

BSME Accreditation Visit Report

**Sharjah English School
Sharjah
United Arab Emirates**

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1. Context

1.1 What are the key contextual factors?

Sharjah English School (SES) is a co-educational independent school for children aged 3-18 years. It operates under the auspices of the Sharjah Education Zone of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The school is designated as a 'private community school', which recognises that it was established to cater for the large British community of Sharjah, to provide an education that accorded with UK needs and requirements. The school is required to follow certain federal and local laws and directives, for example on the allocation of curriculum time to Arabic language and Islamic Studies.

The board of governors devised the school's constitution in 1975, updating it in 1978. It operates as a non-profit organisation.

The school opened a secondary section in 2005 and just afterwards, moved to a new site. It and some of the facilities were provided by the Ruler of Sharjah. The latest phase of building, the Performing Arts Centre, was completed in September 2011 and opened for students later in the year. The final sections of the building, the library and auditorium, were officially opened in May 2012.

The opening of the secondary section was in response to parental pressure, concerned with their children having to commute to Dubai. The first enrolment in secondary was 33 students, rising to 260 this year.

Apart from inspection visits by examination boards and local authorities, there has not been a full school inspection or accreditation since 1997.

The school has identified the following as barriers to providing high quality education:

- Pressure of teaching time, caused by the mixture of MoE and UK National Curriculum (NC) requirements.
- The dearth of high quality Arabic language teachers.
- The time involved in obtaining compulsory annual licences.
- The financial constraints inherent in running a small school.

1.1 British nature of the school.

The school is well above the standard required by British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) for accreditation.

The appearance, nature and ethos of the school are recognisably British. An original founding imperative was to provide an education based on UK principles, procedures and a curriculum that would permit children to join or re-join the UK education system without disadvantage at any stage.

UK passport holders comprise the largest student cohort. The majority of students continue their education in the UK, or at other British schools internationally.

All teaching and management posts are advertised in the UK press.

The school is organized according to the pastoral structures used in English schools. The school house system is successfully implemented: children take a keen interest through assemblies, sporting activities and house competitions.

The school council, prefects and house captains contribute towards the whole school ethos.

As well as fully implementing the curriculum for England, assessments are based on national standards from the UK.

British practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting and annual review meetings.

All communications from the school to families and students are provided in English only, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website.

The importance of extra-curricular provision including clubs and school trips, is in line with British best practice.

The school celebrates special events in the UK, for example the Royal Wedding, Remembrance Day and the London Olympics.

Texts, materials, educational equipment and software are UK-sourced.

Parents are supportive of the British nature of the curriculum. Interviews with parents, suggested they appreciated the inclusiveness and high quality of education delivered at SES.

The school is an active member of BSME.

2. Quality of teaching and learning

2.1 How effective is teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching and learning are above the standard required by BSME. Students enjoy their lessons. Across all phases, nearly all students are engaged and focussed. Students were overwhelmingly positive about their learning. In primary school classes, the quality of discussion clearly indicated that students are enthusiastic learners.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the quality of learning and teaching is consistently above or well above the standard. Teachers are highly proficient practitioners, ably assisted by diligent teaching assistants and parent helpers. Well implemented planning systems based on the teachers' good knowledge of each child's abilities and needs enables them to use a range of skilful interventions to enrich and extend the children's learning experience.

In nearly all lessons, high expectations of behaviour, personal responsibility and achievement underpin all the lessons and activities. Examples of outstanding lessons were seen across the curriculum. For instance, the younger children touch, feel, explore and talk about materials used in table top creative activities and in practical science lessons.

The good use of effective teaching tools such as interactive whiteboards, enrich the learning and provide opportunities for highly effective student discussion. Effective teacher assessment strategies and marking are informative and contribute to both the children's understanding and the effectiveness of planning. The observed use of peer assessment in Key Stage 1 encouraged all students to try their best and to understand the criteria for success.

