

Dubai College

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 11 to 14 November 2024

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Age Group: 11 to 18
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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 three 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 standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO) accreditation. 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 updated the standards in August 2023. The new standards aligned the BSO standards with the Independent School Standards (ISS) and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding applied to schools in England; clarified and reiterated the relationship between the UK and host country laws and reshaped staff recruitment standards to ensure international applicability.

The British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).

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

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

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation.

Part 6. The provision of information.

Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.

Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.

Part 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 British schools overseas 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

Dubai College (DC) is an academically selective, co-educational, British school, in Dubai's Umm Suqeim district. It was established in 1978 by Emirati decree as a not-for-profit independent secondary school on granted land. The school operates without private ownership, and is overseen by a board of trustees.

With an enrolment of 1113 pupils aged 11 to 18 years, Dubai College is larger than many comparable international, secondary schools in Dubai, particularly in its substantial sixth form. The school is oversubscribed in all age groups with waiting lists. There are 64 different nationalities represented, 186 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom require specialist reading intervention. Dubai College offers support for 117 pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) through tailored specialist provision on the basis of need.

The curriculum in key stage 3 draws on the best elements of the national curriculum for England and aligns with UK best practices. At the end of key stage 4, pupils take GCSE and IGCSE examinations with options for advanced studies in subjects such as further mathematics. In the sixth form, students study A levels and optionally, the extended project qualification (EPQ.) Almost all students progress to university, aiming for placements at highly selective universities globally. In the previous year, 64% went to the United Kingdom and 17% to the United States of America.

Dubai College's vision is: 'To be leading British education overseas, underpinned by four pillars of sporting, creative, philanthropic and academic endeavour.' Its mission is to provide a 'rich holistic education and academic excellence for our students'.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 54 part-lessons and conducted learning walks looking at extra-curricular and other activities. Six of the lessons visited were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. They also observed tutor periods and an

assembly. There were 25 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and strategic plans. They inspected the school's safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also considered the views of parents and staff expressed in the BSO survey, which was sent just prior to the inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Dubai College is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from 11 to 18 years.

The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas' 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.

Across the school, pupils, from their high starting points make outstanding progress in **English**. Attainment is outstanding overall and for the highest grades at IGCSE and A level has remained significantly above the England averages for the previous three years. Typically, 100% of pupils achieve grades 9 to 7 at IGCSE in English language and English literature, with an impressive 64% in English language and 62% in English literature achieving a grade 9 in 2024 compared to the UK average of around 2%. In English literature at A level, all students achieved grades A* to B. There is no significant variation in the rates of attainment and progress of different groups of pupils or students, including boys and girls and pupils with SEND.

Pupils develop their reading, writing and speaking skills exceptionally well throughout key stage 3. Pupils gain a deep understanding of a range of literary texts. Pupils' understanding and use of complex vocabulary, syntax and linguistic devices are exceptional and due to the high priority the department places on reading widely and for pleasure. Against the school's own ambitious targets and national tests, pupils make excellent progress and attain high standards in reading and writing compared to their UK counterparts.

At key stage 4, pupils build on their secure knowledge to attain high grades at IGCSE. Pupils develop strong imaginative and transactional writing skills, which draw on the rich fiction and non-fiction texts that they have studied. They extend their developed speaking skills, understanding deeply the oral conventions for different audiences and

purposes. Pupils achieve highly in the speaking element of the IGCSE examination with 100% gaining distinctions compared to 17% in the UK.

In the sixth form, students thrive in their English literature studies. Students' sophisticated analytical skills and experience of reading scholarly texts help them to understand complex and mature themes. Students' excellent breadth and depth of a wide range of literary genres mean that they tackle the A level course requirement with a great level of confidence and enthusiasm. Most students meet their ambitious targets in the A level examination.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding. In GCSE mathematics, 87.5% students attain the highest grades of 8 to 9 and 80% achieve grade 9 in GCSE further mathematics. At A level, 72% achieve A to A* in mathematics, and 73% reach the same high standard in further mathematics. These outstanding outcomes are significantly higher than those of comparable pupils and students both in England and internationally.

