

# St Andrews Samakee International School

## ISQM Accreditation Report

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Education Development Trust accreditation

The purpose of accreditation is to bring about school improvement. Although accredited status is often perceived as an end in itself, the process is underpinned by the principle that the school self-evaluation activities in which schools engage, are of equal importance. In this sense, accreditation serves two goals:

- To provide a means by which parents and students are assured that the school has been judged by independent evaluators to meet rigorous quality standards;
- To support the school's development through moderation of its own self-evaluation.

The school improvement plan is crucial in ensuring on-going development. The accreditation provides recommendations for the school, which should be incorporated into the school improvement plan.

#### Principles underpinning the Education Development Trust accreditation model

- Accreditation criteria are rooted in high standards; they relate to international standards and benchmarks, and to other inspection regimes (for example, Ofsted (England) and, in the case of Thailand, ONESQA from the Thai ministry)
- It is a cost-effective means of providing quality assurance
- The model is developmental – it is grounded in self-evaluation with the school providing an evaluation of its own performance

#### Grades awarded

Judgements are made on a four-point scale as:

- Grade 1: Outstanding
- Grade 2: Good
- Grade 3: Satisfactory
- Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

#### Accreditation status

Gold accredited status is awarded when the school is given Grade 1 meaning **Outstanding judgements in all** of the following sections:

- Standards and achievement
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management

Silver accredited status is awarded when the school is given at least Grade 2 or higher meaning **Good judgements or higher in all** of the following sections:

- Standards and achievement
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management

Bronze accredited status is awarded when the school is given at least Grade 3 or higher meaning **Satisfactory judgements or higher in all** of the following sections:

- Standards and achievement
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management

## Evidence base

### Introduction

This ISQM verification inspection was carried out by a team of three Education Development Trust inspectors. During three days, the team observed 36 lessons, one of which was conducted jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors held 23 meetings during which discussions with staff, students, parents and governors took place. Inspectors scrutinised students' work and school documents and generally observed the school at work.

### 2. School context

St Andrews Samakee International School is an inclusive, independent, privately owned, co-educational international school for students aged one to 14 years. It has a sister school in Hua Hin with the same owners and governing board.

The school is situated in Nonthaburi, approximately 20 kilometres north of the centre of Bangkok and is housed in purpose-built accommodation. The school opened in January 2000 with just two students and has grown to meet the growing student population. There are currently 236 students on roll with 53% in the first school (Nursery to Year 2), 33% in the middle school (Years 3 to 6) and 14% in the upper school (Years 7 to 9). The school is smaller than others of a similar type. After many years of continuous growth, last year there was a 30% drop in enrolment due to a high rate of expatriate mobility.

Approximately 63% of students are Thai nationals and the remainder come from 25 different countries including The United States of America, Britain, Israel and Australia. English is the language of instruction for all students. Approximately 96% of students speak English as an additional language with 13% of these students requiring support. Overall, there are 17% of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and, in the upper school, 38% of students are on the special educational needs register. The school has a high number of students with statements of special educational need due to their school outreach programme and specialist resourced provision.

A well-qualified and experienced team of 34 teachers, mostly recruited from the UK, provide a ratio of, on average, one teacher to every 14 students. Students' learning is supported further by 11 learning support assistants. A team of 11 administrative and security staff help the school to run smoothly.

Children in the foundation stage follow the early years foundation stage curriculum and students in Years 1 to 9 study the national curriculum for England with new assessments introduced last year. A forest schools' programme, the recent addition of French as a third language and a wide range of sporting, creative and academic after-school and community activities enhance the curriculum. The school is licenced by the Thai ministry of education and regulated by the Thai Ministry of Education's Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA). Thai teachers use the St Andrews International Schools Thai curriculum framework, which is based on OPEC Thai Language and Culture Guidelines for International schools.

## Report summary

### Accreditation status

St Andrews Samakee International School is recognised as having met the required standards for accreditation.

The school has been awarded the Education Development Trust International School Quality Mark at **Gold level** which reflects the **outstanding judgements** described within this report.

This accreditation is valid from 16 May 2018 to 16 May 2023.

