

International School of Creative Science Sharjah, UAE

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

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Age Group: 3 to 18 years

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by five inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be added to the register, 'Get information about schools'.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant BSO standards. These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The DfE issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.

The standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (curriculum, teaching and assessment)
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff
5. The premises and accommodation
6. The provision of information
7. The manner in which complaints are handled.
8. The leadership and management of the school
9. The quality of provision for boarding.

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and carers and the wider public of the quality of BSOs by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Information about the school

The International School of Creative Science (ISCS) is an independent, multicultural day school for boys and girls aged three to 18 years, located in the area of Muwaileh, Sharjah. It is part of the Bukhatir Education Advancement and Management (BEAM) group, which has five schools across Sharjah and Dubai. BEAM is the governing body and provides a wide range of services to schools through its 'centre of excellence'.

The school opened in September 2002 as a primary school with 433 pupils. There are now 4,125 pupils from foundation stage up to key stage 5, making it larger than other schools of the same type. The majority of pupils are in the early years and primary phases. There are 2,777 pupils aged three to 11 years. In the secondary phase, there are 1,348 pupils. The school follows the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum and the English national curriculum, alongside the UAE national curriculum for Arabic, Islamic and social studies. Pupils attend a range of universities when they leave in Year 13.

All teachers who teach the English national curriculum are qualified teachers, including some with UK qualifications. Pupils are from over 65 different nationalities. Emirati nationals make up 27% of the pupil population and constitute the largest group in the school. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school welcomes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who would be able to cope with the academic rigour of the whole curriculum. It has identified 7% of the school population as part of the inclusion register, which includes pupils who have some form of SEND as well as gifted and talented pupils for whom the school makes additional or special provision.

The school's ethos is based upon an aspiration to be a community of excellence rooted in faith. Its vision is 'Lighting the way to excellence rooted in faith, cultivating life-long learners and global citizens equipped with a moral compass'.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by five Education Development Trust inspectors who visited the school for four days. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in November 2022 and the final inspection dates were confirmed on

receipt of this information. This provided 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school six weeks before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 120 lessons. An inspector and a senior member of staff jointly observed many of them. There were 52 meetings which took place with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing body.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and that produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. They also undertook learning walks. They inspected the school's safeguarding arrangements and considered the views of parents, pupils and staff.

Evaluation of the school

International School of Creative Science, Sharjah is a good school and provides a good quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

The school meets all of the BSO standards except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Pupils' attainment and progress in **English** are good for pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. Most children join the school in the EYFS with communication and English language skills below those that are typical for their age. Pupils who join at other times often have limited English. Pupils' good progress enables them to catch up with English national curriculum expectations as they move through the school.

In the early years, children make good progress from their starting points. Attainment in EYFS assessments is below England averages in communication, language and literacy but children develop strong foundations for future learning. They build on their phonic knowledge and develop secure decoding skills and accurate spelling in key stage 1. They accurately read books that are closely matched to the phonics they learn. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is close to the England national average. However, pupils' reading

comprehension and writing does not keep pace with their decoding skills as they progress through key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.

By Year 6 pupils catch up. Their attainment in standardised assessments in reading and writing is in line with England averages. They extend their vocabulary and write fluently in a range of genres, using complex sentences and literary devices such as hyperbole and imagery in creative writing. They are prepared well for the secondary curriculum.

In secondary school pupils make consistently good progress. They develop their understanding and skills, complete in-depth critical analysis of texts and read challenging texts with understanding. They write effectively for different purposes, debate issues and present their ideas clearly. Most students take IGCSE in first-language English and around a third take IGCSE in English literature. They achieve standards that are above international averages. English literature has been added to A-level options at the request of students.

Pupils' mathematical attainment and progress from their starting points are good. In the EYFS, most pupils join the school with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. As they move through the primary school, their attainment and progress are good, resulting in outcomes closer to England averages. By the end of key stage 3 their attainment is higher than England averages and above that seen internationally. Good progress continues in the secondary school and attainment in the sixth form shows excellent progress.

In early years children recognise, count and understand numbers to 10. They apply their knowledge of number in a range of indoor and outdoor practical activities. They use vocabulary such as full, nearly full, half full and empty to describe volume.

