



هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص  
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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ITQAN Programme  
**Improvement Review Visit (IRV)  
Report**

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**SHARJAH ENGLISH SCHOOL**

25 / 26 May, 2022



إتقان ITQAN





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## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) is grateful to Sharjah private schools and their stakeholders including students and their parents, teachers and staff, school leaders and governors for sharing their views of the school and engaging with our review teams during this Improvement Review Visit (IRV). This Report shares the findings of this 2-day review. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement along with strategic recommendations intended to help the school bring about its own improvement.

### Purpose

The main purpose of this IRV is to assist schools in their continuous improvement journey through an external validation of their progress, quality, and capacity to improve in the context of Sharjah Private Education Authority's (SPEA) vision to achieve *'Excellence in Education'* by 2024. SPEA has been a pioneer in supporting the private education sector in Sharjah, driven by its mission of *'Enabling the learner's community to grow and achieve aspiring outcomes through supportive and effective services'*. This new and innovative approach to school review is an important part of our strategy for achieving this vision because it supports continuous school improvement.

### Scope

This review is guided by Performance Standards 3 and 6 and seven related Performance Indicators taken from the 2015 UAE School Inspection Framework. These relate to teaching, assessment, leadership and management. Many students, their parents and teachers experience these areas daily. Due to the extraordinary disruption that schools have experienced in the last two years and the impact this is likely to have had on important outcomes, SPEA is focusing this review on these two Standards only, and in isolation from the remaining four Standards. This means that the review does not give an overall performance rating for the school.

The findings relating to the two Standards and their associated Indicators will provide indicative levels based on the 6-point scale in the UAE School Inspection Framework. These indicative levels will help schools understand the impact of their



leadership on the quality of teaching and assessment. The levels may not necessarily be the same as would be the case under the application of the entire UAE School Inspection Framework, however. SPEA believes this is a fair and constructive approach following the disruption in the last two years, and it will help schools to improve in advance of their next full review.

Where applicable, the review programme also gathers information about students' exit qualifications and post-school destinations, and the stage UK curriculum schools have reached in transitioning from Grades to Years.



## THE REVIEW PROCESS

The IRV uses two of the six Performance Standards (PS) and selected aspects of the seven Performance Indicators (PI) from the UAE School Inspection Framework issued in 2015, as follows:

**Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment**, comprising:

- PI 3.1 Teaching for effective learning
- PI 3.2 Assessment

**Performance Standard 6. Leadership and management**, comprising:

- PI 6.1 The effectiveness of leadership
- PI 6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning
- PI 6.3 Partnerships with parents and the community
- PI 6.4 Governance
- PI 6.5 Management, staffing, facilities and resources

### Indicative levels

The indicative levels stated in this report use the following 6-point scale.

<b>Outstanding</b>	The quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectations of the UAE
<b>Very good</b>	The quality of performance exceeds the expectations of the UAE
<b>Good</b>	The quality of performance meets the expectations of the UAE
<b>Acceptable</b>	The quality of performance meets the minimum level required in the UAE
<b>Weak</b>	The quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very weak</b>	The quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE






To gather the required information to inform these indicative levels, our team of reviewers carried out a wide range of activities during the 2-day visit, including:

- visits to lessons mainly in Arabic, English, mathematics and science, including lessons reviewed jointly with senior leaders of the school;
- reviewing important documents such as school self-evaluation form, school policies and the school improvement plan;
- meeting the Governors, Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, subject coordinators, teachers, parents, and students;
- reviewing teachers' lesson plans, samples of students' coursework and related information;
- attending school activities such as assemblies, arrivals, departures, and break times; and
- analysing the outcomes of the surveys returned by students, their parents, and teachers.