In nearly all classes in Early Years and Key Stage 1, the children's learning is highly successful. This is because of the variety of teaching strategies used, accurate and informative assessment and the quality of relationships.

The high quality of outcomes continues in Key Stage 2. Students enjoy their lessons and give their full attention and effort. They are very focused on the tasks set, and work together actively to achieve learning objectives. They are particularly good at working in pairs or small groups, as observed in the majority of Key Stage 2 lessons, for example when students were asked to discuss the differences between schools in England and India in a Year 4 literacy lesson.

In Key Stage 2, all lessons met the standard required: a significant proportion was well above the standard. Learning objectives are consistently shared with students and revisited in a plenary. Planning is methodical, consistent and differentiates work well for various abilities: this is clearly transferred into practice in lessons. Teaching assistants are used effectively, and work with a variety of ages and abilities. In a Year 6 English lesson, a group led by a learning support assistant acted out the poems studied which helped their understanding and enjoyment.

Students are very well organised, motivated and used to the expected routines, which enables them to progress and achieve very well. Students are kept on task with the use of praise and rewards, such as house points.

Assessment for learning (AfL) was evident in some lessons and used effectively: in a Year 5 lesson, where students had to rate their own understanding privately, but for the teachers attention.

The best lessons were differentiated, included AfL, and involved the students working together to achieve the task set. Students are keen to learn and pay close attention to instructions. Teachers encourage students to work independently from the teacher, but with a partner, and this is most effective. Resources are more than adequate and teachers use these very effectively. A key development target is to ensure further use and integration of ICT to enhance lessons even further. Work is marked well and rewards children for their efforts and attainment. The most effective marking, observed in Year 6 literacy, tells the students what they did well, offers thought provoking comments to target the next stage of learning and often has comments from students who have responded to the teacher's comments.

In the secondary part of the school, nearly all lessons were good or better. In a few lessons, where activities were mainly teacher-led or which did not sufficiently challenge students, learning was less effective. Learning objectives were shared with the students. Students were confident in expressing themselves clearly when asking or answering questions. Differentiation to meet individual needs was evident with effective support from learning support assistants. Teachers' subject knowledge was secure.

The best lessons were characterised by high expectations, pace and energy. In these lessons, students were stimulated by active involvement in their learning and enthusiastic teachers. Students were eager to learn, and teachers provided appropriate levels of challenge. Effective questioning techniques facilitated higher order thinking skills. There was a good level of interaction between the teacher and students. Students' contributions were valued and praised. Teachers promoted independent learning. It was further enhanced through paired activities and group work. Examples of good practice were observed throughout the key stages, and across all subjects monitored.

In a Key Stage 4 science lesson, the teacher effectively employed assessment for learning techniques to ensure students had the opportunity to reflect and refine their understanding. In Key Stage 5, small class sizes enable the teachers to give students more individual attention. Students responded well to the high quality of teaching observed.

Students across all key stages are aware of their own targets and are confident, articulate and willing to discuss their achievements. In a Year 10 English lesson on "The Crucible", students were able to explain the meaning of their grades and feedback from marking. In the mathematics department, as part of their assessment procedures, students' understanding is analysed at individual question level, to inform future learning and teaching.

Opportunities to ensure that excellent practice in teaching is spread across the school are under-developed. Although the school's performance management process is satisfactory, it is relatively informal, which limits its impact on raising standards.

Lesson observations and book reviews confirmed that nearly all students were given guidance about how to progress to the next level. The quality and effectiveness of the advice however, varied across the key stages and subjects. Parents and students are given summative information about progress and levels or grades through established reporting procedures. Formative feedback and on-going assessments are well established.

Students are adept users of technology, and many examples were observed of the effective use of the interactive white board. In a Year 3 class, the board was used by groups of students to answer challenging questions on perimeter and area. The school has recently introduced 'Edmodo', a secure educational social network site which enables teachers and students to work and collaborate on line. Students interviewed spoke highly of the opportunities afforded by 'Edmodo' to broaden and deepen their knowledge base in science, history, geography and PE.

