

# Dubai British School Emirates Hills

## 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 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

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

### 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 British School Emirates Hills (DBSEH) is an inclusive, co-educational, private British school, situated in the Springs area of Dubai's Emirates Hills. The school is a

member of the Taaleem group of schools and was established in 2005. It is one of three DBS schools in the region. The principal and head of primary are new to the school this year.

DBSEH has 1208 pupils on roll aged three to 18 years, making it smaller than other similar international, all-through schools in Dubai. With 60 different nationalities represented, many pupils speak two or more languages, including English as an additional language (EAL), while only 23 require extra language support as English language learners (ELL). It is an inclusive school that caters for the full range of abilities and needs. There are 125 pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who receive specialist provision at different levels depending on need.

Children in the early years follow the English early years foundation stage (EYFS). Pupils in the primary school and key stage 3 follow the national curriculum for England. In Year 11, pupils take IGCSE, Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) National Diploma level 2 and/or the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) examinations. In the sixth form, students study A levels and/or BTEC level 3 examinations. Almost all students leave at the end of the sixth form to attend universities around the world, with the majority going to the United Kingdom.

The school's vision is: 'At Dubai British School we encourage and enable every member of our community to Enjoy, Aspire, Achieve!'

## **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 64 part-lessons and conducted two learning walks looking at extra-curricular activities and the early years. Four 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 27 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 British School Emirates Hills is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils aged from three 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.

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding across all phases. Children arrive in the early years with skills typical for their age. By the end of this phase, most children exceed age-related expectations in the development of their language skills, particularly in speaking, reading, and comprehension.

Across early years and key stage 1, teachers systematically develop pupils' phonics skills, with almost all Year 1 pupils passing the phonics screening test. They achieve this as a result of teachers' strong focus on pupils' early reading skills with highly effective planning and regular assessment of pupils' comprehension skills.

Pupils continue to make excellent progress across the primary phase. They acquire extensive vocabulary and develop a love of reading through exposure to a wide range of genres. Teachers emphasise grammar while maintaining high expectations for extended, imaginative, and research-focused factual writing. For example, in Year 6, pupils spend considerable time researching the ways to make changes in their own lives to reduce the impact of climate change. They use this research to develop short, recorded presentations that require the use of formal language, making their findings accessible to everyone. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils reach reading and writing standards that are considerably above those in England.

In the secondary phase, teachers increase the emphasis on textual analysis and information retrieval to aid pupils' comprehension. By Year 8, most pupils can present critical and evaluative commentaries of complex texts. In IGCSE examinations, pupils attain well above England averages in English language and meet expectations in English literature. Most pupils exceed their targets in IGCSE language and literature by around one and a half grades.

In the sixth form, students confidently evaluate the social and historical perspectives of the texts they study and examine complex literary techniques. In Year 12, pupils analyse the techniques that Shakespeare uses in Macbeth to demonstrate changing relationships between characters. In a Year 13 lesson, students carried out an in-depth analysis of the characters in Ian McEwan's novel, Atonement. They looked at narrative perspectives and reasons to be sympathetic or otherwise, looking at the unreliability of the narrator of the novel and how he might influence the reader. At A level, all pupils attain above England averages in English language.

Across all phases, there is no significant difference in the performance of different groups. Pupils with SEND make similar rates of progress as their peers.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding. All groups of pupils including boys, girls and those with SEND make excellent progress and attain well

Most children enter the Reception Year with skills typical for their age. As a result of outstanding teaching, they progress rapidly and attain high levels. By the end of the Reception Year, children understand the composition of numbers up to 10 and can count up to 20 accurately. They can identify odd and even numbers and double single digit numbers. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher introduced the idea of shape, including triangles which led to a discussion about various shapes, using the language of mathematics.

Pupils make rapid progress in key stage 1 and by the end of Year 2, their attainment far exceeds age-related expectations in England. They can write numbers up to 100, interpret simple tables and pictograms and confidently use addition and subtraction symbols. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils accurately added and subtracted three- and four-digit numbers using multiple methods. Pupils easily apply their mathematical skills to solve everyday challenges.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment is high compared to international standards and England averages. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils successfully converted units of measurement including millilitres to litres, centimetres to metres and grams to kilograms, demonstrating a clear understanding of the methods used. They are highly confident learners who enjoy solving mathematical problems.