There is no significant variation in the rates of performance of different groups of pupils, including boys, girls, and those with SEND or EAL. At both GCSE and A level, trends over the previous three years demonstrate sustained excellence in the school's mathematical outcomes.

At key stage 3, pupils build a solid foundation in essential mathematical concepts, including confidently solving equations and interpreting graphs. This robust understanding enhances their critical thinking and equips them for tackling more advanced mathematical challenges in the future. Pupils also develop fluency in the use of mathematical language and demonstrate strong reasoning skills, enabling them to articulate and justify their mathematical ideas effectively.

In key stage 4, pupils continue to make rapid progress through a challenging, sequential mathematics curriculum. They become confident and highly skilled in using data and gain fluency and confidence in working with numbers, employing a wide range of strategies to solve complex problems. In a Year 10 lesson, using simultaneous equations, pupils expertly manipulated formulae and performed calculations with speed and accuracy.

In the sixth form, students master advanced skills and techniques, enabling them to solve multi-faceted problems with precision. They develop the ability to evaluate and select the most efficient strategies, adapting their approaches to suit a variety of real-world and theoretical contexts. In a Year 13 lesson, students readily applied their understanding of calculus to calculate the area between a curve and a straight line.

Throughout the school, students are frequently engaged in rich and challenging mathematical investigations that are thoughtfully designed to deepen their understanding and stretch their analytical capabilities. These activities play a significant role in facilitating students' excellent mathematical progress.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding. Over the previous three years, pupils have consistently achieved above national and international standards. Both girls and boys perform at the same high levels and the very small numbers of pupils with EAL and SEND perform at the same high levels as their peers.

In key stage 3 internal assessments, all pupils attained a DC grade 4 -equivalent to a GCSE grade 4 - and more than half of all pupils achieved a DC grade 7, demonstrating outstanding attainment above national curriculum expectations for their age. In external Year 9 science progress tests nearly half of all pupils achieved standard nine (stanine) 9, the highest grade possible and almost all achieved stanine 6 or higher, representing their exceptional attainment against international standards. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 primarily learn through investigation and practical experimentation. For example, in Year 7, pupils demonstrate their understanding of topics such as forces, by designing and creating rockets, applying their knowledge to real life scenarios.

In Year 9 all pupils begin compulsory GCSE courses in all three sciences, while other British curriculum schools make this selective. In the previous year, DC pupils achieved grades 9 to 8 which is 50% higher than world averages. In biology, 89% of pupils achieved grades 9 to 8 compared to the global average of 30% for the same syllabus, with similarly high results in chemistry and physics. In a Year 11 chemistry lesson, pupils independently set up equipment and accurately conducted a core practical. They showed their strong grasp of concepts when investigating the temperature rise produced in a known mass of water by the combustion of alcohols.

At A level, science remains a popular choice with cohort sizes of around 40 with many students pursuing science-based university degrees. Most students achieved grades A* to B with 43% securing an A* in biology, 34% in chemistry and 40% in physics. These A* grades significantly surpass the national averages in England which are below 10% for biology and chemistry and 11.2% for physics. In lessons, students take ownership of their own learning, often engaging in discussion to deepen their understanding. For example, in a Year 13 biology lesson, students worked collaboratively to share their ideas on epigenetic modification, encouraged by the skilful teacher's questioning that encouraged further analysis and critical thinking.

Other subjects

Attainment and progress are outstanding in all subjects in GCSE and A level examinations. In the current year, pupils achieved the highest proportion of GCSE grades at 9 to 7 with 61% obtaining grade 9 in science subjects. These percentages at GCSE are more than four times higher than England averages for the previous three years. At A level, 76% of all grades were A* and A, well above England averages.

