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Hartland International School, Dubai

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 14 April to 17 April 2025

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Age Group: 3 to 18
Report Published: 29 May 2025
Report Reference Number: 5/63/2025

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

The British Schools Overseas standards are as follows:

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

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

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

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

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	**Outstanding**
Grade 2	**Good**
Grade 3	**Satisfactory**
Grade 4	**Inadequate**

Proportions used in the report

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

Information about the school

Hartland International School (HIS) opened in September 2015 and is situated in Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum City, Dubai. The campus is at the centre of the developing Sobha Hartland community.

Children in the nursery and reception follow the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum. Pupils in primary school and key stage 3 follow the national curriculum for England (NCfE). In key stage 4, pupils choose from 16 GCSE or IGCSE subjects. In the sixth form, students can opt for A levels and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) level 3 National Diploma. Most students progress to university in a range of countries.

The school has 2,009 pupils on roll aged from three to 18 years, making it larger than many similar all-through schools in the region. There are 325 children in the early years provision, 1,004 in the primary school, and 680 in the secondary school, of whom 100 are in the sixth form.

The school is an international community with pupils representing over 107 nationalities speaking 64 different languages. The largest ethnic groups are Arab (20%), British (17%) and Indian (10%).

The school is inclusive in nature, catering for pupils with a range of abilities and aptitudes. There are 81 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is 1,219, representing almost two-thirds of enrolments. Just over 61% of pupils have a first language other than English and for some, English is the third or fourth language, which adds to the richness of the community.

Since 2022, the school has undergone extensive phased development, including new science laboratories, drama and art spaces, sixth-form facilities, and over 20 additional classrooms to support the rapid transition from a six- to an eight-form entry model.

One of the greatest challenges facing the school is its growth, which has been rapid in the previous three years, increasing from 1,020 in 2020-21 to a current population of 2,009. About 66% of Year 11 pupils joined the school during Years 7 to 11, with 25% joining in Year 10. At A level, 46% of students were new to Year 13 in 2024. There has been an upward trend in value added in most subjects over the previous three years.

Hartland International School is accredited by British Schools Middle East (BSME), the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) and the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE). The school won the SEND Inclusion Award (SENDIA) in April 2025.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

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

Inspectors visited 74 lessons. Thirty-three of the lessons visited were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. There were 25 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents, and members of the school's governing board.

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

Evaluation of the school

Hartland International School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

The school meets all of the BSO standards except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are therefore specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding. By the end of foundation stage 2 almost all children achieve outcomes that are significantly above the England average in literacy and communication and language. Girls slightly outperform boys.

Effective early reading strategies in primary help pupils to learn to read quickly and fluently with about 85% of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. By the end of Year 2, 91% of pupils meet the expected standard. In key stage 2, pupils read with fluency, expression, and understanding. They use ambitious vocabulary and write with increasing accuracy. In Year 6, pupils confidently organise their writing using a structured template, drawing on high-quality resources and prior modelling that have been expertly planned to deepen their understanding and support their independent thinking. By Year 6, 95% of pupils attain or exceed curriculum standards, compared to an England average of 72%.

In key stage 3, pupils deepen their knowledge of literary texts, analyse language with precision, and write with increasing sophistication and control. They speak and present confidently, using subject-specific vocabulary fluently across a range of contexts.

In Year 11 English, pupils engage with a wide range of ambitious texts, including speeches and non-fiction, enabling them to explore diverse perspectives and develop sophisticated analytical responses. About 37% of pupils achieve the high grades of 9 to 7 in GCSE English language and 53% in English literature, significantly above the England average. On average, a third of pupils typically achieve the highest grades of 9 to 8 year on year. This is significantly higher than England averages. All pupils make

exceptional progress, exceeding expectations by achieving, on average, one grade higher than their predicted grades. Girls perform better than boys by 10 percentage points.

At A level, 67% of students achieve significantly above the England average at A* to A in English literature. The number of pupils taking this subject remains small.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** is outstanding. Pupils achieve standards that are above international averages. They make sustained and rapid progress through each key stage. Although there is a small variation in attainment between different groups of pupils, all pupils including those with SEND and the most able make exceptionally good progress.

