



Inspection report

Doha British School

Qatar

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Inspection number

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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 students; 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 students and students' 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, 51 lessons (or parts of lessons) were observed by inspectors. Academic documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, members of the board and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students.

The lead inspector was Colin Dyson, team members were Karen Hanratty and Tamsin Harris.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

Doha British School fully meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas accreditation.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Doha British School, (DBS) Qatar is an outstanding school with many significant strengths. DBS provides an excellent quality of education complemented by a high level of student care.

The quality of learning, teaching and leadership are outstanding. Throughout each year group and across the curriculum current students make substantial and sustained progress. The broad and balanced curriculum inspires students to learn.

Parents fully support the vision and direction of the school. They recognise the important contribution the school makes towards the development of their children's lives. The school is held in high regard by the wider community and parents.

The students are proud to be members of the school community and value the opportunities it provides.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths, which include:

- The creation and implementation of strategic developments which result in improving student outcomes, particularly academic achievement
- Planning and delivering that supports the creative and engaging lessons which challenge all groups of students
- Students are confident, self-assured learners. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong, positive impact on their progress.
- Communications and relationships with parents which ensure parents are kept well informed regarding their children's progress as well as wider matters related to the school and the education provided
- The leadership and management of the school are a strength. They have a focused direction and are forward thinking in terms of the strategies and initiatives being introduced.
- All teaching is good or better. Students commented on the enthusiasm of the teachers and praised the way their teachers made learning fun and dynamic.
- Teachers value the continuing professional development provided by the school.
- The strength of delegated leadership that has empowered middle leaders to take a full role in continued school improvement.
- The principal and heads of school are ambitious for students and promote improvement highly effectively.
- In the secondary school high quality, impartial careers guidance helps students to make well informed choices on their academic needs and aspirations.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Use the results of the ongoing curriculum development and school self-evaluation to reflect on and refine the position of DBS as a leading BSO school.
- As the school embeds assessment and monitoring systems ensure they are appropriately harmonised to encourage the sharing of best practice across all three schools.
- Through incisive action, ensure the school is able to retain its best teachers in the increasingly competitive education market.

4 The context of the school

Full name of school/college	Doha British School				
Address	Doha, Qatar				
Telephone number	+974 4019 8000				
Fax number	+974 4450 2235				
Website	www.dohabritishschool.com				
Email address	info@dohabritishschool.com				
Head	Terry McGuire				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Nicholas Evans				
Age range	3 – 18 years				
Total number of students	2,087	Boys	1096	Girls	991
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	11-16 years	607	
	3-5 years	374	16-18 years	110	
	5-11 years	996	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

DBS is a private co-educational day school for students from Foundation Stage to Year 13, offering the National Curriculum of England and IB programmes complemented by a pastoral programme and a range of extra-curricular activities. Students follow the English Early Years Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (with amendments to adhere to Qatari law) and at Key Stage 4 a range of IGCSE courses. At post-16 AS examination subjects are followed as well as the IB Diploma programme.

The school was founded in 1979, to meet an emerging need for educational provision in Doha. The school now has two primary schools; a primary school and secondary school on the Ain Khaled campus and a further primary school at Wakra. Total student numbers have now reached 2,087.

DBS has a clearly stated vision and mission which is known to all stakeholders. The vision underscores internationalism and a commitment to providing first class education for all students.

DBS is accredited by the Supreme Education Council of Qatar and the Council of International Schools. The school was first accredited as a British School Overseas in 2015.

Since the previous BSO inspection the school has successfully addressed all previous recommendations.

4.1 British nature of the school

The Britishness of DBS is clearly evident and is a strength of the school.

The school's organisation is typically British in style and reflects best practices both academically and pastorally. Nearly all the teaching staff, with the exception of Arabic and Islamic staff, have qualifications recognised by the UK. Staff are mainly recruited from the UK. The leadership structure of the school is recognisably British with a principal, head teachers, deputy head teachers, and clearly defined middle leaders. Classroom management, displays of work, three term year and age-related year groups contribute to a British feel of the school.

The school seeks to adopt UK practices and keeps up-to-date by monitoring developments from the Department for Education. Assessments are based on national standards from the UK. British practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting annual review meetings. The school is highly innovative in developing reflective teachers who evaluate and develop teaching pedagogy to support high levels of achievement. The school has adopted a broad range of new innovative approaches and best practice in British education development and as a result has greatly enhanced the learning experiences for all students.