Pupils actively engage in their work across subjects, especially in creative subjects. In design technology, Year 7 pupils proudly complete high-quality desk tidies from formed acrylic. In Year 12, art students work independently, printing a series of expressive and experimental etchings. All this work reflects high quality. Many pupils excel in sports and all demonstrate strong competence in using technology across a range of subjects.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The Standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during November 2024, 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 independent school system in England. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Part 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 quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

Dubai College offers a challenging and aspirational curriculum rooted in its core values, designed to nurture each pupil's potential. This cultivates well-rounded individuals who excel academically, remain physically active, are creatively inspired, and exemplify social responsibility.

The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to be broad and balanced, addressing the diverse needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND and/or EAL. It is fully aligned with the national curriculum for England and undergoes regular review to remain relevant and progressive. School leaders have carefully sequenced curriculum content to ensure pupils revisit and deepen their essential knowledge for exceptional progress. For instance, in modern foreign languages, a strong grammar foundation enables pupils to acquire advanced language skills.

In key stage 3, pupils explore a wide range of subjects and excel in mathematics and science, consistently surpassing age-related expectations. Digital technology lessons equip pupils with essential skills in using various digital tools, applications, and platforms, to enhance learning across subjects.

In key stages 4 and 5, pupils choose from a diverse range of courses aligned with their interests and goals. In the sixth form, the EPQ enriches the academic experience, inspiring students to excel. At all stages, the curriculum is further enriched with guest speakers, themed weeks, and international visits, broadening pupils' horizons.

British values are seamlessly integrated across the curriculum, providing a strong foundation for pupils transferring to the English educational system. The curriculum actively respects democracy and promotes tolerance as pupils engage with key aspects of British history, culture, literature, economics, and geography. This fosters a culture of inclusion and empowers pupils to understand and value differing perspectives, cultivating a sense of community and mutual respect. Through their study of *The Bone Sparrow* in English, for example, teachers help pupils to understand the experiences of displaced peoples forced to live in a refugee camp. Pupils express genuine empathy, as a result. Pupils learn to develop an informed and balanced view of political issues. By understanding opposing points of view, they appreciate the importance of tolerance and mutual respect.

The outstanding library plays a pivotal role in fostering a culture of reading. In key stage 3, reading for pleasure is prioritised through engaging activities, including challenges to read across a range of genres, reading logs and recommended reading. However, there is less focus on the promotion of reading for enjoyment in key stage 4 because there is no dedicated time to use the library or for pupils to read and discuss the books they have read for pleasure. As a result, some pupils do not read as widely and often as they should.

Pupils receive excellent guidance on their educational and career development starting from Year 7. Sixth-form students feel well-prepared for university, thanks to specialised opportunities such as the TopUp Programme, which includes fields of study such as medicinal chemistry and biochemistry.

The exceptional Rolling Personal Education Programme (RPEP) is pivotal to pupils' holistic development. It focuses on age-appropriate teaching related to well-being, relationships, and online safety, preparing pupils to navigate their future academic and social challenges. Teachers design and lead the curriculum with a keen understanding of pupils' evolving needs. The school's provision pays particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. Those characteristics which the UAE law precludes the school from addressing are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation.

Extra-curricular opportunities are a cornerstone of the school's ethos, with over 250 activities available with 95% of pupils engaging in at least one activity. This enables pupils to develop new skills, pursue passions, and participate in meaningful experiences beyond the classroom. The school fulfils its mission to provide a rich holistic education.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** in the school is outstanding.