2.2 How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?

The provision the school makes for the care, guidance and support for all its students is well above the standard required.

There is a powerful sense of care and support permeating the whole school campus. Students across all key stages are happy young people who are proud of their school and thrive on the learning experiences that it provides.

Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers quickly develop a thorough understanding of each child which enables the nurturing of a very homely environment. Parents feel that this has a major impact in ensuring their children thrive at the school.

Throughout the primary years, each child is recognized and valued for their individual needs and aspirations. Teachers display a high level of care. Students' needs are met by effective special needs provision, where appropriate.

Students' development, progression and achievements are celebrated and encouraged throughout the school, with effective teaching and initiatives such as the House structure, play-ground buddies and the school council. Children felt these initiatives helped their school to be very good, and gave them confidence and made them happy to attend. The school has implemented effective practices such as target setting and peer assessment to provide clear guidance on next steps in learning.

Within lessons, teachers plan activities that encourage children to work effectively in pairs and groups that encourage high levels of mutual support and involvement in learning. The school successfully encourages all children to become independent learners enabled and empowered to manage themselves and enjoy the rigour of a challenging and exciting curriculum.

The school has implemented a high level of learning support through dedicated specialist teachers who work closely with class teachers to ensure that all children's needs are addressed. The school formally values the student voice through the school council and playground buddies provide a safe and supportive environment for all students.

The head of Key Stage 3 leads the tutor team effectively in the planning and delivery of a newly organized programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). In addition to providing opportunities for personal growth and development, learning and achievement are explicitly celebrated. An inspiring assembly focused on the new rewards system, stressing the importance of both the academic and pastoral elements of education. There were confident contributions from individuals and groups. In a subsequent Year 7 tutor period, students completed the key stage quiz with enthusiasm.

In Key Stage 4, an on-line tracker and academic tutoring system is being piloted this year to assist established processes for monitoring individual student progress and achievement. Throughout Key

Stage 5, students are provided with a high level of personal care and learning, reflecting the quality of relationships established throughout the school and aided by smaller class sizes.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure a safe and caring environment. Feedback from focus groups, lesson observations and informal conversations with students clearly indicated a care for each other and the wider community, along with a concern for the environment. Students interviewed both formally and informally were articulate, courteous, self-assured and confident in speaking to adults.

There is a secure boundary wall and guards are present at the main gate, monitoring the flow of people in and out of the school and providing identification badges where appropriate. Shelters provide adequate shade for students. The infrastructure was seen to be in excellent condition. Supervision of students at break times, before and after school is well organised.

The two school nurses and a doctor are proactive in ensuring the delivery of comprehensive health care for all students and staff in the school. This includes first aid training and contributing to the taught curriculum, for example making healthy lunches in the primary school.

The school employs a careers counsellor for students in Year 9 and the sixth form, to ensure appropriate advice is given to students prior to starting Key Stage 4 and before university application. Homework diaries are comprehensive and valued by students.

Students with English as an additional language (EAL), special educational needs (SEN) and those who are able, gifted and talented are well supported and cared for. The secondary school has recently appointed a gifted and talented co-ordinator to provide a focus for development. EAL support is in place to raise standards of English through focused teaching, so that students can fully access the curriculum. In some cases, this involved one to one teaching. Students with SEN are well supported across the school by learning support assistants and teaching assistants. Individual educational plans are in place to meet specific learning needs.

2.3 How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?

Overall, the school is well above the standard required in providing a curriculum that meets the needs of students.

The school provides a broad range and balanced curriculum. All students in nursery and reception follow the Early Years and Foundation Stage curriculum. Differentiated activities and learning outcomes ensure all can access the curriculum, with the required level of support to meet individual needs. Through careful planning, they enjoy a wide range of activities and topics that encourage them to become independent learners at an early age. Teachers plan curriculum activities that stimulate speaking and listening skills and this greatly enhances progress in learning.