## Overview of main strengths and areas for development

### Report headlines

- The wholly inclusive nature of the school that actively promotes and celebrates diversity and tolerance of all.
- The excellent quality of senior leadership whose ongoing reflection leads to constant improvement, taking into consideration the voice of all stakeholders.
- The clear vision and direction shared by all staff, despite a large proportion being new to the school this year.
- The high quality of teaching that meets the individual needs of all students, facilitating excellent learning and rapid progress across all subjects.
- The extremely strong emphasis on learning skills and attitudes embedded through the Samakee seven key values, which contribute to students' high levels of engagement and self-confidence.
- The very successful development of the whole child particularly through integrated and cross-curricular learning, the Teepee farm and extra-curricular activities.
- The sensitive and thorough identification of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the superb support they receive from highly qualified staff and through very strong links with outside agencies.

### Recommended area for development

- Develop further the science curriculum in the middle school, to match the frequency and high quality of scientific skills' development in other phases of the school.

## Standard 1: The standards reached by students in their work and the progress they make in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT)

### Highlights and recommendations

- The large majority of children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception because they make good or better progress throughout the three year groups in the foundation stage.
- Children arrive in the early years with skills in **English** that are well below those typical for their age, as almost all speak English as an additional language. They make outstanding progress, so that, by the end of Reception Year, a large majority achieve the early learning goal in reading and a majority in writing. Progress throughout key stages 1, 2 and 3 is outstanding, so that students reach standards that are above age-related expectations.
- Children and students make outstanding progress throughout the school in **mathematics**. Standards are above age-related expectations in key stages 1 and 2 and well above in early years and key stage 3. Students make excellent progress in mental and oral calculation skills throughout the school.
- Children make outstanding progress to reach standards well above age-related expectations in **science** throughout the early years and Years 1 and 2 because science is embedded in the curriculum daily, through discovery. In key stages 2 and 3, students make good progress and reach levels of attainment that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. In the middle school, students do not have the same regular exposure to science throughout the year, so the depth of science skills within the curriculum does not match the same high-quality as in other areas of the school.
- Children and students make outstanding progress throughout the school in **ICT and computing**. Standards are well above age-related expectations in the early years. They are above average in key stages 1 and 2 and well above average in key stage 3.

Almost all students speak **English** as an additional language. Children arrive in the early years with skills in English language and communication that are usually well below those typical for their age. Expert teaching and a strong initial focus on improving speaking and listening skills develop their fluency and confidence and enable them to become more proficient at reading and writing. They make outstanding progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, a large majority achieve the early learning goal in reading, and a majority in writing.

Excellent progress continues in the primary phase for all groups of students. Year 2 students identify accurately key vocabulary and ideas from text and write a recount effectively. Year 5 students use technology very well to research information and incorporate this successfully into a biography. At the end of both key stages 1 and 2, standards in reading and writing are above age-related expectations.

In key stage 3, all groups of students make outstanding progress. They read increasingly complex material and their writing skills improve strongly. Year 9 students show great skill in analysing key language and meaning in the opening of 'Great Expectations'. Standards in English at the end of key stage 3 are well above age-related expectations.

There is a strong and successful focus on developing speaking and listening skills in the early years, which is followed by an increasing emphasis on reading and writing as students move up the school. Reading is promoted strongly and successfully throughout the school, while writing and poetry competitions encourage creativity. As a result, standards in English have risen in all phases since the previous accreditation.

Students' progress in **mathematics** is outstanding in all phases and for all groups of students. Their attainment is well above age-related expectations by the end of early years and key stage 3 and above in key stages 1 and 2. Students' performance in internal examinations is often high, including where it is possible to make international comparisons. Several students in both Years 8 and 9 have successfully taken the mathematics International General Certificate of Secondary Education examination (IGCSE) two or more years early with excellent results.

In the early years, children quickly develop their mathematical skills. By the end of the early years, most children are counting competently to at least 20 and can identify missing numbers in a sequence. They show a good grasp of equivalence and of shape and measure. They compare quantities of liquids in their water play using excellent mathematical terms.

