

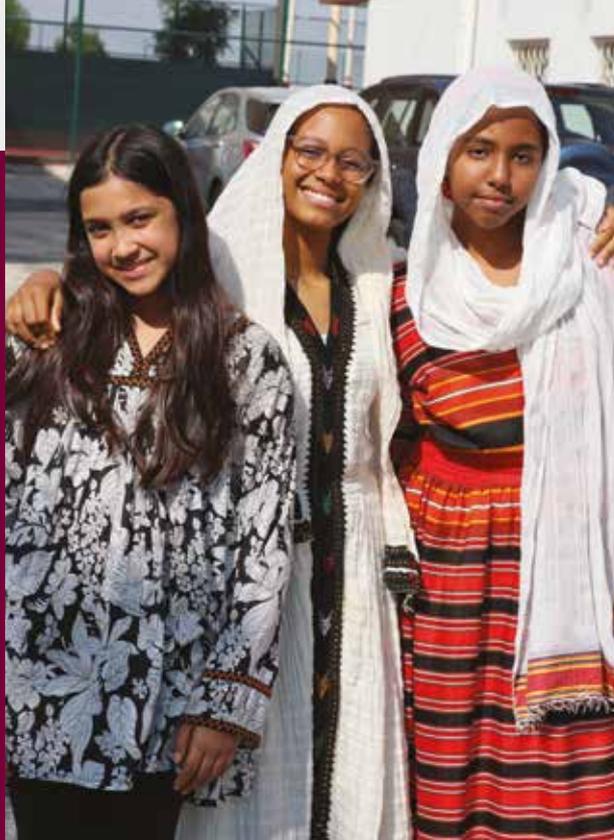


# DOHA ENGLISH SPEAKING SCHOOL



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPORT 2023-2024

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# SCHOOL MISSION AND VALUES

This report highlights the key aspects and accomplishments of Doha English Speaking School (DESS) during the academic period of September 2023 - September 2024.

As a premier educational institution committed to academic excellence and holistic development, DESS continues to uphold its mission to inspire, educate and empower our students to become lifelong learners and global citizens.

We are proud to be a "An International Beacon of Excellence" in education, renowned in the Doha community for our commitment to providing a world class British education within the vibrant landscape of our beautiful campus.

With a rich history spanning over 45 years, our school has continually evolved to meet the changing educational needs of our students, whilst upholding traditional values of academic rigour, character development and inclusivity. Our curriculum is rooted firmly in the British education system, and is designed to foster a lifelong love of learning. The education at DESS is delivered by UK trained teaching staff who integrate innovative teaching methodologies alongside state-of-the-art resources. We strive to create a stimulating and nurturing environment which encourages intellectual curiosity and personal development.

## OUR MISSION

***"To care for the whole child and prepare successful global citizens by creating a nurturing learning environment that challenges each pupil and embraces innovation and critical thinking."***

We are now in our third academic year as a Preparatory school. This marks a remarkable journey of growth, development and achievement by our staff and students. Later in this report you will see evidence of the academic results achieved by our older students and the positive feedback from the parents whose children led the way in the new chapter of our history.

In 2023, DESS achieved an Outstanding rating in our BSO (British Schools Overseas) inspection across all eight standards. These standards include:

- **The quality of education provided by the school**
- **The spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils**
- **The welfare, health, and safety of pupils**
- **The suitability of the proprietor and staff**
- **The premises and accommodation**
- **The provision of information for parents, carers, and others**
- **The school's procedures for handling complaints**
- **Leadership and management of the school**

The report highlighted that DESS provides an excellent education, Students' well-being is at the heart of the school, and exemplary practices around safeguarding ensure that students are kept safe. Students attain well academically and make strong progress as a result of a broad and balanced curriculum which is delivered to a consistently high standard."

At DESS, our students benefit from specialist teaching starting from Foundation Stage 1. This includes specialised instruction in Computing, Music and Arabic (from Year 1 for non Native students). French, and sports/swimming. In Years 7 and 8, each subject of the curriculum is taught by subject-specific specialists.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE **CHAIRPERSON**

**Dear DESS Community,**

I am pleased to present the inaugural Annual Report for the 2023- 2024 academic year on behalf of the Board of Governors of DESS. This report encapsulates the dedication and collaborative efforts of our entire community, and it is my privilege to extend my gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering commitment to the success of our school.

The Board of Governors has been working diligently to ensure that DESS continues to be a centre of educational excellence. Throughout the year, we engaged in strategic discussions, policy reviews, and decision-making processes aimed at fostering an environment that promotes academic growth, character development and community involvement. I am pleased to acknowledge the seamless handover between the outgoing and incoming Heads of School. The outgoing Head of School, Charlotte Molloy, has been instrumental in steering our school with vision, dedication, and a deep commitment to academic excellence. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Molloy.

One significant aspect of our efforts is the Annual Strategy Meeting, where the Board came together to chart the course for the next academic year and beyond. This meeting serves as a crucial platform for aligning our goals with the evolving needs of our students and the broader educational landscape. The strategic priorities emerging from these discussions include a comprehensive classroom refurbishment and development

of a master site plan to optimise the school's infrastructure. The outcome of these discussions underscores our dedication to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that DESS remains at the forefront of providing a nurturing setting for both academic and extracurricular pursuits.

This report also highlights the recent transition in our Senior Leadership Team. At the same time, I extend a warm welcome to our incoming Heads of School, Heather Rinaldi, Head of Upper School, Liam Mernagh, Head of Middle School, and Colette Forrest, Head of Lower School. Their combined experience and passion for education create a dynamic force that will contribute to growth and achievement for DESS.

The transition process has been characterised by collaboration, transparency, and a shared commitment to our core values.



## **Catherine Martinez**

Chairperson to the Board of Governors  
Doha English Speaking School

As we look ahead, I encourage each member of our community to take a moment to peruse this report and gain insights into the impactful initiatives undertaken by our Board and the wider DESS community. Your continued support and engagement are essential as we navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, always with the best interests of our students at the forefront of our decisions.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our school's mission, and I look forward to a future filled with new opportunities and milestones.

**Warm regards,  
Catherine Martinez**



# A FEW WORDS FROM OUR **PRINCIPAL**



## **To Parents,**

I am pleased to present my Principal's Report, detailing the progress and key highlights of DESS over the past academic year.

### **Academic Achievements:**

- Our students have demonstrated outstanding academic performance across all Year groups.
- In both Maths and English, students in Year 8 outperform the International average. The global average standardised age score is 100 whereas our Year 8 average Progress Test in Maths score is 114 (Nov. 2023) and our Year 8 average Progress Test in English score is 112 (Nov. 2023)
- 17% of our Year 8 students are in the top 4 % of global averages in our Progress Tests in Maths and English.

### **Extracurricular Activities:**

- Our school has continued to provide a rich array of extracurricular opportunities for students, fostering their talents and interests beyond the classroom. These have included a variety of music events and performances, sports fixtures and competitions, chess tournaments and Arabic competitions.
- DESS is running 72 different ECAs per term.
- DESS achieved second place in the Qatar Games and also fourth place in the BSME Games (British Schools in the Middle East).
- Currently there are 110 students having internal school music lessons (Singing, Piano, Violin, Drums, Guitar/Ukulele).

- This year has seen the establishment of our Superstrings ensemble - a violin group made up of 10 members that have performed at several school functions.
- We've begun offering graded music exams within school this year with 25 taking place so far this academic year.
- Voice Squad has taken part in both the choral festival at ASD and the Choir of the Year competition at Doha College. Voice squad has expanded to over 100 members.
- Our 2024 School recital showcased emerging and established talent within the school.
- A big thank you to all those staff who have helped to support and encourage the students in all of these events and ECAs.

### **Community Engagement:**

- We have enjoyed all the community events that have taken place during the academic year such as School Iftar and the Family Movie Night.
- The DESS community has managed to raise money for some worthwhile causes during the year such as the Foundation Stage 1 Sponsored Walk for the Qatar Cancer Society which raised QR 30,690 and our annual Charity Day which raised QR 41,153 for Qatar Charity. The school's Libya-Morocco appeal fundraiser raised QR 6,560 and our Palestine appeal raised QR 14,944. Many thanks to the students and staff who have helped to organise these events and also thank you to you as parents for helping to support these charity events.