Students in Key Stage 1 follow British literacy and numeracy frameworks, alongside a good range of topics based on UK curriculum expectations. A broad and balanced curriculum is offered to the children. It is evident that the school has planned their thematic curriculum in order to maximise the learning time available. Evidence sources suggest that curriculum management and implementation is a strength: it has been a school priority.

At Key Stage 2, the school follows the National Curriculum for England and Wales in addition to meeting local educational obligations. Students choose between French and Arabic from Year 4 as their modern foreign language. Differentiated activities and learning outcomes ensure all students can access the curriculum, supported by the use of individual learning plans (IEPs) where appropriate.

Students continue to follow the National Curriculum throughout Key Stage 3. It is enhanced by the addition of music, PE, art, swimming, and design and technology.

At Key Stage 4, the school endeavours to respond to the needs of all students. In addition to studying four core subjects (including a choice of double or triple science), students select four from 11 optional subjects. PE, graphics and textiles are GCSE options added since 2009, responding to students' requests. Able students can take 10 GCSEs in addition to completing mathematics at the end of Year 10.

Provision at Key Stage 5 is flexible, responding where possible to the needs of individual students. Currently students can choose from 16 subjects. There are four possible routes through A-levels, culminating in 3, 4 or 5 A-levels, with the possibility of completing A2 Mathematics in Year 12. The school has a thriving extra-curricular activities programme across the school. All staff are involved in the delivery of activities and 88.5% of students across Key Stages 3 to 5 participate in the programme. Sports teams compete outside Sharjah with increasing success - for example the U16 netball team have recently secured a place in the Dubai Premier League. There is a full International Award programme in place from Years 10 to 13 and a range of other clubs for all interests from scuba diving to computer gaming. Students interviewed stated with pride that they have "too much" choice.

2.4 How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?

Sharjah English School maintains outstanding links with parents and the wider community. Regular informative written reports and consultation meetings with teachers keep parents well informed about their child's progress, level of attainment and attitudes to learning. Two full reports and five interim reports are sent home each year. Parents value the regular and informative parent – teacher meetings to discuss individual student achievements. These are well attended in both primary (99%) and secondary (80%). Parents feel they have good access to prompt and professional dialogue with teachers regarding their child's development.

Formal regular communications are maintained with nearly all parents, through the use of the 'SES Communicator' which provides regular and up to date key information as well as half-termly emailed newsletters and an attractive web-site. Parents praised the dedication demonstrated by staff in their high level of support and guidance of students during both school time and holidays, based on email communications.

An effective parent/teacher group successfully supports the school through a range of social and fundraising activities. This group has raised funds to support a range of initiatives such as providing playground shade. Parent volunteers provide a highly effective range of support in many of the primary classrooms. All parents interviewed highlighted the outstanding care and support all children receive and the high quality impact of all teachers on their child's school experience.

The school ensures parents are kept informed regarding educational developments and initiatives through a range of curriculum and information meetings throughout the year. Parents contribute to the overall direction of the school through their membership on the school governors' board. There are opportunities to meet both formally and informally with teachers and senior leaders, through a clearly understood 'Open door' policy. Parents value these opportunities for contact and felt welcomed and valued whenever they came into school.

The school is successful in promoting links with the local community. Students represent the school in a number of inter school activities, both sporting and academic. Links are also forged with local sporting clubs to enable students to pursue the development of their sporting talents. The school recognises it has an important role in developing the qualities of citizenship of all students, and actively supports a wide range of charities and good causes world-wide. Strong links are developed and maintained with local industries and businesses, which helps to strengthen the curriculum for older students. The school also has a long standing relationship with the local Higher College of Technology and supports up to 25 Emirati students in their professional development as teachers. Opportunities for enhancing professional dialogue are pursued through the collaboration, when appropriate, with other similar schools in both Sharjah and Dubai, as well as being an active partner in educational organisations such as BSME.

