

# Horizon English School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

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Age Group: 3 to 11 years  
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

**To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be added to the register, 'Get information about schools'.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO) accreditation. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

**The DfE updated the standards in August 2023. The new standards aligned the BSO standards with the Independent School Standards (ISS) and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding applied to schools in England. It clarified and reiterated the relationship between the UK and host country laws and reshaped staff recruitment standards to ensure international applicability.**

The British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

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

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

- Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
- Part 5. The premises and accommodation.
- Part 6. The provision of information.
- Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.
- Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.
- Part 9. The quality of provision for boarding.

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and carers and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

### Key for inspection grades

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

### Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

## Information about the school

Horizon English School (HES) is an inclusive, privately owned, co-educational community primary school situated in the heart of Jumeirah, off Al Wasl road. The

principal, who joined in 2023 is new this year. In 2021 the school became part of Cognita, a global group of over 100 schools in 16 countries, with over 85,000 pupils. Upon completing their primary education, pupils go on other secondary schools in Dubai.

Established in 1989 as a small villa school with 12 children, HES now has 1289 pupils on roll aged three to 11 years, making it larger than other similar international primary schools in Dubai. The number of pupils continues to grow with 357 children in the early years, 354 in key stage 1 and 578 in key stage 2. Recognised as the happiest school in Dubai at the Top School awards in 2021, it recently gained international recognition for its 'Staff wellbeing initiative of the year' from TES international.

With 80 different nationalities represented, many pupils speak two or more languages, including English as an additional language (EAL), while only 20 require extra language support as English language learners (ELL). The school is non-selective and has a specialist inclusion department. It currently has 141 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who receive specialist provision depending on need. Additionally, the school also identifies pupils who are gifted and talented, offering them specialised programmes and support both in the classroom and through enrichment opportunities.

Children in the foundation stage follow the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum and pupils in Years 1 to 6 follow the national curriculum for England. The New Horizons programme caters for pupils with complex special needs through a highly personalised approach.

The school's mission focuses on three horizons: a flourishing school; an evolving curriculum; and serving the community. In essence summarised as: Flourish, Evolve, and Connect. The school has a community ethos with an unconditional focus on well-being and child happiness.

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

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

Inspectors visited 51 part-lessons and conducted three learning walks. Nine of the lessons visited were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. They also observed 13 extra-curricular activities (ECA). There were 26 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

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

## Evaluation of the school

**Horizon English School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 11 years. The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

In **English**, attainment and progress are outstanding for all groups of learners from their individual starting points across the school.

Most pupils, by the end of each key stage, attain well above the England average. In 2023, almost all Year 1 pupils passed the phonics screening test which was well above the England average. Over the last three years, phonics results have continued to improve. By the end of key stage 2, almost all pupils make progress at or above expected levels, well above England averages.

Young children make rapid progress in phonic awareness and early reading skills. Almost all pupils can identify sounds and short words during shared reading activities. Younger pupils can effectively retrieve information and predict the meaning of a story. Most pupils in Year 4 can quickly skim and scan text to infer the content of a book, using visual images.

Pupils listen carefully to each other's responses and clearly contribute their point of view. By the end of key stage 2, pupils speak with confidence, effectively sharing and evaluating work during peer-assessment discussions.

Almost all pupils can use a wide range of age-appropriate vocabulary and specialist terminology with accuracy in their writing. For example, Year 5 pupils accurately select adjectives from a range of synonyms to describe feelings in a creative writing task.

Older pupils compose high quality creative writing using language features with accuracy and impact. Year 6 pupils use effective similes such as ‘fangs as sharp as spears’ to describe a character in their story.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are both outstanding in the early years and in primary. The trend in pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding over three years has been upwards. Most pupils meet their targets in key stage 1. A similar proportion of pupils throughout the school exceed their expected levels of attainment in relation to international benchmarks. This rapid rate of progress, in relation to their starting points, leads to very high attainment that is confirmed by internal and external assessments. The performance of different groups of pupils is broadly comparable. This includes girls and boys, those identified as having SEND, and those whose native language is not English.

