



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Sharjah English School

Sharjah
United Arab Emirates

Date **26th – 28th February 2024**
Inspection number **20240226**

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, 73 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Simon Sharron. The team members were Ciprian Ghisa, Dimpy Mehta and Grace Musto.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010.

Specifically, the school cannot by law meet Part 1 – ‘2(2)(d)(ii)- *encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender re-assignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;*’ and Part 2 – ‘5(b)(vi) - *encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.*

The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school continues to provide education of a very high quality because aspirations for student progress and attainment are ambitious in a successful atmosphere of safe, happy learning.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- Inspirational and courageous leadership at all levels of the school
- The quality of education including curricular enrichment through numerous well-attended extra curricular activities (ECAs)
- The use of data to secure strong student progress and attainment, including SEND students
- The strong British feel and ethos which combine seamlessly with school’s strong UAE cultural values
- The professional development of all staff
- Caring pastoral systems that foster excellent student behaviour
- Safeguarding of students and the well-being of all stakeholders
- Health and safety across a large campus
- Strong student leadership across the key stages
- The excellent use of available resources.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Accelerate the pace of the campus development plan ensuring that new facilities complement the ambitious vision for the school.
- ii. Ensure that differentiation by task and adaptive teaching is a more consistent feature of secondary lessons whereby students of all abilities are suitably supported and challenged.
- iii. Further develop the school's digital strategy including an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of AI applications at school and in wider society.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Sharjah English School				
Address	Sharjah English School, Po Box 1600, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	++971(6) 558 9304				
Website Address	https://www.sharjahenglishschool.org				
Key Email Address	enquiries@sharjahenglishschool.org				
Headteacher/ Principal	Mr Darren Coulson				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Mr Khalid Amiri				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	995	Boys	513	Girls	482
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	397	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	171	<i>17-18 years</i>	86	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	341	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

4.1 British nature of the school

Sharjah English School has a strong British feel and ethos:

- The school is organised in a typically British way, both academically and pastorally;
- SES follows the National Curriculum of England and the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum;
- The school is an approved centre for UK examination boards and Duke of Edinburgh Award;
- The school is a member of British Schools in the Middle East (BSME);
- The curriculum is delivered in English except for UAE Ministry of Education subjects and French; all internal and external communications are provided in English;
- Students learn with the aid of many curriculum resources which are used widely in the UK;
- The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular activities as well as musical and drama events, typical of good independent schools in the UK;
- British practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting and annual review meetings;
- The majority of teachers are British qualified and trained;
- Relevant and directed CPD is conducted in collaboration with DFE approved organisations;
- The SES implements a vibrant 'house' system similar to many pastoral systems in UK independent schools;
- The school uniform reflects the British ethos of the school;
- UK universities are the preferred destination for students graduating SES;
- The school offers numerous opportunities for student leadership roles and participation in competitions;
- 27% of the school's student body is British, alongside students from 66 other different nationalities, reflecting the multicultural reality of schooling in the UK.

5. *Standard 1* The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by SES is outstanding.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum meets the aspects of the standard that it is legally allowed to meet. The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The breadth and balance achieved through the combination of the English National Curriculum and the subjects required by the UAE Ministry of Education fully meet the students' needs. Its core offer is complemented by a generous programme of IGCSE and A Level option subjects and an exemplary array of exciting extra-curricular activities which are extremely well attended by students across the school. The curriculum is in places innovative and adaptive in order to be inclusive where this is necessary. The school does not hesitate to offer vocational BTEC courses to post-16 students if they would benefit from them.

The curriculum in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is of a high quality and outstanding in many significant areas. The school's accredited 'Curiosity Approach' to learning provides students with opportunities for child-led learning and investigation through rich resourcing and planning. The curriculum has a clear focus on the development of students' speaking, maths, reading and writing skills. Schemes of work show plans to challenge the most able as well as to support those with special needs. In this foundation stage, the children's personal, social and emotional well-being needs are seen as a priority through careful provision planning which includes providing opportunities for children to share how they are feeling each day in 'self-regulation' areas. Teachers and teaching assistants have a strong understanding of the curriculum and how to skilfully implement it. Daily plans are annotated and adapted to meet the needs of individual children in each class.

Learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 follows the English National Curriculum and the requirements of the UAE Ministry of Education. The play-based curriculum EYFS pedagogy continues as the children move from early years into Year 1, allowing all children to make rapid progress from their starting points. Language immersion is a strength. Speaking and listening is a key curriculum focus. Structured phonics and progressive literacy skills are well planned for across Key Stages 1 and 2. Academic streaming in mathematics in Key Stage 2 allows teachers to differentiate successfully the pace of learning according to each child's level of numeracy. The intentional utilisation of outdoor spaces is strategically incorporated into lessons to foster exploration among students. This was evident in a language lesson, where students engaged in a creative pursuit, such as hunting for 'mythical creatures' as part of story

innovation. The content and skills of the foundation subjects are delivered through themed learning in what SES terms its 'integrated curriculum'.

In Key Stages 3 and 4, the curriculum is broad and balanced, because it too successfully combines the curricular requirements of the UAE Ministry of Education and the English National Curriculum. In Key Stage 3, students have opportunities to study performance and creative arts such as drama and music. Design and technology is included in the core offer.

At Key Stage 4 and 5, historic student demand has seen a preference to study towards engineering and medical professions. For this reason, there is a special focus on STEM subjects with double and triple science as well as design and technology and computer science on offer at IGCSE level. Balancing this, the students can study art, music and drama, alongside a large variety of humanities subjects such as history, geography, economics, business and psychology.

In KS5, students must study 3 A levels from a generous choice of 17 subjects. Subject to IGCSE grades, all sixth-form students have an opportunity to study a fourth A Level subject. Further enhancements include the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) which supports inquiry and project-based learning, promoting cross-curricular, self-led study by students and the 'SES Diploma' which is a bespoke SES Leadership and Service qualification designed to provide sixth form students with the skills to be 'world ready' for life beyond school and enable them to positively contribute to the world around them.

The A-Level provision supports the most gifted and talented students who can also study Further Mathematics, Drama or Art in often very small classes.

Students benefit from strong and effective careers education at SES. Expert support for university applications encourages students to aspire to and often win admission to prestigious universities in a variety of countries including the UK, USA, Canada, France, the Netherlands, South Africa, Ireland, Spain and UAE. The school is considering beginning the career counselling programme starting in Key Stage 3, in light of the increasing secondary school population.

There were many good lessons where IT was used effectively to support learning, although this practice was uneven in upper primary and secondary classes where students can use their own devices with permission of the teacher. While the IT and PSHE curriculum addresses more than adequately online safety, SES is considering the pros and cons of teaching about and with artificial intelligence.

The school's moral education programme, underpinned by the many ECA activities, successfully enables students to develop their personal skills and qualities. As a result, by the time they leave the school, they will have the necessary skills to move successfully to the next stages of their lives.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding.

Most of the 73 lessons observed during the inspection were judged good or better and many were outstanding

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1, effective teaching means that pupils enjoy their learning and make excellent progress. A range of teaching resources is used to stimulate interest, promote creativity and encourage students to think and learn independently. The teaching engenders an infectious enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning among pupils. The excellent standard of behaviour fostered by the learning approach facilitates a high level of engagement by all pupils. In the best lessons, teachers and teaching assistants facilitate learning through imaginative play and high-quality questioning, particularly in outdoor learning environments. Students develop their language through ‘heard words’ in EYFS to extend their vocabulary. As a result, students thrive and make exceptionally good progress. Planning in EYFS and Key Stage 1 is based on a thorough knowledge of students’ attainment and their strengths and weaknesses. This was evident in the classroom where one teacher had created a ‘milkshake station’ to encourage writing. Assessment records and reports are focused, and detailed and clearly indicate the amount of progress made. A detailed tracking system in EYFS and key stage 1 ensures students who need support receive daily intervention.

In Key Stage 2, the standard of teaching, learning and assessment is exceptional. This effective teaching caters precisely to the needs of students, ensuring that nearly all students, regardless of ability, make above-expected progress. Teaching assistants, directed well by the class teacher, are effective in supporting academic streaming in maths lessons for example. This frees the teacher to assess students' progress and identify the next steps daily, tailoring subsequent lessons to suit the needs of individuals. Lesson planning is conducted collaboratively within the year group and departmental teams, with support from ‘Teaching and Learning Leaders’ (TLLs), and other senior staff. TLLs oversee the planning process and coaching of new teachers on an ongoing basis.

Teachers demonstrate strong content knowledge and a clear understanding of how students learn, employing a diverse range of strategies to engage, motivate, and challenge them. Relationships between teaching staff and children are excellent as indeed are those within the teaching teams themselves. The school's inclusive teaching approach prioritises quality instruction, enabling teachers to comprehend pupils' learning profiles. However, more detailed differentiation in the secondary

school for effectively personalising students' learning experiences is an area that could be addressed in future reviews of practice.

