the school administrative team follow up absences and lateness. The school has identified the need to continue with the development of a systematic whole school approach with explicit targets and policies. The school reports attendance figures for individual students to parents. Good attendance is rewarded.

Throughout the school, students are well motivated and keen to learn. All students observed were well behaved in lessons and as they move around the school. From Foundation Stage to Key Stage 5, students behave well at break time. The behaviour policy is clearly understood and the application evident in classes across the school. Focus groups of students, who were interviewed, were confident, self-assured, courteous and polite. The Key Stage 5 students have high aspirations for their future.

Students are proud of their own achievements, but they clearly are proud to share in the achievements of their peers, too. This was evident in lessons throughout the school. Students in the secondary and primary school worked co-operatively and collaboratively with one another. They were attentive when their peers were talking and openly praised success. The students take account of each other's views and contribute effectively to class discussions.

Students are actively involved in a wide range of activities which includes charity drives, Model United Nations, International Award, music recitals, subject prefects and library duties.

7. *Standard 3*

The welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision the school makes for the care, guidance and support for all its students is outstanding. The school has comprehensive measures in place for guarding against bullying and dealing with any unacceptable behaviour, and students feel that they are effective.

The provision the school makes for the care, guidance and support for all its students is well above the standard required.

There is a powerful sense of care and support permeating the whole school campus. Students across all key stages are happy young people who are proud of their school and thrive on the learning experiences that it provides.

Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers quickly develop a thorough understanding of each child which enables the nurturing of a very homely environment. Parents feel that this has a major impact in ensuring their children thrive at the school.

Throughout the primary years, each child is recognized and valued for their individual needs and aspirations. Teachers display a high level of care. Students' needs are met by effective special needs provision, where appropriate.

Students' development, progression and achievements are celebrated and encouraged throughout the school, with effective teaching and initiatives such as the House structure, play-ground buddies and the school council. Children felt these initiatives helped their school be very good, and gave them confidence and made them happy to attend. The school has implemented effective practices such as target setting and peer assessment to provide clear guidance on next steps in learning.

Within lessons, teachers plan activities that encourage children to work effectively in pairs and groups that encourage high levels of mutual support and involvement in learning. The school successfully encourages all children to become independent learners enabled and empowered to manage themselves and enjoy the rigour of a challenging and exciting curriculum.

The school has implemented a high level of learning support through dedicated specialist teachers who work closely with class teachers to ensure that all children's needs are addressed. The school formally values the student voice through the school council and playground buddies provide a safe and supportive environment for all students.

The head of Key Stage 3 leads the tutor team effectively in the planning and delivery of a newly organized programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). In addition to providing opportunities for personal growth and development, learning and achievement are explicitly celebrated. An inspiring assembly focused on the new rewards system, stressing the importance of both the academic and pastoral elements of education. There were confident contributions

from individuals and groups. In a subsequent Year 7 tutor period, students completed the key stage quiz with enthusiasm.

In Key Stage 4, an on-line tracker and academic tutoring system is being piloted this year to assist established processes for monitoring individual student progress and achievement. Throughout Key Stage 5, students are provided with a high level of personal care and learning, reflecting the quality of relationships established throughout the school and aided by smaller class sizes.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure a safe and caring environment. Feedback from focus groups, lesson observations and informal conversations with students clearly indicated a care for each other and the wider community, along with a concern for the environment. Students interviewed both formally and informally were articulate, courteous, self-assured and confident in speaking to adults.

There is a secure boundary wall and guards are present at the main gate, monitoring the flow of people in and out of the school and providing identification badges where appropriate. Shelters provide adequate shade for students. The infrastructure was seen to be in excellent condition. Supervision of students at break times, before and after school is well organised.

The two school nurses and a doctor are proactive in ensuring the delivery of comprehensive health care for all students and staff in the school. This includes first aid training and contributing to the taught curriculum, for example making healthy lunches in the primary school.

The school employs a careers counsellor for students in Year 9 and the sixth form, to ensure appropriate advice is given to students prior to starting Key Stage 4 and before university application. Homework diaries are comprehensive and valued by students.

Students with English as an additional language (EAL), special educational needs (SEN) and those who are able, gifted and talented are well supported and cared for. The secondary school has recently appointed a gifted and talented co-ordinator to provide a focus for development. EAL support is in place to raise standards of English through focused teaching, so that students can fully access the curriculum. In some cases, this involved one to one teaching. Students with SEN are well supported across the school by learning support assistants and teaching assistants. Individual educational plans are in place to meet specific learning needs.

8. *Standard 4*

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The Board of Governors make a strong and significant contribution towards the success of the school's leadership and management. The Board is comprised of nine full members with membership spread across parents and the wider community. Five others attend meetings by invitation, including the Principal and staff representative. They display a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There are highly effective working relationships with the schools leadership team: representing the views of the wider community is seen as an integral part of their responsibilities. Not all governors are experienced in effective long-term strategic planning, which could hinder the sustainability of school development.

The board oversees school policies and procedures to ensure the school meets the local safety, care and guidance requirements. These responsibilities include the safe recruitment and checking of all staff and the effective monitoring of policy implementation to ensure all local requirements are met. Prior to staff appointment, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm identity, medical fitness, the right to work in the UAE and their previous employment history. Two character references are taken up, as well as qualifications and professional references.