Teaching and learning in Dubai College is underpinned by powerful cutting edge educational research. Pupils, including those with SEND, develop expert subject knowledge and adept learning dispositions. Subject teams draw on their sound disciplinary thinking to design a well-sequenced curriculum. As a result, pupils build on their high starting points, make excellent progress and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The 'Science of Learning' (SoL), oracy and feedback are the key golden threads of teaching practice across the school. Most teachers use questioning adeptly to prompt pupils to think and make connections. Rarely do they provide the answers before allowing pupils sufficient thinking time. In some lessons, pupils actively generate questions for their peers which fosters collaborative learning. Pupils enjoy grappling with new ideas and problems. For instance, in a Year 12 English lesson, students presented contentious views on "Othello" and challenged their peers to agree or disagree, sparking lively discussion and debate.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and secure. The school actively invests in developing teachers' practice. The teaching and learning communities thrive and play a crucial role in enhancing teaching quality. Teachers expertly guide pupils' learning by identifying misconceptions and adjusting tasks as needed. Teachers use the school's adaptive teaching toolkit skilfully, providing pupils with SEND appropriate support to aid their learning. All pupils are given laptops. Teachers help pupils to use a range of digital tools to expand their creative ideas and develop essential twenty-first century skills.

The school takes an innovative and exemplary approach to developing pupils' oracy skills. Teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills very well, enabling them to debate and critically analyse problems with confidence. By consistently reinforcing high expectations, teachers inspire pupils to rise to the challenge enthusiastically. Teachers also ensure that pupils regularly revisit and connect knowledge from previous lessons or other subjects, deepening their understanding. For example, in a geography GCSE lesson, pupils drew on their strong historical knowledge of post war Britain to explain the reasons for industrial decline in the 1950s and 1960s.

While high academic standards typify lessons, so do pupils' strong learning skills, resulting in strong progress. Pupils take pride in their work, want to do well and work extremely well with one another. Teachers cultivate an environment that values effort

and perseverance, allowing pupils with SEND to thrive in a calm and respectful atmosphere. Pupils rarely give up, but instead draw inspiration from others. The school's values of 'excellence, hard work, kindness and integrity' resonate in every classroom.

Teachers use their expert knowledge to make necessary adjustments when pupils struggle or misunderstand concepts. Teachers refer to individual education plans (IEP) well to support pupils with SEND, ensuring these pupils learn and make excellent progress just as well as their peers.

The school's assessment framework reflects careful and strategic design. Subject assessment criteria and expectations are clearly published for pupils and parents. Teachers provide timely and specific feedback to pupils, helping them identify gaps in their knowledge. Pupils reflect on their work during dedicated classroom reflection time. Departments analyse assessment information to make curricular adjustments to further enhance teaching and learning.

Part 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** (SMSC) development of pupils is outstanding.

Dubai College consistently promotes academic excellence, preparing pupils for life beyond school. The school demonstrates its integrity through a holistic approach to education. Pupils exhibit excellent conduct, manners and attitudes, reflecting the success of the school's mission. Pupils develop a strong understanding of their responsibilities towards themselves and their community through the moral, social and cultural education (MSC) programme and RPEP. The school's philanthropic commitment is evident in its wide range of charity campaigns and the school building project in Nepal; all of which foster pupils' acute awareness of their privilege. Pupils display a strong moral compass, with incidents of serious poor behaviour being rare. Pupils value the caring and supportive relationships among their peers and with staff.

Restorative behaviour approaches teach pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Teachers guide them to learn from mistakes and strive for continuous improvement. Tutors support pupils' self-reflection through one-to-one tracking sessions. For example, the end of year 'Look back to learn to look forward' review helps pupils

manage their learning and participation. Extensive sporting opportunities further enhance pupils' resilience, self-esteem and teamwork.

The school instils an appreciation of British values. A harmonious culture of respect and tolerance pervades the school where differences are celebrated. Pupils particularly enjoy events such as International Day and other festivals approved by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). While Remembrance Day can no longer be celebrated, it was thoughtfully referenced in assembly within the context of global conflicts. Lessons in history, RPEP and MSC deepen pupils' understanding of, and respect for, democratic processes and public institutions in the UK. The student parliament, comprising elected student council representatives, regularly takes forward and implements pupils' suggestions for improvement. Pupils share their views and opinions in a range of ways, including surveys and extra-curricular activities (ECA) committees. The Belonging Society, formed by pupils as a result of them noticing language and behaviours among some pupils that were not inclusive, makes regular presentations in assemblies about other faiths, celebrations, and cultures to ensure all pupils understand difference. Pupils feel heard and empowered to create positive change.