### **Infrastructure and Resources:**

- We are soon to open a new Arabic hub in the corner of the school field. This will help us to deliver our Arabic and Islamic lessons in a brand new, modern classroom space.
- We now have a site development plan approved by our Board of Governors which will see a new theatre, specialised classrooms and indoor PE space being built on our school site. We are still awaiting Ministry approval on these developments but we have already started classroom renovations and improvements which commenced during the summer break. All classrooms received new windows and doors and Blocks D and E had complete classroom improvements. In the summer holidays of 2025, we will complete the same renovations for Blocks A, B and C.
- We have also renovated and improved all student toilets throughout the school.

### **Staff Development:**

- We have provided many professional development opportunities to teachers and staff to enhance their skills and effectiveness in the classroom.
- We now have members of staff with leadership and inspection qualifications that have been organised by the National College and also Penta International. This will enable our staff to continue to deliver a high quality outstanding education to your children.

### **Parental Involvement:**

- Many thanks to our Parent Council which has provided feedback on many initiatives in school and has then helped to develop areas such as ECAs, communication and parent engagement.
- Thank you also to the Friends of DESS (FOD) who have organised many memorable fundraising and community events throughout the year such as the Movie Night, a FOD Breakfast, Pizza Day and Ice Lolly Day to name but a few.

### **Board of Governors:**

- Thank you to the Board of Governors at DESS who are all volunteers and give up their time to help the School's Leadership Team improve outcomes for the students at DESS.

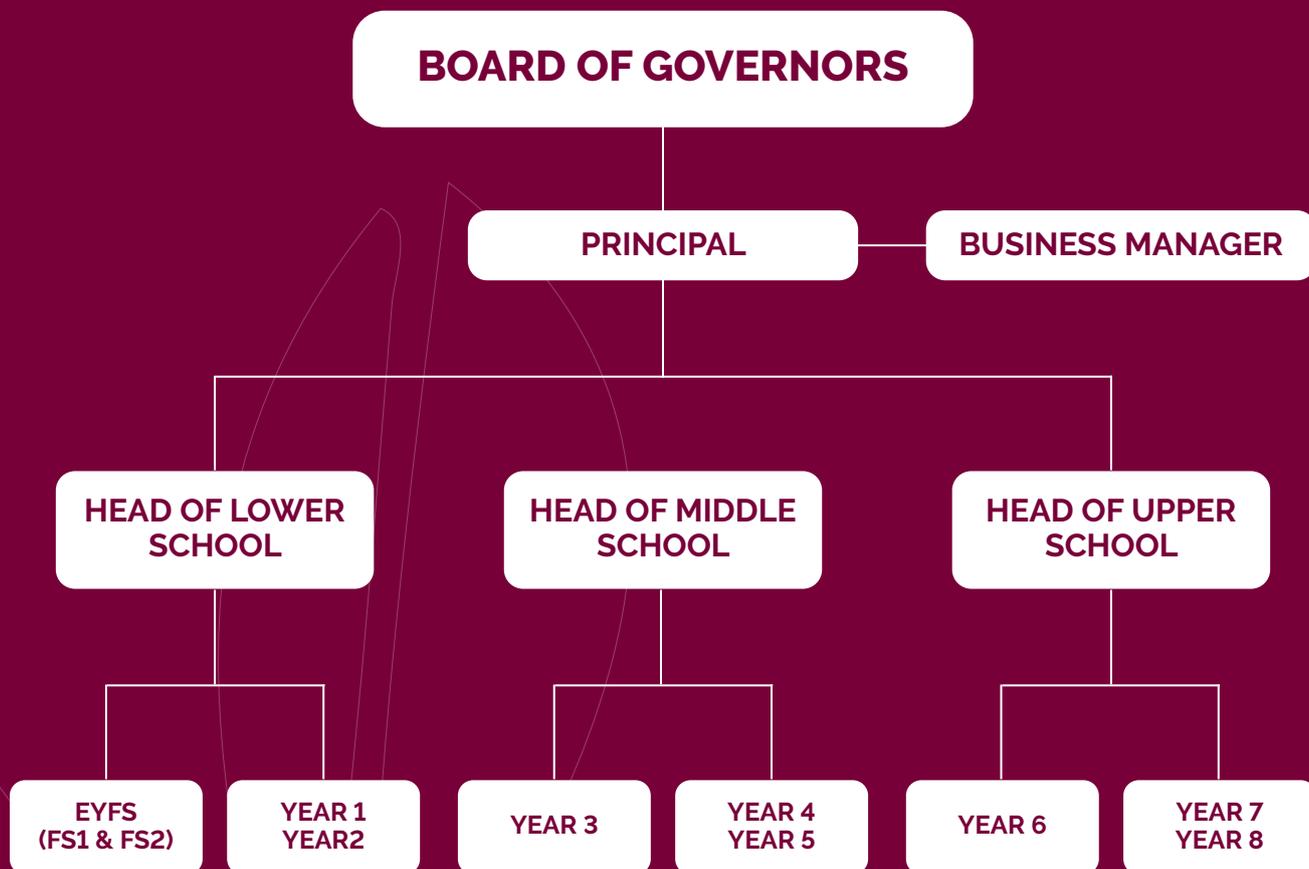
### **Looking Ahead:**

- We are continuing to grow the school in our Years 7 and 8 as we move to 3 classes in Year 7 and 3 in Year 8 from September 2024.
- We are looking to continue delivering an outstanding Curriculum and also to use up-to-date resources to help excite and motivate our students.
- We recently invested in three 3D printers which will help our students. 3D printing is a process that uses computer-aided design, or CAD, to create objects layer by layer. 3D printing is commonly used in manufacturing and automotive industries, where tools and parts are made using 3D printers. Investing in these printers will help us to teach design and creativity, computer literacy, especially digital design tools, problem-solving, 3D modelling, critical-thinking and research, teamwork and communication and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths). These skills will help us to keep our students at the forefront of new technologies and thinking.

In conclusion, I am proud of the achievements and progress made by our school over the past year. I extend my gratitude to the students, staff, Board of Governors and parents for their dedication and support. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence and create a nurturing environment where every student can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

**Warm regards,  
Sean Sibley**

# PREP SCHOOL **STRUCTURE**



**Responsibility, Kindness, Perseverance** and **Respect**, are at the core of our school.

Children learn about these values directly through assemblies and lessons, but also discreetly through their daily life at school as they underpin everything they do. As a result, we help to nurture respectful, resourceful and empathetic children who progress as well rounded students ready for their next phase of education.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**KINDNESS**

**PERSERVERANCE**

**RESPECT**

# FULL BOARD OF GOVERNORS



**Catherine Martinez**  
Chair  
Parent Governor



**Katrina Wilson**  
Vice Chair  
Non-Parent Governor



**Ali Rana**  
Treasurer  
Parent Governor



**HE Hassan Al-Thawadi**  
Parent Governor



**Mohammed Abu Shaikha**  
Parent Governor



**Derek Begley**  
Non-Parent Governor



**Basma Elshayyal**  
Non-Parent Governor



**Michael Gawith**  
Parent Governor



**Tanya Kane**  
Parent Governor



**Emily Kelly**  
Non-Parent Governor



**Eugene Lim**  
Parent Governor



**Kate Ling**  
Non-Parent Governor



**Laila Mahran**  
Non-Parent Governor



**Jennifer Stables**  
Non-Parent Governor



**Simon Whitaker**  
Parent Governor



**Ian Mason**  
British Embassy  
Representative



**Andy Bray**  
Staff Representative



**Sean Sibley**  
Principal



**Mark Loader**  
Business Manager



**Heather Rinaldi**  
Head of Upper School



**Liam Mernagh**  
Head of Middle School



**Colette Forrest**  
Head of Lower School



**Lizelette Kinnear**  
Clerk

# BOARD COMMITTEES

## FINANCE AND FUNDING SUBCOMMITTEE

### Ali Rana (Chair of F&F, Treasurer)

Simon Whitaker  
Mohammed Abu Shaikha  
Laila Mahran  
Sean Sibley  
Mark Loader  
Fiona Younger  
Lizelette Kinnear (Clerk)

## HR SUBCOMMITTEE

### Kate Ling (Chair of HR)

Katrina Wilson  
Catherine Martinez  
Sean Sibley  
Mark Loader  
Janine Al Darwish  
Lizelette Kinnear (Clerk)

