



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Gulf English School

Cairo
Egypt

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

The inspection and this report follow the 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; the school's complaints procedures; and leadership and management. If appropriate, there is a separate section on the quality of boarding provision. 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 DfE on the extent to which schools meet the standards for BSO.

During the inspection visit, over 60 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' 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 Colin Dyson. The team members were Lesley Birtwell, Sam Cuthbert and Michael Wilson.

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. The relevant standards are:

Part 1 – ‘2(2)(d)(ii)- encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; 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)- encourages 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

Gulf English School Cairo (GES) provides a well-structured and supportive environment where student welfare, safety, and wellbeing are prioritised through clear procedures, dedicated staff, and a strong sense of community. The school's commitment to safeguarding, creative learning, and positive reinforcement fosters a nurturing atmosphere that encourages both academic and personal growth.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including:

- the school provides highly effective care, support, and guidance, ensuring the well-being of every student.
- the impeccable cleanliness and maintenance of the school reflect the dedication of its hardworking staff.
- every student is valued, nurtured, and supported by the passionate and driven teaching and non-teaching staff.
- strong, respectful relationships thrive between students, teachers, and the entire school community.
- the school fosters a culture of reflection and continuous improvement, with staff striving to be the best they can be.
- with a clear vision, the principal is committed to creating a school of excellence that meets the diverse needs of the community.
- parents deeply appreciate and celebrate the positive impact the school has on their children's lives.
- a strong sense of pride unites the GES community, where everyone works together to ensure the school's success.
- the school consistently achieves high academic and personal development outcomes, with nearly all students excelling.
- by blending British educational values into its unique Egyptian setting, the school has created a truly special learning environment.
- students radiate confidence, happiness, and empathy, fostering a caring and inclusive atmosphere.
- a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by diverse extracurricular opportunities, ensures a holistic learning experience for all.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. **Encourage higher-order learning** – Provide students with opportunities to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative skills, ensuring they can apply their knowledge confidently in real-world situations.
- ii. **Further enhance teacher assessments**, as planned in the school improvement plan.
- iii. **Improve student attendance** – Utilise school attendance data to implement targeted systems and procedures that promote better attendance rates.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Gulf English School Cairo				
Address	St 55 from St 77 2 nd District, Fifth settlement, New Cairo				
Telephone Number/s	+02 2599 3600				
Website Address	www.gescairo.com				
Key Email Address	melmasry@gescairo.com				
Headteacher/ Principal	Mona El Masry				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Ghada Dajani				
Age Range	3 to 18 years				
Total number of pupils	999	Boys	481	Girls	518
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	212	
	3-5 years	163	17-18 years	135	
	6-11 years	489	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Gulf English School (GES) Cairo, founded in 2018, is a coeducational institution offering a British-based curriculum blended with the Egyptian Ministry of Education's subjects. Initially catering to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 9, it expanded in 2019 to include Year 10, offering IGCSE and GCSE courses. GES integrates UK teaching programs like *White Rose Maths* and *Read Write Inc*, with modern facilities including labs, arts rooms, and sports facilities. Affiliated with British Schools in the Middle East (BSME), it graduated its first class in 2022. GES prioritises academic excellence, professional development, and holistic student growth.

4.1 British nature of the school

The Britishness at GES is well-embedded and fully aligned with BSO standards, ensuring that students experience an authentic British-style education.

The school follows the English national curriculum across all age phases, especially in English and mathematics, supported by Cambridge materials, providing a strong academic framework. English is the primary language of instruction, with students expected to communicate in English throughout the school day, except during Arabic curriculum lessons. This immersion in the English language reinforces a British academic culture and prepares students for higher education in the UK and other English-speaking countries.

At Key Stage (KS) 4, students are thoroughly prepared for the IGCSE examinations, which are internationally recognised and provide them with access to British universities. The school offers structured option guidance and career support, ensuring that students make informed decisions about their educational pathways. This focus on higher education aligns with the British education system's emphasis on progression and long-term academic planning.

The school leadership demonstrates strong knowledge and experience of British educational practices, acquired through external professional development. Leadership qualifications such as NPQs, PGCEs, and MA degrees accredited in the UK contribute to an educational environment that aligns with British pedagogical expectations. This expertise supports the development of effective teaching methods, assessment strategies, and classroom management techniques, ensuring consistency with UK standards.

Elements of British school culture are clearly evident in daily school life. A house system is in place, fostering a sense of community and competition, a key feature of traditional British schooling. The implementation of a uniform policy further reinforces British school identity. Student leadership is actively encouraged through a school council in the secondary school, providing students with a voice in decision-making. This council has played a significant role in improving school procedures, such as enhancing the bus system for younger students. In primary school, the 'Eagles' system encourages leadership and social responsibility, with students involved in charity initiatives and presentations to promote community engagement.

