



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **British School of Sofia**

## **Bulgaria**

**Date**  
**Inspection number**

14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018  
20180314

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## CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

|  |   |                          |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Full name of School                    | British School of Sofia   |                          |                          |
| Address                                | Bulgaria, 1700, Sofia,<br>Vitosha quarter, 1 "Ekaterina Nencheva" 1   |                          |                          |
| Telephone Number/s                     | +359 886 510 510, +359 2 979 19 49, +359 2 978 64 55  |                          |                          |
| Fax Number                             | +359 2 979 00 60  |                          |                          |
| Website Address                        | www.bssofia.bg  |                          |                          |
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| Headteacher/Principal                  | <a href="mailto:teodoran@bssofia.bg">teodoran@bssofia.bg</a> , <a href="mailto:matthewo@bssofia.bg">matthewo@bssofia.bg</a> |                          |                          |
| Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor | Teodora Nenova  |                          |                          |
| Age Range                              | 2 – 18 years  |                          |                          |
| Number of Pupils                       | <i>Total</i><br>273   | <i>Boys</i><br>136       | <i>Girls</i><br>137      |
| Pupil Numbers by Age                   | <i>0-2 Years</i><br>4   | <i>3-5 Years</i><br>47   | <i>6-11 Years</i><br>137 |
|  | <i>12-16 Years</i><br>75  | <i>17-18 Years</i><br>10 | <i>18+ Years</i><br>0    |
| Total Number of Part-Time Pupils       | 0   |                          |                          |

## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British Schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International UK. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, 44 full or part lessons were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, a range of teachers, proprietor, parents and groups of pupils. Two and a half school days were monitored.

Lead Inspector was John Cranfield. The other team members were Geraldine Cranfield and Stephen Deady.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School of Sofia meets all the standards required for British Schools Overseas accreditation.

## 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better. Senior leaders have a clear vision for the future development of the school. Pupils, parents and staff are committed to the school. Nearly all pupils make progress at least in line with their ability, some better. Pupils are well supported through effective pastoral care and the implementation of sound welfare, health and safety policies and procedures. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is a strength. The curriculum is broad and balanced; enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities.

### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths. They include:

- the governance and financial commitment of the proprietor to ensure the school continues to grow and move forward;
- the vision, drive and resilience of the head teacher and his deputy, underpins school improvement;
- the commitment of the school to developing middle leaders and their enthusiastic response to the challenges of their new roles;
- the work of the school counsellor in supporting teachers to identify and meet pupils' needs;
- the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS);
- the value placed on a pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- pupils demonstrating a positive approach to their learning and a tolerant and supportive relationship with their peers;
- pupils who are caring and welcoming - they are good ambassadors for the school;
- the rapid acquisition and confident use of English language by the pupils as they move through the school which is a credit to the teachers.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

Among the school's strengths, the following are areas for possible development:

- raise individual pupil attainment and motivation by planning and delivering learning activities which challenge all learners;
- Improve whole school consistency in the use of assessment for learning (AfL) techniques, for example using more effective verbal and written feedback, plenaries, target setting, self and peer assessment, and reflection;
- explore ways of recruiting and retaining high quality staff.

## 4. The context of the school

The British School of Sofia (BSS) was established in 2009. BSS is an international school, following a British style curriculum. There are over 270 pupils from 40 different countries.

Approximately 40% of pupils are Bulgarian nationals. BSS is the only BSO accredited school in Bulgaria. The mission statement 'Learning today for the World of Tomorrow' drives school improvement. BSS promotes an ethos of inclusivity and encourages both staff and pupils to embrace diversity and differences. Key Stage 3 is condensed into two years. The school was approved in 2010 as a Primary Centre by Cambridge International Examinations. In 2013 the school was approved as a Secondary Centre with facilities to offer IGCSE and A levels. The school was accredited BSO status in 2015. BSS is a member of COBIS and ECIS. The school offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for the eldest pupils after successfully completing the IB inspection.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The ethos, nature and appearance of the school are recognisably British. The school is organised according to the structures used in English schools. Classroom management, displays of work and age-related year groups contribute to a British feel of the school. The majority of senior leaders are from the British education system. The staff aim to offer a broad educational experience recreating the UK independent school experience.

