



**COUNCIL OF
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Sophia High School

London | UK

Melissa McBride | CEO and Co-Founder

Membership Visit Dates | 3-5 Nov 2021

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Part 1: Basic Information - Membership Evaluation

The information required is contextual: how the school is structured, accreditation history and any recent changes to the school.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

Part of the wider Sophia Technologies Ltd group, Sophia High School was founded in August 2020 and is a UK based online school providing full time digital education across the primary and secondary phases of learning from KS1 - KS3, in a co-educational environment for children from age 5 to 14.

We offer the UK National Curriculum and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) from KS1 through to KS3. Working in partnership with Fieldwork Education, we are the first and only online school to be approved by Fieldwork Education, to offer the IPC and IMYC in a full-time online learning environment. We have started the process of working towards accreditation with Fieldwork and via The International Curriculum Association (ICA). This is a three-year accreditation process.

In July 2021, we were delighted to be only one of four online schools to be invited by the UK Department for Education, working alongside Ofsted as their Quality Advisory Board, to take part in their pilot programme for the development of the [Online Accreditation Scheme](#). They also told us that they are hoping to officially launch the online accreditation scheme around December 2021/January 2022. As we were one of the few online schools that took part in the pilot scheme, we should be one of the first online schools that are officially inspected by Ofsted.

As this was a OEAS pilot Ofsted inspection, we received no official report from them. However we did receive verbal feedback that we have identified and taking on are taking on board. This included:

- Develop our Purpose and Direction Policy further to capture our focus on the importance and value we place on children's mental health, wellbeing, social development and happiness when learning in an online environment
- Complete our annual review of policies as per the review schedule prior to the start 2021 - 2022 Academic Year.
- During the policy review process, reflect and implement feedback from the DfE and Ofsted OEAS pilot, where it was suggested to ensure that our practice in an online school environment is embedded into school policies - Pioneering excellence in Online School policies
- Share the guiding statements for wider review with the school community, including staff ,students and families in order to capture their feedback and voice
- Further develop and evidence our use of the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the curriculum and daily life at the school (identified in the IPC/IMYC).
- Further develop and evidence our use of the Student Personal Goals as part of the curriculum and daily life at the school (identified in the IPC/IMYC).
- Develop a system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Guiding Statements.
- The Vision statement is set for review as part of our three year review cycle during the 2023-2024 school year
- Take an attendance register for every lesson
- Further develop ways of introducing PE and Music into the curriculum
- For the students' mental wellbeing find ways they can connect and socialise with each other outside of lessons
- In your Safeguarding Policy find ways that pioneering Safeguarding with specific reference to being an online school - which is very different to being in a physical school.

This scheme will launch towards the end of 2021 and we hope to be one of the first schools to be chosen to be inspected as we were part of the pilot scheme.

Finishing our first year of academic instruction with 30 children from Year 1 through to Year 9, we anticipate that we will carry forward current benchmarks for pupil roll to start the 2021 - 2022 academic year, with plans in place for growth and expansion over the summer and Autumn Term. Our target is to have 50 children in attendance by the end of the calendar year.

Sophia High School offers the following divisions as phases of learning:

- Online Primary School (Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 | Year 1 to Year 6)
- Online Senior School (Key Stage 3 | Y7 - Y9)

Information asked for:

Website: <https://sophiahigh.school/>

Fees: <https://sophiahigh.school/fees/>

We opened the school in September 2020. Here are our [Enrollment figures](#) since then, including the first half of the Autumn Term 2021 and beyond for those families who pay on an annual basis.

Evaluator Response

The information provided has been reviewed and provides useful context for the membership evaluation visit. The enrollment figures, especially the locations of the student body, are very helpful in painting a picture of the ages and locales of the Sophia student population. The bullet points reflecting feedback from local inspection authorities are particularly important, as they clearly mirror many of the kinds of suggestions that the CIS accreditation process would also likely identify and recommend for attention, an encouraging parallel between the school's domestic and international quality-assurance efforts.

Commendations

CIS does not require commendations in this section.

Recommendations

CIS does not require recommendations in this section.

Part 1: Reflective Statements - Head of School - Membership Evaluation

The Head of School has the opportunity to relate the application for CIS Membership or Accreditation to the school's own Guiding Statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this item.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

What are the main benefits to your school seeking CIS membership?

One of the problems of being an online school is that there are currently no regulations - let alone having an expert and experienced body come to your school to inspect how well the school is being run. I have written several articles about this ([see attached article](#)).

Seeking CIS membership and accreditation is integral to our core beliefs. Is part of our three-pronged attack to receive validation of what we do and prove to our parents that their children are receiving an excellent education that can be judged by others, besides ourselves. We are currently also working in partnership with Fieldwork Education. We have started the process of working towards accreditation with Fieldwork and via The International Curriculum Association (ICA). This is a three-year accreditation process. We are also working alongside the Department of Education in the UK. In July 2021, we were delighted to be only one of four online schools to be invited by the UK Department for Education, working alongside Ofsted as their Quality Advisory Board, to take part in their pilot programme for the development of the Online Accreditation Scheme. This scheme will launch towards the end of 2021 and we hope to be one of the first schools to be chosen to be inspected as we were part of the pilot scheme.

We believe that seeking CIS membership and accreditation will help determine if our school meets or exceeds minimum quality standards. It will also help protect the interests of students, their parents, the school itself, and potential parents who may wish to join our school, by ensuring that the educational programs offered have attained a level that meets or exceeds standards that were developed by experts in the field.

We know that that the CIS is a bona fide accrediting agency and is internationally used by other government and non-government agencies across the world. CIS Accredited Schools have also demonstrated their commitment to international education and continual improvement. CIS Accredited schools also meet globally recognized standards and promote the types of values and skills that we are seeking in our own students.

Finally, a school that holds a CIS accreditation shows that it has achieved high standards of performance in international education and has a commitment to continuous improvement. The award shows that the school:

- is devoted to its mission and vision for students
- has thought deeply about the services it offers to students, family and community.
- invests the time and resources for validation from a globally recognized accreditation authority
- focuses on the quality of teaching, student learning, as well as student safeguarding and well-being
- is committed to the development of the students' global citizenship
- has a suitable philosophy of education for its students
- promises only what it can deliver
- is open to regular evaluation by its own school community and peer evaluators
- constantly seeks improvement in all areas of the school plans strategically for the future.

How well are your school's guiding statements implemented in practice?

One advantage of setting up an online school from scratch is that the education team (which has over 60 years of teaching and leadership/headship experience behind them), wrote all the guiding statements and policies. The leadership team also makes sure that the

teachers follow the school's guiding statements. There is constant communication with the staff, daily meetings in the mornings before school most days, and a staff meeting every Thursday afternoon).

Our guiding principles of Trust, Quality, Community, Safety and Innovation is at the heart of everything we do. In our recent Ofsted inspection, we were commended on the relationship between the students and the teachers, the teachers and the parents, the parents and the Education team, and the teachers and the Education team. The surveys carried out on the students, parents and the teachers painted a portrait of a happy and extended family. The fact that our class sizes in the core subjects do not exceed six students, has a lot to do with this, as each student gets a lot of individual attention.

There is no such thing as a perfect school, and we are always looking at ways of innovating the school. We have only been running for a year, so it is difficult to assess the impact our guiding statements are having in our practise.

How does your school address the development of global citizenship in its community?

Developing the skills to become a global citizen is a key part of the IPC and IMYC curriculum. It offers a structured curriculum focused on subject, personal and international learning goals. The IPC takes a holistic approach to learning, developing knowledge and awareness by exploring overarching themes. Students are assessed at the end of each milestone at 7, 9 and 11-years-old. They are tested on their knowledge of several core subjects including Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Art, Society, Geography, History, Technology, Music and Physical Education. Students are given international learning goals to foster a global mindset. An international aspect is included in each themed IPC unit, and guides students toward a sophisticated, multicultural perspective. The IPC is now used by over 2,000 schools in over 90 countries worldwide, and the course helps children develop international mindedness and encourages individual learning paths.

The IMYC is taught in 140 schools in over 50 countries worldwide. It is based on neuroscientific research of what the adolescent brain requires by following a specific process of learning that helps your child to become a better organiser and planner. Your

child will be set learning goals that will develop knowledge, skills and understanding, personal goals that help them connect and grow, and international learning goals that give students a clearer sense of their place in a global community.

The IMYC offers a student-led learning structure, allowing them to select key themes and develop a sense of their place in the world. The goals and focus of the IMYC are to outline the knowledge, skills and understanding required across all subjects. It helps children become more internationally-minded, learning about different cultures and beginning a multilingual education. These learning outcomes were informed by eight curricula from around the world, making them easy to adapt to local national curriculum standards, which is exactly what we do at our schools.

The IMYC provides any student with a global education passport, equipping them to study anywhere in the world. It helps them develop an understanding of different cultures and customs and sets them up for a bright and successful future in a world where international knowledge is becoming increasingly valuable.

Many of the themes in the IPC and IMYC scheme are also further explored during our weekly assemblies, where the whole school shares their experiences and knowledge of the things they have learnt in the IPC and IMYC.

To what extent does your school to the CIS Code of Ethics?

The CIS Code of Ethics are very much in line, with the philosophy and moral principles sent out in all our documentation. We have clear policies about

- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Preventing radicalisation,
- Additional Needs and EAL
- Safeguarding, A
- Acceptable use of IC and Digital Safety
- British and International Values
- Equality and Diversity

- Staff Conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Safer Recruitment

Every teacher has had a clear background check on them, and they sign a [Code of Conduct agreement](#) with us.

All these policies combine to put the students at the heart of everything we do. They also help us to tackle any form of racism, sexism or any type of other discrimination. They also help us to fulfil our legal duties, as well as promote the need to respect the dignity and equality of all individuals, groups and cultures.

We promote global citizenship through our assemblies (every Friday morning) and through our IPC and IMYC curriculum.

Through our blended learning programme, we instil in our students core values. By doing so, we inspire our students to be leaders, be Independent, be mindful of yourself and others, be global citizens and be digitally native. These are the qualities future employers are looking for, and it will hold them in good stead, not just when seeking employment, but decent and honest human beings.

Student achievement will be limitless, and they will leave us with the confidence and capability that will equip them for every facet of adult life, as a global citizen. Students will be aware of their responsibilities as the learners of today and the leaders of tomorrow, as they develop critical 21st Century life skills, such as: communication, collaboration, digital intelligence, empathy, sustainability.

At Sophia High, our online learning ecosystem fosters a strong sense of global citizenship and development of a global community of learners, with families joining us from the UK and the wider world. This community is formed on the basis of being open, transparent and welcoming to all backgrounds, beliefs, and nationalities. It is rooted in the promotion of both British values and International Human Rights and Responsibilities.

We also foster in our student's key international qualities that will help them sustain a

healthy mind and a respect for others. These Personal Goals include: Adaptability: Collaborating: good Communication: Learning Empathy, being Ethical, being Resilient, being Respectful and thinking critically.

How is your school committed to continuous improvement and external evaluation?

We are constantly looking at ways of improving the school and at the end of the year we complete our [school improvement plan](#) that everyone at the school has fed into. This plan is crucial as it explores the key steps taken in how to improve the school for the next academic year. We explore how to deliver academic excellence, further develop our students' characters and how we can further develop a global mindset. We then prioritise the following key areas of the school: Pupil achievement (Raising standards across the curriculum, academic excellence , Progress, assessment: data & tracking), Personal development (Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health), Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Safeguarding, Moving beyond the Curriculum, Marketing & Admissions, Finance, Voice of the Pupil/Parent/Employee. We also ensure high standards are in place across teaching & learning through formal lesson observations, book scrutinies, training and through CPD.

As I have already stated, one of the problems of being an online school is that there are currently no regulations - let alone having an expert and experienced body come to your school to inspect how well the school is being run. I have written several articles about this (see hyperlink in paragraph 1). This is why we are seeking accreditation for the Department of Education, COIS and Fieldwork Education (who run the IPC/IMYC). It is part of our key values and integral to our core beliefs of seeking continuous improvement. This comes about by having core educators coming in to see what you are doing and having frank conversations with the leaders at our school. It is something we encourage and are seeking. It will also make online schools much more credible, accountable and professional.

We have just had some valuable feedback from the pilot Ofsted inspection that forms part of the Online Education Accreditation Scheme that the Department of Education is starting at the end of this year, which we will implement in our next round of the school improvement plan

Evaluator Response

This head of school statement thoughtfully and thoroughly captures the school's responses to the key questions about seeking CIS membership and accreditation. The school improvement plan uploaded is commendably detailed and ambitious for a young and still small school. The commitment of the head to school improvement is in no doubt.

Commendations

CIS does not require commendations in this section.

Recommendations

CIS does not require recommendations in this section.

Part 1: Reflective Statements - Governors and Board - Membership Evaluation

The Board, as the custodian of the school's mission and vision, is able to reflect on the application for CIS Membership or Accreditation, the CIS Code of Ethics and the school's Purpose & Direction.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this item.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

What are the main benefits to your school seeking CIS membership?

As an online education provider led by a leadership team who share almost 50 years of Headship and teaching experience at leading schools both in the UK and British International Schools, our mandate is to provide quality education outcomes for our students; the best of a British education online. In a sector which is unregulated, our team is focused on reimagining education and in doing so leading from the front in driving excellence in online schooling.

In seeking membership with CIS our team are able to ensure that their own work and judgements are externally monitored and helps to maintain our focus on driving ongoing learning and continuous improvement through a quality assurance body.

The global recognition of being a member of CIS will stand us apart from wider online school providers who do not seek meaningful accreditation and will provide a quality mark for online schooling in the digital age of education as we lead from the front. CIS Membership opens a number of doors for global collaboration with wider schools, both physical and online and unmeasurable networking opportunities, including access to

leading thought leadership and training opportunities for our team.

How well are your school's guiding statements implemented in practice?

As a new school, we have been fortunate to build our online school as a greenfield project, ensuring that every policy, teaching and learning strategy, curriculum resource, appointment of our team of teachers and wider staff and development of our learning ecosystem using Google for Education has been rooted in the DNA of our purpose, direction and educational philosophy. As educational leaders and passionate teachers we have seized the opportunity to assess the future needs of our students and deliver a model of education which will prepare them for their roles as the learners of today and leaders of tomorrow as global citizens. Whilst it is early days for our school and the ability to measure the wider impact of putting our guiding statements into practice, we are confident that our team has implemented a community of learning and we are delighted by the progress we have made in our first year. Our experience over the last three terms has provided our senior leadership team with opportunities to reflect upon our journey, tweak, adapt, change and innovate new ideas ready for the next phase of our development to further embed our guiding statements into everyday practice at the school. The focus on our five guiding principles; Trust, Quality, Community, Safety and Innovation sit at the heart of all we do and are used as valuable tools in looking back when undertaking self evaluation but also looking forward in terms of school development moving forward.

There has been much to learn, and there is much to do but our entire community, from our students, families, teachers, leaders, board and investors are excited by the work our team is doing. It is time to reimagine education and we are delighted to be partnering with CIS as a member school to ensure we accomplish this goal.

How does your school address the development of global citizenship in its community?

At its heart, Sophia High School is a global learning community celebrating our students and families who join us from the UK and wider international locations including Portugal, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Antigua and the Maldives. The use of the International Primary Curriculum and International Middle Years Curriculum ensures that

developing global citizenship is at the centre of the ambitious aims and values that we develop for all of our students and is also embedded into our curriculum throughout the year and across each unit of study across the school. This curriculum provides a framework for the development of our students as Global Citizens and focuses our commitment to the holistic development of learners through enjoyable academic, personal and international learning that prepares them for opportunities and challenges now and in the future.

Alongside this, our programme enables us to embrace the UN Sustainable Development Goals as we support our students and equip them with the skills they need in order to become Globally Competent learners, developing their understanding of the world and to further develop learner agency and global competence by providing exciting and relevant challenges linked to these Sustainable Development Goals. Our students are provided with opportunities both inside and outside of the online classroom to apply and enhance their problem-solving abilities as they are presented with a variety of global issues, a key skill essential for the future.

Our primary and senior curriculum encourage learners to be globally competent, socially conscious and motivated to positively contribute within a local and/or global context, something that has become increasingly essential over the last few years especially during this historic moment in time. Metacognitive emotional regulation is also incorporated within our units of study, to promote children to explore how they think and how they can learn more about their emotions and emotional resilience. It is essential that the next generation also thinks about others on a global scale. The inclusion of the new Sustainable Development Goals Challenge Series within the curriculum inspires learners to create a more sustainable future for all.

The IPC2020 and IMYC2020 provides our school with a fantastic structure and framework for an international curriculum our expert teachers adapt to suit any learning context in primary years and supports our ambitious aim of producing globally capable learners of the future, who will have the knowledge, emotional understanding and skills needed to thrive in an ever-transforming digital world.

To what extent does your school to the CIS Code of Ethics?