Throughout the school, displays and activities reflect British cultural traditions and heritage. A recent topic week, 'Exploring Britain,' provided students with an opportunity to engage deeply with British history, literature, and customs. This engagement was evident during the inspection, with students confidently discussing their learning experiences. One Year 3 student proudly shared a book brought from London, illustrating how students connect their school experiences with British culture.

School policies, teaching, learning, and professional development are firmly rooted in the UK's Department for Education (DfE) Teachers' Standards, ensuring consistency with British educational expectations. The curriculum is designed to promote key British values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect. GES effectively fosters a multicultural environment while maintaining a strong emphasis on English language proficiency and a well-rounded literary tradition.

The school also focuses on developing critical thinking, independent learning, and a global outlook, which are fundamental aspects of a British education. These skills prepare students for British higher education and international careers, ensuring they are equipped for success in a competitive, globalised world. GES successfully balances British educational ethos with international inclusivity, creating a dynamic and respectful learning environment that aligns fully with BSO standards.

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

The quality of education provided is good.

GES provides a good-quality education that nurtures both academic achievement and personal development, ensuring students thrive in a supportive and engaging learning environment. The school's well-structured curriculum, often enriched with creative and interactive teaching approaches, allows students to develop critical thinking, confidence, and a lifelong love for learning. With dedicated teachers and a strong emphasis on student wellbeing, GES fosters a culture of achievement, inclusivity, and continuous growth.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

The curriculum at GES is well-structured, comprehensive, and fully aligned with BSO standards, ensuring a high-quality education for students from the EYFS through to KS4. It provides a balanced and progressive learning journey that meets both international and local requirements, effectively preparing students for future academic and career opportunities.

In EYFS, the curriculum provides a strong foundation for early literacy and numeracy, with structured teaching supported by *Read Write Inc.* and *White Rose Maths*. Learning is largely teacher-led, ensuring that core skills are developed systematically. However, there is a need to provide more extended periods for enquiry-based and independent learning. Currently, while there are opportunities for student-led exploration, the emphasis on structured lessons sometimes limits the time available for children to develop independence, resilience, and critical thinking through play. Additionally, while teachers use questioning to support language development, this practice could be embedded more consistently to extend children's vocabulary and verbal reasoning skills.

Across the primary years students experience a broad curriculum that fosters academic excellence, creativity, and personal development through a balanced mix of core subjects, arts, humanities, physical education, and language learning, ensuring students develop essential skills for global citizenship. KS1 follows the English national curriculum, using Cambridge resources and materials. Phonics is effectively streamed to match student ability, ensuring targeted support, and the *White Rose Maths* framework provides a structured, progressive approach. The last project-based learning at school was "Exploring Britain" and students' work was clearly displayed throughout the school in the hallways.

While teacher assessment is well-established in many classes, not all teachers incorporate student self-assessment and reflection activities, to help young learners take greater ownership of their progress.

In KS2, the transition to subject-specialist teaching in upper KS2 ensures that students receive expert instruction. The Cambridge framework supports a rigorous curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics, science and global perspectives. History and geography are still being developed within the curriculum, taught once a week in KS1 and KS2.

In KS3, the curriculum is broad and balanced, with students benefiting from exposure to the arts, sciences, and humanities. The inclusion of creative subjects such as music, drama, and art allows for a well-rounded education. Differentiation in lessons remains an area for development, ensuring that all students - particularly those who require additional support or greater challenge - receive tailored instruction. The use of formative assessment is strong, but its application in adapting teaching strategies is not always systematic. While booster sessions are available for struggling students, there is currently limited emphasis on stretching higher-ability students with enrichment opportunities, particularly in STEAM subjects.

KS4 offers a streamlined curriculum, ensuring students focus on core IGCSE subjects alongside electives. The 90-minute lesson structure allows for depth in learning, but engagement strategies could be refined to ensure active learning throughout. While students achieve strong academic outcomes, lessons can be heavily teacher-led, and opportunities for student-led research, collaborative learning, and problem-solving could be increased. Differentiation is not as evident in KS4 compared to earlier stages, meaning some students may not receive the level of challenge or support they need. Encouraging more discussion-based and inquiry-driven learning could enhance critical thinking and engagement.