British School Sofia (BSS) offers the Cambridge Primary Curriculum in mathematics (grades 1 to 6), English (grades 1 to 6) and science (grades 5 and 6 – in grade 3 and 4 the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) is used). The Cambridge Secondary Curriculum is used in grades 7 and 8. It uses a range of UK assessments, for example Early Learning Goals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and IGCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4. English is the common language of instruction throughout the school, apart from in French, German, Spanish and Bulgarian language lessons.

British practice is evident in approaches to performance management. Resources are UK sourced. All communications from the school to families and pupils are provided in English, translated as required; as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website. The importance of extra-curricular provision including clubs and school trips, are in line with British practice. Parents are supportive of the British nature of the curriculum. Interviews with parents suggested they appreciated the British style of education on offer.

## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by BSS meets the standard for accreditation with aspects of good practice.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The school has a written curriculum policy, supported by schemes of work and implemented effectively which enable pupils to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those with learning difficulties. It does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The National Curriculum of England provides the framework for teaching and learning, adapted to ensure the needs of the pupils and Bulgarian authority requirements are met.

There is full-time supervised education for all pupils of compulsory school age. The British School of Sofia offers a broad and balanced curriculum which provides pupils with opportunities in a wide range of areas of learning, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. The school has an inclusive entry policy and thus caters for a wide range of abilities.

Appropriate policies are in place, supported by long, medium and short-term planning. The policy and written schemes of work ensure that the ages and aptitudes of nearly all pupils are met. The principal language of instruction is English and teachers insist that English is spoken in lessons and around the school. Progress in pupils' level of English is evident from Early Years to Key Stage 5. Small classes and streaming in Key Stage 1 and teaching assistants in Key Stage 2 allows pupils to make good progress in English language acquisition and therefore better access the curriculum. Extra English lessons are timetabled for small groups of pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 as appropriate. The curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress.



Pupils in Nursery and Reception classes follow the EYFS curriculum, working towards the Early Learning goals. Jolly Phonics and the Letters and Sounds phonics programmes are used to develop pupils' reading skills. The online learning journal, 'Tapestry', is used to record observational data and track pupils' progress against the EYFS Learning Goals. This allows teachers to effectively plan work that meets the individual needs of pupils in EYFS and ensures that accurate data is passed on to Key Stage 1 teachers as pupils move into the next phase of their education. The EYFS curriculum ensures that all pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities in all the prime and specific areas of learning. Nearly all pupils arrive with little or no English but the teachers, under the guidance of the EYFS lead, ensure that pupils with a wide range of needs can access the whole curriculum. Bulgarian is taught from Nursery upwards. The quality learning environment encourages pupils, particularly in Reception, to occasionally initiate their own learning and provides appropriate challenge.

In the primary section, programmes of study for numeracy and literacy follow the Cambridge Curriculum, science follows the IPC in grade 3 and 4. In grade 5 and 6, science is based on the Cambridge Curriculum.

The school uses the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) to ensure pupils experience humanities, art and sociology at an appropriate level. The curriculum is enhanced with specialist design technology; Lego Education from Reception to Grade 5, Robotics from grades 6 to 8. French, German and Spanish are offered from Grade 3. Bulgarian as both a foreign and native language is taught from Nursery. Physical Education lessons are timetabled from Nursery to 9, with dance from Nursery to Grade 2 and music from grades 5 to 9. Schemes of work and lesson plans are entered onto the school's system and monitored by key stage leaders and the senior leadership team.