Children and students are encouraged to develop effective social skills and a willingness to be part of a caring community. They display a good understanding for rules and responsibilities appropriate to their age. The school is a harmonious community that displays positive levels of empathy and tolerance.

The school provides a wide range of educational visits, after-school activities as well as musical and drama events.

Parents are highly supportive of the British nature of the curriculum and approach to teaching and learning. Interviews with parents clearly highlighted that they also value the British style of education and the focus on high expectations.

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

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at DBS is outstanding.

There is full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum of England, adapted to meet the requirements of the Qatari Ministry of Education: Arabic, Islamic and Qatari History. The principal language of instruction is English. The school has a written curriculum policy which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. The policy is implemented effectively, enabling students to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The curriculum gives students experience in a wide range of areas of learning, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. Comprehensive schemes of work are in place and ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn and make good progress.

The curriculum in Al Wakra has been a matter of review and development. While the formal academic curriculum has historically been a strength of the school the wider curriculum is now taking more prominence. The addition of a music teacher along with the introduction of optional peripatetic instrument teaching has added to the creative curriculum. An increase in resources for PE has raised the offerings now available for this subject both within the school and within the region. As a result the stated curriculum is now more broad and balanced. The curriculum will be a major focus of development next year in Ain Khalid. Current provision fully meets the requirements for BSO.

A focus on the development of 21st century learning is an ongoing project across all three schools. Students are encouraged to adopt a growth mindset and to view mistakes as opportunities. This has had a powerful impact on students' willingness to take risks with their learning and approach their work with an enquiring mind. Other specific curriculum developments have targeted the needs of particular groups of learners such as the 'Time for Talk' programme in Early Years and the 'DBS Wakra Core Skills programme'. The addition of a dedicated SEN teacher and the raise in focus of approaches to deal with EAL learners have all helped to raise standards across the school.

The focus on a mastery curriculum is helping to raise the level of challenge in lessons and for the most able to extend students' learning beyond the year group boundaries. Different strategies used include older or more able students teaching younger, less able students, which has had benefits for both groups in terms of extending and embedding learning.

Dedicated IT lessons are now taught. Children mentioned how access to the computer suite on a regular basis has improved their skills. Teachers have all received IT training in order to be able to deliver the curriculum.

Bring You Own Device schemes have enabled teachers to embed IT opportunities throughout the curriculum.

Secondary students follow a modified National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. Key Stage 4 students are prepared for a wide range of IGCSE examinations and entry to the I.B Diploma programme. Key Stage 5 students work through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations Board programme, before sitting the IB Diploma. Schemes of work are in place throughout the school. The implementation of a 'Progressive Mastery Curriculum' is a new initiative that aims to enhance the learning for all students. At their most effective, they make a significant contribution to lesson planning and thus to learning. Planning is comprehensive, and supports teaching and learning effectively. The appointment of a dedicated Careers Education and Guidance Counsellor has enhanced the opportunities for students moving onto higher education.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding.

All teaching observed at DBS was at least good and a significant number of lessons were outstanding. Students are engaged in lessons and take their learning seriously, taking responsibility for their outcomes. A key feature of most lessons is the quality of dialogue that takes place between the teacher and students. ‘Ask, don’t tell’, teachers use questions to develop students’ knowledge and understanding, and in the best lessons to probe for higher order thinking. Skills reminders are carefully used to reinforce learning. The pace of lessons is consistently good and challenge is generally well matched to students’ ability levels. Students are able to work for extended periods on independent tasks; learning routines are well established.

Effective teaching strategies are employed rigorously and consistently across the primary school. Clearly defined and differentiated learning objectives or key questions, ‘swag bags’ and green vocabulary are used across a range of curriculum areas. There is a focus on language development, particularly related to comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment. Cross curricular links are evident, particularly in the specific teaching of English skills across all subject areas. The use of teacher and TA time to support learning is well managed and effective. Resources to support learning are suitable, generous and used appropriately. Students speak very positively about the lessons they receive, which they perceive as being fun, engaging, interactive and informative.

Support for students with particular gaps in learning or in need of extension has developed since the last report. A system of academic mentoring, whereby teachers use one hour of their non-contact time each week to support in another class has provided much needed individual or small group support. This time is used flexibly and creatively according to current needs and priorities.