At KS4, the curriculum is structured primarily around IGCSE and AS/A2 pathways, with Year 12 providing an option for students who are considering international university applications and therefore seeking additional qualifications. To provide focused preparation for advanced study in specific subjects, GES Cairo delivers KS4 instruction to a cohort comprising students from Years 10 to 12, dedicated to those disciplines. The school is pursuing further development of a more structured post-16 program, with clearer pathways for students considering international university applications, to strengthen academic progression. Greater access to careers education and university guidance, including exposure to international qualification requirements and scholarship opportunities, is also planned.

Across all key stages, assessment is robust, with a mix of teacher evaluations, standardised tests, and external benchmarking. The use of student self-reflection and peer assessment could be expanded to encourage greater metacognition and

ownership of learning. Digital learning is well-integrated, particularly through *Google Classroom*, but further leveraging technology for personalised learning and adaptive assessment could enhance differentiation and independent study.

In summary, while the GES curriculum is comprehensive, rigorous, and aligned with BSO standards, the school is pursuing areas for further development: increasing enquiry-based learning in EYFS, strengthening cross-curricular links in KS1, embedding history and geography more effectively in KS2, enhancing differentiation in KS3 and KS4, and expanding post-16 pathways to improve the overall educational experience. By addressing these areas, the school seeks to continue to evolve the curriculum, ensuring that all students are fully equipped for academic success and lifelong learning.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory and almost half was good; some lessons were outstanding.

Teaching and assessment at GES align with BSO standards, ensuring a high-quality learning experience across all key stages. The most effective teaching staff employ varied strategies to engage students, using structured lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and formative and summative assessments. Lessons are designed to foster independent learning, critical thinking, and academic excellence, with strong student-teacher relationships evident throughout the school.

In EYFS and KS1, teaching is engaging and interactive, making use of real-life experiences to deepen student understanding. In the foundation stage, hands-on learning activities such as inviting a hen to class when reading *The Little Red Hen* bring stories to life and create meaningful connections between literature and reality. Multi-sensory teaching methods, including singing and physical movement, are effectively used to introduce new vocabulary and mathematical concepts. Questioning techniques, such as a random selection rather than relying on raised hands, encourage active participation from all students. In mathematics, paired talk helps children rehearse their answers, supporting their ability to articulate thoughts confidently. Teachers use a range of assessment methods, including observations, questioning, and direct feedback. In a mathematics lesson, students effectively self-assessed using thumbs up, thumbs down, or wobbly thumbs, demonstrating an awareness of their learning progress.

In KS2, teaching remains consistent with the English national curriculum and *Cambridge* framework. Homeroom teachers deliver core subjects in lower KS2, while subject-specialist teachers take over in upper KS2. The best lessons engage students with questioning, discussion, and hands-on activities. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, students were seen measuring objects around the school and applying correct mathematical terminology such as "centimetres" and "metres," with some confidently explaining conversions between units. English lessons emphasise literacy development, with structured guided reading sessions. While verbal feedback is effectively used, written feedback is primarily found in English writing lessons, where students receive "two stars and a wish" to guide their improvement. There is room for further development in ensuring consistent formative assessment practices across all subjects, particularly in embedding self-reflection and peer feedback in daily learning.

Teaching in KS3 is broad and balanced, incorporating a mix of core subjects and creative disciplines such as Music and Drama. The most effective lessons in this stage are characterised by strong subject knowledge, clear explanations, and interactive learning opportunities. In a Year 9 science lesson, practical experiments engaged students in predicting, observing, and analysing results, reinforcing both scientific

concepts and critical thinking skills. In English, structured discussions help students analyse texts deeply, fostering higher-order thinking skills. While most teachers effectively use questioning as a formative assessment tool, it is not yet fully embedded across all lessons, to ensure a consistent approach to checking for understanding.

KS4 focuses on preparing students for IGCSE examinations. The curriculum is streamlined, with 90-minute lessons that allow for in-depth learning. Teachers, many of whom are part-time subject specialists, deliver high-quality instruction using structured approaches. Lessons resemble a university-style lecture format, where students take notes and review past examination questions. This has led to strong academic outcomes, with students well-prepared to answer high-order questions. However, the teaching in KS4 is largely teacher-led, resulting in a passive learning experience. There is an opportunity to incorporate more student-led research, discussion-based activities, and inquiry-driven learning to enhance engagement and critical thinking. Additionally, differentiation is not as evident in KS4 as in earlier stages, meaning that students with varied learning needs may not always receive the tailored support required.