2.5 How well does the school prepare students for future learning?

The school is well above the standard required in this respect.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure smooth transition through the school from Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 5. Standards of work and behaviour records are transferred across all key stages. At Foundation Stage, meetings with parents and their children prior to entry, open days accompanied by an open door policy and staggered starts to limit the number of new students entering on any one day, ensure a personalised entry process.

At the end of Foundation Stage, meetings with Key Stage 1 teachers are supported with assessment data and folders of work to ensure a seamless transfer. The information is used to group students according to their needs.

Meetings between Year 6 teachers and Year 7 teachers help to smooth the transfer process. In addition, Year 7 teachers receive reading records, writing books, individual student on line profile and standardized assessments in English and mathematics. Teachers know their children.

During Year 6, visits to the secondary school are arranged, and senior school staff teach in the primary school. In addition, students are invited to secondary school events e.g. 'Battle of the Bands' and participate in after-school clubs. The head of Key Stage 3 meets with Year 6 teachers and prospective parents. New students are 'buddied' to smooth their transition. A range of assessment data accompanies each student and is used effectively to group students throughout Key Stage 3. During Year 9, students and parents receive information about subjects currently on offer Key Stage 4. Students are then polled to gauge interest. The school endeavours to take into account students' needs and desires, modifying the curriculum as appropriate. Cognitive ability test data and NC levels are used to help inform option choices.

Throughout Key Stage 4, students receive a wealth of information about the options for further study, through the PSHE programme and academic tutoring. Parents and students are encouraged to consult subject teachers either at the Options Evening or during school time. More specialised advice is provided by the careers department.

Key Stage 5 students receive good advice and help for progression to university. A few students who leave at the end of Year 12 are well supported by the head of Key Stage 5, in completing applications for American universities. In Year 13, students receive help and support with their personal statements and completing application forms for UK universities, including for Oxbridge. Vertical tutor groups provide opportunities for discussions between year groups. Again, specialist support is provided by the careers department. A number of outside speakers enhance provision.

Past students frequently visit the school and are actively involved in school events.

3. Standards achieved by pupils

3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?

The standards achieved by students are above the level required for BSME accreditation. Academic standards across the school are high, and progress made by many students is at least good. In some cases, it is exceptional.

At Foundation Stage, outcomes are consistently high. The majority of children achieved 7+ on the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile, with the number of children achieving 8+ for both reading and writing increasing. This is despite more challenging cohorts with lower average attainment, recently joining the school.

At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above or at least in line with that of students in the UK. The percentage of learners attaining level 2 and above in mathematics and English (reading and writing) in the last 3 years has been consistently higher than the UK average.

The good progress made throughout Key Stage 1 is maintained during Key Stage 2. Standards are above or at least in line with that of students in the UK. Those attaining level 4 and above in mathematics and English (reading and writing) is higher than the UK average. In 2012, 45% of students achieved level 5 in Key Stage 2 SATs tests compared to 39% in the UK; in literacy, 66% of students achieved level 5 compared to 36% in the UK. Students with SEN achieve to a comparable standard. The mathematics department is currently modifying the curriculum to provide level 6 learning opportunities.

The percentage of students achieving the top levels at the end of Key Stage 3 has shown consistent progress and has nearly doubled over the last 6 years. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is significantly above average compared to the UK. In 2011, 89% of SES students achieved 5 A*-Cs compared to the UK figure of 69.8%. In addition, 42% achieved the top grades, A or A*, compared to the UK average of 23.2%. Effective learning and teaching strategies within and across departments are increasingly allowing students to maximise their learning and progress.

Despite this good attainment, target setting is not as challenging as it could be, for students or for teachers. The school has identified this as an area for development.

At Key Stage 5, attainment is above average compared to the UK. 86% of SES students achieve A*-C grades compared to the UK average of 76%.