## PREMISES, HEALTH AND SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

### Eugene Lim (Chair of P, H&S)

Emily Kelly  
Michael Gawith  
Jennifer Stables  
Sean Sibley  
Mark Loader  
Nicola Murray  
Lizelette Kinnear (Clerk)

## CURRICULUM SUBCOMMITTEE

### Tanya Kane (Chair of Curriculum)

Basma Elshayyal  
Derek Begley  
Sean Sibley  
Heather Rinaldi  
Liam Mernagh  
Cole Forrest  
Lizelette Kinnear (Clerk)

## GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

### Simon Whitaker (Chair of Governance)

Katrina Wilson  
Emily Kelly  
Catherine Martinez  
Ali Rana  
Sean Sibley  
Mark Loader  
Lizelette Kinnear (Clerk)

The role of the Board of Governors is to work with the Principal and School Leadership Team to ensure that the pupils receive the best possible education. The Principal is accountable to the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors is accountable to stakeholders including parents, children, staff and the Ministry of Education. The role of the Board of Governors can be summarised into 3 key elements:

- **Helping to set the vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- **Holding the Principal to account**
- **Helping to oversee the financial performance**

There are many tasks that need undertaking and to operate efficiently we have established Subcommittees to whom some of our responsibilities are delegated. These Subcommittees meet up independently of the Full Board. The Chairs of each Subcommittee are usually elected by the members of the particular Subcommittees. The other members are chosen by the Full Board. A vital part of this delegation by the Full Board is to strictly define what a committee should and shouldn't be doing. Currently DESS has the following Subcommittees that meet once per term:

**i. Finance and Funding Subcommittee**

**ii. Human Resources (HR) Subcommittee**

**iii. Premises, Health and Safety Subcommittee**

**iv. Curriculum Subcommittee**

**v. Governance Subcommittee**

The Principal and Clerk attend all meetings. The Business Manager attends all meetings except those focused on Curriculum. Heads of School attend all Curriculum meetings. Subcommittees meet once per term, while the full Board meets twice per term.

## **A summary of the Board of Governors Subcommittees**

### **Finance and Funding Subcommittee**

The objective of the Finance and Funding Subcommittee is to assist the school with its overall strategy and financial management, including short-term and long-term planning, resource management, capital investment, sponsorship, and various special initiatives. The main functions of this Subcommittee are to consider and monitor the school's financial affairs with a view to help sustain and develop its offering working together with other Subcommittees and the Full Board. The Subcommittee monitors the school's financial performance across set parameters on a monthly basis, and provides recommendations to the Board of Governors on finance-related matters in line with the school's Financial Management, Procurement and Tendering Policies. Recent initiatives have included supporting the development of medium and long term financial and capital expenditure plans, specific nearer term initiatives such as a classroom modernisation programme and enhancing tax, insurance and treasury-related affairs of the school.

### **Human Resources (HR) Subcommittee**

This Subcommittee meets once per term. The objective of the HR Subcommittee is to assist the school with its implementation and adherence to its HR Strategy. The main functions of this Subcommittee are to consider and review: The Appraisal (Performance Management) and Pay Policies for the school; Facilitate the appraisal of the Principal's performance by an independent reviewer. Staff salaries including determination of teachers' performance related pay progression. Some recent actions they have helped to support/review have been: additional nursing provision, health insurance renewal and updating staffing.

### **Premises, Health and Safety Subcommittee**

The objective of this Subcommittee is to ensure the health, safety and security of the school and users within and assist with its development strategy. The main functions of this Subcommittee are to consider and monitor: the condition of the school's infrastructure, buildings, facilities and grounds and take necessary action, the Health and Safety Policy and its application, recommendations and management of projects with respect to the school's infrastructure, buildings, facilities and grounds. Some recent actions they have helped to support/review have been: the school's CCTV tendering, classroom renovations and initial discussions about developing the site of the school.

### **Curriculum Subcommittee**

The objective of this Subcommittee is to assist the school with its implementation of required curriculum and educational strategy and adherence to Ministry of Education Guidelines. The Subcommittee ensures all requirements of the Curriculum are met. It considers and monitors school Standards and Performance targets, the School Self Evaluation Process, Self Evaluation Plan, key educational trends and developments in order to ensure that the school remains forward in its approach to teaching and learning. Some recent actions they have helped to support/review have been: Providing input on parent and staff surveys, reviewing provision of ECAs and supporting some Curriculum changes.

### **Governance Subcommittee**

Take delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board of Governors for integrating and coordinating all aspects of governance, legal and regulatory compliance and risk management to improve the quality of the school's governance arrangements for the purpose of enhancing overall performance. Some recent actions they have helped to support/review have been: proposing new Policies such as the new Mobile Device Policy and Conflicts of Interest policy.



## WELCOME FROM **LOWER SCHOOL**



**The Lower School at DESS, encompassing FS1, FS2, Y1 and Y2, offers a nurturing and stimulating environment for our young learners. We pride ourselves on our dedicated and passionate teachers who go above and beyond to ensure the academic success and personal development of our students whilst instilling a lifelong love of learning.**

This year, **FS1** welcomed 80 new children to DESS. We have enjoyed getting to know these exciting, enquiring, investigative little members of our school community and their parents. In Term One, most of our parents joined us on a 'Hook Up With a Book' event in the library which was well received by all. The children put on an amazing performance in Term Two when we showcased our Julia Donaldson 'Take a Leap into a Book'

performance. For such young children this was a show that allowed each child to shine and show what confident little people they were becoming. It was well received by a packed audience. We shared a lovely afternoon making 'Maps of my Heart' with parents and enjoyed cooking treats to give them to take home. We cook in the department most weeks which is an essential learning experience covering so much as well as getting to eat the end product!

**FS2** have had an exciting year so far. Through our Seasons topic, the children put on a fabulous production of Hats Off; a story of a horse who could not find the correct hat for the right season. They learned songs and performed dances for a captivated audience! They also visited Heenat Salma farm where they enjoyed a range of activities, such as making flower bracelets, planting seeds and meeting a variety of farmyard animals. FS2 were keen to show off all of the super learning happening in class. We invited parents in to join in a Phonics lesson, where mums and dads learned all about how we teach children to read and spell. To show our mums how special they are to us, we invited parents in again for Mothering Sunday, where the children made their mums biscuits, flowers and hot chocolate!



**Year 1** have had a wonderful year and have adapted to the transition from FS2 to Y1 with ease. They have thoroughly enjoyed being explorers during our Space and World Explorers topics, finding out lots of information about planets, seasons, continents and oceans. They have also engaged fully in our Animals Including Humans topic where they have learned about the human body, different animal groups, pets and how to look after animals. As part of this topic, the children relished participating in Animal Day and the parental engagement session where they made animal habitats with mums and dads. A highlight of this year so far was our trip to Kidzmondo. The children explored a variety of job roles and gained an understanding of how we need to work to earn money which we can then spend. As always, the DESS children did us proud and displayed exemplary behaviour!

**Year 2** had a great year! Through Humanities and Science, they learned about different habitats around the world and completed a topic about 'safari habitats' and 'arctic habitats'. Whilst learning about the weather and landscape of the arctic, they enjoyed an exciting and engaging trip to the Snow Dunes. For many of our little ones, it was their first time experiencing snow and it was wonderful to see! The children enjoyed 2 parent engagement days. First of all, our parents came in and helped the children to create their 'around the world' garden displays with a variety of artwork from our allocated countries. Parents also came in to join us on a library trip where the students read to their mums and dads. Through our 'beach holiday' topic, Year 2 enjoyed a super learning day - Beside The Seaside Day! The children played beach games and joined in a sand castle building competition!





# WELCOME FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL



**I have loved becoming part of the DESS family this year and getting to know the children, both personally and academically, and their families. Working together with the staff, we have focussed on ensuring high quality education as the priority and how we can overcome any barriers to children's learning. I am looking forward to many years at DESS.**

This year, **Year 3** learned about a variety of topics with highlights being the Romans, the Stone Age and Iron Age and as well as science units on Plants and Light. Some of our favourite activities were dressing up as Romans, making battle shields with parents and presenting information on slides during computing.