By the time students reach the end of the primary phase, they are adept at solving word problems using their knowledge of statistics well; they enjoy the challenge. Students have a very good understanding of place value and accurately complete multiplication and division involving two or three decimal places by the end of key stage 2. They develop their calculation skills to a high standard and use them with alacrity. For example, by Year 6, they respond competently to quick-fire multiplication and division calculations involving square roots and equivalent fractions.

Students in key stage 3 continue to make outstanding progress and, by the end of Year 9, many students are working at a greater depth than found within the expected levels. They undertake tasks involving, for example, trigonometry including Pythagoras theorem, with a strong understanding of the algebraic notation and equations involved. While students generally use their mental or written calculations to solve equations, they know when it is appropriate to use calculators and efficiently employ the higher level function features to achieve high standards. Work is presented very well and graphical representations are neat and fluid. Consequently, they make few mistakes in calculations. Most students at all stages have a good capability to review and improve their own work.

Students have very positive attitudes to mathematics and are keen to apply their knowledge at all phases.

In **science** throughout the early years and to Year 2, children make excellent progress in their scientific understanding of the world. High levels of understanding are possible because science is evident throughout the continuous provision and in integrated sessions, many of which happen in the Teepee farm. Children explore freely, ask questions and learn through discovery and being curious. The farm provides extensive opportunities for real-life learning. Here, children grow their own food, look after and feed the ducks, pigs and goat, build fires and go pond dipping, for example.

In the middle school, students make good progress in their scientific understanding to reach standards that are typical for their age. The rapid rate of progress, seen in earlier years, slows because students do not have the same regular exposure to science investigation. The school is already considering how to improve the frequency and depth of science skills in the curriculum for these students so that it matches the high quality in other areas of the school. Students' work shows that they use investigation skills to, for example, explore the hardness of rocks. In Year 4, when students begin to use effectively scientific method, they understand how solids can change state through melting. In Year 6, students learn sex and relationships education in an extremely sensitive and sensible manner.

In key stage 3, science is taught by a specialist teacher in the laboratory, as a discrete subject. Students make good progress throughout the key stage, reaching standards broadly in line with those expected for their age. In Year 7, students are able to simulate series and parallel circuits on a computer, linking their understanding to real-life applications. By Year 9, students carry out magnesium and hydrochloric acid loss of mass experiments, in the context of the reliability and accuracy of data.

Across the school, students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well in science to make progress from their starting points in line with other students.

Students' progress in **ICT** and **computing** is outstanding throughout the school. Standards are at least good and are outstanding by the end of early years and key stage 3. Children in the early years make very

good use of computers to find out more about their world, such as the life of dinosaurs, and to develop their early reading, writing, mathematical and creative skills.

Students' knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT and computer systems are developed well throughout the primary phase and students make excellent progress from their different starting points. In the primary phase, students are skilled at using a range of exciting applications including those that introduce them to the language of programming. For example, students use early programming and coding skills to plan routes for screen logos and review their success to de-bug and improve the action.

These computing and coding skills are extended greatly through key stage 3. Students use a wide range of multi-media presentation skills to produce exciting posters for school performances. In key stage 3, they combine different media and use editing tools with programming skills to create mobile applications and complex video presentations. Students make very good use of a range of presentation capabilities of computers. They create and edit their own animations, add music and special effects.

Across the school, in all subjects, students develop high-quality skills to research and interrogate the internet for projects in art, geography, history and science. They know that not all information is reliable and that they may need to check their findings. The use of technology is encouraged and used to good effect.

## **Standard 2: Students' personal development**

### **Highlights and recommendations**

- Students' personal development is outstanding.
- Students thrive and become highly confident, independent, resilient and caring learners who enjoy their learning and are not afraid to take risks.
- Behaviour is almost always exemplary. Attendance is high and almost all students are punctual.
- Relationships between students are very strong, and students demonstrate responsibility in a wide range of areas.
- Students have a clear sense of moral duty and respect the dignity of all individuals and groups of people. They show a strong commitment to those who are less fortunate than themselves.