At Sophia High School we uphold, adhere and actively promote all areas of the CIS Code of Ethics. Our Educational Leadership team are highly experienced former Heads of Outstanding schools both in the UK and Internationally and follow the ISI Framework for Inspection of Independent Schools as our basis for exceeding our regulatory requirements and fulfilling the standards outlined in the CIS Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics requires that the school fulfill its policies and contracts; strive for excellence; nurture a culture of care, education, safety, and well-being; is in compliance with all applicable laws; respects the dignity and equality of groups, individuals, and cultures; and promotes global citizenship. The school has an extensive set of School policies and handbooks, in line with the OEAS standards developed by the UK Department for Education Accreditation for Online Education Providers. Overall, these policies are all new for this school year, and the Senior Leadership and the Board is using this first year of implementation to "filter" and improve the policies as they were initially written in order to best reflect the functions of the school and to ensure that all of these policies of reflective of education within a full time online education setting. The school does respect contracts, both with employees (employment contracts) and parents (student enrollment contract).

How is your school committed to continuous improvement and external evaluation?

Our Educational Leaders have based our own school self-evaluation and school improvement process on best practice, which has been gained by their experience as leaders of outstanding Independent Schools in the UK and International Schools overseas. This includes a robust programme of professional development and coaching for staff and an annual cycle of review across all areas of the ISI Inspection framework and OEAS standards for Online Education Providers. Our team are held externally accountable for non-education matters by our stakeholder investors and we will welcome an external 'critical friend' to support ongoing QAB work across the school in the upcoming academic year to ensure the ongoing development and continuous improvement of practice at the school. In late 2021 we will be invited by the DfE and Ofsted to be one of the first online schools in the UK to undertake the OEAS accreditation process once the programme is fully functional and we are also working alongside Fieldwork Education and The International Curriculum Association (ICA) – in order to champion quality, improve learning and unlock potential. (This will be a three-year accreditation process).

As the accreditation process for SOHS progresses, it will be important for us to develop and share how the school's governance structure will evolve in the future to align clearly with CIS standards in this domain (B).

Evaluator Response

The reflective statement of the CEO (effectively the board chair for the school, though this role needs more clarification) eloquently and convincingly states the school's case for seeking CIS membership and accreditation. On a further positive note, it is appropriate that this reflective statement aligns well with that of the head of school, as the two positions clearly are operating the school from the same founding beliefs, values, and goals.

Commendations

CIS does not require commendations in this section.

Recommendations

CIS does not require recommendations in this section.

Domain A: Purpose and direction - A1 - Membership Evaluation

The school's purpose, direction, and decision-making is guided by clear and aspirational guiding statements that are appropriate for the needs of all constituent groups and the context of the school.

Ratings Rubric

A1i. The school has appropriate guiding statements in place to provide clear purpose and direction. A1ii. The school's stated purpose and direction have been formally approved and are fully supported by the owners and/or governors.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Purpose and Direction:

Sophia High School sets its aim, purpose and direction clearly in its policy (see attachment). These are shared with the parents via the website and can also be seen in all the Google classrooms. These aims were set by the school leadership team, with staff, parent and student input. They were last reviewed in June 2020, and will be reviewed once more in June 2022. Our Self Evaluation and School Improvement Planning is guided by the principals and aims set out in our [Purpose and Direction policy](#).

Sophia High offers a distinctively British curriculum. At Sophia High School, we are passionate about creating a leading online learning environment through a unique blend of traditional values and innovative approaches to education. We offer the best in British Private Education, within a flexible home school online education setting. Our school focuses on providing an exceptional online education, offering the UK National Curriculum for England, for students from age 5 - 14. We are the only UK based online school which offers full time online learning for students from Year 1 - Year 9.

However, through participation in the highest quality, inquiry-based, student-centred IPC and IMYC programs, all students find fulfilment by accomplishing personal and academic excellence, become multilingual global citizens that adapt and contribute in a rapidly changing world, and act on their values to positively impact those around them. Sophia High the first online school to partner with Fieldwork Education to offer both the International Primary and Middle Years Curriculums. Our interactive online lessons are delivered in real-time, in small groups of no more than 6 students, for the core subjects of English, Maths and Science.

Our partnership with Google enables us to utilise the leading Google for Education Suite of tools, including: Google Classroom, JamBoard, Google Meet for Education, and many more. These tools transform how our educators and students learn, work and innovate at Sophia High School.

Core Values

At Sophia High School, we are building a global community of learners within a safe, secure and happy online learning environment, where our students are inspired, challenged and supported in all they do. We aim to empower young minds to think creatively, develop independence, problem solve and to make connections with the world around them. Modelled on the richness of the best international approach to education, our school unlocks potential, nurtures talent and realises dreams, so that students exceed expectations. Above all our guiding principles ensure that our Students are aware of their responsibilities as the learners of today and the leaders of tomorrow.

Through our blended learning programme, we inspire our students to:

Be Leaders

Be Independent

Be Mindful

Be Global Citizens

Be Digital Natives

These are the qualities future employers are looking for, and it will hold them in good stead, not just when seeking employment, but decent and honest human beings.

At Sophia High, we aim to empower young minds to think creatively, develop independence, problem solve and to make connections with the world around them. Modeled on the richness of the best international approach to education, our school unlocks potential, nurtures talent and realises dreams, so that students exceed expectations.

Student achievement will be limitless, and they will leave us with the confidence and capability that will equip them for every facet of adult life, as a global citizen. Students will be aware of their responsibilities as the learners of today and the leaders of tomorrow, as they develop critical 21st Century life skills, such as:

- communication
- collaboration
- digital natives / digital citizenship / digital intellect
- empathy
- global citizenship

Philosophy

Education is the engine of our economy, it is the foundation of our culture, and it's an essential preparation for adult life.

We believe it is our responsibility to educate the next generation of informed citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said, and instilling in them a love of knowledge and culture for their own sake. But education is also about the practical business of ensuring that young people receive the preparation they need to secure a good job and a fulfilling career, and have the resilience and moral character to overcome challenges and succeed. Delivering on our commitment to social justice also means placing these principles at the centre of everything we do, so that every young person has the opportunity to reach their potential.

Trust: We build close relationships with our students, parents and educators to ensure that our global learning community is a positive and safe learning environment, where all

members feel valued and supported.

Quality: Our Educational Leadership team are experienced Headteachers, who handpick highly qualified and experienced teachers in the UK. We are also seeking accreditation with the DfE, Fieldwork Education and COIS to ensure our work is quality assessed. We work together to ensure that our students have access to the best learning tools, so that they are prepared for their next stage of learning in the 21st century.

Community: At Sophia High, our online learning ecosystem fosters a strong sense of global citizenship and development of a global community of learners, with families joining us from the UK and the wider world. This community is formed on the basis of being open, transparent and welcoming to all backgrounds, beliefs, and nationalities. It is rooted in the promotion of both British values and International Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Safety: We uphold the UK standards for Safer Recruitment in Education and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. All our teachers have received the latest safeguarding training, including a focus on safeguarding as it pertains to teaching and learning in a digital environment. Students and parents receive e-safety guidance, and all our students have e-safety built into their academic curriculum. Sophia High School provides an especially safe and constructive way for today's students to learn with technology. The school's online learning platform (Google Classroom) is secure and accessible only by enrolled pupils, their parents and school staff. All online students pledge to uphold the acceptable use policy and receive instruction in good digital citizenship and Internet safety.

Innovation: As an online school, innovation is at the core of everything we do. We are continuously innovating the school, so that our students get the best online learning experience possible.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School's (SHS) guiding statements are captured clearly on the school's website, and involve five interlocking ideas: trust, quality, community, safety, and innovation. A learner profile is also provided, anchored in the characteristics of independence, leadership, digital natives, global citizenship, and mindfulness. These statements of purpose were

developed by the CEO/Co-Founder and by the Director of Education. In the absence of a traditional governance structure at this point, it is fair to say that these statements of purpose and direction are approved and embraced by the ownership and leadership of the school. The school's vision is driven by a specific belief in a new kind of school: fully online and following the best of UK and international curricula. Staff interviewed support the school's mission statements and feel that they have input into their implementation. It is clear that the school takes major decisions with reference to its mission. The decision to adopt the International Primary and Middle Years Curricula is clearly aligned with the school's commitment to global citizenship, and the recent decision to expand the scope of work of the mindfulness coach to one-on-one sessions with students shows the school's commitment to mental well-being. To its credit, the school leadership recognizes the challenges of the new paradigm they are embracing: external quality assurance for such a new model, tracking progress of students, following up directly on students who are struggling, and generalizing student results with a limited cohort which has yet to provide data over several years. Although the school's purpose and direction are clearly visible on the school's website and referenced in meetings and assemblies, the absence of physical classrooms also presents a challenge toward visible display of the guiding statements, though some efforts along these lines are definitely being attempted. Perhaps understandably, parents interviewed made little reference to the school's mission statements, instead praising the small class size benefits and highlighting the school's experience and competency in delivering online learning during the COVID pandemic as primary reasons for choosing Sophia for their children. The school's flexibility was also highly valued for parents whose work or travel made regular in-person schooling difficult. One parent mentioned that Sophia was one of the very few online school options which catered to primary students.

Commendations

Domain A Standard A - The school owner and leadership for thoughtfully developing a set of guiding statements for a new type of school which operates fully online.

Recommendations

Domain A Standard 1 - The school leadership consider how the key components of its statement of purpose and direction can be more overtly visible in the daily lives of students and staff,

such as highlighted in print materials (texts, workbooks, etc.) and shared digital materials (handbooks, IMYC personal goals, etc.).

Domain A: Purpose and direction - A2 - Membership Evaluation

The guiding statements provide clear commitment to high-quality learning and teaching which is effectively implemented at each stage of a student's pathway through the school.

Ratings Rubric

A2i. However defined, the guiding statements include clear commitment to high-quality learning and teaching.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

The School's guiding statements, as outlined in our [Purpose and Direction policy](#), provide a clear commitment to high quality learning and teaching at each stage of learning.

Our school focuses on providing an exceptional online education, offering the UK National Curriculum for England for students from age 5 - 14 (KS1 - KS3). We are the first online school to partner with Fieldwork Education to offer both the globally recognised International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC). Our interactive online lessons are delivered in real-time and taught by qualified and experienced UK teachers, in small groups of no more than 6 students, for the core subjects of English, Maths and Science.

Our partnership with Google enables us to utilise the leading Google for Education Suite of tools for the delivery of our online learning environment, including: Google Classroom, JamBoard, Google Meet for Education, and many more. These tools transform how our educators and students learn, work and innovate at Sophia High School. They also give us a robust and secure environment.

Our school is led by a very experienced [leadership team](#), with over sixty years of teaching

and management experience as headteachers and leaders of independent schools in the UK and internationally as some of the UKs leading Independent Schools and Global Schools Groups, with an excellent track [record of success in Outstanding Schools.](#)

Quality assurance of high quality learning will be addressed by the three external validators we have chosen. These include: Ofsted (Department of Education), COIS and Fieldwork Education / The International Curriculum Association (ICA).

Quality of Education Assessment and Curriculum

- School leaders have a strong focus on developing the best curriculum for students including the use of the globally recognised IPC / IMYC, White Rose Maths & Mathematics (Primary / Secondary) Literacy Tree Curriculum & Nelsons Handwriting (Primary). The curriculum is enhanced through a range of creative and independent focused Beyond the Curriculum programme, delivered by a strong and enthusiastic teaching staff passionate about online learning.
- All groups of students make rapid and sustained progress in English, Maths, personal development and in the development of their digital skills.
- In Spring 2021 96% of students met or exceeded their targets in English Reading Comprehension, 95% of students met or exceeded their targets in Spelling, Punctuation and grammar and 83% in Maths
- School leaders have an excellent overview of teaching and learning. Teaching is observed through a programme of joint 'learning walks' with leaders and teachers, work scrutiny, moderation of student work and analysis of student achievement and progress. Outstanding practice, based on the DfE teaching standards, is identified and shared across the school so that staff can learn from each other, and develop further digital teaching skills and maintain the highest of expectations.
- Teachers track students' achievements via regular marking of classroom using the school's marking policy and a student / teacher dialogue on Google Classroom and in the new Digital Subject Workbooks. Parents are kept informed via a programme of weekly 1-1 meetings with teachers.
- Student's confidence in writing, speaking and listening is improving. Students being given opportunities to lead in lessons and assemblies.
- Parents and carers are pleased with their children's progress and would recommend

the school

Pupil Outcomes:

The school has high expectations for student behaviour and conduct. These expectations are commonly understood and applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in students' positive behaviour and conduct and in their pupil outcomes as engaged, motivated learners. Low level disruption is not tolerated and student behaviour does not disrupt lessons. Leaders support all staff well in managing concerns regarding students and in communication of such concerns to parents.

- Students' attitudes to their education are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to work effectively online and when working independently and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Students and staff are respectful towards each other and guest teachers who join throughout the school year. Students conduct themselves maturely in lessons and have excellent relationships with their peers
- Students have high attendance, join lessons on time and complete independent home learning tasks when assigned. When this is not the case, the school takes appropriate, swift and effective action.
- Relationships among students and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture, students are safe and they feel safe and valued.
- Small class sizes allow for informed and meaningful staff-student relationships to develop. Staff know the strengths and needs of each student in their class and adapt the curriculum accordingly to meet the learning styles and interests of the students.

Evaluator Response

Sophia's purpose and direction statements include several key phrases relating to high-quality learning and teaching, including "reimagining education" and "high-quality British education". The five core values also include the key concepts of *quality* and *innovation*. The school does include, in its teaching and learning policy, a specific definition of what high-quality learning and teaching looks like in the special environment of SHS. Additional resources on the CIS website/portal include a *briefing paper* which provides useful guidance on this concept.

Commendations

None at this time.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain A: Purpose and direction - A3 - Membership Evaluation

The guiding statements provide clear commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning.

Ratings Rubric

A3i. However defined, the guiding statements provide clear commitment to global citizenship and/or intercultural learning.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

The guiding statements and our curriculum policies and guides, provides a clear commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning.

At Sophia High School, our [Purpose and Direction](#) clearly demonstrates our commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning. This is embedded across our curriculum and in the daily life of the school and our students.

In line with the UN Global Goals and outcomes of the IPC / IMYC, through our blended learning programme, we inspire our students to:

Be Leaders

Be Independent

Be Mindful

Be Global Citizens

Be Digital Natives

At Sophia High School, we are building a global community of learners within a safe, secure and happy online learning environment, where our students are inspired, challenged and

supported in all they do. We aim to empower young minds to think creatively, develop independence, problem solve and to make connections with the world around them. Modelled on the richness of the best international approach to education, our school unlocks potential, nurtures talent and realises dreams, so that students exceed expectations.

Student achievement will be limitless, and they will leave us with the confidence and capability that will equip them for every facet of adult life, as a global citizen. Students will be aware of their responsibilities as the learners of today and the leaders of tomorrow, as they develop critical 21st Century life skills, such as: communication, collaboration, digital intellect, empathy and sustainable literacy.

The curriculum demonstrates a clear commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning in its educational goals and through the learning programmes. For more on this see Domain C: C3i.

Evaluator Response

There is no question that Sophia embraces global citizenship and intercultural learning in its guiding statements. The school's vision statement uses almost these exact words, and the adopted of the IPC/IMYC programmes align directly with this intention. Furthermore, it was stated by the school leadership that a key reason for seeking CIS membership and accreditation was CIS's emphasis on global citizenship as one of its conceptual drivers, along with well-being, another key goal of SHS. Parents interviewed echoed this important aspect of the school's mission as a primary aspect of their satisfaction with the school, one even mentioning SHS's global awareness and its cross-age thematic approach as a step toward their child's eventual International Baccalaureate enrollment. The next step for the school in this standard is the development of a discrete SHS definition of global citizenship to underpin a shared understanding among students, staff, and parents.

Commendations

Domain A Standard 3 - The school leadership for its clear commitment to global citizenship and intercultural learning as a founding pillar of the new school from its inception onward.

Recommendations

Domain A Standard 3 (Major) - The school leadership and staff develop a definition of global citizenship and intercultural learning specific to the environment of Sophia High School.

Domain A: Purpose and direction - A4 - Membership Evaluation

The guiding statements provide clear commitment to well-being, conform to the CIS Code of Ethics, and demonstrate commitment to the values inherent in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

Ratings Rubric

A4i. However defined, the guiding statements make a clear commitment to well-being. A4ii. The guiding statements are in alignment with the CIS Code of Ethics and with the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Our guiding statements and policies at Sophia High School provide a clear commitment to well-being, conforming to the CIS Code of Ethics, and demonstrate commitment to the values inherent in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

- School leaders and teachers know students and their families extremely well. They take the time to build strong relationships so that they can provide just the right amount of help.
- The school coincidentally promotes the extensive personal development of students. The schools go beyond the expected, so that students have access to a wide, rich set of experiences. Opportunities are provided to students in lessons, extra curricular activities and whole school assemblies to develop their talents and interests and share these with the wider school.
- During lessons, teachers direct their support carefully at individual students and motivate and enable them to complete their work independently and implement strategies to manage their own behaviour. As a result, students show excellent

attitudes in class and there are minimal instances of poor behaviour so that it rarely interrupts learning.