We had an amazing trip to the Dadu Gardens, which linked to our science unit and Qatar Culture. Class assemblies were also a highlight where children presented their learning to parents and the rest of the school.



**Year 4** have enjoyed a range of activities this year. Bikeability day was a highlight where the children learned practical skills combined with an understanding of safe cycling rules. Our parental involvement days in science and geography allowed us to explore circuits and human and physical features found on the Great American Road Trip. Qatar National Day celebrations are always a reminder of how grateful we are to be in Qatar. Some of the external trips included an art visit to Katara and the Blue Pearl trip. It has been a busy year with lots of fun involved.

Our **Year 5** children took part in Greek day. As part of the Greek topic, the children went on a school trip to the 3-2-1 Museum where they delved into the origins of the Olympic Games. The children also had a trip with Blue Pearl which focussed on team building, bushcraft and orienteering activities. The children also enjoyed Green Day celebrations as part of the 'Are we damaging our world' topic. DeapQatar visited to speak to us about sustainability within Qatar.





## WELCOME FROM UPPER SCHOOL



**As we have moved into our third year of Year 7 and 8 provision, Key Stage 3 at DESS continues to go from strength to strength. The number of students has once again increased in Year 7 and 8 and we anticipate further growth next year. The excellent results of the survey from our first cohort of Year 8 leavers solidified our position as Qatar's leading preparatory school.**

The **Year 6** residential trip to the United Arab Emirates provided students valuable cultural exposure and educational opportunities outside the classroom. In addition, every student attended our Expo trip at Al Bidda Park, yet again, a high level of participation and engagement from the cohort.

There have been two well-attended parent engagement days, demonstrating a strong connection between the school, students, and families. The Year 6 students produced a successful musical-comedy show (Robin Hood) to which all students contributed with pride, hard work and commitment. Finally, we welcomed Miss Muna Elmi, who joined as a new staff member and has settled wonderfully into our school community.



**Year 7** students have made a very successful transition in to Key Stage 3. The students have dealt well with moving into the Secondary phase and have learnt how to manage homework deadlines, revise for assessments and become more independent and responsible. Year 7 have enjoyed the privileges of being in the oldest phase with their use of the specialist classrooms as well as the common room and the cafe. Other highlights have included volunteering with the younger students, taking on Prefect and House Captain responsibilities and running their own stalls on Charity Day

**Year 8** students have certainly made the most of their final year at DESS. The cohort have impressed with their impressive academic achievements, attitude to learning and determination to succeed. We are incredibly proud to see the students graduate this year and have great confidence that they will all be highly successful in their new schools both here in Qatar and across the world. The students have been wonderful role models to the younger students here at DESS and have made a real impact with their charity, volunteer and academic duties both within Key Stage 3 and across the school community.



# WELL-BEING

**Events that involve the entire school community are marked as highlights on the DESS calendar, providing opportunities for everyone to share in the excitement. These events include Mental Health Week, Science Week, International Day, World Book Day, and Charity Day. These events create lasting and enjoyable memories for the children, contributing to their journey at DESS and offer moments for reflection and appreciation.**

**Super Learning Days** constitute a significant element of the curriculum, with each year group centering on specific themes. For instance, Year 5 celebrated Green Day, consolidating their understanding of environmental issues studied throughout each term. Similarly, Year 6 culminated their exploration of Ancient Egypt with Egyptian Day. These engaging events provide enjoyable opportunities for students to enhance their learning.

## PASTORAL CARE

### LEARNING MENTOR

Our dedicated Learning Mentor at DESS, Mrs Avory Adams, supports children and young people from FS1 to Year 8, ensuring their social and emotional growth. Her role provides essential support that extends beyond the classroom. Through play-based sessions, cookery, and gardening activities, Mrs Avory Adams engages with pupils, creating a dynamic and supportive space for their growth.

Mrs Avory Adams supports the transition journey of our students, welcoming new pupils to DESS, as well as helping to prepare those moving on from DESS. Our Learning Mentor boosts self-esteem and addresses friendship issues using the Friendology principles. Other interventions include social and emotional skills sessions and Sensory Circuits. Using these strategies creates a positive and inclusive school environment, ensuring

that every child feels valued and supported throughout their time at DESS.

Mrs Avory Adams has recently completed Level 2 Counselling Skills and is currently advancing through Level 3. As a trainee counsellor, she brings a deeper understanding of active listening, empathy, and effective communication skills to her role while introducing therapeutic techniques such as person-centred approaches, cognitive-behaviour strategies, and mindfulness exercises. Studying Level 2 and 3 counselling has allowed our Learning Mentor to address more complex emotional issues and provide specialised assistance to support the overall well-being and academic success of the student at DESS.

## PSHE AT DESS

At DESS, we use three varied PSHE (Personal Social Health Education) curriculums to teach our children what it means to be physically and mentally healthy.

**URStrong** is a friendship curriculum that we have embedded throughout the whole school. It teaches children to cope with conflicts, tricky situations and if someone is being mean on purpose. All staff at DESS are trained to use a particular language that empowers the children to tackle social issues themselves. Each class from Year 2 to Year 6 has a URStrong mentor. These children can be seen at break times wearing a lanyard with our URStrong posters. These children can provide support for their peers and give them advice if they are having a friendship fire.

**ThoughtBox** is a resource that is used throughout the year. It covers a range of topics using stories, videos and questions to promote discussions and debates in the classroom. Some of the topics covered are Water, Awe and Wonder, Global Cultures, Social Media and many more.

**Body Happy Org** is a curriculum used by our Year 6 teachers. The way we think and feel about our bodies affects our health and wellbeing, social relationships and how we show up in the wider world. Sadly, research shows children are questioning their bodies at a younger and younger age and the number of children feeling like their bodies aren't good enough is increasing at a rapid rate. The curriculum promotes self-love and to appreciate who we are and not just what we look like.

# ECO INITIATIVES AT DESS

Following a highly successful 'Green Day' held in Year 5 as part of their curriculum, a group of students were selected as the winners of the persuasive challenge, one of several tasks throughout the day. This group, in collaboration with Mr. Bray (Year 5 teacher), created a short video to launch an Eco House Competition. The premise was simple: any DESS family could record each instance they used reusable bags or bags-for-life while shopping via an online form. Each recorded use contributed points to their child's House, aiming to reduce reliance on single-use plastic shopping bags.

The competition was a huge success. As of 29th May, just three weeks into the competition, the highlights included:

- **Over 320 individual entries submitted through the online form**
- **More than 4,150 reusable bags used by DESS families**
- **Approximately 25 kg of plastic waste avoided**

Other Eco incentives that have taken place this academic year include:

- **Sustainability Week - promoting ideas in school and the wider community - including a Book Swap and Litter-less Lunch.**
- **Recycling - ongoing within DESS for recyclable items in specific recycling bins, Goos (Good On One Side) boxes next to the printers - this is reused by classes, in particular EYFS.**
- **Dadu Trip - EXPO 2023 for FS1 (several more EXPO visits by other year groups)**
- **Eco-Schools Congress 2023 - attended by Eco Coordinator and representing students (Focus on Qatar Marine Environment Story)**
- **Plastic pollution in the Oceans - considered and discussed within Eco Club**
- **Gardening - Planting of the Eco garden, planters and other areas - including making recyclable bird nests and natural products bird feeders - within the Eco club.**
- **Sustainable Gardening Project - In conjunction with The Doha College team for the Global Act (GAIA)**
- **Green Architecture/Sustainable City Living - considering and researching ways of how cities are becoming/can become more sustainable. Creating 'Green Architecture' buildings from recyclable and natural materials.**



We eagerly anticipate following the progress of DESS leavers as they continue their academic journeys beyond our school.

To facilitate this connection, we've established a DESS Alumni Association and encourage all former students to participate. In the near future, we plan to organise events where we can reunite with DESS Alumni and learn how their experiences at our school have influenced their paths.



## DESS ALUMNI

In June 2023, a survey was conducted among the parents of students who completed Year 8 and left DESS. The survey aimed to gather feedback on their experiences and outcomes. With an impressive 71% response rate, the survey provides valuable insights into the perspectives of our school leavers and their families. DESS alumni maintain connections with the school through our dedicated alumni social media pages. Additionally, we have several events planned for alumni over the next 24 months to foster continued engagement and community spirit.