Assessment is an intrinsic part of many lessons. Students work is graded against differentiated learning objectives which are shared and understood by all. Students are given the opportunity to assess their own understanding against these learning objectives and next steps or gaps in understanding are highlighted by teachers. Peer review of work is a strength, particularly with the older students, and is used in a mature and respectful manner. Students respond well to the constructive feedback which they receive on their written work, generally adding their own further thoughts or clarifications during dedicated marking review (DIRT) time.

Data from summative assessments is tracked and used to pinpoint whole class or individual student targets. A clear picture of each student’s attainment is built up over time. Assessment strategies are applied consistently across age groups and subject areas and suitable moderation activities are in place. There is clear responsibility and accountability for student achievement which feedback directly into the planning of sequences of learning

and individual lesson planning. An ethos of creating ambitious and challenging targets for students prevails.

Data is robust and is used to track children's progress. This is monitored effectively by middle leaders. All short term planning documents identify children of different abilities and provision for them. Target Tracker provides effective methods of formative assessment that teachers can utilise easily. Summative assessment guidelines are now in place but need to be kept clear and consistent through the year.

Provision in Pre-school classes needs to ensure it has the correct balance between child initiated and adult led activities in order to ensure good EY practice. A movement away from topic based year group planning towards class based planning based on children's interests would be beneficial.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

Throughout each year group and across the curriculum including English and mathematics, students make substantial, sustained progress. They develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills considering their different starting points.

The standards achieved by the students at the end of Key Stage 1 are outstanding.

Headlines are reported in terms of those children who are meeting expectations. Very few students fail to achieve the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 and the school significantly outperforms UK national averages. The school is in the first year of implementation of assessment without levels and is using the new assessment system effectively to raise standards and increase the proportion of students that exceed the expected level. The school leadership team is able to use the data effectively to identify appropriate interventions through student progress meetings with individual class teachers, which results in excellent student progress.

The outstanding progress made by students continues throughout Key Stage 2. Across Key Stage 2 student engagement in their learning was consistently high in all lessons observed. Strategies to maintain focus were used well by teachers: appropriate pace, variation in activity and carefully considered differentiation were key factors to students investing in their learning experience and taking pride in making progress.

The students in the secondary school continue the pattern of excellent progress. Over the past four years results in IGCSE examinations have improved and the latest data highlights that 84% of students achieved A* to C in all IGCSE examinations. Significantly out of the 1200+ examinations sat 38% were either A* or A and 95% of students achieved A* to C in English and mathematics. Results for students taking the IB Diploma also highlighted significant year on year progress. In 2016 the students achieved a 92% pass rate which compares favorably with the pass rate of 87% in 2015. The introduction of an iSAMS monitoring and tracking system is having a significant impact on student's achievements. Overall there has been a strong improvement, the vast majority of students in Key Stage 3 are making expected or better than expected levels of progress in both Maths and English and this is further supported by student performance at GCSE.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding.

Students at DBS are polite, respectful and excellent ambassadors of the school. Their attitudes to learning are extremely positive and they recognise and appreciate the opportunities that are made available to them by the school. They are self-confident and exhibit mature attitudes. Students have a wide appreciation of other world cultures and celebrate the diversity in their school. They welcome opportunities to be involved in community initiatives and develop links that extend their experience.

Embedding the DBS Learner Profile has been a focus for development. In the Early Years students are exposed to four of the characteristics at an age appropriate level. This is then built on in KS1 and KS2 where students are able to describe the characteristics and can relate them to their daily and academic life. The Learner Profile is also prominent in the secondary school and guides attitudes to learning. There has been an expansion of this into the concept of a growth mindset and encouragement for students to develop positive attitudes to learning even when they encounter difficulties.

Excellent relationships exist between students, and teachers and students. Students are able to communicate effectively and collaborate on their learning and other matters. Students take responsibility both for their own learning and for their behaviour. They have a strong positive self-image and idea of their own self-worth.

Students state that they feel safe and secure at school. Instances of bullying are extremely rare due to the rigorous implementation of a no tolerance anti-bullying programme which is reinforced through PSHE, competitions, posters and an anonymous student questionnaire. If students were to experience problems of this nature they are aware of the steps they should take to resolve it.

Student voice has an impact on many aspects of school life. An active school council exists in all 3 schools. Leadership opportunities are available to students in both primary and secondary with a head boy and head girl appointed annually for each. Opportunities for students to engage in the wider community are a feature of how the school has identified that students thrive if the curriculum is broad and balanced. From the Garden Initiative as a community project to the work experience opportunities, the school provides an outstanding level of support and guidance.