- Student attendance is exemplary which shows the high level of engagement and enjoyment our students have.
- Teachers promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through daily team meetings, celebrations of different cultures, whole school assemblies, drama and performance opportunities, preparing them very well for the future and life as global citizens. SMSC is embedded throughout the curriculum as part of the IPC / IMYC including Personal Goals and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- The highly effective personal development of students is integral to the school's approach. Every interaction is seen as an opportunity to reinforce confidence, social skills, digital literacy and appreciation of learning
- All staff build trusting relationships with students and take time to get to know them, which begins from the point of admissions. They use this information very well to provide effective challenge and support that ensures students of all abilities make considerable progress.
- The curriculum extends beyond the academic and provides for students' broader development. The school's work to enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of high quality.
- The school provides high-quality pastoral support. Students know how to maintain an active lifestyle to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- The school prepares students for life as international minded global citizens, developing their understanding of both the fundamental British Values and UN Human Rights.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and diversity effectively. This is embedded into the curriculum and wider life of the school as a global learning community. As a result, students understand, appreciate and respect differences in the world and its people, celebrating the things we share in common across cultural, geographic, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities.
- Students engage with views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own in considered ways. They show respect for all members of the school community, and no forms of discrimination are tolerated
- The school provides students with meaningful opportunities to understand how to be

responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society. Students know how to discuss and debate issues and ideas in a considered way.

- Senior schools prepare students for future success in education, employment or training. They have begun to use the Gatsby Benchmarks' to develop and improve their careers provision for students and have started a programme of careers talks to speak to students from Year 7 to Year 9. Students are provided with unbiased information about potential next steps and the school has begun to provide quality, meaningful opportunities for students to encounter the world of work.

The school promotes a positive and supportive, culturally-sensitive environment for student well-being, including fair and appropriate expectations for behaviour. See Domain E: E1i

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School's commitment to well-being is unquestioned. The guiding statements refer to "safe, secure, and happy online learning environment", "mental well-being", and being "mindful". One of the five core values of the school is *Safety*. School personnel interviewed repeatedly and passionately spoke of their belief that student happiness and wellness were paramount. Although the spirit of the CIS Code of Ethics and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are certainly in evidence--and the IPC/IMYC commendably links to the United Nations Global Goals--references to key phrases and concepts in these two documents could be more explicit, strengthening the community's understanding and awareness of the school's embrace of these precepts.

Commendations

Domain A Standard 4 - The Sophia High School community as a whole for its strong and overt commitment to well-

Recommendations

Domain A Standard 4 - The school leadership and staff consider ways to make overt reference to the key

being as a foundational principle of the school's guiding ethos.

principles and beliefs of the CIS Code of Ethics and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as further reinforcement of the school's support for the well-being of its students.

Domain A: Purpose and direction - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

Sophia Online High School is reasonably well aligned with the standards in this domain, with purpose and direction (A1) being a special strength. While the school's statements of high-quality learning, global citizenship, and commitment to well-being are definitely present, we feel that these standards (A2, A3, and A4) could be even more developed as the school evolves.:

As a result of the self evaluation for Domain A: Purpose and Direction and in reflection upon feedback received from the OEAS pilot Ofsted inspection, we have identified the following actions to strengthen this aspect of school life (to see these in greater detail please see the attachment School Improvement Plan 2021-2022:

- Develop our Purpose and Direction Policy further to capture our focus on the importance and value we place on children's mental health, wellbeing, social development and happiness when learning in an online environment
- Complete our annual review of policies as per the review schedule prior to the start

2021 - 2022 Academic Year.

- During the policy review process, reflect and implement feedback from the DfE and Ofsted OEAS pilot, where it was suggested to ensure that our practice in an online school environment is embedded into school policies - Pioneering excellence in Online School policies
- Share the guiding statements for wider review with the school community, including staff ,students and families in order to capture their feedback and voice
- Further develop and evidence our use of the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the curriculum and daily life at the school (identified in the IPC/IMYC).
- Further develop and evidence our use of the Student Personal Goals as part of the curriculum and daily life at the school (identified in the IPC/IMYC).
- Develop a system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Guiding Statements.
- The Vision statement is set for review as part of our three year review cycle during the 2023-2024 school year

High-quality learning and teaching

- Start the process of a CPD with the staff linked to our guiding statements and school development plan - where they are set SMART targets. Document to be created for this purpose. Also create a Teacher On a Page - where staff can keep their data on results, observation, book scrutiny etc.
- Develop the breadth of the Music, Drama, Art, Computing and Physical Education / Outdoor Learning curriculum through partnerships with Trinity / LAMDA and wider organisations
- Continue to extend learning opportunities beyond the planned curriculum
- Further develop curricular documentation and procedures across the key stages which are thorough and support teaching well, ensuring continuity and progression throughout the school.

Global citizenship and intercultural learning -Personal development Mental Health / Wellbeing

- To enhance and further develop our commitment to embedding mindfulness, mental

health and happiness into the curriculum and daily life in the school. This includes wider opportunities for children to socialise with their peers online during the school day.

- Introduce PSHE into the [syllabus](#) and timetable, alongside their [learning goals](#)
- Staff to attend 8 week course on Mental Wellbeing and Mindfulness
- Staff to bring mindfulness into their teaching practise.
- Activities/ events which give opportunities for pupils to develop character and give additional responsibility
- Embed the Personal Goals into the IPC and the IMYC curriculum.
- Embed the Sustainability Goals into the IPC and the IMYC curriculum.

Voice of the Student

- Embed student voice at the heart of learning and decision making
- Create a student council (to be elected) that meets once a term with school leaders to discuss how the school can improve.
- Create a survey for them to complete.
- Lead on assemblies - establish rota of student led assembly calendar

Code of Ethics /UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)/ Safeguarding

- Engender a collective approach towards safeguarding so that all staff share in its importance and regard safeguarding as the highest priority through regular training, updates and are kept up to date with policy and practice.
- Ensure safeguarding practices are robust
- PSHE includes teaching children and young people about staying safe
- Maintain an environment where children feel confident to approach any member of staff if they have a worry or problem.
- All staff to complete safeguarding courses, including Prevent and FGM. Will also add Digital Safety training to what we did this year.
- Children Missing From Education: To continue to inform the council when an English student leaves and when arrives. Continue to get reports from their last school. Send Transfer certificates to those outside the UK. Forge links with safeguarding

organisations outside of the UK.

- Melissa and David to update Level 3 Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment training
- Students complete and agree to Digital Safety Agreements.

School leadership will review (and update as necessary) all the policies by September 2021, and to look for any necessary adjustments.

All key improvements can be seen in our school improvement plan, [the school improvement plan](#). This plan, we believe is realistic, focused, and achievable.

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Evaluator Response

Sophia High School is well-aligned with the standards in this domain, and certainly ready to proceed to the accreditation preparatory evaluation stage. The school has clear guiding statements embraced by the community, and which include commitment to high-quality learning, global citizenship, and well-being. These statements of belief are being put into practice.

The school's future steps along the path toward accreditation will be strengthened by the development of a specific definitions, suitable to the SHS context, of global citizenship and intercultural learning, along with more explicit references to the key concepts in the CIS Code of Ethics and the UNCRC.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Domain B: Governance, ownership and leadership - B1 - Membership Evaluation

The respective roles and responsibilities of governance and/or ownership and leadership are suitably defined in writing, respected in practice, and aligned with the CIS Code of Ethics to enable the sustainable development of the school.

Ratings Rubric

B1i. The roles and responsibilities of governance and/or ownership, leadership, and management are clearly defined and set out in written form, and include formal position descriptions and organisational charts. B1ii. Governors and/or owners as well as the school's leaders are aligning practices with the CIS Code of Ethics.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Not Met/Partially Met

Response

B1i. The School has a clear Ownership, Leadership and Management structure which is defined in written form in our [overview document](#), and in our By Laws and Articles of Association Documents including [Certificate of Incorporation](#), [Authorisation Minutes](#), [Articles](#) and [Minutes](#).

The School Owners are Melissa McBride (Co Founder / Chief Education Officer) and Daniel Turner (Co Founder). Melissa McBride has overall responsibility for the parent group, Sophia Technologies and ad Chief Education Officer of Sophia High School for the line management of the Director of Education, David McCarthy who currently sits as Head of School. Melissa is a career educator with vast Educational Leadership experience as Project Advisor to the Global CEO of Cognita Schools, Education Director with EduReach for the opening of King's College Doha and has Headteacher at Outstanding Schools, Longclose School, Wandsworth Prep School in London UK and Hartland International School in Dubai. Daniel Turner is co founder and oversees the education committee as the chair and looks

after both investment raises and finance at the school. Daniel is not on the payroll at Sophia but sits in capacity as co founder and director.

Daniel Turner is Managing Director, Head of Europe at Ellington Management Group (a \$10bn AUM Hedge Fund). He joined Ellington from Chenavari Credit Partners LLP, where he spent four years as a Founding Partner and Senior Portfolio Manager. His primary responsibilities were the European MBS and Regulatory Capital mandates of the firm, namely the “Toro” strategies. Prior to his time at Chenavari, Mr. Turner spent three years with ING Strategic Trading Platform, where he was responsible for modeling, analyzing and investing the bank’s proprietary capital in ‘first loss’ and subordinated tranches of European MBS and SME CLO transactions. He holds a first class degree in Banking, Finance and Management (BSc.) from Loughborough University, and graduated from the ICMA Centre, University of Reading with distinction in International Securities, Investment and Banking (MSc).

The roles and responsibilities of governance and/or ownership, leadership, and management are clearly defined and set out in written form, and include formal position descriptions for the roles of [Head of School](#) (currently filled by the Director of Education) and [Assistant Head](#) with regards to the [School Leadership Team structure](#), and [organisational charts](#) for the wider School and Head Office Support from the parent group, Sophia Technologies.

B1ii. Our Education Committee (Owners and Co Founders) as well as the school’s leaders are aligning practices with the CIS Code of Ethics. This is evidenced in our focus on quality advisory and accreditation that we are seeking both through the Department for Education (Online Education Provider Accreditation Scheme) and Membership with CIS. The Schools rigorous and comprehensive [Self Evaluation and School Development Plan](#) explores all areas of the standards framework and provides evidence of the steps we are making to ensure the highest quality of education possible and alignment with the CIS Code of Ethics and the continued progress and sustainable development of the school as we grow and develop our practice.

We use the CIS Ethics and standards to guide decision making and policies, and also use the ISI School Inspection Standards (where relevant) as a benchmark for our practices. This

enables our Leadership and Management structure to develop a strategic process that allows our team to:

Implement --- Embed ----- Measure ----- Review best practice aligned to the CIS Code of Ethics in order to improve, practice, quality and sustainability over time as the school expands as we continue on our journey to be the leading British Online School.

Evaluator Response

Despite the school rating indicated, the evidence suggests that the school does not yet meet the membership evaluation criteria and should continue to work on this in the time leading to the preparatory evaluation visit. Sophia High School is a subsidiary of Sophia Technologies, and understandably for a school in operation only a little more than one year, the roles relating to long-term strategy and school operations are still evolving and need further clarification and separation to align with the CIS expectations of best practice in governance. That said, the school's co-founders and leadership all have good intentions and are eager to develop the appropriate structures and role/responsibility descriptions going forward. This will include the eventual creation of an advisory body (an idea the school has already begun to develop) to consult on long-range planning, mission, and sustainable finances, as distinct from those roles which primarily handle the day-to-day operation of the school. CIS, and its network of affiliated consultants, are available to provide assistance to SHS as it moves forward to align with the standards in this domain for the preparatory evaluation report. Commendably, the school is clearly striving to operate in line with the CIS Code of Ethics.

Commendations

None at this time.

Recommendations

Domain B Standard 1 (Major) - The school ownership, in collaboration with the school leadership and using outside assistance as appropriate, develop a set

of policies and practices effectively differentiating the complementary roles of strategic direction and oversight from those of daily school operations, in line with best practice in governance for international schools.

Domain B: Governance, ownership and leadership - B2 - Membership Evaluation

The head of school is empowered to be the educational leader and, in partnership with the governors and/or owners, has clearly defined responsibility and accountability for student learning, well-being, global citizenship, and the culture of the school as a whole.

Ratings Rubric

B2i. The head of school's role is articulated in a formal job description that is understood by the governors and/or owners.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

The School has a strong [leadership team structure](#) in place. At this stage of our development, the role of the Head of School, is undertaken by our Director of Education who has vast experience as a senior leader in outstanding independent schools in the UK. As evidenced in the Role Description, the Head of School is supported by the CEO but is empowered to be the educational leader, and in partnership with the owners, has clearly defined responsibility for the day to day running of the school; including accountability for student learning, well-being, global citizenship, and the culture of the school, as a whole.

B2i. The head of school's role is articulated in a [formal job description](#) that is understood by the owners and is supported by the school's stakeholders.

B2ii. There is an excellent working relationship between the head of school and the owners includes an appraisal process for the [Assistant Head of School](#) and Head of School (Director of Education) and the opportunity for mutual discussion of the effectiveness of the working relationships as per our appraisal policy. There is a clear shared vision in place and common understanding about roles and responsibilities. The leaders at the school are empowered to

provide leadership and improvement for student learning, well-being, and global citizenship.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School has formal and detailed job descriptions for the head of school and the deputy head. Although the head (whose title is Director of Education) is entrusted with many aspects of leadership of the school, the co-founder and CEO is involved in many key operational activities, such as hiring of staff. As noted in B1, the duties of these two roles should evolve in the future to more clearly separate strategic oversight from day-to-day operational matters. The CEO will likely function more as a chair of the trustees (or similarly named) advisory board/council once the school is on a sustainable and stable footing. There is an excellent working relationship between the CEO and the head of school, which will serve the school well as its governance and leadership structure evolves in the future. Parents interviewed shared similar observations about the leadership collaboration, having had contact with both the CEO and DoE, depending on the topic, and valuing the open door of both of these school leaders. Appropriately, parents indicated that their first contact in the event of a concern was the classroom teacher, followed by the DoE.

Commendations

Domain B Standard 2 - The CEO and Director of Education for developing a strong and mutually supportive relationship, enabling both visionary goal-setting and effective daily school operations.

Recommendations

Domain B Standard 2 - As part of the development of its governing structure, the school CEO and Director of Education collaborate to revise and refine their respective job descriptions in keeping with best practice in international school governance and leadership.

Domain B: Governance, ownership and leadership - B3 - Membership Evaluation

The governors and/or owners and leaders ensure there is educational and financial [strategic and operational] planning to support the school's viability and implementation of the guiding statements, and that these plans are appropriately communicated to the school community.

Ratings Rubric

B3i. The governors and/or owners are able to demonstrate that the school's short and long-term finances are sufficient to support its operations and the implementation of its guiding statements.

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

B3i. Our finance documents clearly show that the owners are able to demonstrate that the school's short and long-term finances are sufficient to support its operations and the implementation of its guiding statements. We have realistic and appropriate strategic and operational plans in place, in particular with regards to investment and fundraising with our investor network. As such strategic plans and school improvement is underpinned by financial planning to best ensure the viability of the school in the future. Sophia High does not require external auditors due to our company size. Our first set of annual accounts are due to be filed in May 2022 (for the year ending August 2021). Upon filing we will be happy to send a copy in view of our preparatory evaluation stage.

As part of the wider Sophia Technologies fundraising rounds through our investor network and VCs, our Owners have financial plans that include contingencies for unexpected circumstances in order to best ensure the viability of the school in the future. Our next investment round will take place in Q1 of 2022. Our ongoing accountability to our investors both in previous and upcoming rounds, helps to ensure that our strategic and operational

plans that are underpinned by financial planning and which are focused on school improvement and that we uphold appropriate time frames with clear financial underpinning to provide sound direction for school improvement in student learning, well-being, and global citizenship. Providing investors with a quarterly [investment update](#) and program of Town Hall Meetings, ensures transparency in regards to cashflow, budgets, runway and strategic development ensures that educational and strategic plans are appropriately communicated and widely understood by stakeholders to enhance accountability and the transparency of school operations, and ownership.

Evaluator Response

Despite the school's self-rating, alignment with the preparatory criteria in this standard requires additional time and growth on the school's part, so a rating of Met is appropriate at this time.

Sophia High School is fortunate to have the financial stewardship of its highly capable and visionary co-founders, who have secured start-up capital to begin the school's operations. Through careful financial planning, the school is already showing modest profits, and its cash flow is positive. That said, the school is only in the first term of its second year, so long-range financial planning is still being developed. Commendably, the school co-founders believe that they can secure a second round of funding, and the school's online nature (with minimal fixed overhead costs other than salaries) means that it should be able to grow in scale fairly smoothly. The current plan is to expand the school from its current 40 or so students to closer to 200 in the medium-term future, and the co-founders are confident that funding can be arranged to accommodate this growth, further establishing the school's on-going viability. The school's tuition fees are affordable, and SHS has committed to parents to keep annual increases in the range of inflation, which should help increase student retention. At this point in its short life, SHS looks fiscally healthy and cautious optimism for its future growth is certainly justified.