The school has condensed Key Stage 3 into two years, grades 7 and 8. In Key Stage 3 pupils follow the Secondary Cambridge Curriculum for English, mathematics and science. The International Middle Years Curriculum was introduced in September 2017, providing opportunities for cross-curricular links and the development of pupils' thinking skills.

At Key Stage 4, beginning in Grade 9, the school offers a range of Cambridge iGCSEs. All pupils study English Language, mathematics and dual award science in addition to option subjects. English literature has been introduced since the last inspection.

Key Stage 5 pupils have the opportunity to follow the recently introduced International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

The Head of English has the responsibility for EAL and SEN falls under the school counsellor. On admission, pupils' language ability is assessed and monitored closely with a range of intervention strategies available as appropriate. Throughout the school, displays of key vocabulary support EAL learners and the majority quickly become confident and fluent speakers.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs), are written by the counsellor in consultation with class teachers, parents and pupils. External specialists are involved in the process when necessary. Progress for pupils with an IEP is reviewed regularly and communicated clearly to parents.

As an Apple school, IT is used in most lessons: each pupil from grade 3, has an iPad.

The school provides a formalised programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) which reflects the school's aim and ethos, in addition to developing in pupils a respect and tolerance for human differences. British values including the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, no faith and a range of beliefs are implicit in the life of the school. The school works hard to ensure pupils study in an environment free from prejudice underpinned by a strong moral code

Careers guidance is delivered from grade 7. It is presented in an impartial manner, enabling pupils to make informed choices about their future. Pupils in grades 10 through to 12 have individual mentor sessions; individual support is given to older pupils completing university applications and writing their personal statements. The school has recently introduced a software programme to provide guidance on university applications worldwide. Universities are encouraged to visit the school where possible, and many do. In addition, day visits have been made to local businesses and industries to raise pupils' awareness of different career options. Some local companies also come into school to talk to pupils.

The curriculum is enhanced through a range of enrichment activities. These include after-school clubs and societies, charitable events and community service. A range of curriculum experiences help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern day Britain

and Bulgaria. The curriculum on offer takes account of the curricula and external examination accreditation commonly used in schools in the UK.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment meet the standard required with aspects of good or better.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress at least according to their ability, increasing their understanding and developing their skills in the subjects taught as they move through the school. Most teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts, to show interest in their work and learn and think for themselves. Most teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, the needs of EAL learners, and the prior attainments of the pupils. They generally ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. Class time is generally managed wisely, with teachers employing a range of appropriate techniques to assess pupils' understanding. In Key Stage 1 teachers encourage their pupils to revisit success criteria and consider their own progress. Overall, teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

Teachers work hard to provide a bright welcoming environment for the youngest pupils who clearly enjoy being at school and learning in lessons. In a particularly effective Reception lesson the teacher successfully employed targeted questioning to consolidate and extend pupils understanding of 'counting by families'. Whilst classes are effectively arranged to provide a range of learning stations, there is presently an over-emphasis on teacher-initiated activities. Teachers and support staff work effectively as a team. They embrace the challenges of working with pupils who enter with little or no spoken English. As a result of careful planning and positive relationships, these pupils make rapid progress in their spoken English. Moreover, their reading skills are effectively developed through the systematic teaching of phonics that enables pupils to match and learn letters and sounds. Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.

Across Key Stages 2 and 3, although the quality of most teaching is satisfactory or better, a few unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In the most effective lessons, the success criteria and learning activities are sufficiently differentiated to provide challenge for different groups of pupils. At the end, or during the lesson, learning objectives and success criteria are revisited to enable pupils to reflect on what they have understood and what they still need to do to achieve mastery. In addition, the feedback informed the planning of the next lesson. In a particularly effective Year 4 mathematics

lesson, the teacher seamlessly incorporated the use of Information Technology to help pupils generate their own differentiated problems. The pupils then recorded answers on Venn diagrams. Some pupils also identified patterns before making predictions using their prior knowledge of the properties of numbers. In less effective lessons, learning was essentially passive with an overreliance on a limited number of resources and teaching styles. Interviewed pupils commented that they enjoy lessons most when they have opportunities for discussion, collaboration and investigation