A similar outcomes-driven approach is followed, with a focus on preparing students for AS and A2 qualifications. Teaching relies heavily on *PowerPoint* presentations and teacher explanations, supplemented by questioning techniques. While this approach ensures coverage of syllabus content, more varied instructional strategies, including debate, collaborative learning, and independent research projects, could further enrich the learning experience. The number of students in Year 12 is relatively small, and they are often integrated into Year 11 teaching groups. The school is seeking to expand post-16 pathways and provide structured university and career guidance, to better support students' planning to continue their education internationally.

Assessment across all key stages is well-structured, with a combination of teacher-led evaluations, standardised benchmarking tests, and student self-assessments. In EYFS, observational assessments track progress against curriculum objectives. In KS1, there is a mix between observational assessment to track progress against curriculum objectives as well as teachers' ongoing formative assessment and summative assessment at the end of each term that inform lesson planning. In KS2, teacher assessments inform lesson planning and differentiation. KS3 incorporates formative assessment, but its application varies across subjects. In KS4, assessments are largely exam-focused, preparing students for external qualifications.

Overall, teaching and assessment at GES are strengths of the school, ensuring students receive high-quality instruction aligned with BSO standards. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and committed to student progress. Lessons are well-structured, and assessment is effectively used to track achievement and inform teaching. To further enhance student outcomes, the school is seeking to focus on increasing opportunities for independent and enquiry-based learning in EYFS and KS1,

embedding more formative assessment in KS2 and KS3, incorporating more active learning strategies in KS4, and expanding post-16 pathways to support university readiness. By addressing these areas, GES is continuing to refine its teaching and assessment practices, ensuring sustained academic excellence and student development.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students are good.

The standards achieved by students across all key stages are commendable, demonstrating strong academic performance and a clear commitment to high expectations from both teachers and students.

At the EYFS and KS1, students are making good progress, as assessed through the EYFS framework. In June 2024, 70% of learners achieved expected or above Early Learning Goals, while 30% were identified as 'emerging.' Physical development appears to be a strength, with students working at age-related expectations, whereas communication, language, and personal and social development require further support. The Read, Write Inc. Programme has been introduced to enhance phonics learning, and students are grouped based on ability, ensuring a tailored learning approach. Evidence of achievement is clear, with FS1 students successfully learning phase 2 phonics and recognising numbers up to five. Some FS2 students can recall addition and subtraction equations up to ten, demonstrating a solid foundation in numeracy.

In KS2, the school employs a more rigorous assessment strategy through the *Cambridge Progress* Teacher Packs, ensuring alignment with the curriculum. The implementation of CAT4 assessments in Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 provides a benchmark for tracking progress and setting targets. Performance data from the academic year 2023-2024 indicates strong attainment in mathematics, particularly in Years 2, 3, and 4. At the end of Year 3, 72% of students were working at or above expectations in mathematics, compared to 33% in English. In Year 4, 43% met or exceeded expectations in mathematics, while only 25% did so in English. This suggests that while mathematical skills are well developed, there may be a need for additional support in English at this stage. Teachers engage in weekly discussions to track learning progression, and moderation of assessments ensures consistency in writing evaluations. Evidence from assessments and workbooks suggest at times a wide variation between some teachers judgements on outcomes. Further development on moderation could ensure closer alignment.

KS3 students exhibit high attainment levels in iGCSE examinations, particularly in mathematics, English as a second language, and the sciences. Since 2021, 90% of students have achieved a grade C in mathematics and English, with 75% reaching this level in biology, chemistry, and physics. These achievements are reinforced by high standards of classroom behaviour and strong student-teacher rapport. The school also provides opportunities for students to resit exams during the November resit period, ensuring that those who need additional support can improve their outcomes.

At KS4, 100% of students have achieved a grade 7 or higher in IGCSE Second Language English, surpassing international averages. Similarly, in mathematics, 75% of students attained a grade 7 or above, while in the sciences, at least 50% of students achieved this level. These results reflect a culture of academic excellence within the school. A notable area for development is attendance in Years 10 and 11, which drops below 90%, potentially due to the lesson schedule. Addressing this issue could further enhance student outcomes.

Academic success continues to be demonstrated, particularly in mathematics and the sciences, where A-level results exceed international averages. The school rightfully takes pride in these outcomes, which provide excellent opportunities for students in higher education. Overall, the high academic standards achieved align well with BSO standards, and continued emphasis on English development in KS2 and attendance improvements in KS4 are being pursued by the school, to enhance student performance further.

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

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

The social, moral, spiritual, and cultural (SMSC) development of students at GES is well embedded in school life, contributing to a strong sense of community, respect, and responsibility. The school places a high priority on nurturing students' self-esteem, promoting moral values, and fostering cultural awareness, all of which align with British Schools Overseas (BSO) standards.