In the early years, children’s understanding of number and shape develops quickly and securely. Children calculate accurately, so that by the time they enter Year 1 they can count, add, and subtract confidently, and handle number bonds.

Throughout the primary school, mental arithmetic is strong. By Year 6, pupils are adept at solving multi-step problems, involving, for example, ratios, decimals and the properties of triangles. Pupils use appropriate mathematical terms and can explain what they have learned. Pupils make strong progress in response to a range of imaginative tasks of differing difficulty. The highest attaining pupils achieve success in challenging, external inter-school mathematics competitions.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding.

Children in the early years confidently explore and investigate their environment, for example when making rafts for the Gingerbread Man to find out whether their model would sink or float. By the end of Reception almost all pupils achieve the early learning goal (ELG) in understanding the natural world. This is higher than the England average and is one of the highest performing of all the areas of learning. Over the past three years attainment has improved and there are no significant differences between the progress of different groups of pupils.

Across Years 1 to 6 both teachers’ assessment and external progress tests in science show that almost all pupils are working above age-related expectations. This is well above the percentage meeting the expected standards in England. Trends over time are also improving. Progress for all groups of pupils is strong. Almost all pupils with SEND make better than expected progress from their individual starting points. There are no significant differences in the rates of progress between boys and girls. However,

only around half of the small number of pupils who need language support make better than expected progress.

The science curriculum is exceptionally well planned and mapped for progression of skills and knowledge, contributing to pupils' success. In Year 2, pupils benefit from hands-on experience of plants, looking for differences and similarities. They use scientific vocabulary to identify the needs of plants in order to thrive. Year 6 pupils show an excellent understanding of the characteristics of living things. They accurately prove that yeast is alive by carrying out an investigation and observing the results, linking back to their knowledge of the characteristics of living things.

Pupils make excellent progress in a range of **other subjects**. Most achieving above age-related expectations in almost all subjects.

Art, computing, music, library, physical education (PE) including swimming, French, Arabic and Islamic education are all taught by specialist teachers. The classroom teacher teaches moral, social and cultural (MSC) lessons covering much of the national curriculum's history and geography programmes of study.

The content of the curriculum in specialist subjects is very well planned, taking into account pupils' interests that the school has identified through surveys and focus groups. Teachers use data regarding pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding expertly in their planning of learning. As a result, pupils are very well engaged in lessons and enjoy the learning within the specialist subjects.

## Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Part 5 below).

- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during April and May 2024, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

## **Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school**

The standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

The HES curriculum satisfies the requirements of the national curriculum for England, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Creative, practical and physical experiences offer breadth and balance. The curriculum stimulates excitement and curiosity across the age range, and meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with SEND or EAL.

In the foundation stage, children are very well prepared for transition to the primary phase. Learning is child-centred and revolves naturally around their hopes and dreams, as expressed by parents. For example, a child's visit to a tourist attraction, or the role of calcium in looking after an African snail might also spark activities. Annual reviews of the curriculum ensure that skills and knowledge follow a natural progression.

Underpinning all learning is a code of morality which emphasises how people behave, how they treat one another, and how they distinguish right from wrong. The aim is to cultivate transformative competencies, such as taking responsibility, or resolving conflicts. This gives the curriculum its distinctive coherence across the key

stages. It evolves, based on pupils' views, their reading choices, and themes integrated through the use of cross-curricular connections.

The school's New Horizons curriculum effectively meets the needs of pupils with complex special needs because it is based on skills needed for their future. The school also offers an effective programme for academic high attainers, and for those identified as having special talents in, for example, music, art or sport. Extension tasks are common features of all lessons, and pupils benefit from a wide range of co-curricular enrichment opportunities. The 98 different options range from social media and podcasts to arts and crafts. EAL provision is effective in ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum appropriately.

Pupils have a sound knowledge of public institutions in the UK: the role of the police, for example, compared to that of their counterparts in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The curriculum prioritises individual freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for differences as characteristically British. These themes are interwoven across the curriculum, and supplemented by themed events such as anti-bullying week, English week and International Day.