In key stage 1 pupils build on this knowledge and confidently apply it in practical situations, for example when they use a selection of leaves to compare and order longer, longest, shorter, shortest.

As they move through key stage 2, pupils are competent when using UK sterling currency to solve money problems. They understand the links with other currencies worldwide.

By the end of key stage 4 and as they progress through the sixth form, pupils are confident, high-performing mathematicians. This is reflected in the impressive results

that they achieve in external examinations when compared to both UK and international averages.

Outcomes in science are variable across key stages. Children enter the school in the Reception Year with knowledge and understanding of the world well below what is typical for their age. They make progress from this low starting point but by the end of the Reception Year standards are still below England age-related expectations. As they move up through the primary school pupils make increasing progress in science, especially in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 6 their attainment is in line with England averages. Pupils make good progress as they move through key stages 3 and 4. Results in IGCSE physics, chemistry and biology are broadly in line with England and Edexcel overseas averages with the proportion obtaining the higher grades above what is seen in England. For the relatively small number of students entered for A levels in chemistry, physics and biology, progress and attainment are outstanding. Results are well above England and Edexcel overseas averages with 100% gaining grades A* to C in all three sciences.

Children in the early years are beginning to understand what plants need in order to grow. During practical activities they use vocabulary such as sink and float when making predictions and testing them. In key stage 1 pupils are starting to identify and classify animals and plants. In both the early years and key stage 1 pupils' progress is sometimes hindered by lack of first-hand experience of some of the animals and plants which they learn about. As they move up the school pupils develop an increasing curiosity about the natural world and work more and more scientifically. Pupils, especially in the secondary phase, benefit from working frequently in well-resourced laboratories so that they learn through the cycle of hypothesis, experimentation and observation before moving on to theory and review. Teachers integrate into the science curriculum activities and educational visits which show pupils the relevance of science to their everyday lives.

In computing, across the school, pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' attainment in IGCSE computer-science examinations is above the England national average.

Children in the early years confidently use interactive programs to help them decode words, build vocabulary and apply their understanding of number. In the research room, they scanned QR codes to find additional information about farm animals and

deepen their understanding. They dragged and dropped images to create virtual, healthy lunchboxes.

All pupils, from Year 1 upwards, bring their own devices to school. They skilfully gain access to resources during lessons for research or to complete tasks. Online reading schemes allow teachers to monitor pupils' progress if they read at home. By the end of the primary phase, pupils can use navigation and control systems successfully to construct a computer game. They used visual icons and program characters to move in different points of direction.

Secondary pupils follow instructions to edit a movie with given aspect ratios and resolution. In key stage 4, they used arithmetic expressions in python to calculate values and wrote a program to help them furnish a room or build a calorie counter. Pupils navigate adeptly between different software, to gain access to tasks and find help when needed. Students in the sixth form successfully enter coding team challenges in the UK.

A-level students can independently write a python program to implement a stack, using object-oriented programming skills. They articulately explained their reasoning as well as the purpose and usefulness of the program.

In response to requests from parents and pupils, the school is offering a wider range of options at IGCSE and A level. These now include graphic design, psychology, sociology and accounting. These courses are popular with pupils as they offer the possibility of different career pathways. They are making good progress in each of these areas. External examination results for the first cohort of pupils studying these subjects will only be available in summer 2023.

The provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND are good. These pupils are welcomed into school and provided with the support they need to gain access to a broad and rich curriculum. Identification of pupils' needs is thorough. Leaders ensure that pupils' specific needs are met from the time they enter school. The highly qualified, specialist inclusion team works closely with class teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils using high-quality class teaching. Leaders work closely with external agencies, making use of their expertise where needed.

Pupils who need more help are well catered for with curriculum adaptations, behaviour management strategies and targeted support. Their targets for learning and the strategies to support them are clearly identified on their individual plans. The inclusion team provides and sources good-quality training for class teachers and teaching assistants. This ensures that teaching staff have the knowledge and skills to give pupils access to and make progress across the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Standard 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 7 below).