A key strength of the school's SMSC provision is the positive learning environment it creates. Behavioural expectations are clearly defined, and students demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy. There is no significant disruptive behaviour observed, and students engage well in lessons. A culture of positive reinforcement is evident through the reward system, with house points in primary and inter-house sporting events in secondary promoting motivation and teamwork. Assemblies play a crucial role in reinforcing core values, emphasising themes such as democracy, tolerance, and mutual respect. Additionally, student leadership is encouraged through the election of student councils, which allow students to voice concerns and contribute ideas for school improvement.

The school effectively promotes moral development by fostering responsibility and ethical awareness. Through structured initiatives such as community service and internships for Year 10 students, learners develop a deeper understanding of social issues and personal growth. The emphasis on both academic and non-academic achievements ensures that all students, regardless of ability, feel valued and recognised. Fundraising activities, such as raising money for the auxiliary staff Iftar event and supporting the Ommar Al Ard Foundation in repairing houses, instil a sense of empathy and civic duty. Encouraging further student-led initiatives and discussions on global ethical issues could further strengthen moral development and awareness of broader societal challenges.

Social development is well supported through strong student-staff relationships and extracurricular opportunities. Students are actively engaged in leadership roles, and initiatives such as school drama productions and external competitions build confidence and public-speaking skills. Collaboration and mutual support are evident in lessons, particularly in subjects such as PE and science, where students work together to solve problems and encourage each other. The school's engagement with programmes such as the Eagles and the Eagle Scouts (led by GES teachers) enhances leadership development and teamwork skills. To further develop this aspect, the school could increase structured opportunities for peer mentoring, where older students take an active role in guiding and supporting younger learners.

Spiritual and cultural awareness is embedded in the curriculum through subjects such as global perspectives, which encourage students to reflect on different viewpoints and develop a broader understanding of the world. Cultural awareness is reinforced through school

events, where parents are invited to participate, such as joining the choir. The curriculum does not currently include a wide range of international cultural studies and discussions on philosophical or ethical dilemmas, which limits students' global awareness and critical thinking. While the school effectively encourages tolerance and consideration of others, additional structured debates and discussions on global current affairs could help students develop a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity and global citizenship.

A key feature of the school's approach to SMSC development is its focus on student well-being. The behaviour policy supports reflective thinking, with students encouraged to consider their actions and the impact of their behaviour. The role of the welfare coordinator in supporting students during detention provides a constructive approach to discipline. Posters around the school help students distinguish between banter, conflict, and bullying, equipping them with strategies to manage social interactions effectively. These measures contribute to a safe and supportive school environment.

While the school has a well-developed SMSC provision, an area for further growth is enhancing parental involvement in cultural and social initiatives. While parents participate in school events, structured parent workshops on SMSC topics, such as promoting resilience, digital citizenship, and cross-cultural understanding, could further strengthen the home-school partnership. Additionally, the school is considering developing a more systematic approach to tracking students' personal development over time, to help to ensure that all students benefit equally from the various initiatives in place.

Overall, the SMSC development at GES is a strength of the school, fostering well-rounded, responsible, and respectful individuals. The leadership team has successfully created an environment where students feel valued and engaged, and where moral, social, and cultural learning is seamlessly integrated into daily school life. By expanding opportunities for peer mentoring, increasing structured discussions on global and ethical issues, and strengthening parental involvement, the school can further enhance its already strong SMSC provision in alignment with BSO standards.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety is good.

The health and safety provisions at GES demonstrate a strong commitment to student and staff welfare, aligning closely with the British Schools Overseas (BSO) standards. The school has implemented clear procedures to ensure safety across all areas, including morning routines, specialist classrooms, and safeguarding measures. These protocols contribute to a secure and well-managed environment, fostering a culture of wellbeing for students, staff, and parents alike.

A significant strength of GES is its structured approach to morning routines, where a large team of non-teaching staff efficiently manages the arrival of students via buses and cars. This ensures a smooth and safe transition into the school premises, minimising potential hazards. Inside the school, access to certain rooms is carefully controlled, requiring students to be accompanied by staff where necessary. These measures align with the BSO expectations for a safe learning environment.

The school's approach to health and safety within specialist classrooms, particularly science laboratories, is commendable. With a designated lab technician ensuring the correct handling of materials and chemicals, and the presence of fire and hazard emergency equipment, GES meets high safety standards. Observations of lessons confirmed that students consistently wear appropriate protective gear, such as lab coats, goggles, and gloves, reinforcing a culture of responsibility and risk management. This level of precaution ensures compliance with BSO standards related to student safety in practical learning environments.