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

The welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding.

The school provides a safe physical environment for students. Appropriate health and safety policies are in place and all requirements are fully met. Premises are maintained to a good standard. Security measures have been tightened since the previous report. All visitors are required to check in with security staff at the gate and wear a badge around school. The grounds are secure and arrangements for the dropping off and collection of students are robust and strictly adhered to.

Steps have been taken to raise the attendance levels which are currently around 95%. Attendance and punctuality are monitored and tracked using ISAMS and changes to interventions have raised the profile of this area with parents. ISAMS is also used to monitor individual lesson attendance in the secondary school. Behaviour for learning has focused on students' preparedness for school and tracks behaviours including attendance and completion of homework. Class teachers now interact directly with parents regarding attendance, punctuality, homework and other home related and supported issues. Such interventions have been effective and are welcomed by parents.

Changes that have been made to drop off and collection arrangements in Primary have impacted positively on daily routines, safety and curriculum delivery. Students assemble in the sports hall before being escorted to their classroom by their teacher. Parents of older primary students are required to drop their children at the school gate. These steps have eased congestion and ensure that the day, and importantly the first lesson, starts promptly.

All primary staff and key secondary staff have received training in safeguarding. This, together with a clear anti-bullying policy and focus on e-safety help to ensure the wellbeing of all students.

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

Leaders and governors have created a culture that enables students and staff to excel.

The school's actions have secured substantial improvement in progress. Since the previous inspection the school has addressed all the recommendations. The partnership with the governing board has been significantly strengthened and the partnership between the proprietor and staff is uncompromising in their ambition to ensure the school is highly successful.

The school's proprietor and board members are effective in their role as 'critical friends' and have made a valuable contribution to ensuring DBS is a highly effective school. Under the guidance of the principal, the proprietor and board has strengthened its oversight of the school's strategic development. Regular briefings by the school's leadership team aim to ensure all members have a clear insight into the working of the school throughout all Key Stages. Leaders and governors now have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness informed well by the views of students, parents and staff.

The proprietor and board are not yet fully proactive in ensuring the school is able to retain and attract the 'best' teachers: this is necessary if the school is to continue to thrive as an innovative and highly effective learning establishment.

Safeguarding is effective. The board, through the senior leaders and administrative staff, ensure that required checks are in place to confirm that staff are suitable to work with children and that they have the right to work in Doha. Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks, including police checks in the country of origin, are carried out to confirm their identity, their previous employment activity, medical fitness, right to work in Qatar. The school has created a culture of vigilance where student welfare is actively promoted.

9 *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The accommodation, staffing levels and resources at DBS are good.

Buildings are well maintained and noise disturbance between classrooms is minimal and does not affect teaching and learning in adjacent room. The design of the building takes into account the extreme temperatures of the local climate and each classroom has sufficient AC systems installed. Central areas are also temperature controlled and there are ample drinking fountains strategically placed around the school. External areas have sufficient shading. Lighting in classrooms is adequate and all rooms are airy and well ventilated.

Three new classrooms have been added at DBS Wakra and these are all of a good standard. Classrooms are clean and generally in good order. Classrooms are well resourced with interactive whiteboards and suitable furniture that allows specialist teaching to take place. Outside areas are clean and maintained adequately to allow for physical education activities and relaxation. Recently the school has invested in providing further outdoor shading and the extension of grassed areas.

Documentation and certification is available to reflect the regulatory requirements of the country. Water supply meets all the local regulatory requirements, drainage is appropriate for hygienic purposes and for the disposal of wastewater.

Fire drills/evacuations are practiced at regular intervals and evaluated to ensure high levels of student and staff safety. Access for emergency vehicles is suitable. Emergency evacuation routes detailing access points are well displayed. School entrances are monitored at the start and end of the day by senior teachers. Since the last inspection the efficiency of managing the start and end of school days has significantly improved. Staff are present in appropriate numbers during break and lunchtimes. The monitoring of student activity during these times is evident.

Canteens at both campus now provide good quality facilities which aim to ensure nutritionally balanced meals.

The leadership team have embedded highly effective facility management practices that ensure monitoring regularly takes place across all facilities to achieve a learning environment that is safe and well maintained.

10 Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is outstanding.