## SCHOOL INFORMATION

School	School ID	183	
	School location	Sharjah	
	Establishment date	1974	
	Language of instruction	English	
	School curriculum	UK	
	Accreditation body	BSO	
	Examination Board	Edexcel Pearson	
	National Agenda Benchmark Tests/ International assessment	PISA, CAT 4, GL	
	Fee range	AED26,400 to AED67,600	
	Staff	Principal	Darren Coulson
		Chair of Board of Governors	Khalid Al Amiri
Total number of teachers		78	
Total number of teaching assistants		20	
Main nationality of teachers		British/Irish	
	Teacher: student ratio	1:10	
	FS: roll and gender	Boys: 55    Girls: 33	
	Primary: roll and gender	Boys: 206    Girls: 197	
	Secondary: roll and gender	Boys: 174    Girls: 188	
	Nationality groups	1. Emirati: Less than 10 2. Largest nationality: Indian	
Total number of students with special educational needs	40		



## INDICATIVE LEVELS

### STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment	Very good
PI 3.1: Teaching for effective learning	Very good
PI 3.2: Assessment	Very good
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management	Very good
PI 6.1: The effectiveness of leadership	Very good
PI 6.2: Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Very good
PI 6.3: Partnerships with parents and the community	Very good
PI 6.4: Governance	Very good
PI 6.5: Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Very good

## THE REVIEW FINDINGS

### PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

These findings draw mainly from our team of three reviewers' 35 visits to Arabic, English, mathematics and science lessons, five of which were carried out jointly with school leaders.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is very good. Most teachers consistently apply their strong subject knowledge, using a wide variety of interesting resources and techniques to motivate and excite students to learn. Child-centred learning is used effectively, starting with learning through play in the early years and developed throughout the primary stage. The needs of the students in secondary are accurately identified and additional needs, including for the gifted and talented students, are well met.

#### STRENGTHS

- Teachers' subject expertise and comprehensive lesson planning.
- Teachers' use of effective teaching aids including technology and a wide range of practical materials.
- Students' interest, concentration and willingness to collaborate with their peers to maximise their learning through discussion.
- Teachers' provision of individual support to students, particularly in Arabic.





- Teachers' positive and constructive approaches which promote confident responses from students.

### **KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Mainly in the earlier phases, teachers' consistency in their written feedback to students.
- Consistency in some teachers' strategies, in order to promote students' active learning.
- Balance between the use of learning technologies including, for example learning platforms in mathematics, and the more traditional written records of learning.

## **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3: FEATURES OF PRACTICE**

### **PI 3.1 Teaching for effective learning**

#### **Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and how students learn them**

- Most teachers apply subject knowledge very effectively and understand fully how students learn.
- Students share their learning well with their teacher, both orally and in notebooks which also allows for written feedback.

#### **Lesson planning, the learning environment and the use of time and resources**

- Teachers plan engaging lessons, the objectives are clear and the students know what they will learn during the sessions.
- Teachers provide a rich learning environment for students, particularly in primary, with interactive colourful displays which engage the students.
- A wide range of resources is used throughout the school and learning technologies are used effectively in most lessons.



### **Teacher-student interactions including the use of questioning and dialogue**

- Teachers interact with students well to ensure that they are active, engaged and focused through the lessons.
- Higher order and critical thinking skills, promoted by open questioning, are a strong feature of most lessons.

### **Teaching strategies to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students**

- Teachers apply highly effective strategies to promote learning including, for example, 'think', 'pair' and 'share'.
- Teachers support students during the lesson starter phase with individualised tasks appropriate to the needs of the students.
- Students are encouraged to participate actively and collaborate effectively as part of the learning process.

### **Teaching to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills.**

- Teachers promote higher order thinking skills and set tasks which promote discussion and questioning from the students to solve a given problem. This approach is encouraged from the early years and is seen throughout the school.
- Students are encouraged to relate their learning to real life situations in many lessons but not yet consistently across the school.

## **PI 3.2 Assessment**

### **Internal assessment processes**

- The school uses consistent internal assessment processes across each phase.
- Assessment information provides useful information about students' personal and social development as well as academic performance.

### **External, national and international benchmarking**

- The school benchmarks academic outcomes rigorously against national and international expectations and standards. The benchmark measures are identified earlier in this report.



- School leaders analyse in detail the assessment information specific to subjects. They use this to measure performance in skills and knowledge.