Students' personal development is outstanding. Students thrive in the school and become highly confident, independent, resilient and caring learners who are not afraid to take risks. They are encouraged to talk openly about their feelings, and to consider the feelings of others. The school actively and successfully promotes the Samakee seven key values encouraging students to be inquisitive, individual, international, imaginative, inspired, innovative and intrepid.

In lessons, students show high levels of enjoyment and excitement in their learning. They concentrate well and always try to do their best because of their pride, commitment and positive attitudes to learning, both their own and that of others.

Behaviour is almost always exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Students are extremely polite and cooperative. On the very rare occasions that behaviour falls below the school's high expectations, it is addressed sympathetically, positively and effectively. The school uses rewards successfully to encourage further good behaviour.

Students enjoy coming to school. Attendance is high and almost all students are punctual to school in the mornings and move promptly and sensibly to their lessons.

Relationships between students are very strong, and they collaborate very well in both work and play. Students have a strong awareness of what is right and wrong and understand the consequences of any misdemeanours. Consequently, they are self-disciplined, respectful, mature, listen well to each other, and are supportive of anyone in need, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Students show kindness to each other and excellent relationships in the play areas reflect these qualities. They are emphasised further by special events such as 'random acts of kindness' weeks.

There is a wide range of opportunities for students to take and demonstrate responsibility, and they make a significant contribution to the life of the school. There is a very active school council, which considers and makes recommendations on a wide range of issues. For example, they have recently suggested that the names of the school houses should be reconsidered to include a female name. This reflects students' concern for equal opportunities. Students understand the need for democracy in their school and in society and the need to elect different students to share responsibility posts. Students show responsibility in other areas such as the eco-warriors and in helping to set up and run the school farm. Early years children show great independence and responsibility in selecting and serving their own food and drinks at snack times and when clearing up any spills.

Students show a strong commitment to those who are less fortunate than themselves. For example, key stage 2 students recently took part in 'box challenge'. This was run very successfully by students and led by the house captains to raise money for a community charity of their choice.

Students have a clear sense of moral duty and respect the dignity of all individuals and groups of people. Extreme views and discrimination are not tolerated. Students are compassionate and develop a strong commitment from an early age to show tolerance for all, irrespective of any differences. Books and personal, social and, health education lessons address openly issues such as the structure of different family groups. Students' strong sense of giving to the community shows strongly in their commitment to preserving the environment. This permeates the school and there is a positive commitment to reusing and recycling. This is particularly evident in the school farm where environmental mindfulness is prominent and developed successfully.

### **Standard 3: Teaching and learning**

#### **Highlights and recommendations**

- Relationships are excellent throughout the school and staff know students' needs and achievements extremely well.
- Lessons are planned very well to meet consistently the needs of all groups of students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a gift or a talent.
- Assessments of students' progress are robust and accurate and underpin the rapid progress students make.
- Learning and teaching support assistants make a very strong contribution to students' success in their lessons.
- Teachers' high expectations for learning are expressed clearly to students who consistently aim high.
- The stimulating nature of the learning environment throughout the school motivates and enthuses students.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding in all phases. Teachers consistently provide different levels of challenge and questioning that are very closely matched to students' individual needs and abilities. Teachers work hard, have high expectations for their students to succeed and are excellent role models.

Students learn within a purposeful and vibrant learning environment which engages students' interest. For example, in the early years children dig, roll and ride vehicles on the many different play surfaces and sand pits. Small class sizes help teachers to provide sustained attention to individuals and lessons move at a brisk pace.

Teachers apply their expert subject knowledge most effectively and provide high quality, clear explanations and challenging questions that strongly support students' development, understanding and progress. Additional classroom staff, including teaching and learning assistants, make a significant contribution to all aspects of students' learning.

Relationships are a significant strength throughout the school and underpin the high quality of teaching and learning. The excellent induction procedures ensure the children in the early years get off to a flying start and their needs are understood thoroughly by all staff. Staff are excellent role models for students. They encourage them to be positive and aspirational. As a consequence, students rise to challenges such as developing complex group balance sequences in physical education or performing in dramatic and musical presentations for parents and others.