Parents report that they are very satisfied with the communications they receive from the school regarding their children's progress and achievement as well as wider school matters. The website is informative and detailed, providing a wealth of information regarding the school and curriculum together with key policies.

Parents have informal access to teachers on a daily basis, particularly in the primary schools when collecting their children at the end of the day. An open-doors policy allows parents direct access to senior leaders as well as individual teachers. Parents comment that the leadership team are highly visible around the school. Parents' opinions are sought, listened to and where appropriate acted on. Parents feel that they are welcomed into the school and some parents of primary age children relish the opportunity to support learning in class. There are opportunities over the course of the academic year for parents to be involved in and contribute to whole school events; International day and Sports day are examples of this.

Students' written reports are age appropriate, detailed and informative. The timing of written reports is now linked to parent-teacher meetings, an advance which gives the opportunity for open discussion of student progress as well as any clarification needed. A recent initiative to give students and parents details of their class for the following year before the start of the summer holiday has helped significantly in the transition process.

A series of parents' workshops have provided in-depth information for parents on matters related to the curriculum and other issues related to child health and development. The attendance at these has been good and certain units were run more than once due to parental demand.

11 *Standard 7*

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's policies and practices fully meet the BSO requirements.

The complaints procedures are readily available, known by parents and clear in operation. There is a detailed written formal complaints procedure that is transparent, open and effective, and takes into account local laws and regulations. It is made available to parents of students and prospective students. The procedure consists of four stages and mirrors the school's management structure. The complaints procedure allows complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis. There is a clear timescale.

Unresolved complaints are passed to the principal who will attempt to resolve the issues. If the parent is still not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint is heard by the board, comprising members not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Parents have the right to be accompanied by another adult. Ultimately parents have recourse to the Ministry of Education.

Correspondence, statements and records of complaint are secure and confidential.

Parental feedback indicates a high degree of satisfaction with both the speed of response and the outcome of any concern or complaint.

12 *Standard 8*

The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

13 Standard 9 Leadership and management of the school

The effectiveness of leadership and management by the owners, principal, senior leaders and middle leaders is outstanding.

The principal is inspirational with a clear vision that is well shared and supported by all, to enable the school to develop continually. The leadership team is fully united in its vision and purpose. There is a collective drive to continue to improve. The development of middle leaders clearly demonstrates this shared responsibility for the learning outcomes of all students. The school has successfully built a strong trust between the senior team and the rest of the staff. Staff feel valued and happy in the school.

Collectively the senior leadership team (SLT) is uncompromising in their desire to improve and maintain the highest levels of achievement for all students. They have ensured that strategic planning has been implemented effectively to bring about developments which impact on student outcomes, particularly academically.

There is a continued ambition to be a reflective school that is open to new and effective initiatives in order to learn from all opportunities to enhance the learning experience and outcomes for every student.

The introduction of progress leaders in place of year group leaders has had a significant impact on student outcomes. With a subtle but significant shift in focus the emphasis has moved away from management and student welfare, to student achievement and the sharing of good practice. Consequently, teaching and assessment strategies have come to the fore of meeting discussions, with book scrutiny and moderation becoming regular items on the weekly meeting agendas.

Staff trust based relationships allow for teachers to challenge one another as well as provide mutual support. Progress leaders now meet individual teachers three times per year to look at data on individuals and identify gaps. This has been further enhanced by *Target Tracker* that has been a key tool in ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the needs of every learner. The school development plan was created as a collaborative project amongst the SLT and middle leaders. SLT identified the overall strategic direction which middle leaders then added detail to and personalised for their areas. This approach ensured staff felt fully committed to achieving the targets and developments. Throughout the process of reflection, senior and middle leaders are fully involved in monitoring and review that is both methodical and rigorous.

The school has implemented a more rigorous approach to monitoring, tracking and assessment. This enables staff to have a more consistent approach to data analysis to support a greater awareness of students needs and the quality assurance of outcomes. Year group reviews take place on a two-year rotation. These are conducted by SLT and key stage leaders and involve lesson observations, scrutiny of marking and feedback, assessment data analysis and evaluation of the impact of student voice. Individual class differences and year group trends are identified and issues addressed or good practice shared. These reviews have been effective in raising standards in

teaching and learning across the school. The school recognises that as data systems and tracking tools become more embedded there could be further enhancements to guarantee even greater clarity and understanding across all three schools to make certain that best practices are consistently reinforced.