Children in the foundation stage learn about different careers through themed activities and parental visits. However, this is less well developed in the primary school and the school recognises the need to develop this aspect of the curriculum to enhance pupils' aspirations. The school offers an age-appropriate scheme of relationships education in line with the laws of the UAE. Senior leaders manage transition to senior school effectively through close liaison with schools and parent workshops.

Pupils learn about the protected characteristics of age, disability, religion and belief, race, and pregnancy and maternity throughout the curriculum. Those characteristics which UAE law precludes the school from addressing are marriage and civil partnerships, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation. It actively promotes festivals such as Diwali and the lunar new year. Pupils learn about young people with physical or neurological differences, or from different racial backgrounds, such as Marcus Rashford, linked to Black History Month.

The immediate environment of the school enables pupils to translate sustainability into action, including recycling and planting. COP28, held in Dubai in 2023, saw delegates visiting the school to meet pupils who are passionate about the green agenda. Through Cognita, the school is also developing opportunities to raise funds and contribute to the wider world, such as the Sparkle programme in Malawi.

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

Teaching enables all pupils to make at least good progress in securing knowledge and skills across the curriculum from their individual starting points. Pupils with SEND benefit from highly effective teaching provided by specialist inclusion teachers. Support is carefully planned to accurately respond to each pupil's needs, leading to above expected outcomes. When required, the inclusion team provides an additional layer of specialist expertise in lessons, adapting teaching approaches to promote effective learning. Those with English language learning needs have sessions with the ELL coordinator to accelerate language acquisition.

Teachers encourage pupils to be independent by providing a range of support strategies to manage their own learning, for example, the 'stuck station' which allows pupils to gain access to online additional support if needed. An additional portal offers a range of challenging activities to stretch and extend learning for those who choose. Teachers successfully build opportunities into lessons to encourage focused, collaborative activities and discussions with peers, such as sharing ideas with partners to promote learning and practical investigations in science.

Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge which enables them to effectively differentiate learning and engage all pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to challenge thinking, check pupils' understanding and provide high-quality feedback for next steps in learning.

Teaching assistants (TA) in all classes are well trained and fully support pupils' learning. In class, learning support assistants (LSA) effectively provide an extra layer of targeted support to pupils identified with SEND. Teachers identify the support required from the TA in their planning and through effective communication. LSAs understand how to support those with SEND through the use of the pupil snapshot document and through pupils' individual education plans (IEP).

Teachers in the primary phase have a strong understanding of the expectations of the national curriculum for England. Their meticulous planning ensures lessons meet these expectations and are then enhanced to reflect the school's international context. Lessons fully promote pupils' engagement as they are often developed from their explicit interests. They are enjoyable, well-organised and well-resourced. In a Year 3 English lesson, the teacher planned an effective 'spelling disco' to develop strategies which reinforced word accuracy. Following this, most pupils were able to successfully

remember the correct spelling of key words to improve the quality of their creative writing.

Teachers provide stimulating, risk-free learning environments to fully support pupils' engagement and promote exemplary behaviour in lessons, enabling pupils to secure excellent learning outcomes.

From the early years onwards, pupils learn to be independent and manage their own learning, using highly effective resources prepared by the teacher that build on pupils' learning step by step. Pupils use technology with competence and teachers provide many appropriate opportunities to do so. From an early age, they develop the skills and competency needed to choose learning tasks matched to their needs or research new information. For example, they are adept at using online resources to check for accuracy and edit their own work against set success criteria.

The school has developed a detailed assessment policy which clearly outlines how pupils' data supports personalised learning. Well-chosen internal and external assessments enable the school to accurately benchmark all pupils' attainment and progress against England and other international results. Individual pupils' outcome records are carefully developed from a range of data points to record individual achievement and track progress. School leaders and teachers make excellent use of pupils' data to review performance, modify the curriculum and improve standards.