Throughout key stages 3 and 4 pupils continue to make sustained and rapid progress. Over one fifth of pupils achieved the top IGCSE grades of 9 to 8, well over double the England average. Overall, pupils achieved half a grade higher than predicted.



Sixth-form students also achieve high standards compared to England averages particularly at A\* and A grades. They enjoy their learning and have become confident independent mathematicians.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding. Almost all pupils, including those with SEND, meet age-related expectations in every phase of the school with no significant differences between boys and girls in any phase.

Children in the early years confidently conduct investigations with their teacher, such as using various materials to protect an egg from cracking when dropped. They learn to work scientifically and use accurate terminology from an early age. By the end of the Reception Year, most children attain above expectations and almost all make outstanding progress from their starting points.

In the primary phase, pupils participate in both a weekly science lesson and starting in Year 3 a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) lesson. All pupils engage in enquiry-based experiences. A Year 4 group enjoyed recreating the digestive system using various resources, while Year 3 pupils investigated how changes in the distance of a light source affect the size of a shadow. Internal assessments show that almost all pupils meet age-related expectations with most exceeding them. External data confirms a similar trend with three years of consistently outstanding results, surpassing expected standards in England.

In key stage 3, pupils continue their STEAM lessons alongside specialist lessons to secure high levels of progress. External tests show consistently outstanding results over the past three years for all groups.

At GCSE, about half of all pupils attained grades 8 or 9 in triple science, averaging half a grade higher than predicted. In combined science, pupils averaged over half a grade higher than expected. Compared to the England average, pupils' attainment of the top grades in IGCSE are significantly higher.

In the sixth form, at A level, a quarter of all pupils achieved A\* or A grades in all three sciences, over half a grade higher than predicted in biology and chemistry and almost a grade higher in physics. This year the comparisons to UK averages show marked improvement at the top grades compared to the previous two years as a result of the science team's analysis of data with an improved focus on students' practical skills.

Pupils demonstrate excellent progress in a range of **other subjects**.

In summer 2024 the school's A level results ranked fourth highest in the UAE and marked the highest achievement in the school's history. This success is impressive for an inclusive school. Nearly half of all A level grades were A\* or A. Pupils excel in BTEC subjects, especially business, where they achieved nearly two and a half grades above their aspirational targets. Across all subjects, three quarters of students on BTEC level 3 course achieved distinction grades.

All groups of pupils make outstanding progress in a range of subjects such as music, French and physical education (PE) in primary. The school fosters high aspirations, nurturing pupils as well-rounded individuals with life-long learning skills throughout the school. The wide range of well taught specialist subjects supports this commitment to become well-rounded individuals. Economics and business remain popular options at both IGCSE and A level. Pupils can choose from a wide range of different subjects to meet their interests and aspirations.

## 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 are 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 October 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.

The curriculum is carefully planned to provide pupils with a coherent learning experience as they progress through the key stages. It is inclusive and caters for the needs and interests of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Pupils enjoy their subjects and make excellent progress, achieving high standards compared to international benchmarks.

The curriculum fully meets the demands of its chosen frameworks including the EYFS, the national curriculum for England, IGCSE, GCSE, ASDAN, BTEC and A levels. The flexibility of the curriculum is a particular strength. As a result, pupils benefit from a wide range of choices, which aim to support each pupil, whether they choose a traditional academic route or a vocational curriculum.

Courses that promote the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) development equip pupils with essential life skills and a good understanding of UAE culture. They learn how to stay safe and healthy, both physically and emotionally, and how to build positive relationships. Pupils develop their study skills well and quickly become independent learners who readily take responsibility for their own learning.

A well-structured and planned age-appropriate pastoral curriculum runs from the early years through to the sixth form. The school places great emphasis on being quickly responsive to the needs of individuals and making adaptations as needed. Across all phases, pupils are confident learners, capable of adapting to various learning environments.