Great store is put on to revisiting and reinforcing previous learning through skilful teacher questioning, partner talks and formative assessment strategies. Modelling and detailed feedback supports students in making incremental progress, encouraging deeper and more critical thinking about their responses. The school has a clear assessment policy and assessment calendar which sets out the modality and scheduling of teacher assessments. Online tracking of assessment data on 'Classroom monitor' and daily annotations on lesson plans are used to shape the learning for the next unit or day. Assessment opportunities are planned into the learning sequences. Teachers intervene at the point of learning to give concise written and oral feedback to enable students to improve their work and clear misconceptions. Students are encouraged to take on more and more responsibility for their learning through self-and peer assessment, which avails them of frequent opportunities to reflect on their own performance and that of their peers.

Questioning is highly effective, promoting higher-level thinking and critical responses. Dialogue engages students in thoughtful discussions and reflection. Clear progress of year 6 students was seen from identifying the elements of a pie chart to inferencing and comparing different pie charts and presenting them to their peers. In guided reading and language lessons, Year 4 students were seen confidently comprehending a poem to summarise it and then moving on to extend the poem using metaphor and imagery.

In Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, lessons are well planned and structured, ensuring consistent pace and reflection for assessment. In many cases, lessons were exam preparation focused, learning was targeted, and high levels of challenge were evident. Students enjoyed participating actively during lessons. They were focused and engaged, demonstrating an excellent work ethic. Their attitude is shaped by the passion for the subject and the personal delivery style of many of the teachers. Collaboration, debate, questioning are encouraged in the vast majority of the lessons and across subjects, especially in humanities. In a Year 11 business studies lesson, gamification was added to an "open market" sharing exercise on the topic of 'Communication in Business'. A great focus is given to the practical activities, evidenced in all the science lessons across secondary, as well as in design and technology, and art.

Self-assessment was used effectively, with misconceptions being addressed and students taking ownership of their learning. Peer assessment was evidenced only in some cases, and developmental feedback is not consistent across all subjects. In some lessons extension work was set for the more able students, and in the best lessons differentiation was evident for students of all abilities.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

The standards achieved by students are outstanding.

Students make sustained progress across the curriculum from their measured starting points. This is particularly true of all identified disadvantaged students whose deficits in achievement are successfully reduced by successful SEND interventions and monitoring. Overall, academic attainment exceeds comparative UK national averages and personalised predicted grades based on prior assessment. International standardised tests indicate that most SES students also achieve above world averages. Students' behaviour and attendance are also excellent.

In EYFS, the vast majority of students are working at age-related expectations by the time they transition to Key Stage 1. From different starting points, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding progress compared with UK national figures is high. EYFS leaders have planned to increase the number of students who obtain a Good Level of Development which already exceeds the UK national figures.

The school's approach to tracking and assessing pupils' achievements against curriculum standards provides extremely reliable information about how well each pupil is performing.

In Key Stages 4 and 5, overall results for SES are outstanding and significantly above the published UK National Averages. For example, at IGCSE, 85% of all grades achieved were either A*, A or B level (9 – 6); 94% of students achieved A* - C grades (9 – 4) overall. At A-Level, SES students achieved 70% of all grades at A* - B level. 25% of students achieved a combination of A*/A grades in at least three subjects.

On completing their studies, the majority of students go on to university to continue their education. Because of the high standards achieved, 100% of A Level graduates in June 2023 were accepted in their first or second choice university - with an outstanding 87% enjoying acceptance in their first-choice placement. Students' attendance across the school is exemplary (96,4% on the day of the inspection) and fully in line with the UK expectations. Attendance is rigorously monitored, and concerns are followed up effectively.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding; it meets the aspects of the BSO standard that it is legally allowed to meet.

The school demonstrates a strong focus on the nurturing, and wellbeing of their students. It is addressed by the tutors, the heads of houses, as well as in assemblies. Students are encouraged to reflect on their personal wellbeing, monitor it, and ask for support through wellbeing check-ins and the use of a well known wellbeing internet platform. Effective pastoral care is the foundation for the school's academic success. In secondary, the 5 houses are organised vertically, allowing excellent collaboration between students, strengthening relationships, offering a plethora of leadership opportunities, and boosting the confidence of the younger students. The cohesive pastoral teams liaise closely with parents and carers.