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

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is outstanding.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently supportive of the school's aims and ethos, and their attitudes are well disciplined and responsible. They have a highly developed awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others. Teachers and pupils establish relationships characterised by mutual respect, serving as effective role models. Pupils have high expectations of themselves, and they waste no time in lessons. They invariably show the confidence and self-awareness to choose appropriately challenging tasks because they know how well they are doing. They are resilient, too, seeing mistakes as a normal part of the learning process. Pupils listen attentively to

one another, and paired and group work is highly effective as a result. Teachers thoughtfully compose group compositions, putting together pupils of similar attainment, or mixing so that they can help one another.

Pupils know they have a responsibility to make the most of the opportunities they have. Cleaning and tidying tasks are assigned to all in each class, so that they learn at an early stage the importance of their contribution to general well-being. They also take on formal positions of responsibility and so serve the community, as house captains, prefects, or members of the Green Team or the School Council. The school takes the views of pupils into account through these bodies, and through surveys of their responses to the curriculum, associated reading material, and the activities programme. As well as displaying exceptional courtesy, pupils are at ease in conversation with visitors to the school, and happy to share their opinions.

The curriculum prioritises personal development at its centre. Pupils learn effective qualities of leadership and teamwork through collaborative classroom activities as well as through sport or creative arts. Likewise, they develop tolerance and empathy, celebrating differences through stories and through emphasising that differences are a superpower.

Through its programme of transformational competencies, the school actively promotes the fundamental values of democracy, respect for others, the rule of law and individual freedom. The MSC lessons bring together these themes in weekly lessons which include history and geography. They are also mapped across the curriculum using the OECD framework. In the foundation stage, child-led activities develop their self-esteem, and a sense of freedom, through free play, discovery-based learning, and open-ended exploration. In Year 3, pupils consider the rules of Miss Trunchbull in 'Matilda', and compare them to those at HES. This understanding prompts the recognition of the need for rules and their enforcement. MSC schemes of work include a study of democracy in the context of ancient Greece. In a Year 6 MSC lesson, pupils noted that the HES school council holds elections yet they actively explored the democratic process as an intellectual exercise, considering its advantages and drawbacks.

The curriculum attaches great importance to the protected characteristics of age, disability, marriage, maternity and race. The school consciously chooses texts that embody acceptance and respect for diversity, for example "Can you see me", a book about a girl with autism. World Awareness Day and Differences week also promote and celebrate diversity, alongside helping pupils develop their own moral compass to make their own decisions. HES is inclusive towards all members of the community, and

the sense of belonging and caring fosters everyone's well-being. Pupils assess how they are feeling each day, reporting this through a quick response (QR) code if they wish. Everyone feels equally valued: in response to the question on how does it feel to be different here, pupils answered confidently that they were all different. Pupils say that if any member of their class is absent everyone misses them.

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

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

Safeguarding procedures and protocols are efficiently managed by the school's designated safeguarding leaders (DSL) and fully meet the requirements outlined for schools in England and the host country. The safeguarding policy is fully understood by staff, pupils, and parents, which manifests as a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The school ensures that all staff are regularly trained, both face to face and online, at the appropriate level for their role. Child protection and safeguarding training are available in four languages. Cognita carries out thorough annual reviews of safeguarding. The safeguarding and health and safety action plan prioritises ongoing development.

The school has established a rigorous system of monitoring which covers all aspects of health, safety, and welfare. Policies and procedures are regularly monitored and where necessary, updated or amended to reflect best practice. Risk assessments are robust and extensive, covering all aspects of school life.

The fire and evacuation policy, describes the role of fire marshals and provides a detailed overview of procedures to follow when evacuating the building safely. The school's security team follows strict protocols and procedures to carefully check the entry of all visitors to the school. The effective use of colour coded lanyards gives a quick visual check as to why adults are onsite, contributing to the safety of the whole school community.