The use of technology is integrated very effectively into teaching and learning. Teachers bring lessons to life through high quality multi-media slides, interactive challenges and videos. Students make very effective use of individual learning programmes and internet investigations to strengthen their skills in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. They are also encouraged successfully to produce high quality presentations in extended projects for art and design and history, for example.

Support for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally well targeted through specialist support and in-class guidance that helps these students to progress well. Excellent use is made of the inclusion centre to provide a range of therapies and specialist activities that enable these students to take full part in the school curriculum and equip them strongly with skills for an independent life.

Throughout the school, there is a very sharp focus on developing students' investigative and problem-solving skills, not just on memorising facts. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that promote students' ability to work independently and in groups. They create purposeful, challenging and enjoyable learning environments.

Teachers' skilful questioning clarifies understanding and extends students' learning. Lessons are planned to be relevant and enriching to students' lives. Teachers place the highest priority on developing students as inquisitive, self-motivated and collaborative learners. This starts from the early years when all children are Achievesaurus dinosaurs including Tryasaurus and Thinkasaurus and is further reflected in the staff's promotion of the Samakee seven key values or 'ivalues' that run through the school.

Teachers implement a very wide range of assessment strategies. These inform detailed lesson plans and precise learning objectives. Within early years, teachers undertake a rigorous and accurate baseline assessment of children's initial skills that enables thorough and precise tracking of their subsequent progress. Assessment is linked directly to planning objectives for learning that are both teacher-led and initiated by students. Teachers use a variety of innovative methods to assess students in a sensitive, ongoing way to track carefully how they are progressing. Students are encouraged to assess their own performance and work with peers to assess what they have achieved in lessons. The school's marking policy is very clear, and heads of department rigorously monitor its implementation. They undertake 'book trawls' to check the quality of written feedback and the guidance given to students on how to improve their work. Marking of students' work is meticulous and includes precise feedback which the students value.

## **Standard 4: The curriculum**

### **Highlights and recommendations**

- The curriculum is outstanding.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage and national curriculum at key stages 1,2 and 3.
- The curriculum is very well designed to support high levels of progression in all subjects throughout the school. It supports students to attain at very high levels, including some who take IGCSE examinations up to two years early.
- The curriculum addresses the needs of all groups of learners extremely well. There is excellent provision for students who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The school enriches students' learning through imaginative and unusual provision such as the on-site farm and a wide range of residential visits through the school. Students learn through many practical and problem-solving activities from the early years onwards.
- Many diverse extra-curricular activities, from cooking to typing, enhance students' experiences and develop their skills for life. They have many opportunities to participate in creative and sporting events.

The curriculum is outstanding throughout the school. It meets the requirements of the framework for the early years foundation stage and the national curriculum for England for primary and key stage 3.

The curriculum is planned very well to ensure students make sustained high levels of progress in all subjects. Staff work very closely as a team to ensure that students make smooth progress as they move through the school. There is very strong focus on helping students build on their previous learning and so develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve well in their future education.

All staff see themselves as teachers of English skills. They make very good use of a wide range of strategies to help students build their speaking, reading and writing abilities. For example, in mathematics, the teacher asks quick-fire questions and expects full-sentence answers in response. In art lessons, in key stage 3, students give detailed descriptions of the designs using a full and well-considered vocabulary. For example, children learn about shape, size and capacity during their sand and water play in the early years and students in the secondary school use advanced statistical calculations to solve probability problems in mathematics.

The school is fully inclusive. For example, staff take strong steps in every lesson to ensure the needs of those students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are met fully. They give equal consideration to the needs of the most able students and those with a gift or a talent.

The school makes outstanding use of the specialist skills of speech and physical therapists to address a wide range of students' needs in the inclusion centre. Teachers are consistently aware of the needs of the high proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. There are rigorous procedures to ensure that the students' needs are assessed very accurately when they first join the school at whatever age. The school also provides high quality support in the students' home language when the teacher feels that is necessary.

The school offers an excellent range of services to help students make decisions about their future education when they move on to further secondary education.