The leadership and management of the school are good (see Standard 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2023, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The curriculum is good. Across all phases, it is broad, coherent and aligned with the English national curriculum. It makes effective use of the immediate environment and resources available in the local community. The curriculum accommodates subjects taught in Arabic to comply with the requirements of the emirate of Sharjah.

In the early years, children enjoy practical learning in well-equipped facilities, indoors and outdoors. The curriculum is enriched by many specialist rooms and learning spaces, including a working kitchen. These enable children to develop a wide range of skills, encourage independence and deepen their understanding of the world. With the help of external specialists, such as speech therapists and physiotherapists, the curriculum is adapted for those with SEND.

The primary curriculum is carefully planned around themes to facilitate cross-curricular learning. It is reviewed regularly and adjustments are made to match it to the needs of individual pupils. Additional help is provided for those pupils with limited English language skills so that they have full access to the curriculum. Termly trips to local places of interest help to bring the curriculum to life. For example, a visit to The Green Planet increased pupils' understanding of the rainforest theme. Themed days and themed weeks offer pupils opportunities to apply what they learn and build on their knowledge and understanding.

Older pupils are well prepared for UK examinations at IGCSE and A level. Pupils and parents attend well-planned workshops that broaden their knowledge of career pathways and courses. As a result, they are better informed when choosing courses from option blocks to suit their interests and skills. Parents' and pupils' views have been influential in securing additional courses this year, such as graphics design and accounting. A few students complete self-study courses such as Urdu and further mathematics. Staff give them resources and time to complete these at school. Teachers help students with their applications to British universities with branches in

the UAE or further afield. They attend university fairs and alumni talks and have access to useful online resources.

Curriculum policies and plans encourage respect for other people paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and race, as set out in the UK Equality Act 2010. However, the curriculum does not meet fully the requirements in respect of sex and sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership due to the laws of the UAE. The curriculum is inclusive. Pupils have a good understanding of race, culture, gender and disability. For example, they build on their awareness of autism and dyslexia through assemblies and discussions. They have good awareness and understanding of British values. Most can name and discuss the meaning of these values in relation to school life. In addition, they describe the similarities between British and Emirati values such as tolerance and respect.

Throughout the school pupils learn about the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in Britain. British authors feature in the set texts used in English. Primary pupils learn about Jane Goodall and David Attenborough when writing biographies. Older pupils study the work of British street artists such as Banksy and Mohammed Ali. Case studies in geography, sociology and economics provide pupils with a growing understanding of British society.

Saturday classes offer additional learning for pupils as they prepare for IGCSE, AS and A-level examinations. Extra-curricular activities after school are open to all pupils. Most choose sport-related activities in cooler weather and cooking or arts and crafts in the summer. Pupils are successful in many external competitions, including in poetry and art. Older pupils build on their public-speaking skills by participating in Model United Nations. A good range of opportunities and guidance helps pupils consider future careers. These include visits to exhibitions that explore jobs of the future such as working in robotics and artificial intelligence. Sixth-form students benefit from work experience in malls, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies.

Teaching is good across the school. Over time, teaching results in pupils making good progress in learning from their starting points. It builds pupils' knowledge and develops their skills across all areas of the curriculum, enabling them to achieve well in external examinations. There is some variability, however, in its impact within year groups and between subjects. Teaching generally has the most positive impact in early years, upper key stage 2 and secondary classes.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge, supported by good-quality training. For example, phonics teaching is strong in the early years and key stage 1 due to consistent implementation of the phonics programme by teachers and assistants who have had extensive training. As pupils get older, specialist teachers help them to deepen their knowledge. Collaborative planning and regular meetings enable teachers to share their expertise and ideas across the whole curriculum.

Teaching typically builds pupils' subject knowledge effectively. Teachers help pupils to recall and apply previously taught knowledge. They explain and exemplify new learning and question pupils skilfully to deepen their learning. They are good at helping pupils understand the purpose of their learning and its relevance to real life. In Year 7 mathematics for example, pupils considered how their learning about area and perimeter can be used in real life.