All pupils fully participate in school life. An extensive range of ECA broadens pupils' interests, hobbies and career aspirations. Pupils lead various clubs, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Dubai Keynes Society (DKS) and the engineering club. Programmes such as the Junior Colours programme, the CASA (community action service awards) and the Duke of Edinburgh Award nurture self-esteem and social and civil responsibility.

The school passionately promotes equality within the constraints of the host country's laws. The Girls Allowed ECA, led by pupils, actively promotes women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions with inspirational guest speakers. Pupils, staff, parents and governors actively participate in the diversity, equality and inclusion committee to review and enhance the school's cultural awareness and provision further.

Staff sign and adhere to a code of conduct that prohibits the promotion of partisan views to pupils. Teachers and visitors maintain impartiality and encourage balanced perspectives on contentious issues. The history department plays a significant role in teaching pupils about the dangers of extremism.

Pupils have high aspirations for their life and future careers. Their attendance and attitudes to their learning are exemplary. The school's well designed careers programme helps pupils understand their skills and aptitudes. During one DKS session,

an inspirational female former pupil virtually addressed Year 13 students from a university in the USA. Students listened attentively to her sound advice and guidance about the benefits of broadening experiences and achievements beyond academic life.

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

The welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are outstanding.

The school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are rigorous and comprehensive. They are regularly updated to align with UK best practice and take into account the requirements of the host country. This fosters a positive safeguarding culture that permeates all aspects of school life and enables pupils to thrive academically and personally.

All staff complete mandatory safeguarding training, ensuring that they are well versed in their safeguarding duties and can effectively address pupils' well-being. An efficient online system allows staff to log any concerns, with safeguarding leads acting swiftly when necessary. Information on safeguarding is clearly communicated throughout the school and the school's website hosts the latest versions of policies, ensuring everyone is aware of their responsibilities and how to seek support. Parents and pupils have confidence in the school's ability to deal with concerns promptly, fostering a safe and supportive environment.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is impeccable, allowing them to fully engage in their learning and achieve their potential. This is supported by a clear behaviour policy and sanction system, fostering respect, responsibility, and accountability. Transition arrangements enable new pupils to settle into the school very quickly and feel secure and confident from the start. Staff maintain vigilant supervision, complemented by the onsite security team, closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring, and rigorous visitor checks.

The school has a proactive approach to the prevention of bullying. Pupils express with confidence that staff will attend to any incidents promptly and fairly. They are well-informed about the importance of online safety and equipped with the skills needed to navigate the digital world securely. Pupils report that they appreciate the ease of accessing confidential support from the school's counsellors, further enhancing their sense of security and well-being.

Risk assessment is thorough and systematically applied to all aspects of school life. This includes evaluating day-to-day activities, off-site trips, facilities management,

and emergency protocols. The school adheres to recommended fire evacuation procedures, regularly conducting drills to ensure a high standard of protection and care for all pupils. A comprehensive first-aid policy, supported by qualified medical staff, ensures prompt medical care, while efficient transport management practices further prioritise pupils' safety. All health and safety documentation is meticulously recorded, and any minor concerns are promptly dealt with through actionable steps.

Pupils are consistently punctual, and the attendance rate of 98% surpasses the national average for schools in England. This reflects pupils' strong commitment to education and active engagement in the school's vibrant and inclusive community.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school follows rigorous recruitment practices aligned to UK standards to recruit highly qualified staff. Staff turnover remains very low due to market-leading pay and conditions and a harmonious staff environment. In the current year, the school recruited 10 new staff, including four to fill newly created positions. With around 100 applicants for each post, only a select few meet the school's high standards. Leaders involved in recruitment, along with the safeguarding governor have completed safer recruitment training.