Pupils have a good understanding of life in Britain and British values. They learn about the four countries and the capital cities of the UK, its major geographical features and key aspects of British society. British history and literature are also explored. Pupils learn the importance of respect for all people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. Those characteristics which UAE law precludes the school from addressing are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation. They learn about tolerance of different faiths, democratic principles and the value of individual liberty, participating in celebrations such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid.

Pupils are active participants in the school's council elections, demonstrating their grasp of the democratic process. They see learning as an inclusive, collaborative effort and value the opportunity to learn with their peers.

Careers education is integral to the curriculum, particularly from Year 9. Pupils are well-informed about their future educational and career options. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as aquathlon, water polo, football, Lego club, Bollywood dance, fitness and mindfulness. There are 22 different sports on offer, generating 75 school teams. Most pupils participate in at least one activity each week.

Pupils also engage with their local community, including visits to local industries, beaches and a residential trip to the mountains. They support charitable organisations both locally and internationally, contributing to organisations such as 'Dubai Cares' and 'Old Books for New Eyes'.

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

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and have a deep understanding of their pupils' skills and abilities. They meticulously plan lessons, identifying precise learning objectives with clear success criteria. The pace of lessons is demanding, with high expectations that challenge and fully engage pupils, promoting rapid progress. This approach benefits all pupils in all phases, including the most able and pupils with SEND, who consistently make excellent progress.

Teachers set challenging targets and encourage pupils to set their own goals. For instance, in a Year 3 English lesson, the most able pupils tackled grammar objectives two years ahead of their chronological age, and successfully met these goals. The school's '6 Cs' of Caring, Creative, Critical Thinking, Communicators, Courageous, and Cooperative are integral to promoting pupils' positive learning behaviour. Most pupils

confidently demonstrate these qualities during lessons. In early years, children demonstrate the ability to make independent choices and work collaboratively.

Pupils exhibit high levels of self-motivation, exemplary behaviour and a love for learning. The strong, respectful relationships between teachers and pupils nurture an environment where learning thrives. Teachers use excellent questioning techniques to deepen understanding and to encourage pupils to ask their own questions to clarify and articulate their learning. This is exemplified in a Year 13 physics lesson, where students engaged with each other's questions to enhance their understanding of nuclear fusion and nuclear fission and explain their learning using appropriate scientific vocabulary.

Teachers effectively demonstrate new learning, breaking up the learning into smaller steps to help pupils systematically build their knowledge, skills and understanding. This approach is particularly effective in English lessons, where pupils analyse grammar, vocabulary, and writing styles to create successful written pieces. Critical thinking is integral to almost every lesson, encouraging pupils to take risks in their learning. For example, Year 8 mathematics pupils explored the best methods for multiplying and dividing fractions through trial, error, and investigation.

The use of digital technology is both widespread and sophisticated, enhancing teaching and learning across all subjects. Most pupils confidently use these tools for research, homework, and collaboration with their peers.

Teachers weave high-quality assessment techniques into every lesson, enabling them to check pupils' understanding and correct their misconceptions immediately. Feedback strategies, including self- and peer-assessment, encourage pupils to revisit their learning and make continuous progress. The school has recently begun using an Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform to provide Year 6 pupils with feedback on their imaginative writing, which has been particularly motivating for boys in that year group. The full potential of the effective use of this platform has yet to be explored.

Formal assessment frameworks ensure that the school measures attainment and progress at key points throughout the year. Rigorous data analysis systems enable teachers to review and adjust the curriculum. A growing emphasis on self-assessment encourages pupils to reflect on their learning, celebrate their success, and identify their next steps for improvement. For example, the development of highly effective pupils' personal learning logs in the secondary phase has empowered pupils to take leadership of their learning by reflecting on their progress and identifying their next target.

## 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, promoting an inclusive environment where every pupil can: 'Enjoy, Aspire, and Achieve'.

The school presents as a safe, supportive, and caring environment. Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness, adhering to the school rules of: "Be kind, Be safe, Be a good listener". Strong, positive, and respectful relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils demonstrate exemplary self-discipline, positive attitudes, and pride in their achievements. Their outstanding behaviour reflects their enjoyment of school, evident in their high attendance and punctuality rates. In discussions, pupils report very few incidents of unkind behaviour, and when these occur, older pupils or adults handle them sensitively and efficiently.