Teachers use assessment effectively to plan subsequent teaching and support for pupils where needed. They check pupils' understanding frequently and ensure that subsequent teaching deepens pupils' knowledge and fills any gaps. Their verbal feedback during lessons helps pupils to reflect on and improve their work and that of their peers. In a Year 10 psychology lesson, the teacher made very good use of interactive quizzes to check on pupils' learning. Using this information, she was able to spot those who needed additional help and those who were ready to step up to the next challenge.

The positive relationships between teachers and pupils create constructive learning environments within classrooms. Pupils are well behaved. They know the routines and cooperate with their peers and teachers to help lessons run smoothly. In Year 9 English, for example, boys collaborated effectively to plan a persuasive speech on a topic of their choice to the United Nations. However, the extent to which pupils actively engage with their learning varies depending on the quality of teaching. At times, pupils do not listen well to their peers or when the teacher is providing feedback.

Teachers plan lessons carefully. They typically select activities and resources that motivate pupils and challenge and support them appropriately. In primary English for example, oral rehearsal and acting out prior to writing help pupils develop expressive language and write sentences. Technology is integrated into teaching and enhances learning effectively. There are times, however, when the choice of activities and resources inhibits pupils' understanding. In key stage 1 science, for example, pupils'

understanding of plants and animals was hindered by lack of opportunity to touch and feel real objects often enough. Occasionally teachers' explanations lack clarity, so pupils are not sure how to complete the tasks that they are given.

Additional teachers and teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They are actively engaged in all activities in the early years and key stage 1. They provide good support for pupils with SEND in class and where appropriate in targeted interventions.

Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

ISCS is a diverse, inclusive and welcoming school. All pupils are valued and treat each other and adults with respect. All pupils, including those with SEND, are fully involved in school life. Staff give them the care that they need in classrooms and at social times. The relationships between pupils and adults are warm and respectful.

Pupils understand British values such as democracy and respect. For example, they participate in elections for pupils from each key stage to be the voice of their age group on the student council. Respect is one of the school's principal values, linked to the Islamic faith: 'We not only foster academic excellence but also promote understanding of and respect for one another's beliefs and differences.' Pupils and staff are proud of the rich diversity of the school, including 65 nationalities in the student body and 45 amongst staff. Pupils celebrate their own nationalities and cultures and those of others, including on International Day and Global Day. Some students were chosen to represent their nationalities at Expo 2020. Staff award points to pupils who demonstrate the school's values. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn about life in the UK and other countries. The school's values, policies, ethos and curriculum promote respect for the protected characteristics outlined in the UK Equality Act (2010) in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. However, the school is unable to meet fully the requirements in respect of sex and

sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership due to the laws of the UAE.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. In the early years children can be line leaders and tray monitors. Older pupils help younger ones to read. Pupils plan and lead many assemblies in each phase. Students in the sixth form undertake work experience in school as, for example, teaching assistants.

Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, which the school promotes through the example set by staff, Islamic values, the moral-education programme and a very well-devised and effective positive-behaviour policy. Pupils behave well in the classroom and at social times. However, at times attitudes to learning in some primary classes are less than good when pupils do not listen to each other or the teacher and do not follow instructions.

From the early years staff teach pupils to care for the environment, for example by planting trees and bringing a water bottle instead of using single-use plastic bottles or cups. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including sport, art and chess. Visits to cultural institutions such as the Louvre in Abu Dhabi are beginning to resume after the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the early years most learning involves collaboration between pupils. Leaders seek pupils' views via the school council and surveys and their opinions are taken into account. Pupils raise money for local and global charities and were keen to point out that their efforts often benefit non-Muslim countries.

Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles including the importance of exercise and healthy eating. There are rewards for healthy-lunch-box choices. Pupils' emotional well-being is carefully monitored by all staff, including by using the Pupils' Attitudes to Self and School survey. The school's counsellor, nurses and doctors monitor and help pupils who need emotional support.

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

Welfare, health and safety are outstanding.

Leaders have established a very strong culture of safeguarding. This aspect of the school is exemplary. They have devised a comprehensive range of appropriate

policies and procedures which fully meet and often exceed UK and UAE requirements. Regular safeguarding training for all leaders and staff ensures that policies are very well implemented.