Commendations

Domain B Standard 3 - The school's co-

Recommendations

Domain B Standard 3 - The school co-

founders for arranging the necessary funding to start this exciting new school, and to keep it running smoothly while steps are taken to expand student enrollment for more long-term financial stability.

founders, in collaboration with the school leadership, continue the development of medium- and long-term financial plans and projections, along with necessary funding, to support the school's sustainability and future growth.

Domain B: Governance, ownership and leadership - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

Next Steps are to ensure that the role of the owners / education committee are clearly communicated, respected and understood by the wider school community. This includes the appointment of an independent advisory education to our board / education committee to support our ongoing committed to quality advisory and school improvement. As part of our School Self Evaluation and School Improvement Planning process we will continue to embed the use of the CIS Code of Ethics to guide strategy and planning and to further develop our appraisal process for both governance and leadership.

Next steps will include the development of systems which support the effectiveness of working relationships being evaluated and/or reviewed in order to improve their impact on learning, well-being, global citizenship, and the school's culture and to ensure that strategic and operational planning as the school continues to expand is monitored and evaluated to inform future educational improvement and expansion of staffing; in particular where school leadership roles and the emerging middle management structure are concerned. This includes future plans for the School to appoint a full time Headteacher and the role of Director of Education to continue to be developed as an Quality Assurance / Advisory overview role rather than day to day responsibility for running the school as you would

expect in a growing school group, with regional / phase leadership roles being designed as part of [strategic development](#).

With regards to Financial Management - as the school continues to grow we will adapt our financial reporting structures accordingly to ensure growth targets and financial modeling / planning are in line with the CIS Ethics and support the sustainable development of the school in line with our core commitments on staffing ratios / quality and experience of teachers and live lesson learning pod sizes. Sophia will undergo our second round of investment in Q1 of 2022 which will be aimed as strategic growth / expansion into new markets and client acquisition globally.

Evaluator Response

Although SHS is still in the developmental stage of its governing and operational structure, the school's co-founders and leadership understand the future direction expected of best practice in international schools. The school's financial basis is encouragingly sound, and plans for expansion of the student population are achievable. The school's stated planned actions are all appropriate and will support the school's progression in this domain to the preparatory evaluation stage of accreditation (though in format details of prioritisation, responsibility, and timeline are desirable).

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Domain C: The curriculum - C1 - Membership Evaluation

The curriculum as a whole, offers access, engagement, and challenge to support the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of all students

Ratings Rubric

C1i. The curriculum is aligned with the school's stated purpose and direction and its admissions policies. C1iii. The curriculum considers the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of students.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

C1i. The curriculum is aligned with the school's stated purpose and direction and its admissions policies.

At Sophia High School, we provide an enriched online global education through the KS1-KS3 British National Curriculums for England in [English](#), [Maths](#) and [Science](#), as well as utilising our partnership with the [IPC](#) and [IMYC](#). These curriculums align with the schools [admissions policy](#) and the [school's stated purpose](#) of offering a fully online British education for Years 1-9 as noted in our [Primary Curriculum Policy](#) and [Senior School Curriculum Policy](#). As part of our blended learning programme, the curriculum is delivered in daily live lessons in key subject areas that engage and enrich students' educational experiences. These subjects include English, Maths ([White Rose Maths Scheme of Learning](#)), IPC ([2 year route plan](#)) & IMYC ([3 year route plan](#)), Science, [Primary French](#) & [Secondary French](#) and [PSHE](#).

As seen in the [IPC map](#) and [Upper Senior](#) and [Lower Senior IMYC maps](#), you can see how the programming is built on the foundations of the UK National Curriculum objectives in regards to the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should learn across subjects such as History, Geography, Computers and more. As well as offering our UK National curriculum and IPC/IMYC subjects, Sophia High School offers our programme of

Beyond the Curriculum. As stated in our schools purpose, we believe in a future of education in which children are given the chance to be creative thinkers and this programming achieves that goal. To align with the schools purpose, students engage in an array of opportunities to explore beyond the curriculum, led by our fully-qualified teachers who are dedicated to providing high-quality online schooling in a way that makes sense for the 21st century learner.? Our programme includes, to name a few, performance arts and public speaking, computing and career workshops which supports our Admissions and Career's Guidance Policy policies, purpose and direction in developing students personal and academic learning goals.

C1ii. Overviews of the curriculum are well planned and articulated to meet the intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs of students as they progress through school.

At Sophia High School, the curriculum considers the intellectual needs of the students through delivery of the British National Curriculum for English, Maths and Science which are the statutory programmes of study for students in KS1-KS3. The IPC & IMYC programming includes key learning skills, knowledge and understanding in highly engaging topics of study. For example in our primary school themed units, students have been highly engaged in the topics of Active Planet, Vanishing Rainforests, Olympics and Chocolate to name a few where they were able to explore far away lands virtually, listen and learn from experts in the field of paleontology, and explore the ancient Olympians of Greece. Examples of our primary planning, reflect the teachers dedication to provide an outstanding programme that intellectually challenges the students. Our senior students have been challenged with the learning units such as, Identity, Leadership and Community that include skills, knowledge and IPC International learning goals and IMYC International learning goals where they develop into efficient learners engaged with meaningful and relevant global causes and organizations such as WaterAid UK where they build their confidence in being forward thinking and aware globally citizens with a focus on the IPC and IMYC sustainability goals. Examples of our senior planning one, two, and three reflects our teachers dedication as well to provide an outstanding and rigorous programme for the students. Students are continually challenged by the Beyond the Curriculum lessons which empower them to try and learn new skills and knowledge outside of their core curriculum subjects equipping them for a future with 21st century skills.

The curriculum considers the physical needs of the students through the offering of Physical Education lessons within the [IPC Health and Wellbeing](#) subject and the [IMYC Health and Wellbeing](#) topic within the various units of study. For example, the unit of [IMYC Leadership](#) which our senior school studies in the summer 2019 term included the study of leaders in sports, physical leadership and development of healthy habits as well as understanding how warm ups/cool downs help the body prepare and recover from physical activity. Students also participate in physical activity through our weekly school-wide assemblies which can include a focus on exercise and well being for students, most recently fitness education week led by one of our qualified teachers.

Sophia High School has introduced the [PSHE \(Personal, Social, Health and Economic\)](#) curriculum this school year to our programme which considers the social and emotional concerns and needs of the students. We believe in the importance of mental health awareness, which is why we have engaged students in mindfulness workshops during mental health awareness week as well as PSHE lessons to deepen this understanding and practice. Led by our qualified teachers, the lessons play a vital role in our students' education. The senior students at Sophia High School follow Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE.

In the senior school this brings together PSHE, emotional literacy, social and employability skills and Relationships, Sex and Health Education in a comprehensive scheme of learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Jigsaw is designed as a whole-school approach, a spiral curriculum, with year groups working on the same theme (Puzzle) at the same time. Online well-structured lesson plans with slide presentations and teaching/learning activities empower the specialist and non-specialist alike, ensuring the teaching materials are always up-to-date. The focus on mental health is evident throughout, and the content is student-driven and in line with the latest national guidance. All Jigsaw programmes are underpinned by mindfulness philosophy with mindfulness practice scripts and audio files included in every lesson, supporting young people's mental health and learning.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School uses a well-documented combination of the British National Curriculum key stages and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and International Middle Years

Curriculum (IMYC), the latter two themselves largely based on the UK curriculum but with an international orientation. The staff, students, and parents confirmed in interviews that the school's curriculum is very much appropriate to its student body, and appreciated by all. The IPC/IMYC are considered easy for a new teacher to grasp and teach, with excellent teaching materials (which the evaluator observed skillfully in use in online lessons). The school community as a whole value the curricular themes (e.g., rain forest) which run across all year levels, so that siblings at SHS and their parents often have common topics for discussion at home. Staff and students felt that the curriculum aligned with their personal goals, and was flexible enough to be tailored to individual needs as it was not overly prescriptive. Teachers appreciated the autonomy provided, and they meet regularly to collaborate on instructional planning and delivery. Students interviewed were positive about the school's curriculum overall, but older students in particular noted that it lacked physical education and arts education to the degree that they would have wished. The school continues to explore ways to better address the physical needs of students, given the limitations of its online environment (further reference to this topic can be found in Domain E Standard 3), and the school is also considering how it can provide more specialist teaching in areas such as the arts.

Commendations

Domain C Standard 1 - The school leadership and staff for the detail of its curriculum documentation, especially its commitment to the IPC and IMYC.

Recommendations

Domain C Standard 1 (Major) - The school continue its exploration of ways to provide more curricular inclusion of physical activity and arts education.

Domain C: The curriculum - C2 - Membership Evaluation

The documented curriculum determines the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attributes, including well-being and intercultural competencies relevant to the students' current and future development.

Ratings Rubric

C2i. The documented curriculum articulates plans for the development of knowledge, understanding, skills (or competencies), and personal attributes.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

C2i. The documented curriculum articulates plans for the development of knowledge, understanding, skills (or competencies), and personal attributes.

At Sophia High School, the National Curriculum of England for English, Maths and Science are taught across years 1-9. This curriculum presents the knowledge, skills and understanding which are the statutory attainment levels for students in KS1-3. Specifically, the English, [KS1/KS2](#) and [KS3](#) curriculum outline specific requirements for each year group based on the skills needed for the children to attain. The Maths curriculum is taught through the [White Rose Maths](#) program through years 1-9 and the White Rose Maths identifies the progression of Maths learning for [KS1/KS2](#) and [KS3](#) which aligns with the National curriculum of England for [KS1/KS2](#) and [KS3](#). Each year group has a [White Rose Maths Scheme of Learning \(Primary\)](#) , [White Rose Maths Scheme of Learning \(Secondary\)](#) / [White Rose Maths Secondary Scheme of Learning & National Curriculum progression](#) which teachers follow. The Science curriculum is taught through the [IPC thematic units Science Example for \(Years 1-6\)](#) and [IMYC Science Example for \(Years 7-9\)](#) as well as the [Science National Curriculum for England](#). These lessons are taught by our Science specialists and follow the statutory attainment levels for students in Science according to the National

Curriculum.

The IPC curriculum highlights personal goals throughout the thematic units ([IPC Personal Learning Goals](#)). Also, the IMYC curriculum highlights personal goals throughout the thematic units ([Personal Learning Goals](#)). It is important to note that at Sophia High School we also support our curriculum teaching with [Beyond the Curriculum](#). We believe in a future of education in which children are given the chance to be creative thinkers. This involves offering them an array of opportunities to explore beyond the curriculum, led by our fully-qualified teachers who are dedicated to providing high-quality online schooling in a way that makes sense for the 21st century. In terms of professional development planning for the IMYC curriculum, our senior teachers will be working on the My Fieldwork IMYC- 12 [Episode Podcasts](#) focused on improving the learning/teaching for IMYC.

Evaluator Response

The SHS curricular documents indicate articulation, which is facilitated by the small nature of the classes and the school overall. Knowledge, skills, and understanding are core aspects of the IPC/IMYC, along with the development of personal goals and attributes. The IPC/IMYC meshes well with the British National Curriculum, as those key stage objectives not included in the IPC/IMYC, such as mathematics, can be addressed using other curricular objectives. Overall, the SHS curriculum was felt to have multiyear developmental progressions well-suited to the school's student population.

Commendations

None at this time.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain C: The curriculum - C3 - Membership Evaluation

Global citizenship, intercultural learning, and digital citizenship are intentionally planned for within the curriculum to ensure students are well prepared for life beyond school.

Ratings Rubric

C3i. The curriculum demonstrates a commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning in its educational goals and through the learning programmes. C3ii. The school understands the importance of, and has a strategy for, developing knowledge and understanding of students' home backgrounds and languages. C3iii. There is a planned approach to the development of students' digital citizenship.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

C3i. The curriculum demonstrates a commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning in its educational goals and through the learning programmes.

At Sophia High school, the commitment to developing global citizenship and intercultural learning across years 1-9 and this is highlighted foremost in the teaching of the IMYC and IPC curriculum. Specifically, the IPC facilitates learning of students' own cultures and the cultures around them both in their local and global levels. Specifically the IPC programming includes the [Sustainability Goals](#) and [IMYC Sustainability Goals](#). The [International Learning Goals](#) support learners in developing a curiosity and interest in the world through exploring and developing an understanding of multiple perspectives." (My Fieldwork, 2020). Our programming with the IMYC includes global citizenship through various IMYC International learning goals (add PDF of International Learning Goals) as well which includes a variety of learning tasks throughout the units of study. Students at Sophia High School have been involved with student-led local and international fundraising efforts and alongside our

student leadership team, they will be exploring how Sophia High School and their own families can live net zero and how humans are impacting the ocean and how to make change through projects such as One Tree and Project Zero.

<https://www.weareprojectzero.org/adopt>

In our senior school, by studying multiple perspectives and how this shapes communities, it improves students' understanding on how individuals can affect change. Being part of an international learning community provides students to attend lessons with other pupils from around the globe as well which is important in developing the increased awareness of international global citizenship along with the [International learning goals of the IPC](#) and [International Learning goals of the IMYC](#). The interconnectedness of students living across the world from one but attending daily lessons with one another, demonstrates the powerful impact that learning with Sophia High School can have. Children develop an understanding of the world through disciplinary and interdisciplinary study. This also includes taking action which students have translated their ideas for including the selection of a class charity; Oceans Cleanup, the children democratically selected to support as part of our IPC Active Planet unit focus, raising both awareness and fundraising for the organisation. We will continue these initiatives with our newly formed student leadership group this academic year.

C3ii. The school demonstrates commitment to the role of language through developing programmes to support multilingual learning as well as the host country language.

At Sophia High School we demonstrate our commitment to the role of language development through the teaching of English (the host country language, England) for years one through nine as per the National Curriculum in England. Students are also offered weekly modern foreign language lessons which is timetabled across the year groups and supported with digital learning tools. Specifically, French in weekly lessons is offered to children from KS1-KS3 taught by our fully-qualified French speaking teachers. French programming in [KS1/KS2](#) and [KS3](#) follows the National Curriculum in England.

C3iii. The school has defined digital citizenship and has shared age-appropriate expectations with the students, which inform the nature of their learning with technology.

Digital citizenship is delivered purposefully each school day at Sophia High School through the use of technology to access student live lessons and learning materials. Being an online school, this area of development is key to our success which is why we have focused and planned in the following areas to support this. Upon entering Sophia High School, students are enrolled in a Sophia High School 1-day Google Bootcamp for KS1 & KS2 or KS3. These initial courses are delivered by our qualified teachers who have extensive certifications and qualifications in Google Education tools. These induction lessons enable new students to Sophia High School to learn the new educational technology tools that will be used across the school for lesson delivery and independent home learning. Through the delivery of our IPC (Years 1-6) Learning Effectively Online unit and the ICT/Computing introduction in our seniors school during the first weeks of school in the autumn term, all of the students at Sophia High learn about and test the Google technology tools they will be using for learning as well as digital footprints, plagiarism, copyright, history of the internet, safe searching and staying safe online as outlined in our [digital safety policy](#). Students have signed and returned their age-appropriate digital safety policy and this has been review with parents. We focus on developing the students at Sophia High School to be digital natives through the use of a variety of Google Workspace tools daily such as Google Jamboard, Google Classroom, Google Slides, Google Docs and more which they use for their learning every day. Our IMYC units also support the development of student digital citizenship through the knowledge and skills development of coding and programming languages taught by our specialist computer science teachers. Digital citizenship is delivered purposefully each school day at Sophia High School through the use of technology to access student live lessons and learning materials. We focus on developing the students at Sophia High School to be digital natives through the use of a variety of Google Workspace tools daily which they use for their learning every day. Our partnership with Google enables us to utilise the leading Google for Education Suite of tools, including: Google Classroom, Jamboard, Google Meet for Education, and many more. These tools transform how our educators and students learn, work and innovate at Sophia High School. Each year teachers are also trained using the NSPCC in online safety courses which further develop their skills and attitudes to best support our learners across the school.

Evaluator Response

SHS has a clear commitment to developing global citizenship in its students through

intercultural learning. The IPC/IMYC have commendable links to the United Nations Global Goals, providing students with real-life understanding of global connections, challenges, and interactions. As noted above, themes such as *rain forest* cut across all year levels, facilitating important intercultural discussions. Current events, such as COP26 at the time of the membership evaluation visit, are commendably brought into daily classroom discussions at all levels. Although the school offers French as an additional language, mother tongue and home culture support is still under consideration, though hoped for in the future, perhaps through one-on-one provision. As might be expected for a fully online school, the school has an excellent digital safety policy, and digital citizenship is well-developed and thoroughly inculcated in students' lives.

Commendations

Domain C Standard 3 (Major) - The school leadership and staff for the development and implementation of its digital safety policy, ensuring that students operating in a fully online instructional environment are regularly reminded of safe use of the internet.

Recommendations

Domain C Standard 3 - The school leadership continue its consideration of how students can receive support in their mother tongue and home culture as part of their overall educational environment.