Students are gaining new knowledge, understanding and skills at a good rate across all key stages. High achieving students are provided with an appropriate level of challenge. A rigorous whole-school tracking system is being embedded across both the primary and secondary phases: the traffic-light system is used to assess levels of progress and value-added. The analysis of data across all key stages shows that most students achieve or exceed their targets.

3.2 How well are students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

The development of students' attitudes, values and personal qualities is well above the standard.

SES places a high priority on ensuring that the education and well-being of all students in the school are at the heart of any school policies, strategies and initiatives which are developed. It prides itself on being an inclusive school. The positive impact of this on students' attitudes and personal qualities is seen in lessons and around the school.

Student attendance is high. Attendance on day 2 of the accreditation visit was 92.5%, for example. The school has rigorous procedures in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Class teachers in the primary school and form tutors in the secondary record attendance and the school administrative team follow up absences and lateness. The school has identified the need to continue with the development of a systematic whole school approach with explicit targets and policies. The school reports attendance figures for individual students to parents. Good attendance is rewarded.

Throughout the school, students are well motivated and keen to learn. All students observed were well behaved in lessons and as they move around the school. From Foundation Stage to Key Stage 5, students behave well at break time. The behaviour policy is clearly understood and the application evident in classes across the school. Focus groups of students, who were interviewed, were confident, self-assured, courteous and polite. The Key Stage 5 students have high aspirations for their future.

Students are proud of their own achievements, but they clearly are proud to share in the achievements of their peers, too. This was evident in lessons throughout the school. Students in the secondary and primary school worked co-operatively and collaboratively with one another. They were attentive when their peers were talking and openly praised success. The students take account of each other's views and contribute effectively to class discussions.

Students are actively involved in a wide range of activities which includes charity drives, Model United Nations, International Award, music recitals, subject prefects and library duties.

4. Leadership and management of the school

4.1 How well is the school led and managed?

The Board of Governors make a strong and significant contribution towards the success of the school's leadership and management. The Board is comprised of nine full members with membership spread across parents and the wider community. Five others attend meetings by invitation, including the Principal and staff representative. They display a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There are highly effective working relationships with the school's leadership team: representing the views of the wider community is seen as an integral part of their responsibilities. Not all governors are experienced in effective long-term strategic planning, which could hinder the sustainability of school development.

Sharjah English School is very well led and expertly managed. The principal provides strong strategic leadership through a clear, articulated and shared vision that encourages all to achieve educational excellence.

The school leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, that enable them to be both held to account and hold others to account as they continuously seek further ways to improve the high standards of the school. Delegation enables staff to make a strong contribution to the effective development and progress of the school: they contribute by identifying and implementing strategies that impact on levels of achievement.

Through highly effective self-evaluation processes, clear priorities have been identified that involve wide-scale participation and evidence gathering. Accurate analysis has enabled the school to implement clear priorities for development through both phase and departmental improvement plans. The monitoring of development plans ensures all staff are aware and involved in the implementation of effective change.

A range of effective policies and strategies are fully implemented and monitored: this ensures a high level of consistent practice is embedded.

The school leadership team values highly the contribution made by all staff in ensuring each and every child/student succeeds. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are recognized as valued members of the school team. This has created a strong community of professionals who support, encourage and work highly effectively.

A significant proportion of the leadership and management team are recently appointed. Despite this, the team has already had a highly positive impact on the school.

5. Quality of provision

5.1 How good are the accommodation, the staffing levels and the resources?

The overall quality of the premises is outstanding. The campus is purpose built with EYFS, primary and secondary blocks, as well as excellent sports facilities and a new performing arts building. The grounds are expertly landscaped, colourful and attractive, offering a calm backdrop to all areas of the site. The sports facilities include a 25 metre pool, sports hall and large playing field with viewing stand. The performing arts building offers students in primary and secondary access to a well-resourced library, music rooms, an auditorium for school productions and a new ICT suite (for secondary school students). Primary students have their own dedicated ICT room. All classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards and the school is looking into the feasibility of purchasing iPads to support and enhance learning further.