Pupils show a strong understanding of right and wrong and appreciate opportunities to support those less fortunate. For example, sixth-form students recently visited Kenya to help local communities build boundary walls to reduce human and wildlife conflict. Pupils regularly collect donations and equipment for local workers and community members in need. Through the student agency initiative, they research and select the charitable organisations that they want to support.

The school's PSHE curriculum includes relationships education, exploring the characteristics of healthy relationships and how to manage emotions and conflict. Recently, the school introduced the 'Upstanders' initiative, encouraging pupils to take positive action even when doing nothing might seem easier. This initiative helps pupils develop strategies to support anyone who may be a victim of bullying, facing discrimination or struggling with mental health problems.

In its mission to equip pupils with life and learning skills for an ever-changing global world, the school offers many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, share their views and take on leadership roles in the school. Democracy plays a central role, particularly during elections for key leadership roles. These elections allow pupils to influence the school's decisions, supporting leaders in creating a safe and positive

school. Pupils express pride in participating in wider decisions as peer mentors, student counsellors, and digital leaders, making a meaningful difference in their peers' lives.

Pupils possess an in-depth knowledge of public institutions in both the UK and the UAE. They evaluate the differences between the laws of the two countries, identifying both similarities and differences, demonstrating respect for the values of each. Lessons provide opportunities for pupils to discuss these differences. For example, in a Year 9 media studies lesson, pupils compare the responses of UK and UAE leaders to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on death rates. They also possess extensive knowledge about UK institutions, such as the National Health Service and the UK Parliament. In EYFS, pupils explore the heritage and cultures of the UAE, gaining an understanding of their environment and how to become responsible citizens.

The school's well-planned social, moral, and cultural curriculum develops a strong sense of identity, supports self-reflection, and promotes respect for diversity. Pupils develop an excellent awareness and appreciation of their own culture and cultures from around the world. They feel proud and privileged to celebrate a wide range of holidays and festivals, recognizing and honouring the traditions of the various communities represented in their school.

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

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

Staff provide exceptional care and prioritise pupils' health and well-being. Safety permeates every aspect of the school and pupils feel secure and enjoy school. Bullying is rare and when it occurs, it is handled swiftly. Attendance is high at 96% and pupils consistently arrive on time for lessons.

Pupils are proud to be part of DBSEH and actively contribute to its community. They enthusiastically take on roles such as prefects, peer mentors and buddies and participate eagerly in the school council.

Pupils are polite, considerate and kind because the school systematically promotes positive behaviour. The school's values, curriculum and clear behaviour policy, understood by pupils and staff, set high expectations. Staff consistently model good behaviour, leading to few cases of misconduct. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent.

New pupils integrate quickly, supported by pastoral staff and other pupils. Induction days, parent meetings and buddy systems help ease their transition. Pastoral staff offer drop-in sessions to provide additional support and to promptly deal with any problems pupils may encounter.

A strong culture of safety pervades the school. Through the PHSE programme, pupils of all ages learn how to stay safe, maintain their health and build good relationships. Mindfulness is incorporated into the PHSE programme to support pupils' emotional well-being.

Parents have much confidence in the school's commitment to keeping their children safe and are very satisfied with its health and safety measures. The school maintains up-to-date policies and procedures to ensure the safety of everyone. The school ensures risk assessment policies are in place to mitigate identified risks. The safeguarding and child protection policy aligns with UK guidance. All staff receive comprehensive annual training on child safety. The school has developed a robust safeguarding culture, where staff fully understand their responsibility to report even minor concerns, using the school's dedicated online system. Photographs of the safeguarding leaders are displayed throughout the school, ensuring that pupils know whom to approach if they have any concerns. Additionally, parents are well-informed about the school's safeguarding policy.

The first aid policy is regularly reviewed as part of the school's proactive approach to health. The school has a doctor and two nurses, supported by a large number of trained staff to deliver first aid. The school has two well equipped medical rooms, and panic buttons and defibrillators are strategically placed throughout the school. The fire risk policy complies with local regulations and is regularly reviewed alongside other policies to meet UAE requirements.