#### **Analysis of assessment data to monitor students' progress**

- Assessment data are thoroughly analysed by middle and senior leaders to monitor students' progress.

#### **Use of assessment information to influence teaching, the curriculum and students' progress**

- Teachers monitor students' performance closely to ensure they are meeting their targets.
- Data are used to modify the curriculum. For example, additional programmes are introduced to raise literacy levels in lower primary.

#### **Teachers' knowledge of and support for students' learning**

- Teachers use information about individuals or groups to help support students' learning.
- Teachers' thorough knowledge of individual students is used to provide constructive oral and written feedback so students know how to improve.



## THE REVIEW FINDINGS

### PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The newly appointed Principal, in partnership with the experienced Head of Primary, have overcome challenges faced by the loss of a key leadership position. The Board of Governors has supported the leadership team through this difficult time and appointed a new Head of Secondary to join the school in August. All school leaders, Governors and parents share the vision of providing the highest quality education, continually building on the capacity of the school to make it a centre of learning excellence. The school has prioritised its arrangements for ensuring the wellbeing, safeguarding and child protection of all students. Overall, the school has a strong capacity to improve.

#### STRENGTHS

- Governors' strong support for the school.
- The Principal's clear vision of seeking to make the school a hub for learning excellence in the UAE.
- Senior leaders' and all staff's commitment to school improvement.
- The school's approach to building the leadership capacity of all teachers and encouraging them to take on responsibilities.

#### KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The school's approach to sharing good practice which shows strategies that inspire students to learn across all age groups.
- The school's approach to transitions for students across stages, maintaining the positive environment and connections to real life contexts for learning.



## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: FEATURES OF PRACTICE

### **The effectiveness of leadership**

- The Principal has set clear goals for the school and has the full support of all stakeholders.
- The senior leaders are committed to achieving the vision of the UAE and to make the school as good as it can be.

### **Self-evaluation and improvement planning**

- The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans have been shared with relevant stakeholders and demonstrate a clear understanding of what constitutes effective practice.
- The school has an accurate picture of where it is now and what it needs to do to achieve its goals.
- The school uses a comprehensive range of approaches to evaluate practice and to use the information to inform planning for improvement.

### **Partnerships with parents and the community**

- Parents are very pleased with the quality of communication between school and home and appreciate the support they receive.
- Parents are appreciative of the school's handling of the pandemic period and its transitioning to the new four-day week.

### **Governance**

- The school has a well-structured and effective Board of Governors which seeks out the views of all stakeholders and works with the school to achieve its vision.
- The Board provides opportunities for students, teachers and parents to meet with it to raise concerns and contribute to its understanding of the school.
- Clearly defined areas of responsibility are taken by members of the Board.



### **Management, staffing, facilities and resources**

- The day-to-day management of the school is well organised. This ensures a calm and purposeful atmosphere at all times based on well-understood routines and expectations.
- The school's safeguarding policy is well established and practised and includes, for example, efficient routines during fire drills.
- The school is set in attractive landscaped gardens and provides high-quality facilities and resources for students.

## **ADDITIONAL ASPECTS**

### **Transitions (Grade to Year Project) in UK Curriculum Schools**

The school has used an organised strategy to implement the transition policy with a focus on the academic requirements of the students whilst keeping in mind the students' wellbeing. Students have been well supported and the wishes of both parents and students have been at the core of this transition process. The process is still underway but progress is being monitored carefully.

### **Exit Qualifications and Post-School Destinations**

The school prepares students for A Level and BTEC in some subjects. Students gain entry mainly to UK universities although a number of students gain places in the USA, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, South Africa, Germany and the UAE. The school maintains communication with alumni who mentor current students and help them make decisions about university choices.



## VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS

Students, parents and teachers expressed their views about the school through the stake holder surveys conducted by SPEA and in meetings with the review team. The infographics below show key outcomes of the survey, and the following narrative reflects the views they expressed in the survey and meetings. If important concerns were raised, then reviewers considered these and have reported their findings in the relevant sections of this report.