The quality of teaching is generally stronger across Key Stages 4 and 5 than in Key Stages 2 and 3, with more good or better lessons observed. Small class sizes ensure all pupils receive personalised attention. In the best lessons, teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts and take on increased responsibility for their learning. In a particularly effective Year 12 English lesson, the highly effective use of targeted questioning reinforced and challenged pupils' understanding of text. Pupils are capable independent learners, when given the opportunity.

In the best lessons, books are regularly marked and the quality of work acknowledged. This is the exception rather than the rule. The use of 'what next' steps to support and enhance pupils' progress is under-developed.

Classroom resources are of a good quality, quantity and range. Nearly every classroom is equipped with an interactive white board. Resources are generally used effectively. The behaviour management strategies in place throughout the school ensure that nearly all pupils remain on task and focused during the lessons, thus maximising learning time. Teaching effectively prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in the UK and does not undermine fundamental British values. There is great respect for individual human differences. The school does not discriminate against pupils because of their personal differences and lifestyle choices.

The school has a framework in place to assess pupil performance regularly and thoroughly.

Strategies are in place to collate observations of the youngest pupils' learning, both planned and incidental, for example the use of learning journal books. A baseline assessment is conducted at the start of the year in each grade. Formal summative assessments are completed quarterly and recorded on the school's database. External Cambridge Checkpoint examinations are conducted at the end of Grade 6 and 8 with IGCSEs at the end of Grade 10.

Whilst the school has a wealth of information about attainment, the use of valid data to inform lesson planning is not rigorous to provide challenge for different groups of pupils. The use of assessment for learning techniques, for example: self-assessment, peer assessment, strategic use of questioning, use of success criteria and plenaries are not consistent across the school.

Parents receive regular detailed and informative reports.

### 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Nearly all pupils make progress in line with ability, some better.

On entry, nearly all pupils are speakers of English as a second language. Baseline assessments taken in September 2016 indicated that on entry to Reception, 50% of pupils were judged to be working at or below age related levels. Progress however is rapid. By the end of the school year, 70% of pupils achieved a good level of development. There is a comprehensive data tracking process throughout the EYFS, which clearly identifies pupils' levels of attainment and progress in the 17 dispositions that comprise the Early Years Framework. Under-performing pupils are provided with additional support.

Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Increasing percentages of pupils are achieving mastery level in the core subjects by the end of Key Stage 1. The school systematically tracks pupils using Cambridge progress and attainment tests. Primary Subject Checkpoint tests indicate that overall, results match or exceed the internationally accepted averages for the core subjects. For English, mathematics and science the percentage of pupils achieving the highest level were 20%, 30% and 30% respectively. At the end of Key Stage 3, Grade 8 in BSS, Secondary Cambridge Check point tests confirm that good progress is maintained. The percentage of students achieving the highest level in English, mathematics and science are 40%, 30% and 20%. This is an increase of 40% in English, 20% in mathematics and 20% in science since the previous year.

The 7 pupils comprising Year 10 attained A\*-C grades in all IGCSE examinations. In English as a Second Language and Biology, 20% and 30% respectively of pupils gained an A\* grade. Small changing cohorts make

statistical analysis over the past 3 years unreliable. Three pupils are currently in the second year of the IB Diploma course.

The school has identified the need to ensure parents are contacted as soon as possible after registration if their child is absent, in line with school policy. Attendance is taken at the start of the school day. Attendance on the second day of inspection was 86%. Most pupils arrive at school on time. The main reasons for lateness are traffic or medical appointments. The main reasons for absenteeism is illness.

Nearly all pupils are thoughtful, well behaved and motivated learners. By the time they leave school, they have the personal and social skills needed to move successfully to the next stage of their education.