Safeguarding policies at GES are comprehensive and well-implemented. The use of color-coded lanyards for staff and visitors enhances security, making it easy to identify individuals on site. The school's adherence to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* guidelines, with annual safeguarding training for both teaching and non-teaching staff, ensures that all members of the school community remain informed and vigilant. Furthermore, the bilingual nature of safeguarding policies in English and Arabic ensures accessibility for all stakeholders. Staff demonstrate a proactive approach to reporting concerns, and the leadership team prioritises student welfare, responding swiftly to any issues. This transparency fosters a trusting environment where students feel comfortable seeking help from trusted adults.

The *Cambridge Wellbeing* Programme is a defining feature of the school's commitment to student welfare. Across different age phases, tailored initiatives are in place to address emotional and mental wellbeing. EYFS students benefit from a pictorial communication system, enabling them to express emotional needs in a safe and accessible manner. In KS1 and 2, the open-door policy for students requiring support and initiatives such as "The Good News Call" reflect a proactive approach to positive reinforcement and behaviour management. These initiatives contribute to a nurturing environment where students feel valued and supported.

Assemblies are another effective tool used to promote student wellbeing, with engaging and interactive formats that encourage self-reflection and personal growth. The recent example of an assembly on creativity highlights how GES successfully instils confidence and self-belief in students.

A key strength of GES is its dedicated wellbeing team, with staff members assigned to each age phase. This structured approach ensures consistency in welfare provision while allowing for tailored strategies to meet the diverse needs of different student groups. The school's emphasis on both physical and mental wellbeing demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of student welfare, reinforcing the community-focused ethos of the school.

While GES excels in many areas of health and safety, there are potential areas for development to enhance its provision further. Conducting periodic health and safety audits, with student and parent feedback incorporated, could strengthen existing procedures and ensure ongoing improvements. Increasing student-led wellbeing initiatives, such as peer mentoring or student safety committees, could empower students to take an active role in their wellbeing and safety.

The school's proactive approach, combined with its commitment to wellbeing, fosters an environment where students feel safe, supported, and encouraged to thrive. Continuous reflection and refinement of policies will further enhance GES's already strong health and safety culture.

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

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

The governance, ownership, and staffing structure at GES fully meets BSO standards, ensuring a well-managed and strategically guided school environment. The governing body has a clear structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities, allowing it to act in the best interests of students while maintaining compliance with BSO regulations. Governors focus on continuous school improvement by providing strategic oversight without micromanaging, allowing the senior leadership team to effectively handle daily operations. They also prioritise regular performance reviews, using objective data analysis, stakeholder feedback, and external inspections to inform decision-making.

Financial stewardship is a significant strength, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently to sustain high educational standards. Governors play a key role in safeguarding policies, ensuring that student welfare remains a top priority. Policies are robust and effectively implemented to protect both students and staff. Additionally, the curriculum is carefully monitored to align with UK educational standards while remaining culturally relevant to the international setting of the school.

GES maintains a meticulously organised and comprehensive register of all staff and adults interacting with students. The Single Central Register includes records of past and current employees, confirming their legal right to work and verifying necessary criminal record checks. Recruitment processes are rigorous, ensuring that only qualified teachers are appointed. Effective retention strategies help mitigate external influences that could impact staff stability, contributing to consistent educational quality.

Professional development programs, induction processes, and mentoring initiatives enhance teaching effectiveness, ensuring that staff remain engaged and well-supported. The school leadership fosters a culture of collaboration and engagement, reinforcing staff commitment to delivering a high-quality British-style education. This structured and proactive approach to governance, ownership, and staffing supports the overall success of the school, aligning strongly with BSO expectations.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The quality of the premises and accommodation at GES meets the BSO standards and is good.

Despite the limitations of space, the school effectively maximises the available areas to create a stimulating learning environment. The playground walls feature inspiring murals depicting various habitats, which enhance the educational atmosphere. Some classrooms and specialist facilities are relatively compact, but strategic timetabling and smaller group arrangements mitigate these challenges. While narrow corridors serve as additional teaching spaces, they can cause congestion during movement times. The school has managed these issues effectively, ensuring that the building can be safely evacuated within five to six minutes in the event of an emergency.

The school campus includes a range of specialist facilities that contribute to a well-rounded educational experience. These include sports areas, a swimming pool, well-stocked libraries, science laboratories, and a school theatre. The corridor displays are well-maintained and contribute to a positive and engaging learning environment. Importantly, GES is a safe place for students, with security measures in place to monitor access and maintain a secure environment.