## **Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's rigorous recruitment practices meet the UK standards for keeping children safe in education (KCSIE). An accurate audit of its safeguarding practices has been completed. All involved in interviewing new staff have undergone safer recruitment training. A thorough Taaleem recruitment process, led by the human resources (HR) cluster manager and the school's HR, ensures compliance with UAE law and UK best practice. The school recruits highly qualified experienced teachers,



primarily from the UK. In the previous year, staff turnover was 16% and in the current year, the recruitment of 15 new teachers, including the head of primary and the principal has been very successful.

The HR team maintains a single central register (SCR) of all employees, including visiting specialists, supply staff, governors and contracted workers. The operations manager updates the external providers' SCR regularly. The principal actively ensures compliance, regularly reviews the SCR and has introduced 'secret shopper' checks to confirm that staff adhere to the training that they have received. Each staff member has a file with date-stamped documents showing when they were last checked.

All necessary checks are in place, including start dates, identity verification, right to work in the UAE, attested qualifications, medical checks and references from the past five years. Police criminal record checks including the Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) and International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) are conducted for all UK nationals. All staff must also obtain approval from Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

## **Part 5. The premises and accommodation**

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

School leaders ensure a safe and secure learning environment for pupils, staff and visitors. Numerous measures are in place to provide a safe and welcoming school, including restricted entry for pupils and visitors, widespread CCTV coverage, and identification for all adults upon entry. Facilities staff regularly monitor the premises to keep it hazard-free.

The school's accommodation and resources, though compact and a little tired, after almost 20 years, support high quality teaching and learning. Several shaded outside areas are used for both learning and recreation. There is a large area for children in early years with learning resources that encourage children to learn through play. Facilities staff maintain these outdoor areas to a high standard.

The school also features a gym, swimming pool and sporting pitch, all in excellent condition. These facilities are available for use before, during and after school. Classrooms are sufficiently sized, well equipped and furnished with interactive whiteboards. The lighting and acoustics are suitable and the walls display and celebrate pupils' work, providing guidance and reinforcing school values.

The school is well equipped with specialist rooms for science, STEAM, music, performing arts and design technology, each fully stocked with the necessary resources to deliver

a comprehensive curriculum. There are kitchen facilities and two medical rooms with nearby washing and toilet facilities. Administrative offices with well qualified staff ensure the smooth operation of the school. A recently refurbished, purpose-built dining facility provides a popular space for pupils to eat and socialise.

Drinking water stations are conveniently located throughout the school. The school provides gender and age-appropriate toilet and shower facilities for the sole use of pupils, including accessible toilets for pupils with restricted mobility.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Surveys conducted by the school and as part of this inspection show that most parents are supportive of the school. Parents confirmed these positive views at a meeting with the inspection team.

Parents express pride in belonging to a school community where their children receive high-quality academic guidance, leading to excellent academic standards. They appreciate the level of care and support that the school provides to help their children develop socially, taking on ever increasing challenges and resolving conflict. Parents who had recently moved from the UK shared their children's concerns about moving to a new country and school. The school attended to these concerns by providing various forms of support to ensure a good start. The parents stated that, "The school didn't just change my child's life; it has changed my life too. We feel like we are part of a new family, and we are very happy here."

The school uses various methods to communicate with parents, including online platforms that provide information about pupils' progress, showcase exemplary work and significant learning achievements. Parents eagerly anticipate these updates. They value the high-quality reports that they receive, which detail their children's academic attainment, personal development, and clear targets for improvement. They particularly appreciate the new systems that invite their children to participate in discussions about their progress.

Parents express total satisfaction with the comprehensive information they receive about school events and local activities. They especially like the weekly newsletter from the new principal, which highlights a stronger vision for the school.

The school's website offers a comprehensive range of curriculum details, organisational information, and policies for prospective and current parents. Parents report that the school has established many informal systems for sharing concerns. Parents raised a concern about the small range of sporting opportunities and the school took immediate action to add more sports. Parents feel positive about the speed and effectiveness with which the school deals with any concerns.