There is highly effective collaboration and communication between teams, including pastoral staff, the psychologist, social workers, medical staff and health and safety staff. Communication is facilitated by a well-managed online system for reporting and recording as well as by regular meetings between teams.

Pupils understand their role in keeping the school community safe. They know how to report concerns, including via the QR codes which are displayed in all areas of the school.

Although a minority of parents who responded to the Education Development Trust survey do not have confidence that their children are safe in school, this does not match the view of inspectors, school staff, pupils or the majority of parents who completed the survey or spoke to inspectors. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe at all times in school.

From the early years, safety education is successfully integrated into the curriculum. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example in water, on the road, in case of fire and when approached by strangers, including online. Sixth formers learn how to live safely when they move independently to another country. Leaders have mapped much of this teaching across the life-skills programme but it also happens in subject lessons such as physical education and in assemblies.

Staff work in a very healthy and safe environment. Experienced and well-qualified facilities managers and staff are vigilant and spot potential hazards. There are written risk assessments for relevant activities. Regular fire, earthquake, medical-emergency and lockdown drills are well practised and recorded. All aspects of health and safety are regularly and comprehensively monitored both by school staff and external agencies such as the municipality.

There are eight clinics and isolation rooms, one for each building. The school's two doctors, eight nurses and many qualified first aiders deal well with medical needs. The school's psychologist and pastoral and medical teams help those pupils who are emotionally vulnerable.

Pupils and staff who spoke to inspectors are not aware of any bullying. They said that they are confident that if it did occur staff would deal with it effectively.

New arrivals at the school are settled in well by their peers, pastoral staff and form and class teachers.

Pupils' attendance is in line with UK averages. Most pupils arrive at school and at lessons on time.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard. Rigorous recruitment checks are in place for all staff.

The Human Resources Department is based in the BEAM central office and provides a wide range of support services for the school within the group. It diligently maintains a single central record for all teaching staff, governors and administrative staff. The school's recruitment policy ensures that there is a good balance of UK-trained and international school staff.

The single central record is comprehensive and meets all of the requirements to comply with this standard. Security checks and police certificates are required from international and locally recruited staff. These checks confirm that prospective staff are not barred from regulated activity relating to children. Additionally, information about their right to work in the UAE, medical fitness and verification of qualifications are all kept on individual personnel files.

Staff arriving from the UK undertake similar levels of scrutiny and are required to have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance. No staff join the school until all these checks have been completed.

Staff turnover is low at around 18%. Staff say they enjoy working at the school and are happy to stay.

The principal and senior leaders have undertaken safer recruitment training. This is updated annually. All interview panels have at least one member who is trained in safer recruitment strategies.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements for this BSO standard.

Despite the large number of pupils on site, the school is well resourced in terms of facilities which enhance pupils' learning. Across the eight buildings that house the pupils, there has been continuous improvement. This includes a large auditorium, four sports halls and a large artificial play area that is equivalent to four full-sized pitches. There are suitable indoor play areas across all phases, two swimming pools and an extensive range of specialist teaching rooms.

Entry points to the school are staffed by security guards who maintain a register of visitors. Site security receives the highest priority and this is acknowledged by parents. All external doors are secure with a pass needed to gain access.

Pupils say they feel safe when they come to school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. They are confident that they will be listened to and concerns acted upon.

Daily safety checks are conducted of the full site. Any repairs required or health and safety matters are addressed immediately. There is an experienced maintenance team deployed twenty-four hours a day to ensure that this happens.

The school is generously resourced in all subjects and all phases. This helps to ensure that the curriculum can be delivered in full. Resources are well deployed and staff ensure that pupils flourish in an attractive learning environment. They enjoy access to the carefully selected books that are readily available in their library areas.

The school site is clean, tidy and litter free. Pupils are proud of their school and support the cleaning and maintenance staff in keeping it that way.

Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school's website provides a wealth of information, including the school's mission and aims. Access to it is easy ensuring that parents can stay connected through multiple routes. Training sessions and workshops support existing and new parents.

The parents' portal is personalised and access to it is via secure logins. It provides ready access to information on children's progress, daily schedule, weekly schemes, assessments, parent notices, homework, attendance and assessment results.