Children enter the Reception Year with knowledge and skills typical for their age. They build upon the learning completed in the first year of the foundation stage and make very good progress. By the end of Reception, most children have a deep understanding of numbers from one to 10. They can shape, rotate and manipulate shapes and can recognise when one quantity is greater or less than another. By the end of foundation stage 2, most children achieve a Good Level of Development and are well-prepared for their transition to the next stage phase.

As pupils progress through the primary phase, they all continue to make very good progress. Boys make faster progress than girls. By the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment is substantially greater than standards internationally with over 67% of pupils exceeding expected standards. This is the result of strong progress made in lessons and at home. Pupils can measure length, capacity and weight and can add and subtract one- and two-digit numbers up to 20.

Attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 are outstanding. Boys and girls attain very well and pupils of all abilities continue to make rapid and sustained progress. Boys' make slightly faster progress than girls. By the end of Year 6, 88% of pupils attain or exceed curriculum standards, compared to the England average of 73%.

By the end of key stage 3, pupils' attainment and progress remain outstanding. Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys. Pupils with SEND attain very well. Pupils become increasingly confident in using mathematics to solve word-based problems. In a Year

9 lesson, pupils explored standard form and applied it to everyday situations. They confidently converted different numbers to standard form.

In key stage 4, pupils deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and they become proficient in using mathematical methods and formulae to solve problems. Attainment is high and all pupils make very good progress. GCSE pass rates exceed international comparisons with 62% of Year 11 pupils achieving the highest GCSE grades of 9 to 7. On average, pupils achieve almost one grade higher than similar pupils internationally. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and the majority of both boys and girls achieve equally well.

In the sixth form, students' outcomes continue to be outstanding. A high proportion of students attained the top A* to A grades, demonstrating outcomes that are significantly above international averages. Progress is strong and sustained for almost all students. On average students achieve over a grade higher than similar students internationally.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding across all key stages. Boys and girls perform similarly, and pupils with SEND make strong progress relative to their starting points as a result of specifically tailored teaching and high-quality support.

Most children enter the EYFS with an understanding of the world that is below that typical for their age. Imaginative teaching, including virtual zoo visits, sparks children's scientific curiosity. By the end of EYFS, almost all children achieve at least a Good Level of Development in understanding the world.

As pupils progress through primary, they engage with diverse topics that build their scientific skills and knowledge. A strong emphasis on practical science helps pupils think as scientists. In key stage 1, they explore material changes, while in key stage 2, they investigate concepts of friction and reflection. This approach ensures that the majority of pupils leave key stage 2 with attainment well above international standards. In key stage 3, pupils further develop their investigative skills, such as exploring water pressure and responding to questions such as, 'Why is a blobfish bigger out of water?' By the end of Year 9, almost all pupils meet age-related expectations, with 73% exceeding them.

In Year 11, pupils confidently explain the complex, sequential stages of sewage treatment, using precise scientific vocabulary, demonstrating deep understanding

and making insightful real-world connections. By the end of key stage 4, GCSE outcomes significantly exceed international averages, with 89% achieving the high grades of 9 to 7 in biology, 61% in chemistry, and 72% in physics, compared to international averages of 45%.

At A level, most students achieve nearly one grade higher than their international peers in all three subjects. In lessons, students take ownership of their learning. For example, in a Year 13 biology lesson, students engaged in high-level scientific dialogue, confidently and collaboratively discussing the significance of DNA.

Attainment and progress in a range of **other subjects** are outstanding across the curriculum. Overall, boys, girls, EAL and pupils with SEND make consistent progress and maintain strong levels of performance across all other subjects.

In primary, pupils consistently achieve outstanding progress in art, design and technology, drama, geography, history, music, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, computing and physical education (PE). Pupils demonstrate critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills exceptionally well. As a result, they make rich and meaningful connections in their learning.

Attainment at GCSE in computer science, design technology, economics, French, geography, German, history, Mandarin, media studies, PE, psychology and Spanish are significantly above the average for England. Pupils consistently achieve outstanding results in the vast majority of other subjects at grades 9 to 7. For example, 75% of pupils achieved grades 9 to 7 in geography and 85% in history. Most pupils achieve at least one grade higher than their predicted grade in design technology, PE, media studies, Spanish, Mandarin and German. Pupils achieve almost one grade higher than their predicted grade in business studies, computer science and psychology.