The school effectively deploys staff during the school day to keep pupils safe. Pupils settle into school well, helped by buddies and playground helpers. All pupils display exemplary behaviour. Where behaviour is a cause for concern, details are carefully logged and used to plan appropriate support and intervention for the child. All pastoral concerns are carefully logged on an online dashboard, including any rare cases of bullying. Pupils state that there is no bullying and they learn about different types of bullying during anti-bullying week. They understand how to keep themselves safe and say they feel comfortable going to their teacher or the counsellor with any concerns.

Lessons start punctually. The level of pupils' attendance at 96% is high and above the average in the UK. School registers are well-maintained and monitored for emerging trends. If a pupil is absent with no reason provided, the school promptly contacts parents to check the cause of absence.

There is a qualified doctor, supported by two registered nurses, on duty in the clinic during each school day to care for sick or injured pupils. The first aid policy provides a detailed overview of procedures to follow. Health advice and training for teachers is in place, for example, on how to use an EpiPen. The school doctor along with the school's leaders is part of the health and safety committee, which rigorously monitors the quality of first aid provision.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school rigorously maintains a single central register (SCR) of all its employees, visitors, outsourced companies, parent helpers, supply staff and governors. The SCR operates on a Cognita platform creating a profile for each person. Human resources (HR) and the DSL review it bi-weekly for compliance. Cognita HR then monitors and sends a report to the board. HR teams from all Cognita schools in the UAE meet virtually to share up-to-date information.

The SCR confirms all appropriate checks are in place, including the person's identity, right to work in the UAE, medical fitness, and recent references that are followed up either verbally or to a registered email address. All individuals must have Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) approval which includes qualifications attested and certified by a lawyer and police checks dated within the last three months. Additionally, the school conducts social media checks, although these are not formally recorded on the Cognita platform.

The school adheres to safer recruitment best practice. All involved in interviewing including the senior leadership team (SLT) and HR have completed safer recruitment training. The school recruits high quality teachers that are British trained and from British schools. Staff turnover is low and the recruitment of six new teachers for the next academic year is already complete. Succession planning is closely linked to leadership development programmes and opportunities, ensuring teachers are ready to step up when opportunities arise either in HES or across other Cognita schools.

## Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

HES provides an extremely safe and stimulating learning environment for all of its pupils to enjoy and engage in a range of activities. Classrooms are bright and spacious. Pupils of all ages have access to well-equipped play areas, swimming pools and sports facilities both indoors and outside.

Younger children learn in their own dedicated area, as well as central areas, which are full of exciting, creative resources which promote learning through play. The school offers a wide range of specialist facilities to support pupils' learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), PE, IT, creative and performing arts. There are well-maintained indoor and outdoor spaces, which enable the school to offer an extensive number of extra-curricular activities, including musical theatre, the 'Green Team' and a variety of sports.

Each teaching floor has its own set of well-maintained age-appropriate pupil-only toilets with plentiful hand washing facilities, including one toilet for pupils with disabilities. There are changing rooms with showers located near to the pool and sports hall. Drinking water, clearly marked as such, is also available. Pupils bring their own food from home.

The STEM learning space is well planned with a mix of dedicated areas for practical activities, teaching spaces and computer lessons. The school has a safe and secure internet network maintained by a specialist IT team. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards that display teachers' tablet screens.

The specialist medical clinic has separate areas for treatment or the short-term care of sick pupils. The welcoming, purpose built, inclusion building that all children identified with SEND use for their specialist learning. The school has lifts to reach the upper floor. Recent improvements to the school's building include the addition of ramps to entrances, making it accessible to all pupils and adults with restricted mobility.

The facilities team is well-organised and highly responsive to the needs of the school community. The school's environment is exceptionally clean and well-maintained.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has highly effective systems for communicating with parents, including those of prospective pupils, and carers on a range of matters. The school's website contains all the required information about safeguarding, the curriculum, including both language and learning support, pupils' welfare, governance, complaints, admissions, and expectations about behaviour. The school's information management system ensures that they have access to routine information, supplemented with emails if a specific or urgent need arises. The Horizon Update celebrates achievements in a newsletter. Parents understand what is happening in the classroom and in the academic life of the school through another specific online application. This enables parents to gain a strong picture of their own children's attainment and progress.