The school makes use of many visitors from different professions and occupations through the personal, social and health education curriculum to introduce students to the world of work and to raise their aspirations. Senior staff and the school's counselling team provide carefully considered support and training to both students and their parents to help them make the most appropriate decisions about the next stage in their education. The school is extremely successful in developing in students a tolerance, patience and understanding towards others.

A wide range of additional activities enrich students' learning and experiences. For example, visits from high achieving adults, such as Olympic athletes, contribute to students' aspirations and sense of purpose. Students throughout the school experience residential visits promoting many aspects of their personal and social skills. The on-site farm, tree house and forest school not only nurture students' sense of adventure and independence, but also raises their awareness of caring for others including the pigs, ducks, goat, rabbit and tortoises. Students have many opportunities to enjoy diverse and exciting extra-curricular activities throughout the school year. All teachers run clubs based on their strengths and interests and the school offers specialist support in many aspects of art, music and sporting skills. The school is very successful in local and national tournaments.

## **Standard 5: The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources**

## Highlights and recommendations

- The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources are outstanding.
- The school has well-qualified, experienced teaching and learning support staff, as well as high levels of specialist support both from within the school and through outside agencies. All make a strong contribution to students' achievement and well-being.
- The school's accommodation has been developed in a thoughtful and imaginative way to provide a wealth of enriching opportunities and specialist areas for learning. The farm makes a very significant contribution to students' learning and well-being.
- The children in the early years learn in an extremely vibrant and inclusive environment, inside and outdoors, that supports their many different approaches to learning.
- The inclusion centre provides very high-quality facilities for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to receive the specialist support they need.
- The school is resourced well. For example, libraries have an excellent range of books to meet the students' needs and varied interests, all classrooms have interactive whiteboards and there is a wealth of technology for students to use.

The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources are outstanding. Recruiting good quality staff is given a high priority. Teachers' backgrounds are vetted robustly and checks are carried out on their suitability for posts. Consequently, safe, well-qualified, often UK-trained, experienced and committed teachers are deployed appropriately throughout the school. The provision of classroom specialists in the primary school and subject specialists in the secondary school, and a wealth of well-trained, expert support teachers, result in students' outstanding quality of learning. Class sizes are small, so there is an excellent adult to student ratio in all classrooms, particularly in the early years, which helps staff meet the needs of every student extremely well.

The premises provide a wealth of enriching opportunities for all ages. The school has worked hard to constantly update and enrich its accommodation to provide high quality learning opportunities for all its students. Classes and other rooms are extremely well matched to the needs of different subjects and enable staff to provide the highest quality of teaching.

The site is safe and secure with electronic access and well-trained security staff caring for students at all times. There are suitable classrooms and study areas for each age group. The children in the early years have a very dynamic environment, merging learning both indoors and out. Older students have the opportunity to learn in rooms resourced for different subjects such as art, science, music and drama. There are good on-site facilities for sports and physical education. Students, especially in key stage 3, also have regular access to good quality, off-site provision to meet their physical development and sporting needs.

The school is equipped very well to support its strong, inclusive vision for all students. For example, ramps and lifts are arranged well to allow full access for students using wheelchairs. There are two very well stocked libraries with books reflecting many different subjects and interests, including books in several of the different languages represented in the school. Students have regular access to modern technology, such as tablet computers and video equipment, which contribute strongly to their successful learning. Classrooms are maintained well and almost all learning spaces are air conditioned.

The new inclusion centre provides outstanding provision for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students have the privacy and space they need to benefit fully from the high level of specialist support the school offers. The overall impact of these resources on students' learning and progress is extremely positive.

Students' learning is significantly enhanced by the Teepee Farm base. Students experience many aspects of nature first-hand, including the opportunity to care for a range of animals, as well as grow and nurture many different plants.

## **Standard 6: How well the school cares for and supports its students**

### **Highlights and recommendations**

- Care and support are outstanding.
- The school is highly inclusive and nurturing.
- Excellent support is provided for all students through an extensive and coordinated support network.
- There is a strong and successful emphasis on healthy lifestyles.
- Procedures relating to safeguarding and health and safety are robust.
- Students feel very safe in school.