At A level, most students show exceptional attainment, most notably with 75% gaining A* to A in media studies, 67% in geography, 50% in design technology and history, significantly outperforming the average for England. These outcomes demonstrate students' ability to think independently, communicate effectively, and apply knowledge in complex, real-world contexts. All students successfully completed their BTEC level 3 diploma qualification in business at Distinction or Distinction + level.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Part 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken in April 2025, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school

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

The quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

The curriculum is carefully planned and encompasses opportunities for pupils to develop both academically and socially so that they become citizens who can

contribute positively to modern-day society. The curriculum is British in character and provides a coherent learning experience for all pupils in the early years, primary and secondary phases.

Pupils display a very good understanding of life in Britain. They know that the UK consists of four countries, has a monarchy, and a parliament. They learn about the history of Britain including the Norman invasion, growth of empire, immigration and the world wars. Pupils know and understand that Britain is a multicultural society.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about British values within the confines of UAE law. They take part in democratic processes such as school council elections and leadership roles. Pupils show a strong sense of right and wrong and actively shape school rules through pupil council discussions. Their behaviour is exemplary.

Pupils appreciate the importance of individual liberty. They recognise that it is acceptable to be different and that people hold a range of different beliefs. As a result, they are tolerant of different views and ideas. They learn about different political systems across the world. They understand that recent pupil council discussions about canteen food involved listening to all views before agreeing on a proposal for change.

The curriculum ensures that pupils develop a secure understanding of the protected characteristics as outlined in UAE law, including age, disability, race, religion or belief, pregnancy, and maternity. While certain characteristics such as marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex, and sexual orientation are not addressed due to legal restrictions, pupils are actively encouraged to celebrate and appreciate different cultures and beliefs. They take pride in being in an inclusive school community that welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and faiths. The annual international day is a popular event where pupils experience different foods, costumes, music, songs and traditions from the large number of nationalities that make up the school community. Pupils enjoy a cultural exchange with pupils in a school in Lanchester, England. Pupils across all age groups participate in vertical mentoring and leadership, including sixth formers mentoring younger pupils through reading and house activities, fostering age inclusivity.

The curriculum is inclusive. It meets the needs of pupils of all abilities very well, including those with SEND. Provision of skills-based courses and pathways such as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and BTEC and

personalised curriculum plans allow pupils with additional needs to make very good rates of progress.

The curriculum also promotes the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) development of pupils very well, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to thrive beyond school. Staff prioritise pupils' well-being exceptionally well, creating a culture where pupils feel valued, supported, and safe. Consequently, the PSHE curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to learn about staying healthy, manage their emotions and seek support when needed. They know how to stay safe when online, how to deal with strangers and what constitutes a healthy diet. The recent introduction of a new well-being application has strengthened the ability of pupils to express their opinions and feelings and allows staff to quickly respond to pupils' needs and concerns. Pupils develop their understanding of relationships systematically through the PSHE curriculum. Parents are well informed on the content of this programme in line with local requirements.

There is an up-to-date careers guidance programme for pupils. This begins in the primary school where pupils explore different types of jobs and what it means to carry out different occupations. The school regularly invites guest speakers from the local community to share insights into their careers; for example, what it means to be an entrepreneur. In the secondary school, pupils build on this foundation through a well-planned careers programme led by the future pathways counsellor. Almost all sixth-form students successfully progress to highly competitive universities, with the vast majority securing their first-choice placement.

A wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities enriches the curriculum and deepens pupils' learning. Pupils learn about sustainable fashion design, engineering through participation in the F1 in Schools programme and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Participation in musical productions such as the 'Wizard of Oz' and 'Matilda' are extremely popular. Pupils debate world matters and lead several sports clubs and activities including the pupil council, Eco Warriors Club, World Scholars and the Model United Nations programme. The extended project qualification (EPQ) deepens sixth-form students' study skills.

The curriculum makes extensive use of the local environment. Mathematics and physics pupils, for example, study the architecture of the Burj Khalifa and pupils visit the Louvre in Abu Dhabi.