### Survey sent to the parents of children who left DESS June 2023 and Completed Year 8

#### 71% Response Rate

School	Percentage
Doha College	40
Park House	17
King's College	13
Sherborne	10
Qatar International School	7
Private School UK	7
Doha British School	3
State School UK	3

# YEAR 8 2023 SURVEY FEEDBACK

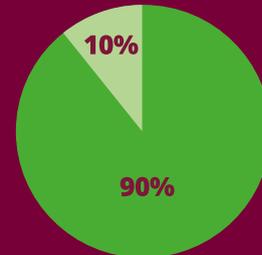
*"Above and beyond in every aspect especially providing excellent environment and great teachers for the students!"*

*"N\*\*\* was one of the lucky ones who got a chance to complete year 7 and 8 from DESS. She is doing really well at Doha College and it's all because the hard work teachers put in and prepared them earlier. Even her new teachers said DESS has prepared their students really well."*

*"Teachers were exceptionally caring, supportive and approachable. I found this school had an ethos where all students and opinions were valid and heard. The humility and lack of arrogance all the way up to the Heads was very apparent making it an amazing environment to be part of."*

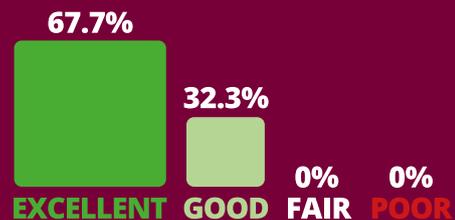
## Feedback RESULTS

Would you recommend DESS to another parent for Years 7 & 8?

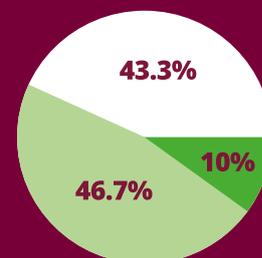


**STRONGLY** **YES** **NO**

How would you rate the quality of teaching and learning in Year 7 & 8 at DESS?



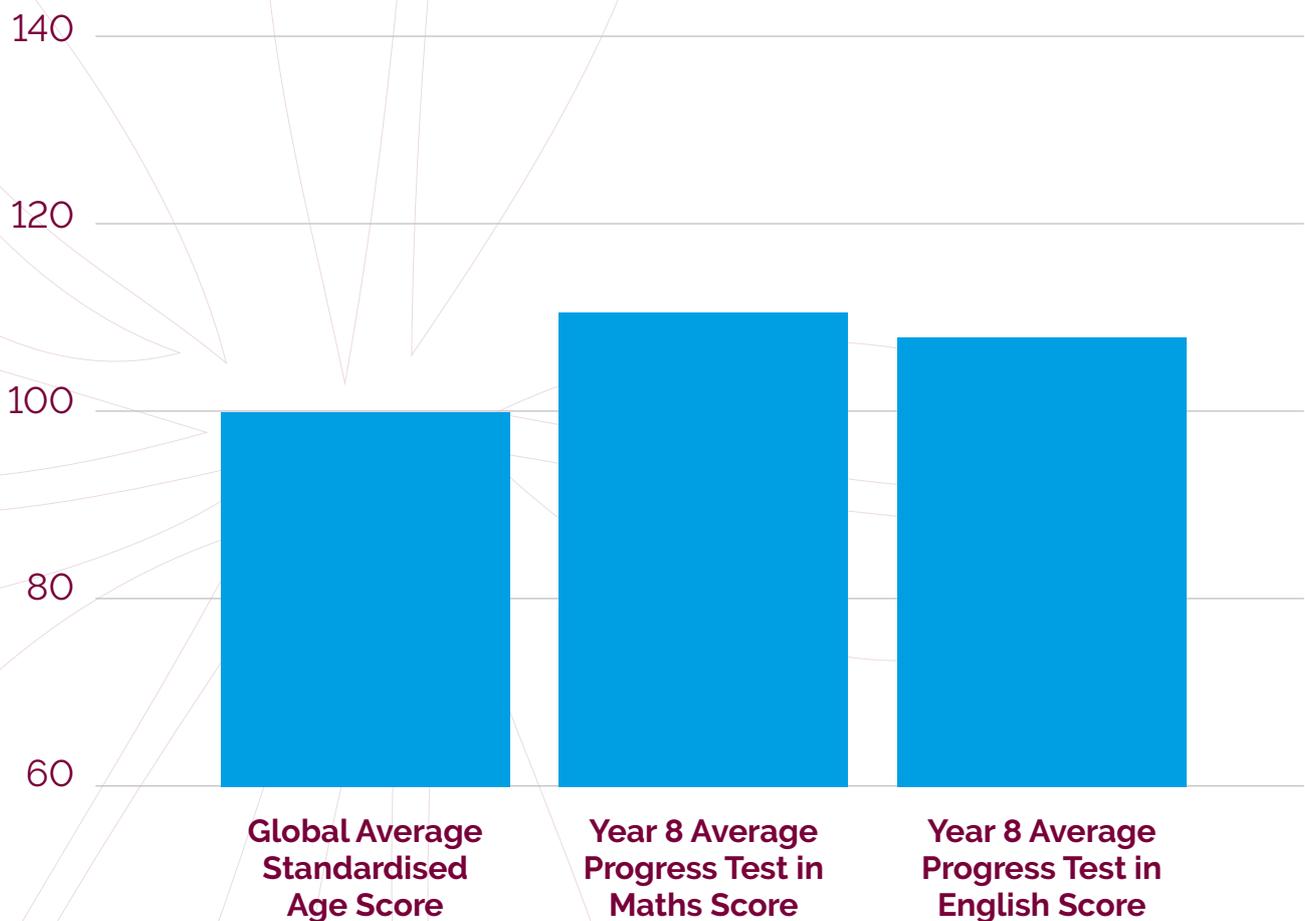
How do you estimate your daughter / son is performing compared to their peers at their new school?



**FAR ABOVE** **ABOVE** **IN-LINE** **SLIGHTLY BELOW** **BELOW**

# ACADEMIC RESULTS

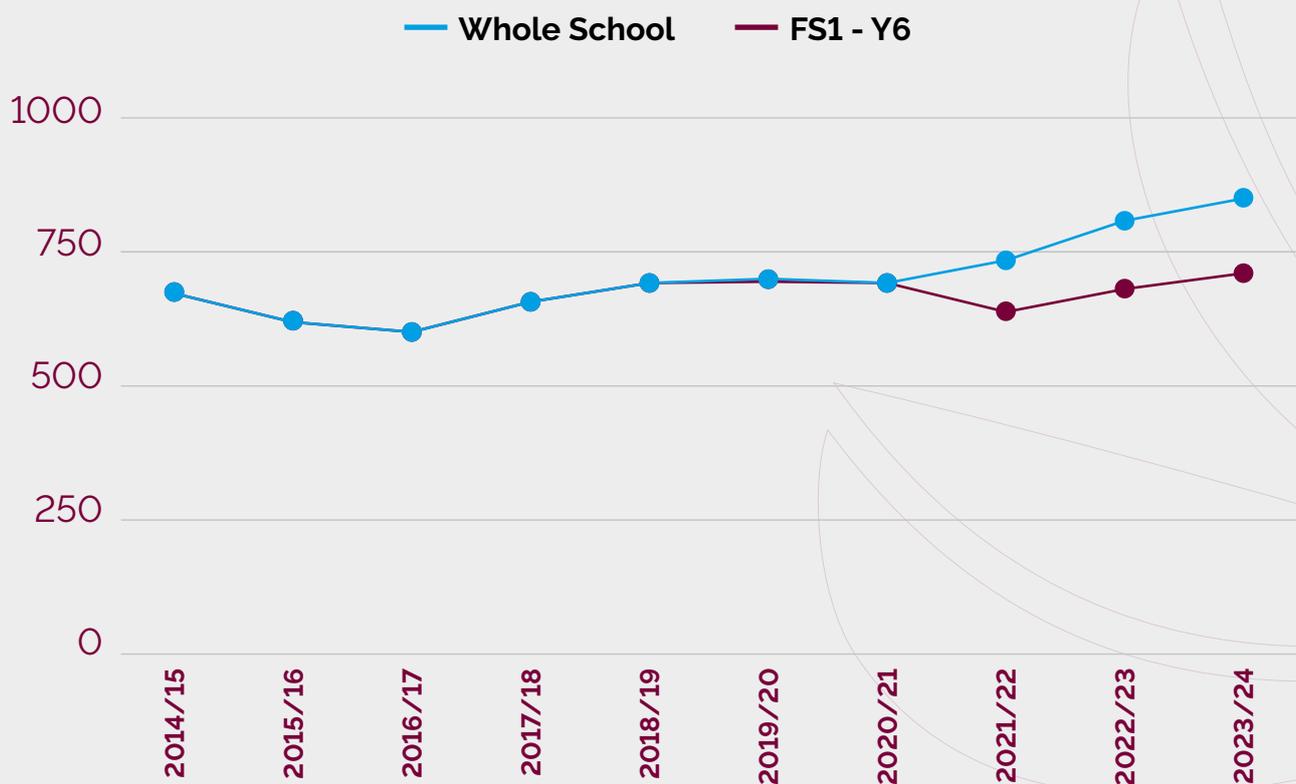
- The global average Standardised Age Score is **100**
- Year 8 average Progress Test in Maths: **112** (Jun 2024)
- Year 8 average Progress Test in English: **111** (Jun 2024)
- In both Maths and English, students in Year 8 outperform the International average
- 17% of students are in the top 4 % of global averages in Progress Test in Maths and Progress Test in English



# NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT **DESS**

- Our school has over 830 students in attendance, a number that has steadily increased over recent years
- Since 2016, our student population has grown from 635 to 832, marking a significant 31% increase
- It is important to note that this growth isn't solely due to the opening of Year 7 and Year 8 in 2021. In fact, from FS1 to Year 6, our population has increased from 635 to 730 during the same timeframe, reflecting a rise of 96 students, equating to a 15% increase
- Currently, our student body comprises 730 children spanning Year Groups FS1 through to Year 6, with an additional 103 students in Years 7 and 8

Whole School Numbers on Roll per Academic Year



### Whole School 2016-2024

635 to 832(+198/+31%)

### FS2 - Year 6

634 to 730(+96/+15%)

### Key Stage 3

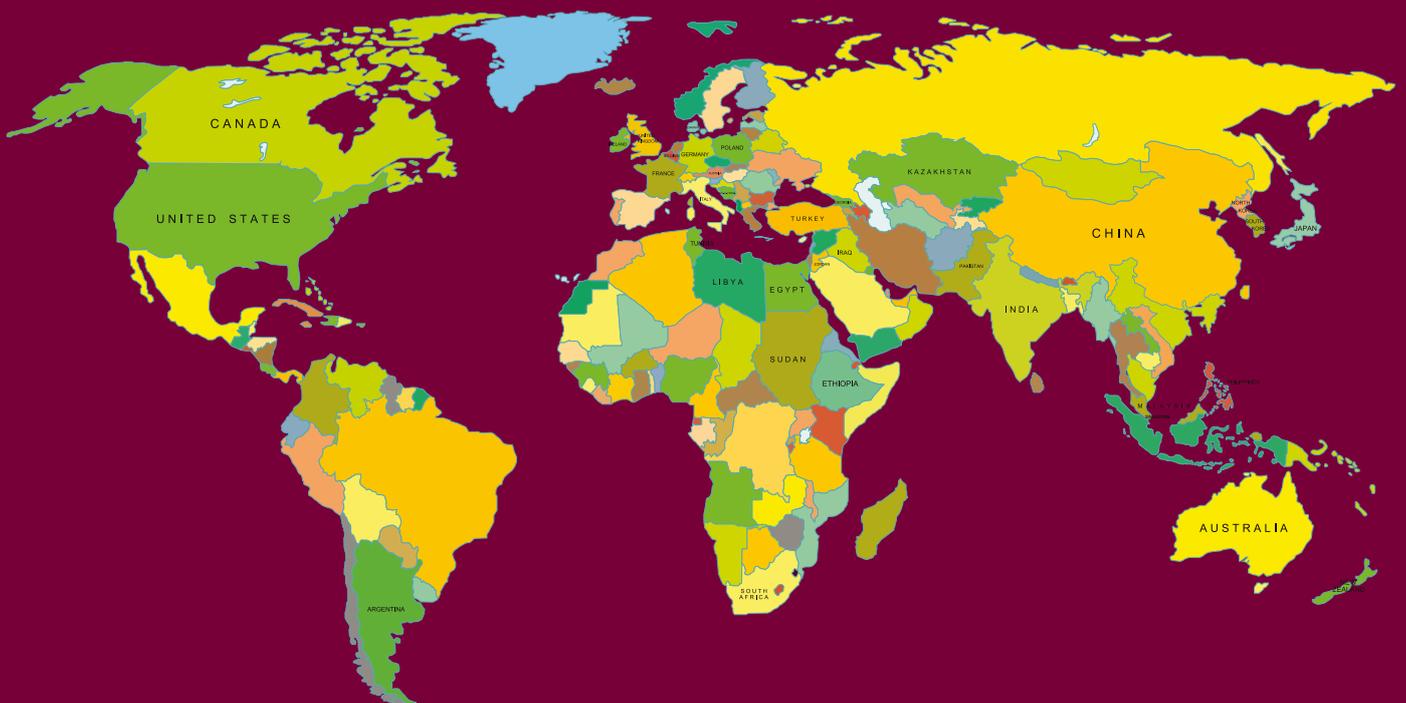
Sept 21 - Y7 - 46 students

Sept 22 - Y7 & 8 - 90 students

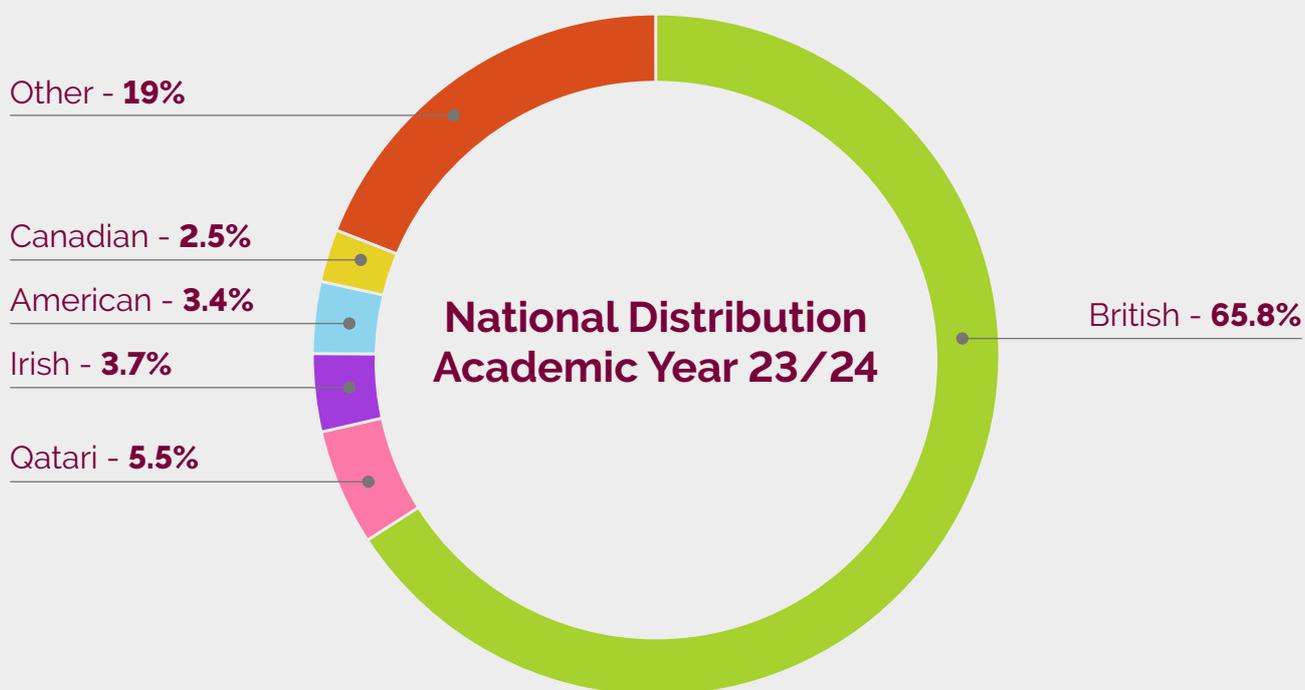
Sept 23 - Y7&8 - 102 students

# DESS STUDENTS BY NATIONALITY

- We are proud to have children from many diverse backgrounds and nationalities studying at our school
- Currently at DESS there are children from almost 40 different nationalities
- 65.8% of students are British Passport holders
- This is followed by Qatari, Irish, American, Canadian, Pakistani, Australian, Indian, Egyptian and South African passport holders. We also have children who are Italian, Kazakh, New Zealanders, German, Libyan, Jordanian, Turkish, Malaysian, Polish, Sudanese, Lebanese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Singaporean, Tunisian, Argentinian, and Austrian. At our school you will also find children from Belgium, Bosnia, China, Denmark, Holland, Ethiopia, Philippines, France, Georgia and Iraq