Specialist science laboratories, art rooms, the library, the auditorium, an art and graphics room, a design technology workshop and textiles classroom, enhance students' learning experiences. Dedicated music rooms, lined with acoustic tiles support the teaching of a wide range of musical instruments

The school has sufficient staff and resources to effectively deliver the curriculum offered. All primary and secondary teachers are UK trained with recognised qualifications. Primary teachers are generally allocated to the key stage they feel most comfortable with. Subject specialists in primary include French, PE, swimming, Arabic and Islamic Studies. Secondary teachers teach their subject specialism in dedicated areas, with students moving from room to room.

SES is committed to on-going staff development. Staff have recently presented training to colleagues in-house and they are also able to attend local courses.

The school has correctly identified the need to invest further in musical provision in terms of instruments. It is also seeking to improve further the provision of high quality professional development for all staff.

6. Overall effectiveness of the school ?

6.1 How successful is the school?

Overall, SES provides a quality of education that is well above the standard required for BSME accreditation.

The school has high expectations of all its students: they respond by making good or better progress in their lessons and in external examinations.

The school is highly successful in enabling all students to develop their personal skills and qualities: students are thoughtful, well behaved, treat others with respect and have well-developed social skills.

SES has implemented a curriculum that engages students effectively and matches their needs, interests and aspirations.

The school is held in high regard by the wider community and parents. The students are proud to be members of the school community and value the opportunities it provides.

6.2 What the school does well

Highly effective pastoral support and a positive inclusive ethos, underpins the work of the school effectively.

Overall, students' achievements are well above standard. The school has implemented a broad and balanced curriculum, proactively responding to the need of students, providing challenge and encouraging all students to excel.

Senior leaders under the guidance of the principal provide outstanding leadership and management. The vision of the school is shared effectively, and is focused on the continued drive to further enhance the high standards already achieved. Collegiality and collaborative planning contributes to a common drive and purpose that is supportive and effective.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities provide students with the opportunity to develop their interests.

Students show genuine concern for the needs of others and display a high level of self-awareness and confidence. They listen to their teachers and each other, taking a shared responsibility for their learning. Behaviour is exemplary.

Students were vocal in their appreciation of the time teachers gave to students within the school day, after school and at week-ends.

Teaching standards across the school are high. The large majority of lessons monitored were good or better. None was unsatisfactory. The most successful lessons were clearly planned and delivered, demonstrating secure and enthusiastic subject knowledge. A brisk pace and confident use of appropriate technology engaged students in their learning. In the best lessons, teachers used a range of questioning skills, differentiation, and appropriate challenge. In addition, they provided opportunities for students to develop as independent learners.

Teachers and support staff provide a high level of care and guidance to all students, helping to create a positive atmosphere that celebrates each individual's achievements. Appropriate policies and procedures regarding the health and safety and well-being of students are in place.

Administration staff are highly effective in supporting the smooth running of the school.

Highly effective communications between all stakeholders ensures information is shared and opportunities for participation in decision making maximised.

The school provides high quality accommodation. The site inspires: everywhere, learning is celebrated.

6.3 What should the school do to improve further?

- Develop opportunities to ensure that the many examples of excellent practice in teaching, are embedded in all areas.
- Build on current practice, to formalise the school's performance management process to further raise standards.
- Ensure governors are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support the leadership team successfully in effective long-term strategic planning, that will secure the sustainability of a school of excellence.

6.4 Does the school meet the standards for being an accredited BSME school?

SES has significant aspects that are well above, and all other elements are above the standard.

The Accreditation Team is recommending to the BSME Executive Committee that the school **does** meet the accreditation requirements.

Evidence source/s

During the accreditation visit, 47 full- or part- lessons were observed, school documentation and policies were analysed, students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions, both formal and informal, were held with board members, senior staff, middle managers and a range of teachers and groups across all phases. Focus groups of students and parents were also interviewed. Three whole school days were monitored.