## 6. *Standard 2*

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils is well above the standard required for accreditation and is a key strength. As they move through the school, pupils develop their understanding through the taught curriculum, planned Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons, the Youth Effectiveness Programme (YET), circle time, themed assemblies linked to the school's values and the informal curriculum.

The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for human differences. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. Feedback from parents over discussions about more sensitive topics has overall, been supportive of the school's approach. Fundamental British values are instilled both explicitly and implicitly. Pupils are provided with a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship in Bulgaria, the UK and internationally through the topics they study

Cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are given the opportunity to celebrate diversity in a range of local and international festivals throughout the academic year. This includes an International Week. PSHE topics such as 'Responsible Citizen' together with IPC topics on 'Society' and 'Internationalism', further enhance international mindfulness. In addition, themed international assemblies, the sharing of experiences between peer groups, and presentations by visitors to the school from a wide range of cultures enhance provision. Parents of Chinese pupils presented an assembly on 'China Old and New' to EYFS classes and followed this up with a range of videos and activities. In 2017 a number of pupils acted as hosts to pupils from a visiting Indian school.

The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through a wide range of experiences in and beyond the classroom. The Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) component of the IB Diploma programme enables pupils to further develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. Two Key Stage 5 pupils spoke confidently to visitors at the exhibition of their art work. Pupils are tolerant and supportive of one another. They enjoy the regular celebration of individuals' and group success. The second day of the accreditation visit saw pupils from EYFS through to Key Stage 4 performing in a talent competition in front of their peers, parents and visitors. A number of pupils who did not perform, competently and enthusiastically gave up their time back stage to ensure the programme ran smoothly.

Pupils of all ages are comfortable and confident when contributing ideas, responding to questions, engaging in discussions and performing in front of their peers. They are offered a range of spiritual experiences and show a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible. Three nursery pupils, whilst creating letter shapes in plasticine, maturely discussed issues relating to how one should deal with a bird found with a broken wing and whether it would be able to fly if the wing was repaired.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. Moral development of pupils throughout the school is good. The school works hard to ensure that pupils understand how individual liberty, tolerance, respect for the law and each other contribute to a caring, forward-thinking society. The school effectively enables and encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong. It employs a restorative justice approach to behaviour interventions, encouraging pupils to reflect and propose solutions. Pupils have also been consulted about and provide input on appropriate consequences for the breaking of rules. Pupils are polite, respectful and excellent ambassadors for their school.

Social awareness and co-operation between pupils is evident in many lessons across the school. Collaborative learning is a feature throughout all key stages and in the playground, where pupils socialise and play together. The school fosters and enhances a feeling of togetherness and 'family'. This was repeatedly emphasised by parents in their meeting with the accreditation team. They stressed how happy and safe their children feel and how they really look forward to coming to school.

Partisan political views are precluded in the teaching of all subjects. The content of the curriculum is presented in an impartial way with an appropriate balance of opposing views were applicable. YET discussions also facilitate open discussion of balanced points of views.



## 7. Standard 3

### The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school meets the standards for accreditation.

The school has a formal written behaviour policy which promotes good behaviour and manners. This is available on the parent portal. The policy is implemented across the school. The general behaviour of pupils observed during the inspection was good. BSS Golden Rules are displayed in all classrooms. The school is beginning to formalise procedures and systems for recording poor behaviour and sanctions taken.

The school has an anti-bullying policy also available on the parent portal. Significant effort has been made through staff training, assemblies, PSHE/YET lessons and an Anti-Bullying week to raise awareness of bullying. The school has also taken measures to raise awareness of cyber bullying specifically.

The school meets all local health and safety requirements and is regularly inspected by Bulgarian authorities. The school has a Health and Safety Policy published on the parent portal. The school is endeavouring to build a culture where health and safety is the responsibility of all. The school is aware of the need to conduct a full health and safety audit to further secure site safety.