Domain C: The curriculum - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

We have met the Membership Evaluation criteria for the core standards for Domain C - The Curriculum. As outlined in our [School Improvement Plan](#) the further development of the curriculum at Sophia High School is a core focus for our team as we begin to embed best practice across the primary and senior phases of the school. This includes working towards accreditation with the IPC / IMYC in coordination with our CIS Evaluation visits. In order to ensure that the curriculum are well planned and articulated to meet the intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs of students as they progress through school, our key focus for the 2021 - 2022 Academic year is on supporting high quality teacher planning through documentation, action plans and staff CPD so that there is further evidence of planning for individual student learning needs which offers access, challenge, and the development of independent learning in order to support learning in live lessons as well as the independent home learning tasks that students complete outside of their timetabled lessons. This will help us to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the high- quality learning expected within the curriculum on offer and to further develop activities that foster well-being and explore diverse personal, community, cultural, and global perspectives, attitudes, and values to develop intercultural competencies. As our Global Citizenship,

Student Leadership and Digital Citizenship initiatives are embedded across the school we will look for ways to measure the impact of these projects so that they inform next steps and going development of our curriculum.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School is generally well-aligned with the standards in this domain, though there are some areas for further improvement to be ready for the preparatory evaluation stage. As a matter of procedure, it is important to state alignment with the membership criteria (which are sometimes different in content) before addressing alignment with the preparatory evaluation criteria. That procedural point aside, the school has much to be commended in its curriculum development and implementation, including its attention to the UN goals to instill the concept of environmental and economic sustainability in its students. Its emphasis on safe online behaviour is especially noteworthy and important. The school's stated planned actions are appropriate, and should be supplemented with continued efforts to incorporate home culture and language support for its students. In the next accreditation phase, these actions can be prioritised as bullet points with the responsible person and expected timeline included.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Domain D: Teaching and assessing for learning - D1 - Membership Evaluation

Teaching is closely aligned with the school's definition of high-quality learning which enables all students to be engaged and challenged, to gain access to the curriculum, and to have success in their learning.

Ratings Rubric

D1i. Students are actively engaged in their learning. D1ii. Teachers are familiar with the school's curricular programmes and work to ensure that all students succeed.

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

D1i. Students are actively engaged and challenged in their learning.

Research has demonstrated that engaging students in the learning process increases their attention and focus, motivates them to practice higher-level critical thinking skills, and promotes meaningful learning experiences. Last year our student attendance rate was in the high 90 percentile; which is a testament to our very small class sizes, the delivery of exciting lessons and the engagement of our students. We engage students in their learning in many ways, these include:

- Tapping into Students' Prior Knowledge.
- Learning about the Students' Interests.
- Organising Classroom Discussions.
- Designing highly relevant learning activities.

- Integrating Modern Technology - very important in an online school
- Providing timely and Regular Feedback in Terms of Progress.
- Teaching engaging lessons.

All our lessons are recorded, so SLT can view anyone given lesson whenever they wish. Teachers also have termly lesson observations and marking scrutinies, which show each teachers strengths and areas that need developing.

In Mathematics, we also teach to the ability of the child, if they are struggling they are moved to a lower 'pod' if they are flying and are sent as 'talented' - they are moved to a higher pod.

In the recent trial Ofsted Inspection both the parents and the students informed the inspectors that they were very happy with the lessons and how teachers feedback to them.

D1ii. Through their practice, teachers are implementing the school's definition of high-quality learning.

The use of effective teaching and high quality learning is clearly outline in our [Teaching & Learning Policy](#).

Sophia High that effective teaching and high quality learning:

- Enables students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills;
- Fosters self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- Involves well planned learned sequences and lessons utilising effective teaching methods, activities and management of time;
- Shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of students; ensuring that these are taking into account when planning learning;
- Demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- Utilises effective classroom resources of good quality, quantity and range;

- Implements effective assessment strategies to inform teaching and impact on student progress;
- Develops meta-cognitive strategies;
- Utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging students to act responsibly;

●
Supports the promotion of ELIS (and universal) values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and Promotes diversity and equality.

Every teacher is expected to evaluate the impact of their teaching in order to continue improving as a reflective professional. We support the view that the very best teachers constantly seek improvement and want to continually develop their skill as expert teachers. A successful teaching professional will always be a reflective practitioner.

D1iii. Teachers employ a range of differentiated methodologies that enable learners of all ages and abilities to be successful.

There is clear evidence (see recorded lessons) that teachers use a variety of different methodologies that enable students of all ages and abilities to be successful. These include

- Designing lessons based on students' learning styles.
- Grouping students by shared interest, topic, or ability for assignments (use of break out rooms in Google Classroom)
- Assessing students' learning using formative assessment.
- Managing the classroom to create a safe and supportive environment.

D1iv. Teachers understand student learning needs and support their academic, social, emotional, and physical growth and development accordingly.

It is important for a teacher to understand human growth and development in order to best meet the needs of students, both collectively and individually. By understanding typical patterns of growth and development, teachers are better equipped to make appropriate

educational choices. With such small class sizes, we believe that our teachers are very well equipped to support these needs.

Our teachers support social and emotional development in a variety of ways including: using children's books, planning activities, coaching on the spot, giving effective praise, modeling appropriate behaviors, and providing cues. Research has demonstrated that engaging students in the learning process increases their attention and focus, motivates them to practice higher-level critical thinking skills, and promotes meaningful learning experiences. Much of this comes through active learning. Active learning is any learning activity in which the student participates or interacts with the learning process, as opposed to passively taking in the information. We believe this is one of our strengths and one that sets us apart from the majority of online schools in the UK. Having such small class sizes, means that all the students are actively engaged in the lesson, where everyone takes part and contributes to the lesson. It is important to notice that when given the opportunity to actively engage with the information they're learning, students perform better.

Other key factors include: the qualities of a good teacher - these include skills in communication, listening, collaboration, adaptability, empathy and patience. Other factors of effective teaching include an engaging classroom presence, value in real-world learning, exchange of best practices and a lifelong love of learning. All things that can be witnessed in our classrooms across the year.

Our teachers use a variety of techniques to create a more inclusive classroom and support social skill development in their students. These include:

- Modeling good manners.
- Adopting role-play social situations.
- Creating break out rooms.
- Reading class stories.
- Preparing students for assemblies
- Team meetings

Evaluator Response

As the school has effectively laid out in their narrative, SHS already aligns with the preparatory evaluation criteria in this standard, justifying the school's rating of Exceeded. Students observed during the visit were generally engaged in their learning, and when interviewed spoke positively of the school's program and approach as meeting their needs. SHS has several ways of measuring student engagement, including attendance figures (98% attendance last year). It can be argued that it is harder for a student to hide in an online context (SHS requires students to have their cameras on at all times), and the SHS teachers skillfully use technical tools to keep an eye on individual students even while presenting. During observations, the Evaluator noted that teachers would call out students whose attention was wandering, even opening an individual Google Jamboard for the student to require their activity. Sophia, to its credit, uses both print and digital resources, giving the students variety. The school has a clear definition of high-quality learning and teaching in its policies, and teachers demonstrated a range of methodologies and a good understanding of their students' needs. It is clear that the SHS staff take very seriously the adjustments needed to make online learning successful and enjoyable. Students interviewed felt challenged, and liked the combined year levels so that they could find their own appropriate level in any given class session or topic, moving flexibly up or down with no stigma attached. Students described their lessons as interesting and appropriate for their needs, geared toward ability rather than just age, with one student summing up, "I like all my subjects!"

Commendations

Domain D Standard 1 - The SHS teaching staff for their engaging delivery of lesson content, adjusting their online teaching approach flexibly to the needs of each student.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain D: Teaching and assessing for learning - D2 - Membership Evaluation

There are effective policies and procedures in place to identify the varied needs and overall well-being of students, both at admission and while enrolled, to ensure that all students may benefit from the school's programmes.

Ratings Rubric

D2i. The school has a published admissions policy that is aligned to the guiding statements and which offers clear information to parents and prospective parents concerning the alignment between students' well-being, learning needs, proficiencies, and the programmes offered. D2ii. The school's admissions process secures relevant diagnostic information about an individual student's well-being, proficiencies, learning differences, talents, and learning aptitudes to assist in determining whether the student's educational needs can be met by the school and its programmes.

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

D2i. The well-being and learning needs of students enrolled in the school are adequately supported by clearly defined and effective screening programmes and referral systems.

As part of the mental well being of students, we fell Sophia High has a duty to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and to foster good relations between those groups. The [Equality Act](#) defines mental illness as a disability providing it has long-term adverse effects on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This

also has clear links to our school values and purpose.

There are several methods Sophia High promote equality, diversity and tolerance. These include:

- The curriculum we choose - see IPC and IMYC - they are key aspects to this.
- promoting community cohesion (IMYC currently studying the theme of [community](#))
- parental engagement and student engagement
- staff training.
- Adhering to the [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

The well being of students is also tied into how you treat others and how they treated you. For this reason students have [Personal Goals](#), which form an integral part of their well being. The sense of self-respect and fair treated also forms part of some of our key policies. These include:

- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Online Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Anti Bullying Policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Additional Learning Needs Policy](#)
- [International and British Values Policy](#)
- [Digital Safety Policy](#)
- [Radicalisation and Prevent Policy](#)

Next step (see SIP): to implement more help with the mental wellbeing of students.

This includes:

- targeted individual or small group interventions to raise self-esteem.
- one to one sessions with a school pastoral team member
- anger management classes
- one to one therapeutically based sessions with school staff
- externally provided Life Coach/Mentor to come in once per week, where students can

book slots to discuss any problem that is on their mind.

D2ii. Ongoing assessment procedures monitor the extent to which students benefit from school programmes, and effective procedures are used to continually improve student access to the curriculum.

The schools' admissions process secures relevant diagnostic information about an individual students' well-being, proficiencies, learning differences, talents, and learning aptitudes to assist in determining whether the students' educational needs can be met by Sophia High. Every child student has to go through an admissions process that is clearly set out in the Admissions Policy

The first part of the process is that all student has to take two summative online assessments. These are called Puma (mathematics) and the other is called Pira (reading comprehension). These assessments give us invaluable information. This includes their standardised score, the age standardised score, their percentile score (where they compare to the national average), the maths/reading age, whether there are any concerns, their Hodder Scale and their predicted Hodder Scale (a way of tracking the progress of students), a breakdown of their strengths and areas they need to develop in these two subjects. On top of this they then have a 1-to-1 with one of our teachers, where the teachers perform a series of formative assessments and discuss the student's educational background.

We have a series of summative assessments that take place every term. These include **Puma** (maths), **Pira** (reading comprehension) and **Gaps** (only Yrs 1-6 - grammar, punctuation and spelling) - these are all computer based. Each report gives us invaluable data and ways of tracking attainment and progress. Each term there is also a series of formative assessments we complete - these include where all the teachers get together to moderate a [piece of creative writing](#) the students have completed on a given theme, [making key judgments](#) in all the subjects across the curriculum throughout the year. These judgements and others across the curriculum are inputted, alongside their evidence, is stored in Classroom Monitor. All of this is [reported](#) to parents.

Evaluator Response

SHS effectively demonstrates in their narrative that the school already aligns with the preparatory evaluation criteria in this standard, justifying the rating of Exceeded. Sophia has a very well-crafted admissions and inclusion policy, and parents reported being clear on the process when they first applied. The school administers admissions screening tests in English and mathematics to help determine the student's fit for SHS and, if admitted, appropriate *learning pod* (combined level group). The school tries to be very clear during the admissions process about what it cannot provide, in the way of intensive learning support. Once admitted, students are assessed regularly both formatively and summatively. As noted in Domain G, the school's new software platform, *Athena*, will facilitate improved tracking of student progress and sharing of this information with parents. Notably, the school engages in periodic collaborative discussions of assessments, jointly moderating student writing to ensure consistency across the staff. Detailed lesson feedback is also provided to teachers after classroom observations, providing guidance for changes if and as needed. SHS does provide some internal support for students needing ESL or learning support, and it can draw on its sister branch of Sophia Technologies, a tutorial service, to connect parents to additional support if that seems feasible and useful.

Commendations

Domain D Standard 2 - The SHS leadership and staff for a thorough and effective admissions screening process, ensuring student suitability for the school's educational program, followed up by regular formative and summative assessments throughout the school term.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain D: Teaching and assessing for learning - D3 - Membership Evaluation

Teaching draws on a range of appropriate cultural and authentic contexts to provide meaning and purpose for students in their development as global citizens and intercultural learners.

Ratings Rubric

D3i. Teachers are aware of the implications of the reference to global citizenship and intercultural learning in the school's guiding statements and ensure that knowledge of, and respect for, the host country and other cultures are embedded within teaching and learning.

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Preparatory Evaluation Stage

D3i. Teachers are aware of the school's own definition of global citizenship and use it to provide age-appropriate opportunities to experience and learn from a variety of environments, contexts and cultures.

A global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands the wider world – and their place in it. They take an active role in their community and work with others to make our planet more peaceful, sustainable and fairer. Education for global citizenship is not an additional subject - it's a framework for learning, reaching beyond school to the wider community. It can be promoted in class through the existing IPC and IMYC curriculum. The **UN Global Goals** compliment the way that we learn with the [IPC/IMYC International Goals](#) very well. Many of the IPC/IMYC modules cover these goals eg [Vanishing Rainforest](#).

They also fit with the ethos of the IPC/IMYC with regards to International Mindedness and

promoting empathy developing the sense of "the other". The UN Global Goals offer the perfect opportunity to reflect on how our actions can impact on the lives of others complimenting [the IPC/IMYC Personal Goals](#) perfectly as well as our [Sustainability Goals](#).

Along with high standards of academic achievement, we believe we also need high standards of thoughtfulness, cooperation and morality.

D3ii. Students can give examples of their intercultural learning.

Intercultural learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills that support the ability of learners to both understand culture and interact with people from cultures different from their own. This is embodied in the IMYC and IPC Scheme of work - which look at exploring the cultures of others and how they are different from their own. An example of this would be the [Community module](#).

D3iii. The school is seeking ways to measure and assess students' development as global citizens and intercultural learners.

We do this through the International Learning Goals and Sustainability goals out by the IMYC/IPC. The teacher judgements are recored in Classroom monitor.

Evaluator Response

Despite the school's self-rating, the evidence and interviews suggest that the school still has a bit more work to do to align fully with the preparatory evaluation criteria, and thus a rating of Met is appropriate.

There is no question that Sophia High School is committed to global citizenship, as evidenced by its selection of the International Primary/Middle Years Curriculum as a foundation of its instructional programme. Global citizenship and intercultural learning are specifically called out in the school's guiding statements, and the Evaluator observed

numerous instances of global events and themes being incorporated into student lessons at all year levels. Students interviewed could refer to these topics as part of their studies, and were enthusiastic about their focus on current affairs. The Evaluator observed a student-led assembly where students discussed the threat of climate change to the world's oceans, and efforts they were supporting to reverse that impact. The United Nations Global Goals play a key role in the IPC/IMYC lessons. At the same time, the school has not yet developed a specific definition of global citizenship and intercultural learning in the context of Sophia High School, which will be a logical next step as the school evolves. Similarly, the school will want to develop some additional and formal measures of student development over time in this vital aspect of the school's mission.

Commendations

Domain D Standard 3 - The SHS leadership and staff for high-profile emphasis on global citizenship as part of the school's curriculum, fostering student knowledge, skills, and understanding in this core school value.

Recommendations

Domain D Standard 3 - The school leadership and staff collaborate to develop a context-specific definition of what it means to be a global citizen at Sophia High School, to further build a shared understanding of this key concept in the school's mission.

Domain D: Teaching and assessing for learning - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

During our first year, the SLT and staff were consistently looking at ways of improving the school. The recent trial Ofsted inspection also gave us some valuable tips on how we could improve. We also had some feedback from the children. After self-evaluation we have created a School Development Plan. This is an ongoing document where we plan the next steps for Sophia High School, as we continuously find new ways of improving the school. This document outlines the key areas for development and the action plans. One of the key areas in the document is on teaching and learning.

High quality teaching and marking are key indicators for pupil progress. This is why we now have [lesson inspections and feedback](#) from these once per term. These outline the strengths of the lessons observed, whilst also highlighting key areas that the teacher needs to improve.

We also do [formal marking feedback](#) once per term. Quite similar to the lesson observations, their strengths and key areas for development are outlined.

The students also complete [once piece of creative writing](#) that is modified by the staff. The

teachers compare notes and ideas of what constitutes: emerging, secure, exceeding piece of work.

One key aspect we have changed after ourself-evaluation, is that this was not formalised. There was no real CPD with the staff, outlining key areas they needed to work on, individualised SMART targets. CPD has been shown to increase teacher motivation, confidence and commitment to teaching. Learning new skills and applying them in the classroom can lead to a more stimulating and effective teaching environment. The CPD process will then help us you manage our own development on an ongoing basis. Its function is to help you record, review and reflect on what you learn.

We have now created a CPD document that staff need to complete. On completion they meet with their appraisal at the start of the year, half way through the year and at the end of the year. There are also numerous meetings and conversations that happen throughout the year to track the teachers' progress. The CPD is split up into individualised targets areas, including:

- Training
- Academic Targets: Achievement
- Academic Targets: Pupil Progress
- Curriculum targets:
- Contribution to the wider development of the school
- Management targets
- Time Management Targets
- Embracing Digital Curriculum targets
- Safeguarding targets.