The school's arrangements and provision for the care and support of students are outstanding and highly effective. Consequently, students feel extremely safe and cared for very well in school.

The school is highly inclusive and extremely nurturing. Relationships between staff and students are very strong and productive. New students settle quickly in the friendly and cooperative atmosphere. They gain quickly in confidence through the mutual support of peers. The positive reinforcement received from teachers helps develop their self-esteem, maturity and sense of personal worth. Students are known exceptionally well as individuals, and the school's provision is tailored to meet their varying needs; students are encouraged to develop their individual strengths. One student said that 'the school allows and encourages us to be ourselves and to be different.'

The coordinated support network offered by the school is extremely strong. Students say that they know who to turn to if they are facing problems or having difficulty. They are confident that they will be listened to and any issues addressed. The promotion of ideals of friendship and cooperation actively prevent issues of bullying. Bullying is very rare, but if it happens it is dealt with quickly, appropriately and sensitively. As a result, students feel very safe and secure in the school, and both students and parents comment on the school's harmonious and inclusive nature.

Excellent support is provided for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and any students facing problems or difficulties. This takes place very effectively through the work of teachers, learning support and guidance staff, and the school nurses. Staff maintain a constant watching brief and are alert to any student who might need support. There are also very strong partnership links with outside institutions and agencies such as the Merak clinic, which provides intensive support via specialist therapists. As a result, any student needing additional support or help is identified quickly, and appropriate action is taken.

There is a clear and successful commitment to leading a healthy lifestyle, including both physical and mental health. There is a strong emphasis on healthy eating, and this is evident in the food provided in the canteen. Students benefit from a range of physical activities as part of the curriculum, during break times and in extra-curricular activities.

The school's safeguarding and child protection policies are comprehensive and are applied rigorously, conforming to the best of UK practices. Any incidents or concerns are handled appropriately and, if necessary, with the support of external agencies and partners. All staff are trained regularly and suitably and any new members are guided through the school's approach as part of their induction. The school ensures that externally employed staff or contractors' staff are suitably checked.

The school works assiduously and successfully to ensure students' safety. School leaders ensure that all activities are appropriately assessed for risk, and that matters relating to health and safety meet all

requirements and are reviewed routinely. The school site is very secure. Robust systems control entry. All staff and visitors have to show identification and pass through manned barriers, and the site is suitably monitored by surveillance cameras. Stringent fire regulations are met, reflecting those in the UK, with regular evacuations held to test procedures. A lockdown procedure has recently been introduced to ensure that students remain safe from severe weather and intrusion.

## **Standard 7: The school's partnership with parents and the community**

### **Highlights and recommendations**

- The school's partnership with parents and the community is outstanding.
- There are very strong, extensive and successful partnerships with the local community. These enhance greatly the academic and social experiences and outcomes for students.
- The provision of information for parents, carers and others is excellent. A variety of communication systems keep parents fully informed about their child's progress, education and all that is happening in the school. Online systems allow two-way communication between parents and the school, as well as the sharing of information.
- Parents feel that their views are taken into account. They feel part of the school community and say that the school works very well in partnership with parents to help their child's education.

The school's partnership with parents and the community is outstanding. There are very successful partnerships with the local community, including the Merak clinic, Rainbow House which is a local charity home to help young people in the community, local universities and institutes and support agencies. Additionally, the school welcomes regularly a range of visitors including local firemen and a storyteller. The school also allows its facilities to be used by the community for special activities such as the Samakee farmers' market and for community drama. Such partnerships enhance greatly the academic and social experiences and outcomes for students.

A variety of communication systems keep parents fully informed about their child's education and all that is happening in the school. The school's website is comprehensive and provides a range of easily accessible information concerning all aspects of school life. This includes basic information, contact details, admission arrangements, policies, procedures, events and news. In addition, there is a wide range of methods to provide further information, including newsletters, emails, text messaging, and social media, and parent and carer information meetings.