The school weekly letters keep parents engaged and informed about what is happening in school. They include, highlights of the week, key initiatives and survey links for parents to feed back on how the school is doing. Calendar dates are given well in advance as well as notification of forthcoming events that children will be involved in.

A large majority of parents who responded to the BSO survey said their child was happy and felt safe at school. Parents say that they are well informed about progress and have many opportunities to communicate with the school. They have frequent face-to-face meetings and receive written reports. They use the school platform to know what the children are learning and newsletters inform them what the new curriculum topics will be. They like the school not being too formal and most say that they feel welcome. They spoke highly of the weekly coffee morning where new parents are encouraged to network and belong.

Leaders regularly review information systems and consult with the parent council. This is an active and supportive organisation. Parents are invited to contribute to improvement planning. Leaders listen to them and take their views into account. For example, parents were involved in discussions about bringing children's own devices to school after the COVID-19 return. Children use these devices in most lessons.

The board works well with the school and parents to support the Red Crescent charity. A large majority of parents say that the school is well led. Parents receive important updates about their children's well-being and they are pleased that pupils can use QR codes around the school when they need support. They know that the English national

curriculum is teaching their children about respect and tolerance and they see this reflected in their children's attitudes at home.

A small minority of parents said that they did not receive sufficient information. Evidence gathered during the inspection did not support this view.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

The complaints policy is available on the website. The staged procedure outlines how leaders will resolve complaints and the expectations of all parties within timescales. Records of all concerns and their resolution are kept. Few have reached a formal complaint stage as most are resolved promptly. Concerns are dealt with fairly and in a timely manner to the satisfaction of parents.

A large majority of parents say that leaders are available and they feel comfortable in approaching them. Parents' views are sought through regular surveys which have largely positive results.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are consistently met. The highly effective senior leadership team works well collaboratively. It ensures that all stakeholders understand and share the school's vision, including the promotion of British values.

The school is successful in combining local cultural values and traditions with the best of British practice. Leaders at all levels are good role models and are committed to improving the provision and outcomes for pupils across the school.

The board of governors is fully involved in the strategic planning of the school. It ensures that the school operates legally and is compliant with local regulations. Members give safeguarding the highest priority and ensure that this aspect of the school is outstanding. School systems are rigorous with numerous checks and balances to ensure that pupils' safety remains paramount.

Governors and the school's leaders understand and respect their separate responsibilities. The board brings together a wealth of expertise that supports and challenges school leaders in the right measure. In addition to parent and teacher representatives, the board includes student members.

The board has a detailed knowledge and understanding of all aspects of school life. This is reflected in the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.

The board undertakes the appraisal of the principal and other school leaders. In turn, leaders monitor the work of other staff across the school. They are well supported by a highly effective programme of teacher training and continuing professional development. Leaders and the board encourage all staff to follow courses, often online, and this results in a well-trained and committed workforce. Leaders and staff share and celebrate best practice. For example, staff are encouraged to lead on a 'Bright Ideas' initiative where they can suggest improvements to be trialled and shared across the group of schools.

In addition, ISCS identifies potential leaders and develops them from within the school. Many of the principals and leaders within the BEAM group started their teaching in one of its schools. Surveys completed by staff are overwhelmingly positive. They say how proud they are to work at the school.

The school's self-review is accurate and the inspection team largely agreed with leaders' assessment, particularly in relation to the overall good progress made by pupils. However, inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in parts of the school and in different subjects. Opportunities to enhance pupils' learning are sometimes missed. Improvements have continued in developing teachers' subject knowledge and in their classroom-management techniques.

A large majority of parents who completed the inspection survey commented favourably on their experience at ISCS. They have regular access to staff and receive informative reports. Where they have any queries or concerns, parents say that staff and leaders are responsive.

ISCS is a highly inclusive school. There is no evidence of discrimination and diversity is celebrated. Inspectors found the pupils to be kind, tolerant and happy. They thrive in this caring school environment.