To help their organisation with this each teacher is given a document called 'teacher on a page' which outlines the key targets and the feedback they get from the SLT

Next step (see SIP): to implement more help with the **mental wellbeing of students**. This includes:

targeted individual or small group interventions to raise self-esteem.
one to one sessions with a school pastoral team member
anger management classes
one to one therapeutically based sessions with school staff
externally provided Life Coach/Mentor to come in once per week, where students can book slots to discuss any problem that is on their mind.

Evaluator Response

SHS is clearly well-aligned with the expectations of this domain and ready to move to the preparatory evaluation stage, as it already can demonstrate alignment with those higher expectations in two of the standards and is well on the way to the same threshold in the third standard. The school's stated planned actions are generally appropriate (though those relating to well-being would be more appropriately cited in Domain E); for the preparatory evaluation phase, these actions would be better formatted as prioritised bullet points with responsible parties for oversight and expected timelines listed. The primary action item is the development of a discrete, site-appropriate definition of global citizenship and intercultural learning for the Sophia High School context.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Domain E: Well-being - E1 - Membership Evaluation

The school environment is characterised by openness, fairness, trust, and mutual respect to support student learning related to well-being. The school listens to students' views and develops their agency, compassion, environmental stewardship, and leadership capabilities.

Ratings Rubric

E1i. The school has a positive culture promoting openness, fairness, trust, and mutual respect. E1ii. The school has opportunities for students to express their views and develop their leadership capabilities.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

E1i. The school promotes a positive and supportive, culturally-sensitive environment for student well-being, including fair and appropriate expectations for behaviour.

Sophia High has clear policies on expected behaviour, staff conduct, safeguarding, online safeguarding, anti-bullying, International and British Values, Digital Safety and Radicalisation & Prevent, Equality and Diversity Policies. They show clear clear guidelines both to the staff and pupils on how to behave. We have a behaviour Log - where poor behaviour is recorded. When this happens, parents are immediately informed. We also have a low level concern log, where any inappropriate behaviour by an adult is reported to the SLT. Good behaviour, excellent attendance and good work are rewarded in weekly assemblies.

E1ii. There are opportunities for students to share concerns, express their views and influence decisions and develop their leadership capabilities.

Each for teacher has a team meeting twice a day. Here students discuss what is happening in their lives and if there any any problems they may be facing. As part of the SDP we are now forming a school council, which will. meet every half term with the SLT to discuss their views on the school and looking at ways of improving it. We have also introduced PSHE, where may of the students do discuss their emotions with the teacher. We are now looking at bringing in a mentor/life coach once per week, where students can book slots to speak to him if they have any worries about life. This came about. due to pupils' wishes for an time they can have to explore their worries and feelings. When it cones to raising money for charities, each form will decide which charity the money will go to. The seniors had an IMYC module on Leadership, that helped them develop qualities you look for in a leader.

Evaluator Response

All of those interviewed--students, staff, and parents--were unanimous in their description of the school culture as supportive and positive. As just one indication of staff well-being, it was noted that the school had zero teacher absence rate last school year. Staff reported feeling genuinely recognised and acknowledged for their work. Initially, new staff were interviewed in person for the online school, and the few new staff this year felt very supported in their integration. The leadership team builds school culture through a thorough induction process for new hires, which includes time spent observing teaching colleagues in their online lessons. Students are passionate in their advocacy of particular school and societal goals, and the school student council provides one vehicle for student leadership development. Teachers also reported using online breakout rooms to provide opportunities for students who expressed a desire to take the lead on a topic or theme. Confidence is built in all students, starting in the early years, and students reported feeling listened to and valued. SHS has a student council group, ChangeMakers, who specifically discuss ideas for improving the student experience (and the world outside of the school). One of their recent projects was fund-raising for Project Zero, to benefit the earth's oceans. Students also felt that being heard was easy in a small, online school, and also appreciated the school's explanation when it could not make changes they requested. Parents interviewed echoed their appreciation for the school's interaction with students, indicating that the small class sizes and online nature of the school helped more introverted children to gain confidence and speak up. Another parent mentioned that the diverse nature of the student population meant that their child felt okay being different, while yet another parent

shared heart-warming stories of students in different year levels helping each with skills development or social and cultural understanding.

Commendations

Domain E Standard 1 - The school leadership for developing a thorough and effective induction process for new teachers, focusing especially on the demands and differences of the school's culture of online instruction.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain E: Well-being - E2 - Membership Evaluation

The school has clearly documented and effectively implemented policies and procedures relating to child safeguarding to protect and promote the well-being of all enrolled students. These policies set out how the school addresses the following issues: safer recruitment; staff conduct; student behaviour; reporting, managing and recording child safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse; roles and responsibilities of staff, leaders and governors to manage and oversee safeguarding; staff training, student education and parental engagement; peer-on-peer harassment and abuse (including but not limited to bullying and sexual harassment); online safety; and security and health and safety. These exceed, where necessary, local regulatory requirements.

Ratings Rubric

E2i. The school has documented policies and procedures to safeguard and promote the well-being and protection of students (see the list of areas to cover in the standard). E2ii. Leaders and teachers demonstrate a shared responsibility to address awareness, prevention, and responsiveness to all issues covered in the standard.

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

Membership Evaluation Stage

E2i. The school has documented policies and procedures to safeguard and promote the well-being and protection of students (see the list of areas to cover in the standard).

There are policies that set out how the Sophia High addresses the following issues: and it's procedures:

safer recruitment;

staff conduct;

student behaviour;

Exclusion

reporting, managing and recording child safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse;

roles and responsibilities of staff, leaders and governors to manage and oversee

safeguarding - covered in the safeguarding policy, Neutral Notification, and Whistleblowing Policy

Appraisal of Staff/staff training.

Online Safeguarding Policy (after feedback from Ofsted. We are trying to become pioneers in this field)

peer-on-peer harassment and abuse (including but not limited to bullying and sexual harassment);

Digital and Online safety;

Health and safety

Radicalisation and Prevent

Anti-Bullying

Attendance and Children Missing from Education

Equality and Diversity

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery

Staff Code of Conduct - signed by teachers

E2ii. Leaders and teachers demonstrate a shared responsibility to address awareness, prevention, and responsiveness to all issues covered in the standard.

All the above issues are carefully considered by the leaders and teachers. Safeguarding issues are raised every week during staff meetings. Staff receive weekly bulletin safeguarding emails on the key issues around safeguarding. There are clear safeguarding procedures in place.

Last year the staff have received safeguarding training in:

- Prevent & Radicalisation

- FGM
- Safeguarding children Level 1
- Forced Marriages
-

This year they will be receiving training in:

Keeping Children safe online

Managing Sexualised behaviour

Child Protection in Schools

Safeguarding children with SEND

Evaluator Response

The school already meets the preparatory evaluation criteria, justifying the rating of Exceeded. SHS has very professional and well-developed policies and procedures for child safeguarding and student well-being. Fortunately, to date there have been only minor instances of concern, where the designated safeguarding lead needed to become involved. Child safeguarding training has been undertaken by all staff, including senior leadership, and the school leadership has also undergone safer recruitment training. Wisely, a second staff member is being trained as deputy DSL. Staff reported regular updates in their child safeguarding professional development, and a regular agenda item for staff discussions is any possible concern about student well-being. There is a clear impression that child protection is a shared responsibility at SHS; as one staff member put it, safeguarding is "embedded in the Sophia High School culture".

Commendations

Domain E Standard 2 (Major) - The school leadership and staff for their dedication to child safeguarding and student well-being, through effective

Recommendations

None at this time.

policies, procedures, and daily practices.

Domain E: Well-being - E3 - Membership Evaluation

The school ensures the physical and mental health and overall well-being of all enrolled students.

Ratings Rubric

E3i. Sufficient and suitably qualified medical and counselling staff/contracted providers serve the physical and mental health needs of the students enrolled. E3ii. Physical and mental health records are kept in line with local regulations. E3iii. The school has programmes to promote physical and mental well-being.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Membership Evaluation Stage

E3i. Sufficient and suitably qualified medical and counselling staff/contracted providers serve the physical and mental health needs of the students enrolled.

As Sophia is an Online school, we do not need qualified medical staff, as all the children are in their own houses. We are in the process of getting a life coach/mentor who will be with us once per week, where students can book slots for their mental well-being. Currently, if the parents need a longer session for every week, they book this life coach/mentor for 1-to-1 sessions.

E3ii. Physical and mental health records are kept in line with local regulations.

All safeguarding and behaviour records are kept securely by the DSL in line with local regulations. See [safeguarding policies](#).

E3iii. The school has programmes to promote physical and mental well-being.

For online schools it is harder to promote physical well being, as there are no sport and PE lessons. However, PE does form part of the IMYC and IPC curriculum.. Promoting health and well being are also covered in the curriculum, as is mental well being)(especially on PSHE and Science lessons). The staff at Sophia High are currently on an 8 week Meditation and Well being Course. Once completed they are going to introduce this to their forms. Much of their well being is also covered in their [personal goals](#). Physical well being is also covered in assemblies. We recently had an assembly on National Fitness Week, where all the students had to perform a series of exercises. .We also encourage all our students to take part in physical exercises outside of the school and take part in sporting activities by joining their local clubs or going to gyms and swimming pools. One of the recommendations from Ofsted was that we need to keep a log of what physical activity children are doing outside of school. We are going to soon introduce this.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School, as a fully online school, does not have medical personnel on staff, and expects parents to provide medical support if needed, though SHS staff certainly keep on the lookout for any student showing signs of needing medical attention. Student mental health, on the other hand, receives close scrutiny and the school believes that it should support student psychological wellness. Teachers reported that the signs of student mental stress are the same as for an in-person school, and that they are attentive to changes in student work, attendance, or on-screen behaviour, or even changes in parent behaviour, which might signal the need for support or intervention. Fortunately, given the school's very small class size, it is harder for a student to be overlooked or hide difficulties. In addition, the school is exploring use of a new parent survey designed to help identify student emotional or social concerns. The school's designated safeguarding leads are the first line of contact when such concerns arise. Students often stay online at the end of a lesson to speak with a teacher if they have issues of a personal rather than academic nature, and teachers are available for such conversations after morning classes as well. Students interviewed expressed comfort in sending teachers an email or adding a private comment

to the online chat, so that they could discuss issues they might have. The school does not employ a counselor, but does have a well-regarded mindfulness coach; the school is planning to have him offer brief one-to-one sessions with all students on a regular basis, and for more extended time with individual students as requested. The coach recognizes that he is not a trained counselor and advises the school leadership if a student needs professional help. The school leadership may wish to establish a relationship with a counseling practice, particularly one used to supporting remote learning, as a backup when more serious cases arise (CIS has recently set up a partnership with one such agency based in Berlin).

Student records are kept securely in digital fashion in the Google environment, and the school complies with appropriate data protection and privacy laws. To its credit, SHS has recently received certification as a Cyber Essentials school, a UK-government certification of internet security against data breaches or other threats to digital privacy.

SHS acknowledges that provision of support for students' needs in areas such as music and physical education is a challenge in an online environment. The school has brought in outside specialists in areas such as dance and theatre, and teachers indicate that they often make homework assignments that require students to get moving in and outside the home, to encourage exercise. School leaders are considering having students keep a journal of their physical activity, and will be incorporating this educational expectation into its new in-house educational platform called *Athena*. Although it is true that organized sports such as swimming or gymnastics or basketball cannot be done in the home, many schools during COVID have conducted fairly rigorous physical education classes online with students at home, an idea which SHS indicates it plans to explore further.

Students have begun occasional family-to-family exchanges in person, and the school is aware of the need to establish safe ways in which students can casually hangout together such as would happen on recess or after lunch in a physical school. Students interviewed echoed these areas for improvement (arts education and social interaction). One student interviewed did acknowledge that the online approach of SHS usually meant that homework was done by the end of the school day, freeing up after-school time for students to pursue sports or arts if available. The school would be wise to consult CIS's Director of Student Well-being for guidance, as well as resources from the International Centre for

Missing and Exploited Children's Education Portal (www.icmec.org/education-portal) to assist with appropriate online social opportunities for students.

Commendations

Domain E Standard 3 - The school leadership for arranging regular one-on-one sessions between students and the mindfulness coach, to support student mental health and well-being.

Recommendations

Domain E Standard 3 - The school leadership investigate how it can increase physical activity in the school curriculum, to enhance student wellness.

Domain E Standard 3 - The school leadership consider how it can have professional, trained counseling support available to its students, as external consultants or on retainer, to supplement the current staff in their good efforts to ensure student well-being.

Domain E Standard 3 (Major) - The school leadership explore safe and secure ways in which online students can have casual social time such as would be experienced by students in a physical school, where adults are supervising from a distance, while giving students appropriate privacy for developmental play and interaction.

Domain E: Well-being - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

As mentioned in the various parts of this domain, there are a few things we need to do and others we need to create and embed:

- Voice of The Pupil: We are just in the process of forming a student council. We need to embed half-term meetings with the SLT, where there is a clear agenda. Students have to write to the CEO and Director of Education giving reasons why they want to be in the school council. From here the CEO and the Director of Education will choose who will be in the council. The members of the school council will change every term.
- The staff will continue to improve their knowledge on key safeguarding topics: Keeping Children safe online, Managing Sexualised behaviour, child Protection in Schools, Safeguarding children with SEND.
- Keeping a log of the physical activities students are doing outside of school (Ofsted

recommendation)

- Embedding a Mentor/Life coach into the school to come in once per week. This will be probably be our PSHE teacher, as he is very experienced in mental well being having worked with children, families and speaking in conferences. He is key part of the Free Spirit Collective in Dubia.
- Extending Mindfulness and Meditating into the school: After the staff have completed their eight week course - we are looking at ways of embedding this into the curriculum and possibly at the beginning of every lesson.

Evaluator Response

It may be safe to say that this domain is one that provides some of the greatest challenges to a school that operates fully online. SHS takes its responsibility for student well-being very seriously, and regularly takes new initiatives in support of student wellness. The school staff are very attentive to individual student well-being, and as a small school, it is considerably easier to keep a close eye on every student. Without question, the school atmosphere is one of mutual trust and respect for all parties, and students have opportunities to express their opinions, which the school acts upon when possible. SHS is equally conscientious about its obligations for child safeguarding, with well-crafted policies and procedures, especially those related to digital safety. As a small school, wellness oversight is daily and applicable to each and every student.

The school's stated planned actions are all appropriate (and would be improved by the addition of responsible parties and expected timelines), some echoing the Evaluator's observations and recommendations in this domain. In particular, the school recognizes the need to continue developing strategies to provide for (or at least verify and document) more physical activity in students' lives, as well as the need to have professional counseling available through referral if serious cases of student mental ill health arise.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this

domain.

domain.

Domain F: Staffing - F1 - Membership Evaluation

The faculty and support staff are employed in sufficient numbers, and with appropriate experience, qualifications, and competencies and in accordance with the host country employment law and the CIS Code of Ethics.

Ratings Rubric

F1i. The number of faculty and support staff is commensurate with the number of students, to ensure a satisfactory learning experience for students in accordance with the school's services, curriculum, and complementary programmes. F1ii. Staff recruitment and retention is managed in accordance with the host country employment law and the CIS Code of Ethics.

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

F1i. The number of [appropriately qualified faculty](#) and support staff is commensurate with the number of students and demands of the school's services, curriculum, pedagogy, and complementary programmes, to ensure all students benefit from the learning experience. An overview of our team can be [found here](#). The School SCR will be made available to view during our evaluation visit due to GDPR and Privacy Policy.

As of Autumn 1 2021 there are 38 full time students in the primary and secondary school, supported by a team of 3 senior members of the leadership team including the [Director of Education / Assistant Head](#)) 7 [full time Master Teachers](#); 2 part time specialists; science specialist teacher in the senior phase of the school and specialist teacher of PSHE + Mindfulness coach, and 3 part time residents in Performing Arts / Drama, Maths, Computer Science + Coding. From the 2021 Academic Year, all staff have an area of specialism that they lead on at the school as part of professional development to cover, English + Phonics, Math, Science, PSHE + Mindfulness and Mental Health, PE + Digital Learning and Curriculum

in order to ensure that all students benefit from the learning experience. Students are taught in a max 1:6 ratio in the core subjects and 1:10 ratio for IPC/IMYC and French for live digital lessons.

Our teachers all hold post graduate degrees in education and have a minimum of five years teaching experience within the British Curriculum both in the UK and abroad. Our residents are a fully qualified teacher of Maths and Computer Science with a degree from Imperial College London, and both a professional west end actor and graduate of Italia Conte, and third year student at Russell Group University of Edinburgh, who lead workshops in their area of specialism throughout the academic year.

Our Education Team is supported by 4 full time members of our [Head Office Team](#) including Technology, [Marketing](#) and Admissions. We also have a degree apprentice partnership with the [University of Warwick for our Junior Developer](#) as part of our Tech Team.

Fiii. Staff recruitment and retention at Sophia High School is managed through a school policy that is in accordance with the host country's employment law and the CIS Code of Ethics. Teachers are employed either as self [employed contractors](#) or [PAYE permanent teaching staff](#).