# SCHOOL BY NATIONALITY (APRIL 2024)



# STAFF RETENTION

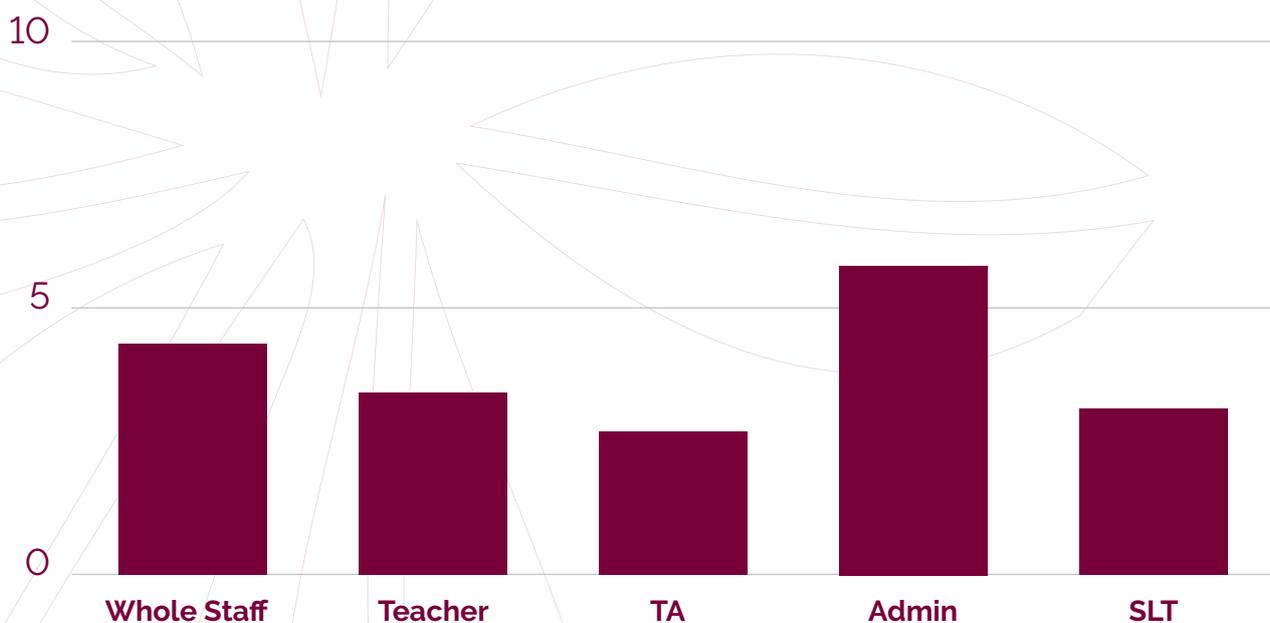
We are proud of the fact that the average length of service for our staff is 4.8 years. This represents a strong foundation of experience, commitment, and stability within the school community, which contributes to our success and effectiveness in fulfilling our educational mission.

This year, our CPD (Continual Professional Development) efforts have concentrated on enhancing our phonics provision through ReadWriteInc. Our reading leaders have participated in their face-to-face leadership course, which has equipped them with the expertise to lead phonics improvements across Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Many staff members attended Greg Bottrill's training on early writing development. This training emphasised creating a culture where children discover the joy of reading and writing, demonstrating that mark-making is purposeful and enjoyable.

Several staff also participated in Karen Wilding's Maths training, specifically designed for early years educators. This training introduced innovative methods for teaching 'number sense,' addressing common issues in achieving number sense fluency and how to overcome them. Additionally, numerous staff members accessed training from the UK National College to further develop their skills in specific areas.

Average length of Service per Role  
(Years)



# EXTRA CURRICULAR PROVISION

At DESS, we are committed to educating the whole child and this is reflected in our holistic approach to education through our extra curricular provision.

- **DESS ran 141 internal ECAs this academic year**
- **We have had squads ranging from Year 3**
- **We have had squads including Football, Basketball, Cricket, Rugby, Netball, Swimming, Badminton and Athletics which have trained during the academic year, with the majority competing in their tournaments**
- **We have had extra training for our BSME squad including some weekends**
- **We have had 2 swim schools for our lower ability swimmers (Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4)**
- **Over the last 12 months our teams have participated in national and international competitions and boast some phenomenal results for a school of our size. The 2023 BSME team competed in Oman securing a 2nd place position overall and the Year 8 boys football team competed against 32 teams within Qatar and won gold**
- **110 students are currently undertaking internal school music lessons (Singing, Piano, Violin, Drums, Guitar/Ukulele)**
- **This year has seen the establishment of our Superstrings ensembles consisting of a violin group made up of 10 members that have performed at several school functions**
- **We've begun offering graded music exams within school this year with 25 taking place**
- **Voice Squad has taken part in both the choral festival at ASD and the choir of the year competition at Doha College. Voice squad has expanded to over 100 members**
- **The School recital showcased emerging and established talent within the school**



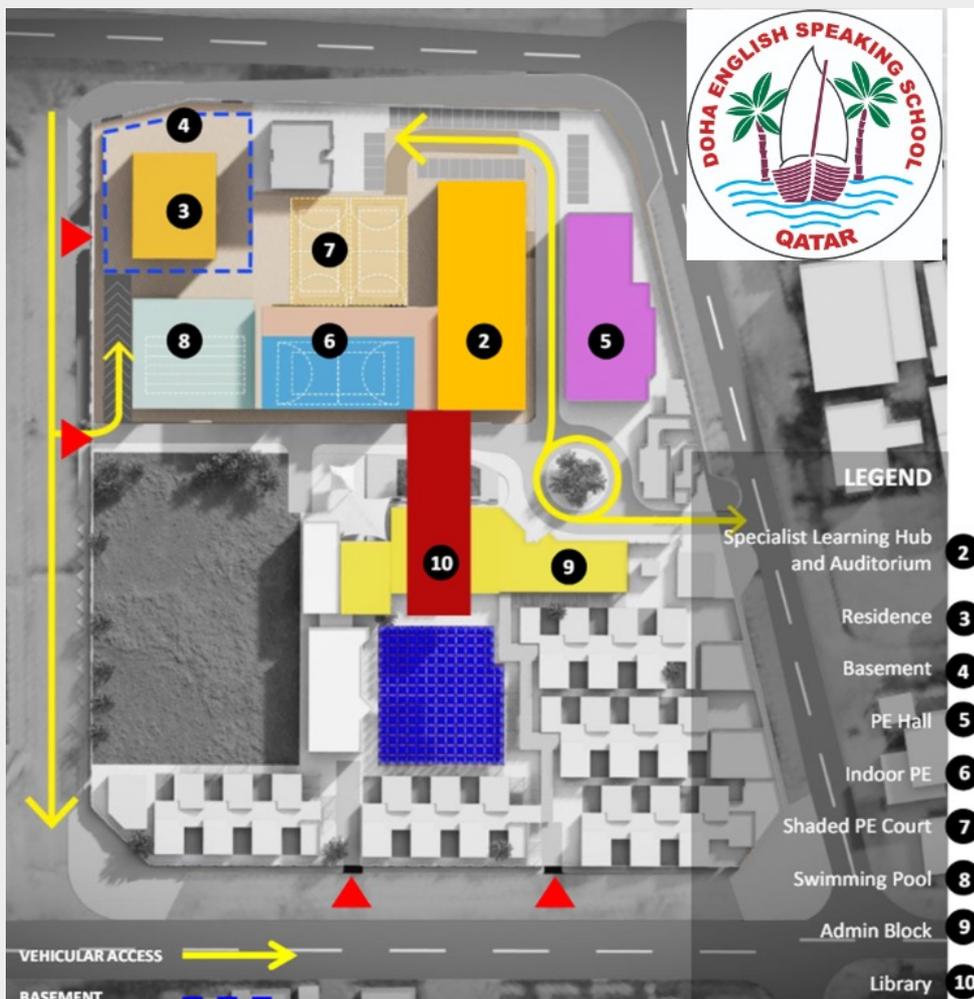
# SITE DEVELOPMENT

The school has been working with the support of Addworks to help develop a plan to improve our site and facilities. The plan has been formed based on ideas and feedback from parents, pupils and staff. This has come through our surveys and meetings along with the Parent Council and Governor meetings. The feedback has been extremely positive about our classroom environments and highlights the desire to see our sports, library and performing arts facilities improved.