Parents observe that senior leaders are visible around the school, particularly at the start and end of the day. They believe the new principal understands the needs of the school's community and feel confident that the school will continue to flourish under his leadership.

## Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The complaints policy meets requirements and is available to parents on the school's website and on request. Recently updated, it outlines a staged procedure starting with informal conversations with class teachers. If parents are unsatisfied, they can complain in writing to the key stage leaders or heads of school. If the principal needs to deal with a complaint, his personal assistant (PA) records it officially in the confidential complaints log. Two complaints have been logged this year, both resolved without escalation. The school treats all complaints confidentially but does not pursue anonymous ones.

The procedure allows parents to attend panel hearings with Taaleem's governors, accompanied by another person if they choose. Each hearing includes at least three people not involved in the complaint plus one independent member. Findings and recommendations go to both the complainant and the person complained about. A confidential written record follows formal procedures and documents any actions taken. The school has procedures to deal with complaints against the principal.

The school welcomes complaints to encourage parental feedback. The new principal proactively builds positive relationships with parents, fostering trust and openness.

## Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

**Leadership and management** of the school are outstanding. Leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are fully met.

The new principal has maintained the school's ethos, culture and vision while focusing on building relationships with parents and the community. He and the new head of primary spent time at DBSEH prior to starting, allowing them to establish relationships and ensure a smooth transition. They bring valuable experience that enhances the school.

The principal, head of primary and head of secondary work cohesively to motivate staff and evaluate the school. Leaders clearly communicate strategic priorities to a dedicated staff team that takes pride in being a member of the school. In the BSO survey, staff describe leaders as approachable, kind, respectful and committed to the pupils' best interests. All leaders, including experienced middle leaders serve as excellent role models. The school's size promotes excellent daily informal communication among colleagues, further enhancing the sense of community.

The school has created its own professional development and learning process based on action research that allows teachers to set their own developmental targets and share their findings. The generous professional development budget supports staff in gaining UK-accredited qualifications.

The school has a rigorous, yet developmental quality assurance and monitoring process in place. It begins with full lesson observations in the first term, regular sampling of parts of lessons and peer observation in subsequent terms. This ensures leaders maintain a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and key improvement areas. Data analysis is used in action plans, ensuring accountability for pupils' outcomes. New teachers report high quality induction beginning upon appointment and including live online contact until they start in post. Surveys of newly appointed staff lead to continuous improvement in recruitment practice.

School improvement plans reflect accurate self-evaluation. They remain realistic while striving for continued excellence. The school has an excellent capacity for further improvement, not least because of the new principal's clear purpose.

The school is part of the Taaleem group of schools and is accountable to the Taaleem board. There are two key groups of governors. The school executive board (SEB) supports the principal in achieving strategic goals. It ensures appropriate monitoring is in place including through annual reviews. A dedicated safeguarding governor advises on safeguarding matters, contributing to a strong safeguarding culture in the school. The school advisory board (SAB) includes members of the school's community with specific areas of expertise. The recent appointment of an advisory governor for AI

helps the school navigate the rapidly evolving challenges of this technology. Students also share their insights on the school's development.

The principal meets fortnightly with Taaleem's Dubai Director who oversees his appraisal. While supported by head office, the principal has full autonomy to shape the school. This collaborative relationship amongst leaders in the Taaleem group is valued highly because it leads to the collaborative sharing of ideas.

Governors work alongside leaders to ensure legal compliance with clear financial policies. Taaleem's auditors guarantee financial transparency, being a publicly listed company.

Leaders and governors actively promote equality and inclusion, systematically reviewing practices. They challenge preconceived notions and serve as role models, promoting a high awareness amongst staff. Instead of a head boy and girl, the school now has head students who exemplify diverse skills. In the BSO survey parents praised the community spirit and nurturing environment of this friendly school. Parents of children with SEND noted the school's exceptional commitment in ensuring their constant challenge and inclusion.