The school appoints staff in accordance with our [Safer Recruitment Policy](#) as part of Safeguarding and our Leadership Team hold recent Safer Recruitment in Education training. All staff sign and agree to the [School Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy](#), and this is discussed during both induction, in staff meetings and in performance review meetings throughout the year.

The School has a clear Staff [Appraisal and Performance Related Pay Policy](#). CPD is linked to the School's School Development Plan and staff frequently take part in training linked to the curriculum and their areas of responsibility alongside Digital Learning and teaching training.

Evaluator Response

The evidence uploaded and conversations held during the visit confirm that the school already meets the preparatory evaluation criteria, and a rating of Exceeded is appropriate.

Sophia High School maintains its commitment to keep each of its online classes to a maximum of six or seven students, resulting in exceptionally supportive teacher-student ratios. Many of the classes observed by the Evaluator were even smaller than this maximum. Sophia teachers are well-qualified and experienced in their areas of teaching. In addition, the school provides considerable induction and training on the special nuances of online teaching and learning. In addition, the school has several highly-qualified support staff, particularly in the area of technology. SHS follows very clear and safe recruiting policies and practices, fully aligned with UK law and certainly in the spirit of the CIS Code of Ethics.

As the school grows and evolves, additional staff may be needed in specialist areas such as early childhood education, music, and physical education, as well as secondary subject area specialists, as appropriate to the online learning environment and the ages of the students enrolled.

Commendations

Domain F Standard 1 (Major) - The Sophia leadership for hiring and inducting a team of qualified and experienced teachers and support staff in especially generous numbers to provide small class sizes and personalised attention for its students.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain F: Staffing - F2 - Membership Evaluation

Thorough background checks have been carried out for all staff and volunteers to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the country, previous employment history, criminal record, qualifications, and suitable references. This information has been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed.

Ratings Rubric

F2i. Formal and sufficient procedures exist for the screening of all prospective staff (whether employed, self-employed or sub-contracted).

Self Ratings

Exceeded

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

F2i. As evidenced in our **Single Central Register** of appointments (to be made available at the visit), formal and sufficient procedures exist for the screening of all prospective staff (whether employed, self-employed or sub-contracted). The school follows our [Safer Recruitment Policy](#) as part of our wider Safeguarding Practices and Senior Leaders have completed Safer Recruitment in Education [Training](#). MM. [Training DM](#) Roles are formally posted and make reference to our commitment to Safeguarding Children This applies to all members of staff including volunteers and owners and is consistently applied.

All staff undergo a thorough recruitment process in line with best practice including; [standard application form](#), at least two professional reference checks, confirmation of qualifications, proof of ID and address, right to work in the UK check, enhanced DBS check, interview with at least two members of the senior leadership team trained in Safer Recruitment including the use of standardised interview questions.

Evaluator Response

Uploaded documents and interviews held during the visit confirm that the school already meets the preparatory evaluation criteria, and a rating of Exceeded is appropriate.

As noted in F1 above, Sophia High School has embraced safe recruiting throughly, adopting a policy well-aligned with the expectations of the international school child protection task force and CIS standards. All employees, including the senior leadership and co-founders, have undergone background screening. Those staff hired living abroad have had to provide police clearance from the countries of their residence. The school's CEO and Director of Education, who are responsible for most hiring, have both undergone specific safer recruiting training as well.

Commendations

Domain F Standard 2 - The Sophia leadership for developing and implementing a robust policy and practice for hiring and screening both current and new staff, ensuring student safety is paramount.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain F: Staffing - F3 - Membership Evaluation

The school provides for the continuous professional development of faculty and support staff that relates to school priorities, addresses the professional needs of the staff, and contributes to the development of student learning, well-being, and global citizenship.

Ratings Rubric

F3i. Faculty and support staff have access to professional development.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

The school has a clear [Appraisal and Professional Development Policy](#) which ensures that all faculty and support staff have access to professional development. The School Self Evaluation Plan, identifies professional development needs for staff which are linked to both performance and appraisal and development of individual staff and are outlined as strategic goals in the [School Improvement & Development Plan](#) and mapped out in the School [Annual Cycle of Review](#). All staff meet individually with Senior Leaders in September to discuss and agree professional development goals and targets and to identify training needs linked to the strategic development of the school.

Each teacher is provided with a [Teacher on a Page](#) journey to track their individual progress throughout the academic year, in regards to outcomes on, planning lesson observations, moderation, book scrutiny, training. Student Achievement, Progress, Safeguarding, Management, Digital Literacy and contributions to the wider life of the school is also captured for each staff with regards to progress and professional needs in order to support the school in being more effective.

Evaluator Response

The evidence suggests an improved rating from that indicated by the school. The evidence provided and focused group discussions held during the visit indicate that the school already meets the preparatory evaluation criteria, and an elevated rating of Exceeded is appropriate.

Sophia High School enthusiastically and generously supports its staff in their professional growth. The school has a well-designed professional development plan linked to its appraisal system, and an annual cycle of activities for staff that includes periodic workshops and training linked to SHS's ambitious school improvement plans. Teachers reported being extremely satisfied with the school funding for their development, and they especially appreciated the ability to request training or skills enhancement that they had themselves identified. Individual staff development is recorded in a teacher's file, and the administration can prepare a spreadsheet overview of all PD activities (though this could perhaps be made even easier to produce). Staff members interviewed expressed particular thanks for the opportunities the school provided for pedagogic sharing among colleagues, including the school peer observation component of its appraisal system.

Commendations

Domain F Standard 3 - The SHS leadership and staff for engaging in regular, targeted, and effective professional development to improve curricular planning and instructional delivery, thus enhancing student learning.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain F: Staffing - F4 - Membership Evaluation

The appraisal/performance management system is defined and implemented for all faculty and support staff based on pre-determined, explicit criteria and is supported by a programme of professional development and/or training, which is linked to appraisal outcomes and identified school priorities.

Ratings Rubric

F4i. There is evidence of a faculty and staff performance evaluation process that includes feedback.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Despite being a new school in the 2020 - 2021 Academic Year, there is clear evidence as per our [Annual Cycle of Review](#) and record of performance evaluation of staff that we have a clear performance evaluation process for staff including introduction of our [Appraisal and Performance Related Pay Policy](#). This ensures there is a clearly communicated, written performance evaluation and feedback policy and appeals procedure for staff .

All teaching staff at the school undertake a [CPD performance evaluation process](#) which looks at the key areas of [teaching and learning](#), [lesson observation](#), [book scrutiny](#), [moderation](#), in senior and [moderation in primary](#), management / leadership development, contributions to the wider life of the school etc.

This has enabled us to develop a [Teacher on a Page](#), so that the development of staff and feedback is personalised, clearly communicated and done in agreement with the professional development goals of the staff designed to support staff in their development in their roles and future career aspirations linked to the growth and development of the school. CPD is linked to our [Self Evaluation Process and Strategic Development Plans](#)

All Teaching Staff have entered into this process.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School has a professional and comprehensive appraisal policy appropriately linked to professional development. For teachers, the evaluation includes three observations: a first self-reflection, a second with peer observation and sharing, and a third conducted by a supervisor. The appraisal properly includes scrutiny of lesson preparations and review of teacher-generated learning materials. There is discussion of adding the digital notebooks of student work to this process. Interestingly, since all instructional lessons are recorded, it is easy for teachers and supervisors to review and discuss a particular class. Teachers expressed satisfaction with the appraisal process, in particular their appreciation of the peer observations and follow-up discussion. A formal appeals procedure is not included in the appraisal policy, though there is always conversation about the evaluation when concerns can be exchanged.

Commendations

None at this time.

Recommendations

Domain F Standard 4 - The school leadership and staff collaborate and agree on a formal appeals procedure which can be added to the appraisal policy.

Domain F: Staffing - F5 - Membership Evaluation

Collectively, the leadership and staff create a professional and trusting working environment. Written policies and guidelines establish expectations for the performance and conduct of all faculty and support staff, and they are applied fairly and consistently.

Ratings Rubric

F5i. Leaders, faculty, and support staff have a professional and trusting working relationship.

F5ii. All faculty and staff receive clear documentation and a code of conduct outlining their roles, responsibilities, and expectations for behaviour.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Professional and Trusting working relationships are developed between Leaders, Faculty and Support staff through clear policies, processes, role descriptions, staff meeting schedules, clearly communicated [self evaluation and strategic development priorities](#) and performance development, a programme of CPD for all staff and use of the staff room as part of Google Classroom. Written policies and guidelines establish expectations for the performance and conduct of all staff and they are applied fairly and consistently.

Policies Include

[SHS Charter - How We Work](#)[SHS Behaviour Policy](#)

[SHS Whistleblowing Policy](#)

[SHS Self Reporting Policy](#)

All Faculty and Staff receive clear documentation and a code of conduct outlining their roles, responsibilities and expectations for behaviour. All staff are provided with clear job descriptions with role responsibilities, a clear [induction](#) programme, and expectations for behaviour in our [Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy](#).

As a school, we have adopted our code of conduct with specific written guidelines stating appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of adults with children. The [Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, Online Safeguarding](#) and [Digital Safety Policy](#) and Digital Agreements also are in place to enforce positive relationships between leaders and staff and also in relationships with students.

Job Descriptions are in place for a range of roles and these will be developed further as areas of responsibility continue to emerge in line with staff CPD and strategic development plans of the school

[Head of School \(Current Director of Education\)](#)

[Assistant Head](#)

[Class Teacher](#)

[Marketing](#)

[Technology](#)

[Junior Developer Apprentice](#)

Staff have excellent lines of communication across the phases of the school in [weekly whole school meetings](#), phase meetings, staff room posts and discussions, team training including mindfulness coaching for all staff and the opportunity to contribute both to staff meetings to raise questions or concerns but also the priorities identified in the school strategic improvement plan.

As part of the wider Sophia Technologies Ltd group, Sophia High School also shares a number of relevant HR policies for staff in regards to [Grievance Processes](#), [Disciplinary Processes](#) and [Capability Procedures](#) which are read alongside our Appraisal Policy

Evaluator Response

Comments from both administration and staff validated that SHS has a very positive

working environment. Relationships were characterized as mutually respectful, with social and professional support extending to all parties at the school. Staff used expressions such as "fantastic" and "feel appreciated" to describe the professional atmosphere, as well as "exciting" and "innovative". All of those interviewed shared the observation of one colleague that SHS puts "kids first". For many, the opportunity to teach from home is greatly appreciated, as is the half-day teaching schedule followed by preparation time, both enabling better work-life balance than in previous positions. As another staff member put it, "We are pushed to be better, but hard work is rewarded."

There are job descriptions for staff members, and roles and responsibilities are "definitely" clear, as one staff member stated. SHS has both a behaviour policy and a detailed code of conduct. Many precautions are in place to guard against inappropriate teacher-student online contact, with students and parents regularly reminded of Internet safety. All lessons are recorded for review at any time, though occasionally a one-on-one meeting between a student and a teacher may take place. These conversations, if held through the school's system, are logged by Google's software, so that a record exists of all such interactions.

Commendations

Domain F Standard 5 - The school leadership and staff for developing a positive, mutually supportive and trusting working environment, which indirectly supports student happiness and well-being.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain F: Staffing - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

Our summary should be read in relation to the objectives outlined in our School Improvement Plan. As a new school which just completed its first year of operation in the 2020 - 2021 academic year, we have met the standard at Membership but would need an additional year to gather evidence and embed practice to fully exceed the domain standards.

With reference to Staffing, the following development points and actions are necessary to continue to strengthen this aspect of school life

- Establish subject management responsibilities and enhanced Job Descriptions in the 2021 - 2022 for the following areas, English, Math, PE, IPC / IMYC, Student Leadership, and Deputy Safeguarding Lead as outlined in individual staff CPD targets (Done in September 2021)
- Implement Subject Developmental and Role of Responsibility Reviews for the above areas to identify learning needs and ongoing progress and development of staff in this areas.
- Continue to develop the middle management and senior leadership structure of the

school as we continue to grow to ensure ongoing professional development of staff and overall progress and strength of the school

- At the end of the Academic Year have subject leads establish evidence based strategic plans for their departments to ensure appropriate allocation of resources, staffing and funding for future development.
- Develop documentation around school culture and the role that staff play in ensuring positive relationships are built across leadership, faculty and support staff, students and families and guide to provide both prospective and new joiners to support them in understanding the culture that defines Sophia High School.
- Develop an onboarding program for new staff as part of our staff induction program and training for new joiners.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School is very well aligned with the standards in this domain, and ready to proceed to the preparatory evaluation stage of its accreditation path, as it already meets the preparatory evaluation criteria for three standards, and needs only small adjustments to align at that higher level in the remaining two standards. The school's planned actions listed here (including steps to align with the next level expectations in one of the two standards not already met) are well-captured as bullet points, though they could be prioritised and include who is responsible for oversight and when they are expected to be addressed.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Domain G: Premises, facilities, technology systems, and auxiliary services - G1 - Membership Evaluation

The school maintains premises and facilities, with supporting systems and services, to enable it to fulfil the school's stated purpose and direction, deliver the curriculum, and contribute to the well-being of students.

Ratings Rubric

G1i. Physical facilities, teaching and learning spaces, and equipment are age-appropriate, well maintained and adequately support the school's purpose and direction and sustain the well-being and learning programmes for all students.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Membership Evaluation Stage

G1i. Physical facilities, teaching and learning spaces, and equipment are age-appropriate, well maintained and adequately support the school's purpose and direction and sustain the well-being and learning programmes for all students.

This is not really relevant to an online school. The only physical building we have is our Head Office; we are not a physical school and, therefore, do not have physical facilities.

We have a [Health and Safety Policy](#) in place as well as provide guidance on correct [ergonomics](#) for students. These sit alongside the [Online Safeguarding Policy](#) that we have pioneered following requests from our pilot inspection with Ofsted. We complete an annual [Remote Learning Risk assessment](#) to identify and lower risks associated with online learning.

With regards to our Digital Learning Environment, powered via Google for Education and including the full use of Google Classroom, our digital learning and teaching platforms and interactive learning tools used in lessons are age-appropriate, and support our school's purpose and direction. Children are taught age appropriate tasks in regards to how to [learn effectively online](#) at the start of the academic year as part of our IPC / IMYC lessons.

Parents are advised on what [hardware and software the students need](#) - to make excellent progress and maintain a safe working environment when learning online. Our Digital Education Environment, including the timetable of live interactive lessons are age appropriate and sustain the well-being and learning programmes for all students. Google for Education provides a safe, secure learning environment where we are able to make learning visible and transparent for students and parents as part of our blended learning programme.

Children are provided with a Google Bootcamp and [Parents have the opportunity to attend Google Workshops](#) with our Assistant Head, before joining the school in order to provide them with the skills they need to interact with our [digital environment](#) and are taught how to keep themselves safe and work in a manner which safeguards their well-being and mental health.

Evaluator Response

As a fully online school, Sophia High School has no physical facilities for teaching and learning (only a small office leased in a commercial complex). The school does provide specific guidelines for the set up of home learning spaces in terms of technology and furniture supporting healthy online learning. Classroom teachers take note of students whose home learning environment appears contrary to these guidelines. Most of those students observed by the evaluator in online lessons were generally adhering to the school's guidelines.

Commendations

None at this time.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain G: Premises, facilities, technology systems, and auxiliary services - G2 - Membership Evaluation

The premises have high standards of maintenance, cleanliness, health, safety, and security, which are supported by written policies and effective procedures, and which exceed, where necessary, local regulatory requirements.

Ratings Rubric

G2i. Appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces, air quality, heating and cooling, shade, shelter, lighting, and acoustics support safety, health, and an environment conducive to learning and well-being for all. G2ii. Written policies and procedures are in place to support the health and safety of all on campus and the school meets the health and safety codes and regulations of local authorities. G2iii. Effective procedures and drills are in place for emergency situations that require evacuation or emergency medical care for staff and students.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Membership Evaluation Stage

G2i. Appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces, air quality, heating and cooling, shade, shelter, lighting, and acoustics support safety, health, and an environment conducive to learning and well-being for all.

This is not appropriate to an online schools, as all students are in their own homes. The School HQ has a Health and Safety Policy in place

G2ii. Written policies and procedures are in place to support the health and safety of all on campus and the school meets the health and safety codes and regulations of local

authorities.

We have created three policies that cover this area, which are appropriate to an online school. These include:

- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Digital Safety Policy](#)
- [Online Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [A Parent Guide to Google Classroom](#)
- [Remote Learning/Google Classroom Risk assessment Form](#)

G2iii. Effective procedures and drills are in place for emergency situations that require evacuation or emergency medical care for staff and students.

This is not relevant to an online school. Head Office is covered in the Health and Safety Policy.

Evaluator Response

As a fully online school, Sophia High School has no indoor or outdoor spaces for teaching and learning. The school does provide specific guidelines for the set up of home learning spaces in terms of technology and furniture to support healthy online learning. Classroom teachers take note of students whose home learning environment appears contrary to these guidelines. The Evaluator observed that most students were following the guidelines, at least during lessons observed in the course of the visit. The school has a very good health and safety policy, though sections of the policy relating to physical premises are only minimally applicable; other parts of the manual have been commendably adapted to apply to an online educational environment. The school does meet local health and safety codes for its very small physical office, with primary responsibility for that space lying with the building's owner. The same applies to procedures for emergency evacuation, applicable only to its small office and followed according to local regulations.