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

Teaching and learning are exceptional from early years to the sixth form, consistently securing excellent outcomes for pupils. The school builds its framework for teaching on well-chosen, research-driven principles, clearly articulated through The Hartland Way. Uncompromising expectations and a deeply-embedded ethos of kindness, respect and courage underpin teaching and permeate every classroom. Pupils, including those in the early years, learn to collaborate and be reflective learners. Pupils show exemplary learning behaviours in all classes, demonstrating independence, curiosity, and resilience. The climate for learning is orderly and highly respectful. Pupils want to learn and do well.

Teachers' strong subject knowledge is a consistent feature of teaching. Teachers use their expert knowledge to ask questions skilfully and present new learning in engaging ways to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers use modelling exceptionally well to help pupils understand what is possible. In an English lesson, pupils were inspired to write by reading the teacher's and published authors' biographies. Teachers make astute choices about the resources they use, including reading texts, ensuring that they challenge, motivate, and inspire pupils. In a Year 9 science lesson, pupils relished the opportunity to use an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot to support their research into radiation.

Teachers are ambitious for pupils' achievement. They prepare pupils well for examinations and the next stage of their education. Teachers challenge pupils to think deeply about important concepts and nurture their attitudes and values. In a Year 12 English lesson, for example, the teacher used the poem 'An Easy Passage' skilfully to generate sophisticated discussion about female gender roles and social responsibility.

Teachers know their pupils very well and use assessment to tailor learning insightfully, deal with misconceptions, accelerate progress and plan effective next steps. The individual education plans and passports for pupils with SEND contain detailed information about their needs and strategies that support them. Teachers use a range of assessment information to adapt learning tasks to respond to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, learn and progress exceptionally well. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher and support staff successfully targeted key pupils to check how well they were able to convert pounds into pence and back again using a range of concrete manipulatives. As a result, the teacher and support staff quickly resolved pupils' misconceptions.

Teachers teach basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy well across most of the school. However, in a small number of lessons, pupils do not write accurately. In these lessons, teachers do not correct spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes as quickly as they should and therefore allow errors to persist.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils learn to read fluently quickly, including those new to English. The libraries are well stocked with fiction and non-fiction books aligned closely to the curriculum with different genres to match pupils' interests. The silent reading club is popular. The school encourages parents to share their love of reading to inspire pupils to read widely and often.

The school ensures that teachers continuously develop their skills and knowledge in highly effective teaching methods. The school's professional learning communities, and its collaboration with other schools, drive innovation and the sharing of good practice.

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

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

The SMSC development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in and out of the classroom. They treat each other, staff and visitors with courtesy, respect, and kindness. They provide a warm welcome to visitors and are exceptionally proud of their school. On the rare occasions when concerns arise, staff, parents and pupils resolve them quickly. Pupils value the school's clear rules and understand their role in creating a safe, respectful, and highly achieving environment where everyone thrives. They speak with pride about their inclusive school community, where everyone feels welcome, valued, and empowered to share their views with confidence.

Pupils have a powerful voice in the school. Staff actively seek their views through tutorials, assemblies, and regular surveys, ensuring pupils contribute meaningfully to decision-making. Pupils share their views through leadership roles and the pupil council, directly influencing key decisions across the school.

Pupils are highly motivated to do their best in all aspects of their learning. In lessons, they take an active role in their learning. They work very well as individuals and in groups, often making the decision in lessons on what they learn next. Pupils cooperate and collaborate with each other and staff. They are very well organised and have the right equipment to hand. They hold very high expectations of what they can achieve. Pupils celebrate their own and each other's successes and see disappointing performance as the starting point to get better. Almost all pupils take part in at least one enrichment activity each week. Over 50% of pupils have represented the school in a sporting capacity or as a member of a school sports club.

Pupils know about and understand key British values. They actively participate in the democratic process through the election of school leaders as sports captains and tutorial representatives. Pupils value school rules and understand and appreciate the laws of the UAE. They respect all faiths and beliefs and recognise that their school is a multicultural and multi-faith community. They actively promote tolerance and treat everyone with dignity and kindness.

Pupils have a sound understanding of the public institutions of the UAE and Britain. They are proud to be citizens of the UAE and learn about the country's history and culture. The school names its four houses after local parks. Pupils understand the historical significance of each place and speak about them with pride. Guest speakers such as the Emirati performance poet Afra Atiq, contextualise Arabic and Emirati culture first-hand.

Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility towards each other and the wider community. They welcome new pupils to the school and willingly support their introduction by acting as a buddy. Older pupils act as mentors to younger pupils as a way of helping them learn and become fully involved in school life. Pupils are active in local charities. They sit on the school's charity committee as 'Hartland Helpers' and recently raised funds for breast cancer day. They collect toys and books for a school in India, organise charity boxes for the Red Crescent and provide free food and drink to local workers during Ramadan.

SMSC provision encourages pupils to have respect for different groups in society. Pupils explore global matters such as child labour, youth voice in decision-making, and age-related stereotypes. They engage critically and reflectively, developing strong social awareness and empathy. Pupils engage thoughtfully with themes of disability by

studying the lives of Stephen Hawking and Benjamin Zephaniah. They also analyse motherhood and maternity through rich discussions of 'Blood Brothers' and 'An Inspector Calls'. Children explore 'who I am' to celebrate differences and primary pupils study anti-racism as part of their PHSE studies. Pupils take pride in sharing their heritage during the annual cultural day, celebrating traditions, languages, and identities.

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

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

Pupils receive exceptional care. The vigilant safeguarding culture creates an environment where pupils thrive both academically and personally. The child protection policies are comprehensive and regularly updated to reflect the best and latest of UK practices. Safeguarding arrangements comply fully with the host country's requirements.

All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They systematically complete mandatory training that equips them to effectively support pupils' well-being. A professional online system enables staff to log concerns, and safeguarding leads respond swiftly when necessary. Safeguarding information is clearly communicated throughout the school. The latest policies are available on the school's website, ensuring that everyone understands their roles and how to seek assistance. Parents and pupils express confidence in the school's ability to tackle concerns promptly. Parents articulate complete confidence in the systems that the school embeds to keep their children safe.

Behaviour across the school is excellent, enabling pupils to engage in their learning and achieve their full potential. A clear behaviour policy, underpinned by the school's six values, promotes respect, responsibility, and accountability. Online systems effectively monitor and record any incidents that occur. Staff maintain vigilant supervision, supported by an onsite security team, closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring, and thorough visitor checks.

The school is an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. A proactive approach to preventing bullying ensures that incidents are rare. Pupils and parents trust that staff will deal with any concerns promptly and fairly. The curriculum ensures that pupils are

knowledgeable about online safety so that they can navigate the digital landscape securely. Pupils appreciate access to the online well-being system, which provides confidential support from the school's efficient counselling team. This strategy further enhances pupils' sense of security and well-being. Transition arrangements, including a buddy and mentor system, help new pupils settle in quickly. Parents and pupils confirm that these create a sense of security and confidence from the outset. The counselling team provides effective support when needed, ensuring all pupils thrive.

Leaders have established a rigorous culture of health and safety that safeguards pupils across all areas of the school. Risk assessments are thorough and systematically applied to all aspects, including daily activities, off-site trips, and emergency protocols. Appropriate actions are always taken to reduce identified risks. The fire safety policy is rigorously implemented. Equipment is meticulously maintained to the highest standards, contributing to a consistently safe and secure environment. The school follows fire evacuation procedures with rigour, conducting regular drills that embed a strong culture of safety throughout the school. A comprehensive first-aid policy, supported by qualified medical staff, guarantees prompt and regular medical care. Efficient transport management prioritises pupils' safety. All health and safety documentation is meticulously maintained, and minor concerns are quickly resolved.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are steadily improving. Leaders emphasise the importance of good attendance and take appropriate action to achieve this. Currently, the attendance rate stands at 92.9%, slightly below the national average for schools in England.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school maintains exemplary safeguarding procedures, underpinned by a highly effective human resources team of three staff that conducts all necessary background checks to meet the required standards for staff working with pupils. A rigorously maintained single central record (SCR) captures comprehensive information on all staff, including those not directly employed by the school, such as members of the executive and advisory boards, contractors, and outsourced providers. This ensures full compliance with statutory requirements.

The SCR includes checks on start dates, identity verification, medical fitness, right to work in the host country, qualifications, criminal records, and references. It is securely stored and reviewed regularly through a robust system that guarantees both accuracy and confidentiality. The safeguarding and child protection governor works closely with the safeguarding team to ensure all checks remain current.