EYFS provision

Most children arrive at school with limited English language skills. They rapidly acquire essential English language skills, reinforced through a variety of activities. Following a systematic phonics programme, taught consistently across the different areas of learning, they make good progress from their starting points in readiness for Year 1. They can understand and follow instructions and have access to the curriculum. Children who attend foundation stage 1 in the school have a strong foundation of letters and sounds.

The school follows the EYFS framework. It is adapted effectively to ensure that children learn about British and Emirati values as well as developing an understanding of other world cultures. Children move seamlessly between well-resourced areas of learning which offer a stimulating environment. This enables them to choose how they learn, become curious, experiment and find things out for themselves.

Well-planned lessons engage children and support the development of language around a theme, such as farm animals, based on a book or story. Children grow and look after plants, enjoy music and movement during circle-time activities and engage in creative play with sand, water and other materials. They skilfully use equipment that helps them develop balance, coordination and agility. Adult-led indoor games teach them how to play together and take turns.

Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this has a positive impact on children's learning. Most children display improving listening skills during whole-class sessions. They are taught to learn from their mistakes and evaluate their own and others' learning and improve their work in focus groups. They use symbols such as a sun to symbolise that they are 'glowing' and a flower to indicate that they are 'growing'.

Early years leadership is good. Communication with parents is effective. Supported by newsletters and online media, parents are active partners in their children's learning, as well as their personal, social and emotional development. Workshops familiarise parents with phonics, reading and numeracy strategies and involve them in practical ways to encourage learning at home, including making playdough in the EYFS kitchen.

Post-16 provision

Attainment and progress in the sixth form are outstanding. In 2022 students were entered for A-levels in mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology. Although entries for A-level in 2022 were few, most students attained grades A* to B in all subjects and attainment was well above UK averages.

Sixth-form numbers have risen from 88 last year to 197 this year. Last year 79% of pupils in Year 11 stayed at the school in Year 13. Twenty-one per cent moved to other schools, mostly to the American School of Creative Science where the courses offered are more appropriate for their intended higher education. All students move on to university, most in the UAE but some abroad, including in the UK.

There are currently three routes to A-level in the sixth form, including a fast-track one-year course. All students can study the subjects which match their career aspirations. A-levels are added to the curriculum at the request of students. Where the school is not able to offer a subject, students undertake self-study and the school provides resources.

Teaching in the sixth form is very strong. Teachers are well-qualified subject specialists. Teachers new to A-level co-teach with more experienced colleagues. Teachers generate very positive relationships with students and their infectious enthusiasm and passion for their subjects inspires high endeavour in students.

All students follow a life-skills programme for their personal development. Many students attend, and sometimes lead, the wide range of extra-curricular activities which the school provides. They undertake work experience, externally or within the school, for example helping the medical teams in the clinics.

Students have access to regular careers advice and pastoral support. They learn about the experience of university and living independently abroad.

Leadership of the sixth form is good. All aspects of provision are regularly reviewed and planning for increasing student numbers and a wider curriculum is highly effective.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country's laws.

It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010.

2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;

5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

What the school could do to improve further

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

There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in some subjects and some parts of the school. Sometimes teachers do not make their expectations clear or make best use of local resources to enhance learning. At times, pupils do not listen well to their peers or when the teacher is providing feedback. Leaders should ensure greater consistency in those subjects and phases where teaching is weaker. They should do this by improving both teachers' subject knowledge and their classroom-management techniques.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		x		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		x		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		x		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		x		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		x		
The behaviour of pupils		x		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		x		
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The quality of provision for boarding

NA				
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School details

Name of school	The International School of Creative Science
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	2002
Age range of pupils	3 to 18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	4125
Annual fees (day pupils)	21,000 – 39,700 AED
Address of school	Muwaileh, Sharja, United Arab Emirates
Telephone number	+97165344444
Email address	principal@iscs.sch.ae
Headteacher	Samar Khalid Murad
Proprietor	Bukhatir Education Advancement and management International (BEAM)

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

Accreditation – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

Accreditation Board – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

Assessment – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

Attainment – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO) – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

Education Development Trust – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

Central Support Team – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

Combined or Joint Visit – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

Cycle of Inspection – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

Curriculum – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Management – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

Progress – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

School self-evaluation – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

Standards –

(1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.

(2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

Teaching – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential.

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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