The maintenance of the premises is of excellent quality, reflecting the school's commitment to providing a clean, safe, and well-kept environment. A dedicated team of highly skilled support staff ensures that any hazards are promptly addressed and that the site remains litter-free throughout the school day. Communication between staff and the maintenance team is highly efficient, and a planned maintenance program ensures that necessary repairs and repainting are completed every summer. The school also implements strict security procedures, with ID checks for visitors, constant supervision, and locked gates that are monitored by security guards. CCTV cameras provide additional safety, and emergency drills are regularly conducted, followed by debriefing sessions to address any arising issues. Recently, the fire alarm system was upgraded to ensure it can be heard in outdoor areas, and fire safety equipment is regularly inspected with appropriate certification in place. Laboratories are equipped with essential safety equipment, including fume cupboards, and internet security measures are in place to protect students and ICT systems.

Hygiene and accessibility standards are met through well-maintained washrooms and changing room facilities, with hot and cold water supplies that do not pose a scalding risk. Filtered drinking water is clearly marked, and students are encouraged to refill their water bottles at stations to reduce plastic waste and promote environmental sustainability.

The medical facilities at GES are highly effective, providing well-equipped clinics staffed by qualified doctors and nurses. The clinic includes treatment and isolation rooms, as well as access to restroom facilities. Medicines are securely stored in locked cupboards or refrigerators, and medical records, including treatment logs and vaccination details, are meticulously maintained. Parents are informed by text or phone call when their child receives

medical attention. Although the school does not cater to students with complex medical needs, provisions such as wheelchairs are available for students with mobility issues.

The building is well-lit, ventilated, and maintained at a comfortable temperature. Its layout allows for natural airflow, while blinds provide shade from direct sunlight. Music rooms are positioned to minimise distractions and are soundproofed to ensure effective learning. Furniture, fixtures, and fittings are kept in good condition and appropriately cater to students' needs.

Outdoor spaces at GES are well-designed for physical education, recreation, and social interaction. Facilities include multiple outdoor yards, a football court, a basketball court, a running track, a gymnasium, and a covered swimming pool area. Early Years and KS1 students benefit from a dedicated playground designed to support gross motor skills, role play, and active play. Additional playground areas have markings that encourage creative and structured play, and all play areas provide shaded seating spaces. The secure outdoor space for Foundation Stage enhances curriculum opportunities by enabling students to engage in outdoor learning activities.

Overall, the premises and accommodation at GES are well-maintained, safe, and conducive to learning. While space constraints present some challenges, the school successfully manages these through effective scheduling, infrastructure improvements, and strategic use of available resources. The strong emphasis on security, hygiene, and maintenance ensures that students can learn in a safe, comfortable, and stimulating environment.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents is excellent, and a strength of the school.

The partnership between the school and parents is highly effective, demonstrating a strong commitment to communication, collaboration, and inclusivity. The school has established a welcoming environment where parents feel actively involved in their children's education. A variety of engagement initiatives, such as FS1 Grandparents' Day, a community choir, and opportunities to support reading, foster a sense of community. The school provides multiple communication channels, including a parent/student handbook, newsletters and an active social media presence, ensuring that parents are well-informed about school activities and developments.

Workshops, such as the mathematics active learning session, equip parents with the necessary tools to support their children's learning at home. The bi-annual magazine, *MessaGES*, celebrates achievements across academics, sports, and the arts, reinforcing the school's commitment to a holistic education. Parents express a deep sense of trust in the school, describing it as a family-oriented institution where every child is valued and known by name. This personal approach contributes to a strong and supportive learning environment.

The effectiveness of communication is further reflected in the ease with which parents can access school staff and receive timely updates. The school's website serves as a comprehensive hub of information, offering details on the curriculum, policies and safeguarding measures. Additionally, parents receive annual letters that include contact details for administrative officers, ensuring clear lines of communication.

Policies related to admissions, attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing are readily available through the website, parent portals, and school publications. Health and safety protocols, first aid guidelines, and links to key policies are also provided in the student/parent handbook. While student attainment results are not publicly posted online, they are celebrated through the annual Excellence Awards ceremony and shared via social media.

Parents receive detailed updates on their child's progress through termly consultations and written reports. These reports, generated by the school's assessment systems, include information on attainment, attendance, behaviour, and future targets. In EYFS, attainment is measured against early learning goals, while in primary and secondary education, students are assessed based on expected age-related benchmarks. For students requiring additional support, individualised learning plans or education plans are developed and shared with parents, ensuring that each child's needs are met.