## EYFS provision

Early years provision is outstanding with exceptional teaching, leading to outstanding attainment and progress for nearly all children. Baseline assessments show that children arrive working in line with EYFS expectations. By the end of this phase, almost all children make exceptional progress across all areas of learning. At the end of the early years, nearly all children achieve good levels of development and perform well above the expected levels in England.

The curriculum offers a rich and varied experience that promotes the personal development and well-being of all children. Teachers carefully sequence learning to ensure every child makes high rates of progress. They plan opportunities for child-initiated learning and support children in making independent choices, promoting investigation, inquiry, and creativity skills. Teachers integrate opportunities for critical thinking and reasoning into all activities, using targeted questions to encourage children to discuss their work.

The phonics programme is well structured, skilfully implemented and reinforced through tasks in classroom activities. Teachers plan higher-level 'Rocket' challenges for more able children. Innovative programmes effectively develop children's

imagination, vocabulary and early writing skills, developing their interest and engagement in writing.

Daily observational assessments allow teachers to adapt the curriculum as needed. Key moments of each child's learning are recorded and shared with parents through an online platform. As children progress, teachers encourage them to identify their own evidence to share on the platform. Parents value their child's perspective on their own learning.

Early years teachers demonstrate excellent pedagogic knowledge, contributing to high quality teaching. Their interactions with children build deeper knowledge, skills, and understanding, enabling children to gain confidence and access to learning effectively.

Leaders in the early years demonstrate high levels of effectiveness, possessing extensive knowledge of the EYFS curriculum and innovative teaching methods. Regular high-quality professional development enables practitioners to reflect on their practice and develop new skills based on current research in early child development.

## Post-16 provision

The sixth form currently has 144 students, most of whom have continued from Year 11, with around 15 new students recruited into Year 12. Student retention from Year 12 to 13 is very high at 100%. Students can choose from 17 A levels and 7 level 3 BTECs in any combination. A few may follow a bespoke programme to meet their individual needs. The school does not offer AS levels. Entry requirements are strict, requiring grades 7 to 9 in most subjects. Currently GCSE retake classes are available for mathematics.

Sixth-form students have a wealth of opportunities to develop their leadership skills through roles such as being a head student. They engage with leaders and governors to share their views. They also benefit from a range of enrichment opportunities, including the Model United Nations, a student-led newspaper and as sports leaders. The university preparation course includes study and life skills, first aid, cooking, emotional and financial awareness. Students complete work experience at the end of Year 12, choosing their own placements.

Students receive excellent, personalised career advice and guidance for making university applications. Seven students are currently applying for Oxbridge. Students study a broad range of subjects, with almost all receiving offers from their first-choice universities. The majority of students continue to university in the UK each year.



The quality of teaching in the sixth form is excellent, with dedicated teachers who possess excellent subject and examination knowledge. Students know they can seek support anytime and mentors assist those identified as underachieving. Help is swiftly implemented along with prompt parental contact. Students' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are outstanding with everyone eager to learn and participate.

Pastoral care is exceptional, enabling students to thrive. Dedicated counsellors assist sixth-form leaders to support their students. Weekly well-being checks alert tutors to any concerns. Students also benefit from access to specialist resources to help with any personal matters.

The sixth-form team exhibits stable and effective leadership, creating a culture of high expectations for students' academic and personal success. Members of the team state that they are 'small but mighty' as they know their students so well.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

Dubai British School Emirates Hills (DBSEH) 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). DBSEH 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 has begun to explore the potential benefits and challenges of using AI as a learning tool. It will be essential for leaders to continue to enhance the AI literacy of teachers, develop policies and investigate innovative approaches to use this technology. This will ensure that pupils use AI responsibly to enhance their learning and develop their skills.

## 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

<b>Name of school</b>	Dubai British School Emirates Hills
<b>Type of school</b>	Private. For profit.
<b>Date school opened</b>	2005
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1208
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	N/A
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED 51,809 – AED 77,715
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	N/A
<b>Address of school</b>	Dubai British school Emirates Hills Springs 3, Emirates Hills, Dubai, UAE. PO Box 37828
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 4 361 9361
<b>Email address</b>	principalpa@dubaibritishschool.ae
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Brett Girven
<b>Proprietor</b>	Taaleem

## 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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