The positive relationships between older and younger students are reinforced through the excellent provision of over 50 ECAs. Many of the programmes are organized and delivered by sixth form students, for example: economics, law, engineering, astrophysics, robotics & drones, STEM. In the chemistry ECA, Year 13 students, overseen by staff were seen conducting experiments with KS3 students in the science labs, respecting all the safety requirements. Student initiatives are encouraged across the school: primary students initiate games for their peers, while secondary students organise lunchtime clubs. Overall, over 90% of students at SES participate in at least one ECA.

Development of a strong student voice through the house system and school council across the school is very discernible. Students are actively involved in school life. Opportunities for students to develop leadership skills are available through a large variety of roles and responsibilities across all key stages. These include class jobs, library leaders, sport leaders, Model United Nations (MUN), head girl/head boy, house captains and school councillors. Students are supported to be autonomous, to take risks, to learn from mistakes, to be courageous.

The school promotes British values through the planning of lessons and the curriculum across the school. This is naturally particularly noticeable in the English or Humanities lessons. Personal development of students is promoted through the PSHE curriculum which effectively integrates the topics and the expectations of the UAE Moral Education curriculum. Programmes such as the MUN, 'Speak Out', 'Changemakers', the Duke of Edinburgh Award, promote respect for freedom of expression, global citizenship and environmental sustainability.

In secondary, students are supported in making informed decisions through the careers provision available to them. Expert guest speakers are often invited into school to speak to students, and the school's collaboration with the University of Sharjah is an example of excellent practice.

Student behaviour is excellent. This allows them to thrive in a safe, mature and trusting environment. Students understand and value the school's behaviour policy which is underpinned by rewards for positive behaviour and clear consequences for conduct that falls below expected standards. Students believe that there is little bullying in school and strong relationships are the foundation for this. Many students spoken to informally related that SES feels like a family. Students are encouraged to explore their own cultural heritage and celebrate the diversity of their peers, fostering a deep sense of social and cultural understanding.

7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for welfare, health and safety meets the standards for BSO and is outstanding.

The school ensures that the welfare, health and safety of pupils is at the heart of the school community. It is underpinned by robust policies, procedures and systems in which all stakeholders, including parents, adhere to. One parent described the school as a ‘safe community place that creates a love for learning’. Safeguarding policies and procedures are firmly embedded. The reporting system for safeguarding incidents is consistent across the school through the use of the ‘My Concern’ platform led by designated safeguarding leaders. Students know they can report any safeguarding concern using QR codes or an ‘ask it basket’. A wide range of systems are implemented to keep pupils, parents and staff safe on site, including the visible and watchful presence of teachers and leaders around the school at all times.

The culture of welfare, health and safety is deliberately reinforced through opportunities in the formal and wider curriculum as well as by vigilant pastoral systems and qualified school counsellors. Keeping yourself safe and making informed decisions are the focus of frequent workshops for parents, students and staff.

A welcoming canteen, providing nutritious hot food, fruit juices, fruit and salads helps pupils make healthy eating choices. Good hygiene standards and the importance of healthy eating as ‘fuel for learning’ is constantly reinforced.

Parents describe the school as a “fun and safe place to learn” where students “always want to be.” Students have made strong friendships: they appear happy and open in their relationships. Anti-bullying strategies are actively taught through assemblies, moral education, PSHE, antibullying week and parent workshops. Good behaviour is shared with parents and they are actively involved in resolving issues of negative behaviour. Parents confirm that the approach is effective.

A comprehensive health and safety policy is fully operational. There are clear lines of responsibility, covering student, staff, visitors, buildings and equipment safety. Risk assessments are in place for the classroom, hot weather periods, high risk curriculum and recreational areas as well as for outdoor learning and visits.

The school complies with local fire standards. Fire systems, including extinguishers, are regularly checked by an external contractor and the fire alarm is monitored by the Ministry of Education. Regular drills are held and evacuation procedures are clearly displayed. Staff are aware of how to use fire extinguishers, the fire hose and fire blankets. Evacuation and lock-down procedures, alongside other health and safety issues, are covered as part of staff training.