The human resources (HR) team, supported by the senior leadership team (SLT) and the safeguarding governor, meticulously maintain a single central register (SCR) of checks on all employees. This register includes governors, outsourced companies, parent helpers, contracted workers, visiting specialists, invigilators, transport and ancillary staff. All required checks are conducted thoroughly. HR requests three references per candidate with two verified by phone, and keeps attested qualifications in hard copy in locked files. Criminal record checks covering UK nationals through the Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) and International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) are mandatory. Medical fitness certificates are required for KHDA approval and visa processing. Social media checks are outsourced with comprehensive reports provided. The SCR records annual safeguarding training dates. Training for support staff is conducted in their own language, where necessary. Approximately 40 staff, including trip leaders and sports coaches have completed advanced safeguarding training.

All checks ensure the suitability of staff to work with children.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's premises offer an exceptional and enriching learning environment which ensures a safe space for all. Efficient use of resources and state-of-the-art modern facilities play a pivotal role in supporting outstanding pupils' achievement. This also supports the full delivery of the national curriculum for England and examination requirements.

The buildings and premises are exceptionally well-maintained and specialist areas, such as those for science, technology, and the creative and performing arts, are well-equipped. Excellent acoustics and lighting provide an optimal setting for effective teaching and learning and pupils' performance. The school's excellent physical education facilities, including the Sports and Performing Arts Centre of Excellence (SPACE), inspire pupils' participation in a diverse range of physical activities to promote their physical and mental well-being.

The premises foster a welcoming atmosphere through outstanding cleanliness and efficient security measures. The security team maintains a vigilant presence to ensure the safety of everyone on campus. Facilities are risk assessed each day and the onsite maintenance team promptly attends to any emerging concerns to maintain full compliance with health, safety, and welfare standards.

The school offers washing and changing facilities exclusively for pupils, alongside clearly labelled drinking water stations and handwashing facilities. Medical facilities include private examination rooms and dedicated spaces for treatment and recovery. The school prioritises accessibility for pupils with physical or mobility difficulties, ensuring inclusive access.

An ongoing refurbishment programme consistently enhances the school's environment, further elevating the already high-quality infrastructure. The recent addition of a new building dedicated to mathematics, digital learning, art, and the school library has enriched pupils' learning experience, providing a calm and inspiring atmosphere. Classrooms have cutting-edge technology and large whiteboards around the room to promote collaboration and active pupils' participation. These facilities reflect the school's commitment to inspiring curiosity, creativity, and a passion for learning.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's website is informative and easily navigable. It contains all the required information about the school's aims and ethos, organisational information, safeguarding, academic results, the curriculum, admissions, complaints and behaviour. The school's policies follow the latest UK government guidance, where appropriate, and are presented clearly. Parents value the email communication and frequently use the school's digital application (app) to gain access to newsletters, messages and presentations. The school's calendar sets out clearly key events, trips and visiting speakers, ensuring parents remain informed. Parents praise the school's transparent approach to sharing information and feel well informed about all aspects of the school's developments. For example, they appreciated the opportunity to hear and discuss the decision to ban the use of mobile phones in school. Parents consistently state that they feel like partners in the school, which they believe makes it unique and special. Almost all parents responding to the BSO parents' survey and the school's own parental feedback confirm that their children feel safe and thrive at this school. They also confirm that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence supports these views.

The school provides parents with tools to help their children stay safe on- and offline. The helpful safeguarding presentations offer parents tips and strategies for managing risks, protecting mental health and navigating online safety. The school's counsellors frequently attend coffee mornings to support parents with any concerns about their children. The school's anonymised pupil surveys and web-based reporting systems give pupils more ways to share their concerns. Parents praise the school for acting upon feedback promptly and ensuring both parents and their children have a voice in the school. For instance, the principal recently made a presentation to parents on the slight increase in prejudice-based incidents and outlined the school's response.