Commendations

None at this time.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain G: Premises, facilities, technology systems, and auxiliary services - G3 - Membership Evaluation

The technology systems (infrastructure and data) support the school's teaching, learning, and administrative needs and have appropriate and effective safety, security, and confidentiality measures in place.

Ratings Rubric

G3i. The provision of technologies is planned and appropriately funded and supports the learning programmes. G3ii. Technology systems support the management and operational functions of the school.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Exceeded

Response

Membership Evaluation Stage

G3i. The provision of technologies is planned and appropriately funded and supports the learning programmes.

As a full time online school, technology is at the heart of what we do and how we deliver our leading model of digital education at the primary and secondary phases.

Sophia High is cloud-based and all our lessons run on Google for Education. [Google for Education](#), transforms how our educators and students learn, work and innovate together with secure tools from Google Workspace for Education. We are one of the few online for profit schools they have partnered with to provide access to this leading technology for online learning and teaching. We are building a system which enables our global learning community to connect to our digital learning environment as we work together with our staff, students and parents to drive educational innovation in the digital edtech space.

The provision of technologies has been well planned and this infrastructure and data provides the backbone, structure and support for our digital learning environment and every decision made has been in view of establishing an exceptional digital learning experience for our students, using leading technology systems to ensure the school's teaching, learning, administrative needs are met and fulfilling our mandate to ensure the safety, security, privacy and confidentiality of our learning ecosystem is in place. Our technology systems and technology team support the management and operational functions of the school. Google for Education products are easy for our team to deploy, use and manage. With a few clicks, our Technology Team can set up new accounts and manage policies across an entire global learning community. Automated, cloud-based management streamlines processes and ensures that all users stay up to date. We also provide ongoing tech support for our families and updates via Google Classroom.

As part of the admissions process parents are taken through the type of hardware and software they will need ([specifications](#)), as well as guidelines on wi-fi. Teachers are also provided with the resources and hardware if needed to run their lessons. Google Classroom also includes many interactive tools to make sure the students are more hands-on. Sophia High also has online subscriptions to Mathletics, Reading Eggs, Language Nut, Nelson Handwriting, Oxford Owl to support high quality provision of our curriculum at home. The school uses Rising stars to administer its standardised online assessments which are done termly in live lesson settings. . We use Classroom Monitor to make all our judgements and to assess ongoing student achievement and progress tracking through the uploading of evidence to support teacher judgements.

We are now investing in creating our own digital education platform (Athena) for core processes in the school including registration, reporting, communication with parents, learning content through our new escape rooms (online educational games) - this will be tailor made or our own specific requirements.

G3ii. Technology systems support the management and operational functions of the school.

The technology team play a vital part for the support of the school. Guidance is given on the [Sophia High website](#). On the website there is a step by step troubleshooting guide to

fixing your connection problems.

Parents have access to our technician's email if they are having technical problems. When it comes to the Google Classroom, the Assistant Head, is in charge of all training (she does workshops with teachers, parents and students alike)

Evaluator Response

The evidence indicates that Sophia High School already aligns with the preparatory evaluation criteria, and an elevated rating of Exceeds is appropriate.

Sophia High School has a very well-considered and -funded technology plan and implementation, appropriate for an online school, a credit to the school leadership and the school's parent organization, Sophia Technologies. SHS has given a great deal of thought to delivering instruction online to all age levels, and the school has adopted the Google Suite for Education (one of the rare for-profit schools granted such use, the Evaluator was told). As a result, teachers have a variety of effective platforms to draw on, including Google Classroom, Google Meets, etc. Students are given clear technology requirements to ensure smooth home instruction, and teachers are similarly provided with guidance on the computer hardware they will use. Increasingly, to ensure consistency, the school is offering teachers loaned equipment or participation in a buy-back program to own the hardware. SHS has found that Google does not have the full functionality of a student information system (it is not ideal for tracking student progress or attendance, for instance). As a result, the school has developed its own supplemental platform, which is called *Athena* (from the Greek goddess of wisdom). This new platform is being designed to mesh smoothly with Google for a complete package (for instance, allowing tracking of student tardiness, an important indication of student engagement). The new system will facilitate reporting of student progress to parents, and allow parent access as appropriate so that this information is available without needing to send emails. As noted in earlier domains, SHS has undertaken the rigorous process necessary to receive a Cyber Essentials certification of online security.

As a side note, although the school primarily uses digital content, SHS enthusiastically supports and recommends the use of print materials, especially books, in courses such as

English and science (even offering to help secure these print materials for families living outside of the UK).

Commendations

Domain G Standard 3 (Major) - The school ownership and leadership for its development and support of appropriate technology to deliver the school's mission of online education from primary grades upward, including the creation of its own student information software platform, facilitating student learning and parent involvement.

Recommendations

None at this time.

Domain G: Premises, facilities, technology systems, and auxiliary services - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

As discussed in the previous section we are spending a lot of time and money building our own unique online portal. This will be called (Athena - Greek for Strategy and Wisdom) for registration, reporting, communication with parents, learning content through our new escape rooms (digital learning content for both Sophia High Students and those external to our school environment) - this will be tailor made to our own specific requirements.

The creation of digital learning content through educational games (gamify) will be created in our escape rooms. This will give our students additional opportunities to learn outside of the classroom. It also will give us the opportunity to be involved in social enterprise - where we can give students throughout the world with social inequalities access to these resources free of charge.

We continue to develop our digital learning and teaching skills to improve our entire team's knowledge and understanding - this involves CPD for staff specifically linked to teaching in the digital learning environment and our continued partnership with Google to support our strategic direction of pioneering best practice in an online school as we continue discover and in many cases develop a broad selection of apps, activities, lesson plans, digital literacy tools and games to advance learning in the classroom including virtual field trips, lessons on coding and more. We continue to invest in technology as this is a core fundamental of the online learning environment we have created.

Evaluator Response

A considerable portion of this domain is not closely applicable to Sophia, as a fully online school, but the school commendably takes Internet safety and security very seriously, including its certification against cyber-attacks and hacking. Most commendably, the school technology provision is excellent, including the development of its own in-house software platform, meshing student information with the Google Suite for Education. The school's stated planned actions here are appropriate (though their format could be improved, as noted elsewhere in this report). SHS is definitely ready to move to the preparatory evaluation stage of its path to accreditation.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Domain H: Community and home partnerships - H1 - Membership Evaluation

Effective communications foster a productive home-school partnership and a positive learning community.

Ratings Rubric

H1i. The school communicates regularly and systematically with parents/guardians about the school's purpose and direction, its operations, and the education provided to each individual child enrolled.

Self Ratings

Met

Evaluator Ratings

Met

Response

Membership Evaluation Stage

H1i. Sophia High communicates regularly and systematically with parents/guardians about the school's purpose and direction, its operations, and the education provided to each individual child enrolled. Parents have full access to our Google Classroom Digital Learning Platform where planning and learning is visible 24/7. We also have an open door policy so that all parents feel empowered to contact us with their comments / questions / concerns and have an annual summer term process of obtaining feedback / testimonials from our families.

Below are some examples of significant communications sent to parents.

- [Annual Report](#)

- [Parent Handbook](#)
- [Beyond the Curriculum](#)
- [End of Term Newsletter](#)
- [Last letter we sent to the parents](#)

Parents have begun to have new opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, including joining our whole school Friday assemblies, and through invites to join and lead as guest speakers for our careers talks and workshops with classes. This is an area we are seeking to increase levels of parental involvement. Parents all receive a weekly 1-1 meeting with their child's lead teacher to discuss student learning and going progress in the school and are all inducted into the school community through our Parent Induction and Google Bootcamp Workshops for new families.

We are currently exploring the establishment of local parent groups and ways of communication through our digital learning environment to foster parent to parent networking and wider opportunities for students to connect in person with wider families at the school.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School goes to great lengths to communicate with parents and guardians. Its website contains important information, and the school sends out periodic newsletters to inform families of school activities and operations. In addition, there is a comprehensive parent handbook which is available. The school leadership sends letters to families *en masse* as appropriate to the topic. Students and parents receive a digital report card with the student's progress. The quality of these communications is exceptionally professional in appearance and content. The school also holds brief weekly conferences with parents, to which students are invited, to discuss achievement. For many parents, these have proved so successful--and the school has developed a high degree of independence in students--that parents have asked to reduce the frequency of conferences, preferring to allow their child to handle progress reports in between. These regular sessions also include questions about any possibly disruptive changes in the home learning environment, so that teachers can be

aware and adjust accordingly.

Parents normally use email to contact teachers, who usually respond within 24 hours. Teachers' daily schedule normally involves teaching in the morning, with the afternoon open for lesson planning and student/parent support as needed. Students more likely speak to teachers at the end of a lesson or during the regular team meetings held online for each class group. Commendably, older students offer tutorial support sessions for younger students, and within-group peer support also takes place. Students rarely need to contact teachers after the school day, as the school makes clear to students that it is okay not to understand everything at first in every lesson, and that is okay to do part on an assignment according to ability.

SHS is exploring ways to involve parents in school life, although parents are already invited to join assemblies and present their skills and experiences to students during specific classes. Some school families have begun to connect socially outside of school, even across country borders. Formal solicitation of parent input is still in the early stages, though the school is exploring use of the Quaglia surveys and other instruments designed to gather input on student learning. Parents interviewed expressed a wish for occasional parent hangouts online, just to share experiences and tips.

Parents interviewed were very satisfied with SHS overall, though they did offer a few suggestions for change. A few parents felt that the morning-only live lessons were not enough to keep their child busy during the day, especially for those students who were less self-directed and less independent in their daily structure and learning. Some parents would like more assigned book reading, with parent interaction, as a break from screen time. Another mentioned concern about loss of hand-writing skill practice. Parents did note the ability to shift around family activities (e.g., sports or physical activities) before or after class time, which was appreciated and stressed by almost all families, to help balance the online learning focus of the school.

Commendations

Domain H Standard 1 - The SHS

Recommendations

Domain H Standard 1 - The school

leadership and staff for its extensive efforts to communicate with students and parents, helping build a strong home-school partnership.

leadership continue its efforts to formally solicit parent feedback on school operations, to further improve the home-school partnership for student learning and well-being.

Domain H: Community and home partnerships - Domain Summary - Membership Evaluation

As a result of the self-evaluation, the school identifies the actions necessary to strengthen this aspect of school life. The Self-Study should be action-orientated, with evidence-based evaluation leading to informed planning and proposed actions, in line with the school's guiding statements.

Ratings Rubric

There is no rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

As we continue to grow our global learning community, we will continue to develop our internal processes to seek out parent / guardian views and feedback on the education we provide to children. Sharing of our School Self Evaluation and School Development Plan with the wider community is an important step in this process in order to provide wider opportunities for these views to inform next steps to improve the school. Developing opportunities for our parents to take part in curriculum learning and beyond the curriculum opportunities to further develop our children and their knowledge of the world as global citizens will benefit our students and their learning.

Sharing of the CIS Code of Ethics and our Purpose and Direction statements with our parents will support our objective to encourage involvement in the life of the school so that we continue to develop student learning, well-being and global citizenship in line with our vision as we further develop relationships with our families as ambassadors of the school.

Evaluator Response

Sophia High School is commendably well-aligned with the expectations of this domain, and ready to move to the preparatory accreditation phase. Its communication efforts are extensive and professional, and it continues to seek ways to increase parent involvement in student learning and school life, as well as parent input into school improvement. The school's stated planned actions are appropriate, and could be better formatted as prioritised bullet points, along with the responsible party and desired timeline for completion.

Commendations

Please refer to the commendations under individual standards for this domain.

Recommendations

Please refer to the recommendations under individual standards for this domain.

Part 3: Conclusions - Membership Evaluation

An opportunity for the school to summarise the self-reflection and self-evaluation process.

Ratings Rubric

There is no Rubric for this response.

Self Ratings

No Rating

Evaluator Ratings

No Rating

Response

There is much to be proud of as a school which has just completed its first academic year of instruction. We have firmly established the foundations for driving high quality learning outcomes and developing our policies and practices in line with both our Purpose and Direction as well as the CIS Code of Ethics.

The work that has been conducted by our Senior Leadership Team on this CIS self reflection and self evaluation process has enabled us to identify clear evidence of us meeting the Membership Evaluation standards and in a number of areas, already working within the Preparatory Evaluation Stages of our Accreditation Process. As a schools, the work that we have done with the DfE on the OEAS requirements and CIS Self Reflection has provided key strategic improvements and next steps for our journey. This external Quality Advisory guidance is crucial to our ongoing development and growth as we aspire to the the global leader in digital education for primary and secondary students. Our SEF was updated at the end of the Academic Year for 2020 - 2021 and this has fed into our SIP which is currently being rolled out amongst our wider team and implemented with our first review of this due at half term.

Evaluator Response

This membership evaluation was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many

schools had enacted on-line learning and teaching to maintain contact with their students and continue their education. Sophia High School, based in London, England, was especially well-placed during this challenging time, as it conducts all of its instruction online, at all times. CIS agreed that Sophia HS was appropriately suited to a remote evaluation process and offered the school the opportunity to conduct a virtual membership visit to begin its journey towards membership (Sophia was the second fully online school to undergo CIS membership, the first completed just a few weeks earlier). The visit took place successfully in November 2021. The CIS School Support and Evaluation Officer, based in Los Angeles, conducted meetings virtually and joined online lessons through the school's Google platform. Discussions were held with all stakeholders. These activities allowed the evaluator to gain a reasonably broad perspective of the school. The remote membership visit was completely sufficient to determine that the school is certainly suitable for CIS membership.

SHS makes a very positive impression, with a great deal to be proud of. The school has a strong and clear commitment to global citizenship in its guiding statements, and through its choice of the International Primary and Middle Years Curricula, and their links to the UN Global Goals. The relationship of the CEO/Co-Founder, the Director of Education (*de facto* Head of School), and the newly-named Assistant Head (who also teaches) is exceptionally strong, resulting in a compatible and effective team to guide the school. The Co-Founders have secured initial financial backing to launch the school, which is already showing some profitability, and the co-founders are confident that additional funding can be obtained to expand the school's programme and current enrolment of 35-40 students by a factor of four or five in the coming few years. Fittingly for an online school, SHS has strong digital safety and security policies and practices, part of an overall emphasis on student well-being that permeates the school community ("We want the students to be happy first and foremost."). The SHS leadership has engaged a talented teaching cadre and enhanced their professional skills with generous training specific to effective delivery of online lessons. The working environment is positive, a special tribute for a school in which staff almost never meet in person, interacting solely online. Underpinning the school's success is a high-quality technological base that extends even to the in-house development of the school's own student information system.

Although the school is doing many things very well, SHS is seeking CIS membership and accreditation to become even better, and the report highlights a few important areas for

attention. As the school evolves, the co-founders need to construct a governance and leadership structure that more cleanly separates strategic long-range decisions relating to mission and finance from those associated with daily operations. To complement the school's guiding statements, the school staff and leadership should develop a brief description of global citizenship in the SHS context. And to make its online school even more comprehensive and enjoyable, the school should seek ways to introduce physical education, arts, and casual social interaction into the daily lives of its students.

In conclusion, the Sophia High School is a good young school, and that is in comparison to all schools (physical or virtual), as its online nature is certainly not a notable differentiator. SHS brings a professional approach to its small school operations, with a highly ambitious school improvement plan. Its student retention rate from the first year to the second is good, and the school is commendably committed to school improvement, having undergone UK Ofsted inspection in a pilot programme for online schools, and now planning to add CIS accreditation. Parents were very positive about the school's performance and suitability for their family's needs, and they appreciated the school's upgrading of their own adult tech skills (parent Google boot camp) to best support their children. Staff were very positive about the school ("I love it here"), and students were equally positive, often helping each other remotely.

CIS did not weaken its expectations and criteria just because Sophia High School is not a traditional bricks-and-mortar school. Only one or two standards (relating to physical premises) might be considered partially not applicable. SHS fully met all but one membership standard and exceeded several (in itself a testament to the school's professionalism). The school clearly has the commitment and capacity to achieve CIS accreditation after it is granted membership, and the school will be an excellent addition to the CIS family of schools. The school effectively developed its membership evaluation report. The report contains some suggested changes in the format on responses and domain summaries when the preparatory report is prepared, but these changes are cosmetic, not substantive, and the school can easily make these small adjustments.

CIS would like to thank Melissa McBride, CEO and Co-Founder, David McCarthy, Director of Education (Head of School), and Jennifer Callaway, Assistant Head, for ensuring the visit went smoothly and efficiently. CIS offers further thanks to the students, staff and parents who were generous in their time and honest in their answers to the many questions posed.

CIS also wishes the school well as it prepares to undertake the CIS accreditation process.

Commendations

CIS does not require commendations in this section.

Recommendations

CIS does not require recommendations in this section.