The school maintains a list of all staff and volunteers who currently work in the school. This shows when they started and stopped working in the school.

9. *Standard 5*

The premises and accommodation

The overall quality of the premises is outstanding. The campus is purpose built with EYFS, primary and secondary blocks, as well as excellent sports facilities and a new performing arts building. The grounds are expertly landscaped, colourful and attractive, offering a calm backdrop to all areas of the site. The sports facilities include a 25 metre pool, sports hall and large playing field with viewing stand. The performing arts building offers students in primary and secondary access to a well-resourced library, music rooms, an auditorium for school productions and a new ICT suite (for secondary school students). Primary students have their own dedicated ICT room. All classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards and the school is looking into the feasibility of purchasing iPads to support and enhance learning further.

Specialist science laboratories, art rooms, the library, the auditorium, an art and graphics room, a Design Technology workshop and textiles classroom, enhance students' learning experiences.



Dedicated music rooms, lined with acoustic tiles support the teaching of a wide range of musical instruments

The school has sufficient staff and resources to effectively deliver the curriculum offered. All primary and secondary teachers are UK trained with recognised qualifications. Primary teachers are generally allocated to the key stage they feel most comfortable with. Subject specialists in primary include French, PE, swimming, Arabic and Islamic Studies. Secondary teachers teach their subject specialism in dedicated areas, with students moving from room to room.

SES is committed to on-going staff development. Staff have recently presented training to colleagues in-house and they are also able to attend local courses.

The school has correctly identified the need to invest further in musical provision in terms of instruments. It is also seeking to improve further the provision of high quality professional development for all staff.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

Sharjah English School maintains outstanding links with parents and the wider community. Regular informative written reports and consultation meetings with teachers keep parents well informed about their child's progress, level of attainment and attitudes to learning. Two full reports and five interim reports are sent home each year. Parents value the regular and informative parent – teacher meetings to discuss individual student achievements. These are well attended in both primary (99%) and secondary (80%). Parents feel they have good access to prompt and professional dialogue with teachers regarding their child's development.

Formal regular communications are maintained with nearly all parents, through the use of the 'SES Communicator' which provides regular and up to date key information as well as half-termly emailed newsletters and an attractive web-site. Parents praised the dedication demonstrated by staff in their high level of support and guidance of students during both school time and holidays, based on email communications.

An effective parent/teacher group successfully supports the school through a range of social and fundraising activities. This group has raised funds to support a range of initiatives such as providing playground shade. Parent volunteers provide a highly effective range of support in many of the primary classrooms. All parents interviewed highlighted the outstanding care and support all children receive and the high quality impact of all teachers on their child's school experience.

The school ensures parents are kept informed regarding educational developments and initiatives through a range of curriculum and information meetings throughout the year. Parents contribute to the overall direction of the school through their membership on the school governors' board. There are opportunities to meet both formally and informally with teachers and senior leaders, through a clearly understood 'Open door' policy. Parents value these opportunities for contact and felt welcomed and valued whenever they came into school.

The school is successful in promoting links with the local community. Students represent the school in a number of inter school activities, both sporting and academic. Links are also forged with local sporting clubs to enable students to pursue the development of their sporting talents. The school recognises it has an important role in developing the qualities of citizenship of all students, and actively supports a wide range of charities and good causes world-wide. Strong links are developed and maintained with local industries and businesses, which helps strengthen the curriculum for older students. The school also has a long standing relationship with the local Higher College of Technology and supports up to 25 Emirati students in their professional development as teachers.

Opportunities for enhancing professional dialogue are pursued through the collaboration, when appropriate, with other similar schools in both Sharjah and Dubai, as well as being an active partner in educational organisations such as BSME.

11. *Standard 7*

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school provides clear information about complaints and the procedures that are in line with local Ministry requirements. Senior staff operate an 'Open Door' policy to ensure all parents have easy access to the staff to discuss and share any concerns. The Board of Governors have established a clear policy, though to date, no incidents have required the implementation of the complaints procedure past level 1 (meeting with the principal).

All parents surveyed felt confident regarding dealing with any issues they had. Parent questionnaire results also provided evidence that nearly all parents felt the school listened and acted quickly regarding any concerns.

12. *Standard 8*

The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

13. *Standard 9*

Leadership and management of the school

Sharjah English School is very well led, and expertly managed. The principal provides strong strategic leadership through a clear, articulated and shared vision that encourages all to achieve educational excellence.

A significant proportion of the leadership and management team are recently appointed. Despite this, the team has already had a highly positive impact on the school.

The school leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that enable them to be both held to account and hold others to account as they continuously seek further ways to improve the high standards of the school. Delegation enables staff to make a strong contribution to the effective development and progress of the school: they contribute by identifying and implementing strategies that impact on levels of achievement.

Through highly effective self-evaluation processes, clear priorities have been identified that involved wide-scale participation and evidence gathering. Accurate analysis has enabled the school to implement clear priorities for development through both phase and departmental improvement plans. The monitoring of development plans ensures all staff are aware and involved in the implementation of effective change.

A range of effective policies and strategies are fully implemented and monitored: this ensures a high level of consistent practice.

The school leadership team values highly the contribution made by all staff in ensuring each and every child/student succeeds. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are recognized as valued members of the school team. This has created a strong community of professionals who support, encourage and work highly effectively.