The reports that parents receive about their child's progress are highly detailed and informative. The school reports on pupils' progress three times a year using clearly defined criteria for each judgement statement. Reports prioritise progress over attainment and evaluate pupils' attitudes towards learning, aligning them with the school's emphasis on fostering a positive and resilient approach to improvement. Parents value the focus on their child's personal development. The school is currently

working on a new template to include pupils' ECA attendance in reports. Parents will be consulted at every stage before implementation.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The complaints policy fully complies with requirements and is available to parents on the school's website. It follows a three-stage procedure. Almost all concerns are resolved informally through direct contact with teachers. If a complaint cannot be resolved within five working days, parents proceed to the second stage, formal resolution. At this stage complaints are submitted to the principal and records kept. Over the past 10 years, only one complaint has been dealt with at the third stage.

All hearings at the third stage include at least three persons, including one who is not directly involved with the school and none who have been previously directly involved in the complaint. Complainants may bring someone for support, but not legal representation. The committee's findings are final and are sent in writing to the principal and complainant.

The school deals with all complaints in a timely, courteous way in accordance with its policy.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. School leaders secure excellence and fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are fully met.

The refreshed strategic vision reaffirms the school's commitment to the four pillars of sporting, creative, philanthropic and academic endeavour. This commitment to deliver a rich, holistic education and academic excellence shines through every aspect of the school. Leaders collaborated closely with governors, parents, pupils and staff to establish core values of excellence, hard work, kindness and integrity. They also defined the top 10 strategic priorities to guide the school's future under new leadership.

The current principal, with almost 10 years of inspirational leadership at Dubai College, embodies integrity and sets the bar for excellence. His leadership fosters a community of staff that work incredibly well together for the good of the pupils, empowering them to reach their full potential and ambitions. The school's capacity for innovation and

continuous improvement is driven by a culture of collective input, through surveys and creative thinking sessions, involving all stakeholders. Leaders remain highly visible, accessible to all and serve as outstanding role models. The BSO survey reflects that staff view leaders at all levels as highly effective, competent and dedicated.

Staff take immense pride in working at Dubai College, valuing the school's commitment to their professional growth. The sense of a happy community is palpable in the staffroom. Many newly appointed staff describe it as the best school they have worked in, partly due to its focus on well-being. Professional development is a top priority with a cutting-edge research approach guiding all initiatives and up-to-date practice. Time is purposefully allocated in the academic calendar to support continuous professional learning and teachers' learning communities encourage the sharing and trialling new strategies. Many aspiring leaders in the staff team benefit from structured support and the school promotes from within wherever possible. Rigorous improvement processes allow staff structured autonomy to set four goals with their line manager, encouraging high standards and research driven practices.

The school's self-evaluation process involves a rigorous review of examination outcomes with heads of subject providing data driven improvement strategies to their line manager and the principal. Self-evaluation also encompasses curriculum, teaching, learning and the views of pupils and parents. Broader evaluations of pastoral care, extra-curricular involvement and health and safety further shape the dynamic school's development plan.

The board of governors, drawn from prominent community members, with a broad range of experience, serve as the school's trustees. They ensure a rigorous commitment to the oversight and strategic planning of the school and engage in regular governance training through a UK-based programme. The chair of the governors holds a visionary outlook for Dubai College's future and maintains a deep, active interest in its progress. The safeguarding governor with advanced training, rigorously supports and challenges the school's safeguarding leads. Such highly effective governance makes a significant contribution to the school, providing a blend of support and challenge, setting high educational standards. Policy decisions rest with the governors while the principal oversees their daily implementation. The chair appraises the principal using UK best practices, including a comprehensive 360-degree evaluation.