Google Classroom serves as an additional tool for providing information and resources to support learning both in school and at home. Parents appreciate the structured approach to reporting and value the parent-teacher meetings that follow report distributions. They feel reassured that their children are recognised as individuals, with personalised attention given to their academic and personal development.

The school's commitment to transparency and collaboration is further demonstrated by its willingness to share data with inspectors, including admission and attendance records. This level of openness reflects a strong partnership with parents, ensuring that they remain engaged and informed in their child's educational journey.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The complaints procedure at GES fully meets BSO standards, ensuring that concerns from parents, students, and staff are handled efficiently, fairly, and transparently.

The process prioritises student well-being and fosters trust within the school community. The complaints policy is easily accessible through multiple platforms, including the school's website, the parent/student handbook, and the teachers' handbook. This ensures that all stakeholders are well-informed about the procedure. To further enhance accessibility, the school could introduce a dedicated complaints section on its website with a clear step-by-step guide.

Informal concerns are acknowledged within 24 hours to encourage early resolution, while formal complaints receive a response within five working days. Parents are updated on actions taken within 15 days, ensuring transparency and timely communication. The escalation process is clearly structured: initial concerns are addressed by senior leaders, unresolved issues are reviewed by the managing director, and, if necessary, an independent panel of three individuals makes the final decision. The managing director then communicates the final resolution and recommendations to parents, accompanied by a formal written summary.

Parents appreciate the school's open communication and swift resolution of concerns. This structured, responsive approach aligns fully with BSO expectations, reinforcing accountability and trust within the school community.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school is good.

The leadership and management at GES demonstrate a clear vision, strong values, and a commitment to continuous improvement, aligning well with BSO standards. Despite financial and infrastructural constraints, the leadership team effectively fosters a high-quality learning environment through strategic planning, staff development, and a focus on community engagement. While there are significant strengths in leadership, there are also areas for development that could enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of school improvement initiatives.

A notable strength of the leadership team is its ability to inspire and empower staff. With a significant proportion of locally hired teachers, professional development is a priority, ensuring that teaching remains aligned with the British curriculum while being responsive to the local context. Leaders provide regular training, mentoring, and opportunities for skill enhancement, particularly focusing on the development of middle leaders. This has strengthened staff confidence and expertise, ensuring that leadership is distributed effectively across different levels of the school. Setting clear expectations and offering constructive feedback supports a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. However, while there is a strong emphasis on teacher training, further development in coaching and peer mentoring could enhance professional growth and consistency in instructional practices across all key stages.

Strategic planning is evident in the implementation of the School Improvement Plan, which sets clear priorities for school development. To maximise its impact, there is a need for more clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and systematic monitoring of progress. While leaders have a strong vision for improvement, goals are not always measurable or reviewed regularly enough, which limits accountability and the drive for sustained progress. The school is seeking to establish more structured review cycles and utilise data-driven decision-making to help track the effectiveness of initiatives more precisely.

Resource management is another area where leadership excels, particularly given the infrastructural limitations faced by the school. Leaders have been effective in making the most of available resources, ensuring that learning environments remain engaging, structured, and conducive to student progress. Continued investment in infrastructure is necessary to support long-term growth and maintain high educational standards. Exploring additional funding opportunities, such as partnerships, grants, or external sponsorship, could help alleviate some of the financial pressures and allow for further improvements to facilities.

A defining characteristic of the school's leadership is its emphasis on community engagement. The leadership team actively fosters an inclusive and respectful school culture, ensuring that students, parents, and staff feel valued and connected. Transparent communication and efforts to involve families in school life have helped establish a strong sense of partnership

between home and school. This collaborative approach enhances student well-being and academic success. The school is considering increasing opportunities for parental involvement in some decision-making processes.

Another strength of the leadership team is its ability to maintain high expectations for both staff and students while providing the necessary support structures for success. Students benefit from a challenging yet nurturing academic environment, while teachers receive professional guidance that enables them to deliver high-quality instruction. This balance of high standards with a supportive approach has contributed to a positive school culture where both staff and students are motivated to achieve their full potential. To build on this success, leadership could focus on further embedding a culture of distributed leadership, ensuring that decision-making is collaborative and that staff at all levels feel empowered to contribute to school-wide improvement initiatives.

Ultimately, leadership and management at GES demonstrate resilience, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to educational excellence. By continuing to refine strategic planning, expanding professional development opportunities, strengthening parental engagement, and seeking innovative solutions to financial constraints, the leadership team can further enhance the school's long-term success. Their ability to navigate challenges while maintaining high standards and fostering a strong school community is commendable.