All senior leaders and board members involved in recruitment complete safer recruitment training, reflecting the school's deeply embedded culture of vigilance and commitment to maintaining the highest safeguarding standards.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The premises offer an outstanding and enriching learning environment. Safe and inclusive spaces support the well-being of all pupils. State-of-the-art facilities and innovative use of resources create a setting where pupils thrive both academically and personally. The central reception area warmly welcomes pupils and their families.

Classrooms are spacious, bright, and filled with natural light, creating an atmosphere that encourages pupils' engagement and creativity. Learning spaces are well-equipped with the latest technology and large whiteboards, promoting collaboration and active learning. Displays of pupils' work are prominently featured throughout the school, celebrating achievements across the curriculum. Excellent acoustics further enhance the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring an optimal experience for both staff and pupils.

Specialist facilities, including well-resourced libraries and dedicated areas for art, music, drama, and science, significantly enrich the educational experience. These facilities provide pupils with opportunities to explore their interests and develop key skills. They support a broad and ambitious British curriculum, fully aligned with national standards.

PE facilities encourage active participation, promoting both physical and mental well-being. The school prioritises accessibility, offering exclusive washing and changing areas and clearly-marked drinking water stations for the sole use of pupils. The school provides cold and hot water to support effective hand washing. The school maintains

both medical clinics to high standards, with each located close to a toilet facility. Access to counselling rooms ensures pupils' health and welfare are consistently prioritised.

The school maintains high standards of hygiene and safety throughout its premises. Robust security measures ensure that access is tightly controlled. Careful supervision of bus arrivals prioritises pupils' safety. Comprehensive risk assessments, coupled with a vigilant security team, help ensure a safe and secure campus for all members of the school.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's website serves as a comprehensive resource. All essential policies such as safeguarding, curriculum, SEND, EAL, behaviour and sanctions, bullying, health and safety, first aid and medication and complaints are easily accessible on the website and parents' handbook. These are clearly articulated, regularly reviewed, and include relevant contact details. The website offers a wealth of important information regarding admissions processes, daily schedules, uniform requirements, lunch menus, and transportation options. Links to the online parental portal enable families to access school updates, newsletters, and academic information seamlessly. The website also features contact information for the chair of the board of governors, along with the school's vision and mission, helping parents understand its values and leadership.

Parents express high levels of satisfaction with communication between home and school. They value the responsiveness of staff and appreciate receiving regular academic and pastoral updates. Teachers report on attainment and progress three times a year through two short reports and one detailed report. They also meet parents twice a year to discuss each pupil's development in depth. Parents highlight the school's warm, family-oriented atmosphere and feel well informed about their child's progress. Teachers provide helpful guidance on how parents can support learning at home, whether through additional practice or encouragement.

Structured parent and teacher meetings further enhance communication. Parents confirm that teachers know their children well, recognise their strengths, and dedicate

themselves to helping them reach their full academic and personal potential. They also appreciate the wide range of activities available for their children.

Parents of pupils with SEND praise teachers for providing the necessary support that enables their children to thrive. They confirm that this support is crucial in understanding their child's needs and in developing a close partnership with the school.

School leaders actively seek parental feedback through various formal and informal channels, including chat groups, surveys, meetings, and emails. Parents appreciate how leaders listen to suggestions and concerns and tackle any concerns promptly. They feel that leaders make big decisions collaboratively, involving the school community in the process.

Parental involvement is actively encouraged through various initiatives, including parent representatives from each class and the Friends of Hartland group. This group plays a vital role in the school, enhancing the partnership between the school and families by contributing to multiple aspects of the school. The school welcomes parents into the community and regularly invites them to take part in events and workshops.

An overwhelming majority of parents report that their children feel safe, are happy, and enjoy coming to school. Many parents describe the school as a 'big family' where staff know and care for every child. Parents appreciate the principal's presence, which makes them feel welcome and valued members of this 'big family'. Parents view the school as an extension of their home. Inspectors observed these same nurturing, family qualities during their visit.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school's complaints procedure is clearly documented, readily available to parents, and fully compliant with BSO standards. The policy sets out clear timescales for each of the four stages in the process and encourages parents to raise complaints

informally in the first instance. If unresolved, parents may submit a formal written complaint, which triggers a structured response.