The committed, cohesive group of governors frequently engages with the school and ensure its legal compliance under UAE law. As a non-profit foundation, the school relies

on philanthropic contributions to expand and renovate its facilities. It manages resources efficiently in partnership with the school's bursar.

Leaders and governors champion equality and inclusion. The school admits a broad spectrum of academically able pupils including those with varying needs. It maintains selectivity due to high demand with 800 applicants for 180 places in the current year. The school has an inclusion action team and a Diversity Equality and Inclusion (DEI) working group along with the 'Belonging Society', a DEI student group that promotes inclusivity. The extensive extra-curricular programme is open to all, with sports participation available at all levels. Parents of children with SEND commend the school for its inclusivity and the exceptional support provided for their children's personal and academic development.

Post-16 provision

The sixth form comprises 296 students, almost all of whom have advanced from Year 11, with only 8 new students joining in the current year. All students progress from Year 12 to 13, although those who initially chose four A levels may opt to drop one.

Almost all students proceed to university with 90% attending their first-choice destination and 20% enrolling at top 10 global universities. In 2024, five students went to Oxford and three to Cambridge. In the previous year 64% of students attended universities in the UK.

The sixth form offers a selection of 20 A level courses but does not include vocational options due to the lack of demand. The school does not offer AS levels. Leaders actively respond to students' course requests, adding subjects, such as politics recently. Students independently arrange valuable work experience placements.

Numerous leadership opportunities are available, including head boy and girl, prefects, peer mentoring in the liaison programme and the student parliament. Students are elected democratically by their peers. The school supports well-rounded development by providing 200 ECAs and opportunities for charity work. These range from sports squads and the economics society to specialist lectures organised by students.

Students commend the quality of careers guidance, which features skilled specialists in different parts of the world, alongside insight days, guest speakers and former students. Tutors provide tailored advice through one-to-one conversations. The TopUp Programme is specifically designed to bridge the transition to university, with an increased focus on university applications during Year 13. It equips students not only

for the academic rigours of university life but also how to manage the practical aspects of living independently.

Teaching quality and relationships with students are exceptional, a sentiment echoed in students' surveys. Students take ownership of their own learning. While some students experience stress and anxiety related to academic study, the pastoral team closely monitors students' welfare and attends to concerns promptly. Tutors, attuned to students' needs, quickly recognise and intervene to respond to any changes in behaviour. Students have confidence in the strong support system, which includes counselling and personalised academic guidance.

The head of sixth form, new in the current year, has revitalised the tutor programme. She is observing all aspects of the sixth form carefully to implement changes that align with key priorities. The sixth form exudes a culture of high expectations promoting both academic and personal excellence.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

Dubai College meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws. The requirements of the host country take precedence.

It cannot fully meet the standards that relate to 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5(b)(vi). Dubai College encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; pregnancy and maternity; race and religion or belief, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

What the school could do to improve further

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

The school's emphasis on the of the love of reading is not promoted consistently in all key stages. Pupils in key stage 4 do not receive the same opportunities to read for pleasure as those in other year groups. To address this, the school should explore more ways to encourage older pupils to read more widely and for personal-enjoyment. This would allow them to experience the emotional and social benefits of reading texts that spark their interests and imagination.

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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School Details

Name of school	Dubai College
Type of school	Independent, not-for-profit, selective secondary school
Date school opened	1978
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	1,113
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	Years 7–11: AED 93,220 yearly Years 12–13: AED 105,555 yearly
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Hessa Street Dubai UAE
Telephone number	+97143999111
Email address	dccommunications@dubaicollege.org
Headteacher	Michael Lambert
Proprietor	n/a

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 His 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 50 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust's vision is a world in which all lives are transformed through excellent education. We strive to improve education for learners globally, grounding our work in research and evidence. We support leaders to raise standards, improve school performance, develop great teachers and open career pathways.

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.

We have built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services. One of our main aims 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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