The clinic is based in the primary building and is staffed by two qualified nurses and a part-time doctor. Detailed medical records are up to date and shared confidentially, where necessary, with the relevant people. Staff complete first aid, including paediatric first aid training. The school has a strategic emergency response plan. Appropriate records of accidents and minor incidents are kept. Excellent communication between the nurse, staff and parents ensures that pupils' health and well-being is a high priority. Staff are highly visible during lesson transitions, playtimes and at the start and end of the school day, ensuring effective supervision. A lifeguard is always present at the swimming pool during school and ECA hours.

Effective procedures ensure that there is always a safe hand-over to an appropriate adult. A 'sibling club' is offered to those parents who pick up later in the afternoon. Bus escorts guarantee good student behaviour to ensure that school transport is a pleasant, safe experience. Admission registers are completed daily in line with local requirements. Procedures are in place for students who arrive late and absences are followed up. Attendance data is securely stored on the school's administrative systems.

8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at SES fully meets the standard for BSO.

SES is a not-for-profit organisation, operated by a group of professionally talented volunteers with educational and commercial backgrounds. They are devoted to the success of the school with demonstrable skills to shape strategic direction and hold to account the principal and his executive leadership team. The governing board also includes 2 elected parents and an elected teacher.

The HR department is very strong and well organised, overseeing all the processes required for safer recruitment and personnel management. SES follows all regulations of the Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff. All staff have to be SPEA approved to be able to receive a visa and work permit. Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks, including police checks in the country of origin, are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness and their previous employment activity. The school maintains detailed and updated records of all staff on its single central record which meets all the requirements of BSO. Safeguarding is overseen by the principal, his executive leadership team, a safeguarding board and a link governor also highly experienced in this area. Additionally, members of staff have to complete a probationary period.

The majority of teaching staff are UK trained or have qualified in English-speaking countries. Where necessary, some staff are upskilled through NPQ and iPGCE courses. All staff receive induction training delineating their roles and responsibilities. Teacher professional standards and development are linked to an annual cycle of performance management. Detailed induction and staff handbooks set out professional conduct and ethical expectations.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation of the school meets the standards for BSO.

The premises and accommodation provide an exemplary, secure and enriching learning environment. Purposefully designed, the campus features distinct blocks for EYFS, primary, and secondary education, complemented by separate, well-equipped gymnasias for primary and secondary students, an outdoor swimming pool and expansive outdoor sports fields including a spectator stand. Students benefit from a dedicated performing arts building with a versatile auditorium, alongside a studio space for art galleries, drama lessons and a discrete area for counselling. The utilisation of facilities, including the well-resourced primary and secondary libraries, computer science room, music rooms, and auditoria for assemblies and productions, is optimised across the whole school. Interior learning spaces are maintained to high standards of cleanliness, ventilation, and resourcing. This is especially true of specialist subject classrooms that support science, art, and technology. While there is safe storage of hazardous materials, the school needs to remain vigilant that all restricted areas are permanently closed to students.

Outdoor areas are meticulously maintained and their cleanliness is supported by environmentally conscious students who actively contribute to a litter-free site. Each building fosters a sense of community, providing common spaces conducive to team meetups and social interactions for students and staff. Great attention is given to ensuring the safety of the expansive campus. This is extensively utilised by the school community for various learning experiences, including lessons, events, and playtime. Consequently, the securing of the school's extremely long perimeter is constantly under review.

Provisions for physical accessibility, such as ramps and lifts in the main building, promote inclusivity. The learning environment in the spaces occupied by EYFS and primary school are attractive with educational displays, fostering a homely atmosphere and rich learning environment. In contrast, secondary classrooms tend to lack this vibrancy.

While the new facilities for the sixth form, including study and common rooms, are excellent, the recent increase in secondary students has left many secondary classrooms cramped. As the secondary school grows in number, the school may choose to expedite the detailed refurbishment and renovation programme.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers and others fully meets the BSO standard.

SES's vision, mission, aims and values are highly visible in displays around the school and on the school website.

An annual general meeting has recently been introduced for parents where the school's strategic plan is reviewed and the most recent financial information shared. Parents value the transparency that this stakeholder opportunity proffers.

The school provides a variety of communication possibilities for parents including, emails, face-to-face meetings (both formal and informal), social media, parent workshops, online platforms and celebration events. Parents describe the relationship between the school leadership teams, teachers and parents as 'trusting'. They value the open communication and 'community spirit' activities which encourage parental involvement. In EYFS, there are weekly 'parent mystery readers' and, across primary and secondary, parent led workshops based on topics such as nutrition and healthy living. In both primary and secondary parents feel communication is excellent as staff accommodate parents' busy schedules flexibly.