In addition, the school holds regular workshops for parents on a range of topics, offering educational and social guidance and the opportunity to exchange ideas. This might deal with transition to a senior school or hosting an inclusive birthday party. The Friends of Horizon run social events and support the school in numerous ways. All these are well attended and make a distinctive contribution to creating and sustaining a harmonious community.

Parents state that they appreciate the presence of senior members of staff at the school gate when they are dropping off or collecting their children. This ensures that the school deals with minor concerns promptly and effectively. Parents confirm that teachers and leaders are very accessible, and their responses to queries are invariably helpful. The school often anticipates a parental anxiety by, for example, making contact to resolve an administrative snag over activities, or to confirm a change in evacuation procedures to accommodate a child's temporary loss of mobility.

The school gathers parents' views more formally through annual Cognita surveys, and they feel that the school values their opinions and takes them into account when planning. For example, a recent decision has returned a possible space for parking to being a multi-use space for the pupils. Parental representation is part of the governing body.

Parents receive full written reports on their child's progress, with advice on next steps. Parents value the twice-yearly parent-teacher meetings for a more formal discussion regarding their child's progress.

Parents' views, as expressed in the BSO survey and in discussions during the inspection, are highly positive about the school. Almost all say that their children look forward to coming to school, are safe and happy there, and that they are thriving. They spoke of the 'warm and nurturing environment and inclusive culture' in the school.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's website has a clear complaints policy accessible to parents. The policy meets compliance requirements and specifically encourages parents' views and ideas. It outlines a staged procedure that escalates to the principal if not resolved at an earlier stage, adhering to specified timescales. Parents should first go to the classroom teacher, followed by the head of Year or heads of subject. The procedure allows for parents to attend panel hearings with Cognita governors, with the choice of being accompanied. The panel makes recommendations and shares them with complainants and any other relevant parties. Both the proprietor and principal have access to the findings. The principal's personal assistant (PA) maintains confidential records of significant complaints. Procedures are in place for addressing complaints against the principal.

There have been no escalated complaints this year. The principal and senior leaders maintain high visibility and availability interacting with parents during drop-off and pick-up times and are receptive to any concerns parents may have.

## **Part 8. Leadership and management of the school**

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

The principal is new to the school this year. His alignment with the school's values fosters improvement through inquiry rather than radical change. The SLT, including the early years leader, has been in the school for some time, having progressed from being classroom teachers. They are now well established, stable and very effective.

The principal and senior leaders effectively communicate their vision and strategic priorities, inspiring staff and fostering a supportive community. The drive and ambition in this already outstanding school is palpable. It is clear from the numerous responses to the BSO survey that leaders inspire staff, are incredibly supportive and are excellent role models. All staff said they are proud to be a member of the school and all enjoy working at HES. The school's own employee survey confirms morale is highly positive.

The school prioritises middle leaders' development by providing ample opportunities for training and school-wide experiences. This includes support for National Professional Qualifications (NPQ) and a University College London (UCL) and Cognita joint leadership project. This focus on continued professional learning (CPL) extends to all staff, enhancing the quality and drive for improvement. The deputy head has researched professional learning and recently spoke at the Research Ed conference in Dubai. Action research projects and learning from one another are an important part of CPL. Each teacher has a team-teaching partner and open classrooms encourage teachers to observe and learn across different year groups. New teachers confirm that induction is of high quality and that support is always available throughout the year. The school uses the PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment) model, balancing information and support with time for building relationships.

Line managers fully understand teachers' performance through supportive and developmental observations. They prioritise reflective conversations over formal targets, ensuring accountability for pupils' outcomes. Teachers engage in 360-degree reflections to plan their next steps for improvement.

School improvement plans are data driven and reflect accurate self-evaluation and targeted growth. The school's excellent capacity for improvement stems from leaders who understand what needs to be done to innovate and improve.