Comprehensive records of regular fire-drills were provided upon request. Fire standards conform to UK requirements. There is a first aid policy in place that is followed by staff. The school nurses play an integral role and ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner.

Pupils are appropriately supervised during the school day. The school has a well organised duty rota that ensures good supervision of pupils during the day. There is a security guard present at the entrance gate at all times. All visitors to the school have to produce a proof of ID in order to be issued with badges. An admissions and attendance register is maintained which conforms to local regulatory requirements. An attendance register is taken each morning. The school has identified the need to ensure they communicate with parents immediately after the close of registration, in line with the school's policy. Risk assessments are completed for all school trips in line with the health and safety policy.

## 8. *Standard 4*

### The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor is of a high order. She ensures the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for all pupils. In addition, she takes responsibility for the recruitment and checking of staff credentials.

A 'safer recruitment' policy is in place. Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks, including police checks in the country of origin, are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in Bulgaria, previous employment activity, character references and suitability to work with children. Attested copies of qualifications are required for all teaching staff. The school does not employ supply staff. There is no evidence that any member of staff or volunteer who carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school is in contravention of any local, overseas or British disqualification, prohibition or restriction.

There is a list of all staff who currently work in the school. This is regularly updated and shows when they started and stopped working in the school. Staffing levels are more than adequate for the successful delivery of the curriculum. All teaching staff have qualifications appropriate to their role; some staff have further academic or teaching qualifications that enhance school development.

## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet the required standard for BSO.

The school is spread across two sites. Early Years and Key Stage 1 are accommodated in a newly acquired shared multi-use building. Key Stage 2 and above remain on the main site. Space is utilised well on both sites to maximise the provisions available for both pupils and staff. Neither site is big. The school has identified the need for more space and is endeavouring to secure a larger school campus.

Separate toilet facilities for boys and girls in Grade 3 and above are provided, with hot and cold water washing facilities. Toilet and washing facilities and fittings are age appropriate. During school hours, staff and visitors have separate designated washroom facilities.

Suitable outdoor space ensures physical education is delivered in accordance with the school curriculum and facilitates outside play. Pupils from Grade 6 and above travel offsite for Physical Education lessons. Both the transport and the facilities used are fit for purpose. There are no showering facilities available to pupils and with this in mind PE lessons for older pupils are scheduled at the end of the school day. Lighting and heating systems are well maintained and in good working order. Local municipality street lighting ensures footpaths outside the school gates are illuminated. The two sites are well secured, with a security team monitoring those entering and leaving the sites.

There are medical clinics on both school sites which are staffed by qualified paediatric nurses. The clinics meet all local regulatory requirements. The clinics have changing facilities and toilets adjoining. The clinics are equipped with beds, first-aid supplies and running hot and cold water.

The proprietor has invested in and improved the quality of the facilities and maintenance of the school sites. All fixtures, fittings and furniture are age appropriate. Sound insulation, air conditioning units, lighting and acoustics allow for effective teaching and communication. The flooring is in good condition throughout the school. The drainage system allows for the effective disposal of wastewater and surface water. Classroom lighting is appropriate and well maintained. Good recreational equipment is available for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. Outside spaces are maximised to create two multipurpose sports courts on the main site. Pupils have access to fresh drinking water available from a number of water coolers. All toilets have washing facilities with hot and cold running water. The temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

## 10. *Standard 6* The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others meets the standard for accreditation.

Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with appropriate information, including the school's address and telephone number. Information is provided to parents about the schools' expectations for pupils' levels of English language and, how the school will support them with their English language acquisition. Parents are also informed if their child is identified as having special educational needs (SEN). The individual education plan (IEP) is fully discussed with parents. They are involved in the development and renewal of any plan. The school counsellor provides parents with information about external support and agencies as necessary. The school is in the process of planning a comprehensive admissions pack for prospective parents.