Parents receive progress reports about pupils' progress twice a year. Reports are informative with pupils being given grades for their attainment according to progress test results and against age-related expectations. Behaviour, punctuality and attendance are also recorded.. Reports also include evaluative comments for individual subject areas. In Primary school, Tapestry is used to showcase pupil learning in which parental engagement is notable in celebrating the learning and progress of the pupils. The formal reports are supplemented through parent-teacher meetings. Senior staff are always available to engage in conversations with parents when they drop off and collect their children at the school gates.

The school's website provides comprehensive information about previous inspection reports and key policies such as safeguarding, child protection, complaints procedure and positive behaviour policy. It provides access to a discrete parent portal for the exchange of confidential information.

SES promotes a Parent Support Group (PSG) whose aim is to promote parent volunteer work to enhance communication between all stakeholders. A successful innovation has been the organisation of a Friday morning 'sport morning' when new parents are invited to join and lead sporting activities with students.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard set by the BSO.

All complaints are handled seriously, sensitively, and with a high level of confidentiality, as outlined in its complaints policy which is shared on the SES website. Any issues and subsequent follow-ups are recorded by team members on the platform 'My Concern'. Due to the school's open culture and walk-in policy, parents feel comfortable discussing their concerns informally with teachers or middle leaders. If the need arises, a formal procedure is followed. The complaints policy clearly indicates how complaints may be escalated and the timelines within which they must be addressed. All concerns related to students' issues are directed to a team of counsellors who take a proactive approach. Early identification of potential issues is effectively addressed by counsellors before they escalate, ensuring the overall safety and well-being of the students. Parents feel very satisfied and secure with the formal and informal procedures established in the school for handling complaints. All complaints about staff are handled by the principal or the board of governors.

The school has a whistleblowing policy in which the school encourages staff, governors, parents and students to come forward and voice any concerns.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school is outstanding. This is because it is the backbone and inspiration behind a highly effective school that continues to maintain exemplary standards in all fields of operation.

The school benefits hugely from a professionally diverse and expert group of volunteer governors. They are exceedingly committed and know their school's weaknesses and strengths extremely well. Together with an experienced executive school leadership team, they assure not only the strategic direction of the school but also the excellent quality of education and welfare that the school provides for all its students. They offer the executive school leadership team a high level of challenge. Their vision to become a 'world class school embracing the dynamism of the UAE' is courageously ambitious.

In recent years, the leadership and management of the school has successfully overcome some considerable organisational challenges in the form of COVID, the introduction of the four-day school week and a national change in the admission age of students.

The dual UK and UAE curriculum and the cohesive multicultural community of the school reflect the wider, global, very aspirational society in which SES operates. Academically, pastorally and administratively, the principal and his executive leadership team have created a leadership and management structure that is constantly reviewing and adapting its interventions to maintain and improve student progress and achievement.

Recent appointments to strengthen the senior and middle tiers of leadership across the school have been effective in monitoring and realising core school improvement objectives. They have also reinforced the caring, self-supportive school community that these achievements depend on. Middle leaders responsible for teaching and learning in EYFS and Primary and secondary heads of department assure progression and outstanding student outcomes through well-sequenced schemes of works. They oversee ongoing development which drives student progress towards higher attainment.

The concerted promotion by the leadership teams of fundamental human values and the aspirational qualities of the individual is at the heart of the school.

The lines of leadership and management accountability are well-defined and undoubtedly sit behind the success of the school. Performance management is carefully distributed and clearly has a significant impact on standards across the school. A major success factor of the school leadership and management is that they have created a community in which all its members feel that they can grow and realise their ambitions. Professional development is a major strength of the school even if it means that some colleagues are promoted out of the school because of this upskilling. Student and staff morale is high. Staff confirm that, from

the governing body and principal down, SES is a compassionate school. Wellbeing is a targeted priority for all the leadership teams.

Safeguarding, including safer recruitment, is in full compliance with BSO and UAE local requirements. It is overseen by a safeguarding link governor as well as the executive leadership team who convene a safeguarding board. The school has a strong SEND department and actively supports inclusion. Financial and physical resources, including the premises and infrastructure of the school, are tightly managed to the needs of the school and overseen by governors who have professional experience and expertise in finance and accountancy. The channels of communication between the school and parents and internally within the staff group is exemplary. The school has succeeded in engaging parents as active contributors to the school's cultural activities and, vitally, as important learning partners for their children.