### Students

Almost all students are satisfied with the education they receive. They enjoy lessons and welcome the feedback they receive from their teachers. Most feel safe and supported by staff at school.



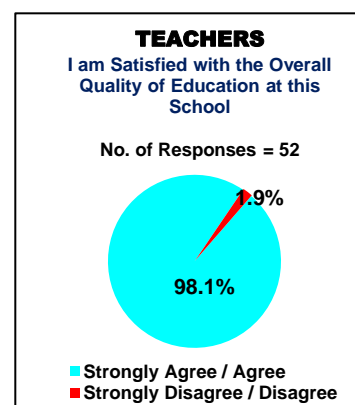
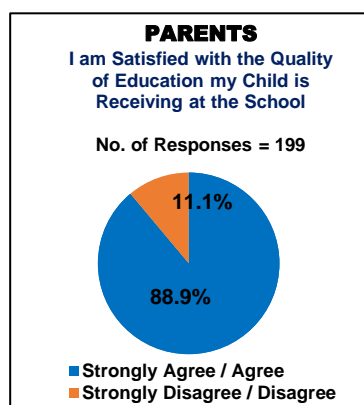
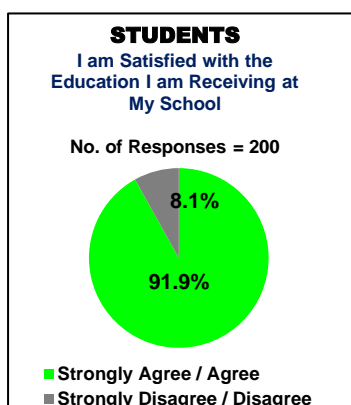
### Parents

Most parents are satisfied with the education the school provides. They feel that their child's teachers have high expectations for learning. Most are satisfied with the communication between home and school.



### Teachers

Almost all teachers consider that the school provides a high quality of education for students. Most are very positive about how senior leaders are evaluating and encouraging school improvement and their role within it.





## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

To improve teaching and assessment, the school should now:

- i) provide additional training on the school's marking policy so younger learners benefit more from teachers' written feedback;
- ii) involve all teachers in sharing effective learning and teaching practice with each other to promote active learning across all areas of the school;
- iii) review the balance of students' learning experiences which are controlled by information technology compared to those which use a wider variety of other resources available in school, and adjust where necessary; and
- iv) improve the breadth of students learning in mathematics by giving a greater emphasis to the development of skills.

### Standard 6: Leadership and Management

To improve leadership and management, the school should now:

- i) integrate the role of the new secondary head so that it complements other responsibilities in the senior leadership team;
- ii) support secondary teachers as they continue to explore a wider range of real-life contexts to improve relevance for students; and
- iii) introduce self-evaluation approaches based on opening-up all classrooms to sharing practice so that all teachers can learn from each other.

### Stakeholder Views

To improve stakeholders' views, the school should now:

- i) continue to work with parents to ensure their views are always taken into account in a very transparent way.

### Transitions in UK Curriculum Schools

To improve transitions further, the school should now:

- ii) continue to support the small number of students who chose to take the 'natural' path to the next year group and are no longer in their age-appropriate or friendship groups.





## Exit Qualifications and Post-School Destinations

To improve post-school destinations, the school should now:

- i) continue to monitor the range of courses offered in the secondary school so that all students have a wide choice;
- ii) build further the range of inspiring stories from its alumni approach.

In addition to considering the full content of this report and identifying actions required to bring about improvement, the school should build the above recommendations into its improvement planning process.

In consultation with the assigned School Improvement Advisor, the school should send its revised improvement plan, including specific actions, timescales, and success measures, to SPEA within two months of the publication of this report. Four months later, the school should submit a detailed report on progress to SPEA.

SPEA's next school review will validate the progress report and include a review of further progress made by the school in implementing the recommendations from this IRV report.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, please contact SPEA on [schools.review@spea.shj.ae](mailto:schools.review@spea.shj.ae) within three weeks of receiving this report.