The acquisition by Cognita in 2021 has positively transformed the quality of governance. Governors support the school's clear strategic direction prioritising well-being and inclusion. Governors are fully representative of the school community with parents as part of the board with regular surveys of pupils, parents and employees. These show high levels of satisfaction, well above the Middle East average for Cognita schools. These surveys allow governors to be forensic in moving forward in response to comments. Governors also have representation from a principal in another Cognita school. Hence, leaders benefit from experienced oversight and critical friend support, particularly through linked-governor visits to parts of the school. It is clear that

governors communicate ambition and drive improvement while being clear about their separate responsibilities.

Cognita provides legal expertise and has strong financial policies. A dedicated safeguarding governor is responsible for regular reviews of safeguarding ensuring compliance and advice across schools. As a result, there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. The CEO formally appraises the principal and regular meetings with the chair of governors complement this process, ensuring ongoing accountability.

The school's culture emphasises children's happiness and well-being. The school views staff well-being as a prerequisite to high performance. It is clear that governors and leaders champion inclusion and promote equality. They take seriously their influence in being role models and prioritise diverse curriculum opportunities. Parents summed up the school in the BSO survey by saying, 'Great culture, not glittery and new but filled with love and happiness.' Others said, 'An incredible school with love and care running through the core of everything it does.'

## EYFS provision

The early years foundation stage is outstanding as a result of the high-quality provision and its excellent leadership.

All children in the early years make fast progress from their starting points. At the end of this stage, most children achieve their ELGs, with a large majority of children achieving a Good Level of Development, which is above the England average. Teachers ensure children are well prepared for transition to Year 1, by sharing children's achievement data.

Approximately a third of children have English as an additional language but all make rapid progress as a result of the well-designed phonics programme.

The early years team carefully plan activities to reflect each child's needs and interests, leading to excellent levels of learning outcomes for all children. Children enjoy learning in a stimulating, creative, rich environment. They are confident learners, choosing the resources that they want to use alongside their classmates.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are kind to classmates and show respect for those around them. The provision made for their welfare, health and safety is outstanding alongside the rest of the school.

The early years teaching team is keen to develop and share its professional skills with others. The leadership team arranges regular learning walks to identify and share

outstanding practice. For example, the team recently organised a team-teaching focus on literacy, following on from the analysis of termly achievement data. Monthly 'stay and play' sessions help parents discover more about their child's learning. Regular workshops help parents learn effective ways to support their child, such as, 'Getting ready to write'.

The EYFS curriculum is further enhanced by specialist teaching in Arabic, PE, music and swimming. Action research projects have led to a teaching approach called 'in the moment' planning. Explicitly designed learning activities focus children's interests.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

## What the school could do to improve further

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

The quality of careers education and awareness among primary school pupils is currently underdeveloped. School leaders have the opportunity to bridge this gap by encouraging collaboration with parents so that they can introduce pupils to the range of professions that collectively they represent. Consequently, pupils would develop an understanding of various career paths, broadening their horizons and aspirations, as a result.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education	X			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	X			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	X			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	X			

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	X			
The behaviour of pupils	X			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	X			
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	X			
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## School Details

<b>Name of school</b>	Horizon English School
<b>Type of school</b>	Inclusive, private, co-educational primary school.
<b>Date school opened</b>	1989
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1289
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	n/a
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	42,063 to 56,377 AED
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	n/a
<b>Address of school</b>	30B Street Off Al Wasl Road Horizon English School PO Box 6749, Dubai, UAE
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 4 3422 891
<b>Email address</b>	info@horizonschooldubai.com
<b>Principal</b>	Nick Hart
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Education

## GLOSSARY

**Achievement** – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

**Accreditation** – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

**Assessment** – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

**Attainment** – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

**British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO)** – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

**Central Support Team** – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

**Combined or Joint Visit** – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards

against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

**Cycle of Inspection** – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

**Curriculum** – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB)** – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

**Leadership** – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

**Learning** – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

**Management** – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

**Ofsted** – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

**Progress** – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

**School self-evaluation** – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

**Standards** –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

**Teaching** – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

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

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train.

We have built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services. One of our main aims is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then, we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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