Since the last inspection, the school has updated its website. The school's ethos, aims and mission are clearly stated. In addition, a parent portal which provides parents with information relating to their child's attendance, lates, reports, homework, curriculum information and calendar of events, is extensively used by parents. Particulars of the school's academic performance are also available. The accreditation report is posted on the web site and available from the school on request.

Key policies, including behaviour/discipline policy, code of conduct, safeguarding, health and safety policy, and anti-bullying are readily available to parents. Details of the complaints policy and procedures are also on the website. The school has established a specific 'complaints' box in which parents can initially enter any concerns. To date, this has been used for suggestions for improvement, rather than complaints.

Pupils and parents receive quarterly reports by email. They are also available as paper copies if parents request it. Assessments are available to parents in the parent portal, although some of the focus group of parents indicated that they do not fully understand the assessment information provided. Parents are provided with the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and attainment formally with class teachers.

Parents reported that they are happy and confident that the 'open door' policy of the head teacher and his deputy is effective and allows any queries and/or concerns to be heard. The focus group of parents reported that the school is quick to respond with appropriate action when issues are raised. The parents are extremely happy with the school and the provision

made for their children, including the work of the school counsellor. They were particularly impressed at the manner in which their children are encouraged to be accepting of others and tolerant of their differences. Parents and pupils stated that there is a real feeling of community within the school.

## 11. *Standard 7*

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The procedure for dealing with parental complaints is robust and takes into account best practice.

Complaints are rare. Wherever possible concerns are dealt with quickly by the most appropriate member of staff. There is a detailed written formal complaints procedure that is transparent, open and effective, and takes into account local laws and regulations. It is made available to parents of pupils and prospective parents. There are clear timescales set for the management of complaints. The handling of complaints mirrors the management structure of the school. Nearly all cases are dealt with by the class teacher or tutor on an informal basis. Parents have easy access to senior leaders at the start and end of the school day. If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of an informal approach, they are able to submit a formal written complaint through the parent portal on the school's website. If a formal complaint has not been resolved by the head teacher, the parent(s) can request a meeting with the proprietor and parent members of the independent parent teacher committee for a formal review. Parents have the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend. A copy of the findings and recommendations are made available to the complainant and, where relevant the person complained about, the owner and the head teacher. The policy allows for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating at which stage they were resolved. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are treated confidentially and kept securely.

## 12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school meet the standard for accreditation with aspects of good practice.

The proprietor oversees school policies, ensuring all local requirements are met. She ensures sufficiency of resources through robust financial management.

The school is well organised and runs well. Operational procedures are established and understood. The newly appointed head teacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school. He is well supported by his senior leadership team. Through its recent self-evaluation, the senior leadership team have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The rapid growth in pupil numbers is providing increasing opportunities for teachers to undertake leadership responsibilities. To that end, the school has fully met one of the recommendations from the last inspection to 'review, expand and strengthen senior and middle leadership across the school and prepare for future growth'. The school has recognised the need to develop and support newly appointed middle managers to ensure they have the skill set to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

With a few exceptions, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and, in many cases, better. The school has recently implemented a performance management process, with appropriate emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising individual pupil attainment. It is too soon to judge the impact. The school now has a rigorous monitoring and tracking process which is providing a wealth of data on individual pupil attainment and progress. Whilst this is beginning to be used effectively to identify underachievement and plan intervention strategies, the use of attainment data to plan lessons which provide appropriate challenge for different groups of pupils is underdeveloped.

Effective policies ensure that nearly all pupils make progress at least in line with their ability in literacy. The school's curriculum provides organised and effective opportunities for groups of pupils to learn and make good progress. The school has a positive impact on pupil behaviour, in addition to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The proprietor is aware of the need to continue to secure, support and develop high quality teachers. She is effective in ensuring their suitability to work with children. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school works well with parents and carers.

### 13. *Standard 9* The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.