If concerns persist, the school arranges a panel hearing with at least four individuals who were not directly involved in the matter, including one independent member. Parents may attend the hearing and bring someone with them if they wish. The panel issues written findings and recommendations, shared with the complainant, relevant staff, and made available for inspection by the principal and proprietor.

The school records all formal complaints, including their resolution at each stage and the actions taken. The school treats all complaint-related correspondence and documentation as confidential, unless local legal frameworks require disclosure. There has been no formal school complaint with a hearing since the opening of the school in 2015.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The school's ambitious mission, 'to make today's learners into tomorrow's leaders' is deeply embedded in every aspect of the school. Leaders communicate this clearly and consistently to pupils, staff, and parents, creating a shared sense of purpose and driving a culture where excellence is the expectation.

Senior and middle leaders navigate the school's rapid growth and high levels of pupil mobility with agility. They ensure that curriculum planning, assessment, and pastoral support remain consistently strong, despite the pace of change.

With the school's rapid growth has come significant change in the leadership structure. Seven members of the current senior team are in their second year, reflecting both expansion and strategic renewal. Annual reviews of roles and responsibilities ensure a dynamic and forward-thinking leadership model. In September 2024, 82 new staff joined the school. Leaders planned this expansion strategically, ensuring all appointments were well-qualified subject specialists.

The leadership team ensures that BSO standards are consistently met through robust implementation of school policies, securing compliance. The executive board provides

effective oversight, ensuring the school meets all legal requirements and operates within a clear financial policy framework. Their work supports the school's strategic priorities and promotes accountability at every level. The separate responsibilities of the board members and the school's leadership team are understood and respected.

The executive board engages in regular, professional dialogue with the principal, demonstrating a clear understanding of leadership and strategic direction. Monthly meetings, along with quarterly and annual reviews, ensure alignment with the school's improvement plan and key performance indicators.

Leaders, including the advisory board, drive sustained improvement across the school. The planned state-of-the-art sports facility set to open in 2025, reflects their strategic vision to enhance the school's competitive edge and broaden the PE curriculum. Leaders lead by example and inspire both staff and pupils through their clear commitment to professional growth creating a culture where continuous improvement is the norm.

The school actively seeks and values the views of its community through regular surveys, parent coffee mornings and students' voice initiatives. Leaders act on this feedback to inform strategic decisions and strengthen trust. The Hartland Friends association plays a central role in actively supporting new families at the start of each new term when they organise the new parents' coffee morning.

The vast majority of staff are proud to work at the school. Staff feel highly valued, well supported, and motivated as a result of leaders' clear vision, inclusive approach, and strong focus on professional growth and well-being. Leaders implement robust professional dialogues that set clear expectations, recognise strengths, and support staff to continuously improve their performance.

The vast majority of parents agree that their child enjoys school and feels safe. Pupils speak warmly about the inclusive and caring environment, saying, 'We all care for each other. We are a family.' Staff foster a strong culture of respect, belonging, and care, where they know pupils well and provide the support they need to thrive.

Leaders promote a culture of fairness and inclusion, stating, 'If there is something that is out of line, we will address it'. They act swiftly to challenge discrimination and ensure, for example, that support is in place for families experiencing financial hardship. An Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging group, led by a dedicated member

of staff, ensures that inclusive values are not only promoted but embedded in policy and practice.

Safeguarding is a non-negotiable priority at Hartland International School. All senior leaders, pastoral staff, and members of the advisory board receive appropriate and up-to-date training.

Leaders embed rigorous and transparent self-evaluation and strategic planning at every level. These processes are closely linked and drive continuous improvement by identifying priorities, promoting reflective practice among staff, and shaping a clear, evolving vision for the school. As a result, improvement planning is purposeful, inclusive, and firmly rooted in a culture of high aspiration.

Leadership at all levels is highly effective and relentless in pursuing excellence, securing a culture of high standards. The school is exceptionally well placed to sustain further improvement.

EYFS provision

The foundation stage provision is highly effective, well led and managed. Children make rapid progress from low starting points. A large majority reach a Good Level of Development by the end of foundation stage 2. Children are prepared well for the demands of Year 1.

Teachers plan and sequence the curriculum extremely well to meet the needs of the child. They know the children extremely well. New arrivals are assessed and screened for SEND by the inclusion staff.