Parents receive regular and detailed reports and updates about their child's progress, both formally and informally. Formal reports are issued twice a year, and there are three parent-teacher consultations annually. In addition, parents receive and can access information about their child's education and progress through a variety of online systems including the parent portal and a virtual learning environment. Some of these enable two-way communication and allow parents, students and staff to share information and content, including assignments and homework, feedback and messages. These systems are widely and increasingly used, and are very popular with parents.

Headteacher forums have proved to be a particularly productive method of communication. For example, following one forum in 2017 and feedback from other areas, a one-stop support workshop was created to meet parents' requests for a variety of workshops. This allowed parents to speak to specialist staff about a range of topics including academic and pastoral issues. In addition, the school has run workshops on specialist topics such as keeping children safe on the internet. Such workshops have been attended very well and are welcomed by parents.

Parents say that they are extremely well informed about all that is happening in the school, and the progress their children are making. They report that the school and staff are open and very accessible, and that the school responds very effectively to all reasonable requests for information or to any concerns they may have. They feel that they are listened to and that their views are taken into account. As a result,

they feel part of the school community and say that the school works very well in partnership with parents to help their child's education.

## **Standard 8: Leadership and management**

### **Highlights and recommendations**

- Leadership, management and governance are outstanding
- The headteacher and her senior team provide a very clear vision and ethos for the school, with a focus on providing a nurturing environment in which students develop both academically and personally.
- Leaders across the school work well together in effective teams, despite many of them being new to the school.
- Leaders are constantly reflective and able to use their initiative to drive ideas forward.
- The board of directors ensures the school operates according to ministry requirements and has sound fiscal policies.
- Self evaluation is rigorous with regular review. As a result, improvement planning is well focused and informs professional development.
- The performance of staff is monitored regularly, through observation and follow up, leading to reflection and improvement.
- The school has excellent capacity for further improvement.

The quality of leadership, management and governance throughout the school is outstanding. The headteacher provides a very clear vision to create independent, confident and lifelong learners. Her success is clearly evident in students of all ages, abilities and needs who thrive in this nurturing environment. Highly effective leaders work exceptionally well as teams across the school. Leadership in the early years is outstanding and helps children make rapid progress in all areas of their development. All leaders use their initiative, and are constantly reflective. Their commitment to excellence and improving students' experiences is admirable. All staff embrace this ethos because it is so well demonstrated by the headteacher. She is a superb role model for tolerance and respect. Staff morale is therefore very high and their enjoyment in working in Samakee is palpable. This is even more exceptional because many of the staff are new to the school this year.

Senior leaders meet regularly and are a cohesive team. They have a very clear, big picture of the school because they understand the issues from the various points of view of the different phases. In turn, this supports transition and also helps to manage pastoral needs. Senior leaders are successful in driving the school forward with Samakee values at the core and they provide excellent capacity for further improvement.

The board of directors, with the headteacher and head of early years as part of the board, sets the strategic vision for the school. It has clear financial policies, ensures the school operates legally, promotes equality and ensures that safeguarding procedures are highly effective. Its recruitment procedures are very successful in appointing mostly UK-trained, highly competent teachers. The responsibilities of the board and the school's leadership are well understood as being separate, while operating always in the best interests of the students.

Self-evaluation is extremely thorough, accurate and based on analysis of a wealth of reliable data and the views of all stakeholders. This informs whole-school improvement planning. Leaders at all levels are responsible for action planning based on their own ongoing self-evaluation. Constant review and updating clearly ensure these are fit for purpose and are useful working documents. Leaders know their school exceptionally well. The headteacher holds regular headteacher's forums to discuss issues and listen to the views of parents. As a result, there are fewer recurring issues raised.

The school is highly committed to the continuing professional development of all staff. It offers a wide range of in-house and external courses to meet the needs of the school's priorities and needs of individual staff. It has been particularly successful in training support teachers whose expertise in encouraging and extending learning is clearly evident. High-quality induction helps new teachers settle quickly. Staff appraisal is rigorous and supportive and holds all staff and leaders to account.

Outstanding leaders of the school, at all levels, fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring they nurture, inspire and care for every one of their superb students. As an inclusive school, Samakee promotes equality, tackles discrimination and embraces diversity, which contributes to the extremely caring atmosphere wherein students are happy and highly successful.