Over the summer holidays, works have taken place to renovate our classrooms and introduce a new astro turf pitch. We will soon be developing a new building housing an auditorium and some additional teaching spaces. Alongside this we are looking to build a new residential block for our staff which will enable us to utilise some of the current residential areas for a new indoor sports hall and swimming pool. The library is a much loved space and we are working towards making this a centrepiece feature bridging the main building and the auditorium.

This started with a concept design bringing a natural flow around the site with achievable developments whilst still ensuring disruption is kept to a minimum. We are now embarking on drawing up detailed designs and obtaining the relevant Ministry approvals. Once all the approvals are in place construction can commence and as each phase nears completion we will be working to get the next one underway. Below you can see the overview of the finished site plan.

These planned developments are the most significant in DESS's history and will help ensure the continued long term success of the school.



# A DEDICATION TO **CATHERINE FRANCIS**



Catherine Francis, a dedicated teacher and Year Group Leader at DESS from 2004 until her passing in 2023, made immense contributions to our school's success. As a shining example of our core values, Catherine inspired students and staff alike with her unwavering dedication and boundless enthusiasm. Throughout her 19 years at DESS, she witnessed and embraced numerous changes, leaving an indelible mark on our community.

In tribute to Catherine's memory, the school has installed a bench on our field, adorned with a plaque bearing a personalised message. This bench serves as a quiet place for students to reflect on her legacy during their breaks. Additionally, recognising Catherine's passion for netball, the school has established an annual staff netball match in her honour, with the winning team awarded the prestigious Mrs. Francis Trophy. Catherine's spirit and commitment continue to inspire us, and she is deeply missed by all at DESS.



## PARENT COUNCIL

Ensuring an optimal learning environment for our children is a shared priority among parents, guardians, and educators. To achieve this, collaboration is key, and the Parent Council plays a vital role in facilitating this partnership. The Council serves as a voice for parents, conveying their concerns and suggestions to the School's Leadership Team and the Board of Governors. Issues raised are of a general nature, affecting all children or specific groups, rather than individuals, and are treated with confidentiality unless specified otherwise by the parent or guardian.

Composed of annually elected parent representatives from each school year and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Parent Council provides a platform for constructive feedback on school operations, events and policies. This input informs future initiatives and ensures alignment with the needs and preferences of our school community. Additionally, the Chairperson of the Parent Council holds a seat on the Board of Governors, further enhancing communication and collaboration between stakeholders.

# FINANCIAL DATA

## **Overall school financial objectives and health**

DESS operates on a not-for-profit basis whereby all funds are invested into the school rather than paid to shareholders or owners. This approach has encouraged the school to target a small surplus each year, allowing this to accumulate and positioning the school with a healthy cash reserve. The main objectives of the school are to continue building a surplus each year coupled with utilising the assets of the school to deliver long term improvements. The planned site developments have been arranged to be internally financed, thereby helping to protect our ethos and sustainable independence and bringing a focus to deliver a surplus that can support our plans.

## **Key income sources**

The main source of income for DESS is tuition fees, this accounts for over 96% of our total income. Other income sources are registration and assessment fees along with two corporate sponsorship arrangements.

## **Current investment projects**

Exciting developments in progress include the renovation of our Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 classrooms, the construction of a new astro turf pitch and a dedicated Arabic hub that includes two new classrooms. Over the past year we have been making improvements to classrooms and updating the existing technology through a rolling programme of screen replacements and the addition of more sets of Chromebooks. The electrical infrastructure across the site has recently been updated and we have introduced the Ministry required CCTV system.

## **Future investment plans**

The Board is committed to developing the school site to improve the facilities and learning environment, the first step in this has been the Board's approval of the site master plan. The first phase of this will see the introduction of a new building designed to house a theatre and new specialist classrooms. This will be closely followed by significant developments to our main building completely refreshing our library, small gym and reception area.

We are blessed with a site full of history and heritage and the plans are sensitive to this. They will ensure we protect the unique design of our classroom spaces whilst introducing new facilities. In the short term we are continuing to invest in our underlying infrastructure to ensure there is no compromise as we develop the site. As part of this we are looking to introduce a new network and server system to ensure a more robust IT provision over the course of the next year.

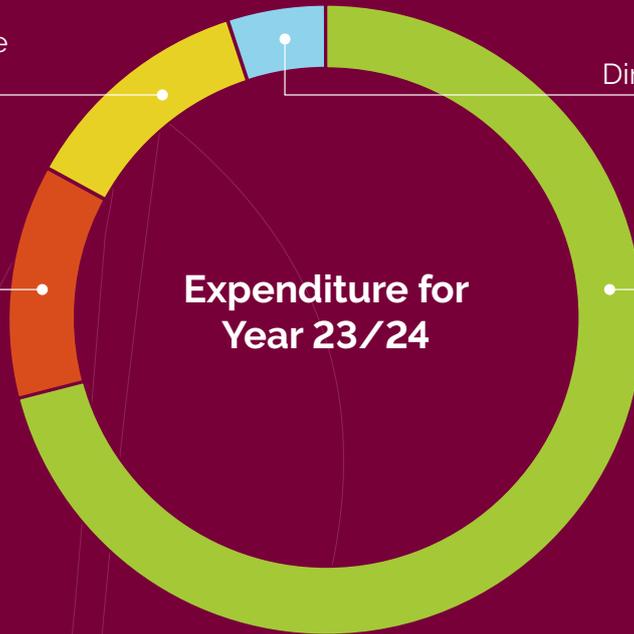
General & Administrative Costs - **12%**

Direct Academic Costs - **5%**

Site Costs - **12%**

Salaries & Staff Costs - **71%**

### Expenditure for Year 23/24



Learning Environment - **34%**

Overall Site - **66%**

### Investment in Year 22/23



# FRIENDS OF DESS

## 2023/2024 SUMMARY REPORT

The Friends of DESS (FoD) is a parent led voluntary group which exists to engage in activities to foster the community spirit of DESS and advance the welfare and education of the pupils of DESS by raising funds so as to provide additional facilities and resources.

We currently have a committee of 9 dedicated volunteer members (1 committee position is currently vacant) and we have a further team of over 35 parents who actively volunteer and assist with our events.

Since the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year, the FoD have held the following community fundraising events:

- **Two second hand uniform sales**
- **Two ice lolly sales**
- **Two craft sales**
- **Pizza Day**
- **Movie night**
- **Golden Ticket Candy Sale on World Book Day**
- **Community breakfast**
- **Sponsor a Book week (library fundraiser)**
- **Discos**
- **Non uniform day**

We also had a School community Wishmas Tree during December on which pupils and parents could hang their wishes for the year ahead.

In January over 40 parents joined us for a social community breakfast at a local hotel.

These events have involved approximately 200 volunteer hours and have raised QAR 60,839.35 for future school projects as well as bringing the school community together.

We received and approved funding requests for the following:

- **Music Department: tuning Steel Drums, QAR 4,380. These are now back in use with KS2 pupils**
- **PE Department: New basketball hoops, QAR 4,598 which have now been sourced and are available for PE lessons**
- **Adventure Playground: Repair to climbing frame at a cost of approximately QAR 25,000. Due to the amount of this request it is now pending further approval by parent vote**

We have possible new funding requests which would amount to approximately QAR 9,000.

**Thank you to all of our DESS community for another successful year.**



**Gail Chalmers**

Friends of DESS  
Chairperson





# DOHA ENGLISH SPEAKING SCHOOL

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