Children develop early writing, reading and numeracy skills extremely well through play-based learning. 'Explorer time' helps children understand the natural world. The literacy circle sessions engender children's love of stories. Children enthusiastically tell their own stories, act them out and author their own books. Specialist practitioners provide dedicated lessons in Arabic, PE, swimming, visits to the library, and music, movement, and performance. Teachers plan engaging activities indoors and outdoors to spark children's curiosity and imagination, such as visiting the school's garden and the outdoor kitchen. Teachers are attuned to children's passions and interests.

Teachers carry out assessment in the foundation stage through careful observations. They track each child's progress carefully and share children's achievements with parents. Teachers have a strong holistic picture of children's development.

Children learn to manage their emotions and communicate their feelings well. Teachers facilitate this effectively using symbols to develop vocabulary, reinforce routines and improve communication. Brightly-coloured lanyards denote children who display the Hartland values. Children display strong social and emotional regulation by the end of foundation stage 2. Children develop their independence well and make decisions, such as choosing the class reader.

Parents are valued partners. They attend workshops such as 'Come and learn phonics' and 'Come and explore outside with me'. Parents praise the communication between home and school. They agree that children are safe and well cared for.

Post-16 provision

The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. With 38% of A level grades at A* or A in 2024, the school performs significantly above the average for England, reflecting strong academic outcomes and a culture of high achievement.

Leaders know their students well and create a culture that actively supports every individual to thrive both academically and personally. Roles are clearly defined, with the head of sixth form and heads of year ensuring sharp academic focus and robust pastoral support. Careers education is exceptionally well planned, with a comprehensive programme that includes university fairs, career guidance sessions, and higher-education preparation days. As a result, students are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps, with all securing their first-choice university placements in 2024.

The quality of education in the sixth form is of the highest standard. Teaching is consistently strong, enabling students to develop deep knowledge and understanding across a broad curriculum. Teachers plan lessons with precision, using rigorous assessment to tailor learning. The use of past papers and targeted feedback helps students develop examination confidence and achieve highly. Vocational pathways, such as BTEC Business and BTEC Sport level 3, demonstrate leaders' commitment to a curriculum that meets all learners' needs.

Personal development in the sixth form is exemplary. Leaders provide a rich and varied programme that develops students' character, confidence, and resilience. The Hartland Diploma, which includes the mandatory elements of vision, effort, systems, practice, and attitude (VESPA), enables students to engage meaningfully in enrichment activities such as leadership, volunteering, and community service. Sixth formers are excellent role models who contribute significantly to the wider life of the school through mentoring younger pupils, societies, and student leadership. Students' voice is strong. The Monday morning announcement throughout the school is the sixth formers' way of bringing together the school community. Opportunities for work experience in the summer term are wide-ranging and develop students' vocational skills well.

Students' behaviour and attitudes in the sixth form are exemplary. They demonstrate high levels of respect for one another and for staff. Relationships are warm, positive, and built on mutual trust. Students conduct themselves with maturity and take pride in being part of a close-knit, supportive community. 'Heart to hart' meetings, and access to a school counsellor ensure that students feel supported and able to manage the demands of sixth-form life. Students value the inclusive ethos and the focus on well-being. They say, 'We are a family. Our school has expanded but we still make sure we know each other, are there for one another, and listen to one another'. Students are proud of their sixth form and contribute positively to its success.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

What the school could do to improve further

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

In a small number of lessons, spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in some curriculum subjects are not corrected in a timely manner. This means that the quality of pupils' written work is variable and does not consistently reflect the school's high standards for writing. Leaders should ensure that teachers systematically monitor and correct pupils' written work so that the highest standards are attained and maintained.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
The quality of education				
Overall quality of education	x			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	x			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	x			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	x			
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development				
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	x			
The behaviour of pupils	x			
Welfare, health and safety of pupils				
The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			
Leadership and management				
Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			

School Details

Name of school	Hartland International School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	September 2015
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	2009
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 43,328 to AED 82,429
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Sobha Hartland, Nad Al Sheba, Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Telephone number	+97144079444
Email address	principal@hartlandinternational.com
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Cottam
Proprietor	Mr Ajay Rajendran, Meraki Group

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standards –

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Report reference no: 5/63/2025