



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

British International School

Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam

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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 ownership 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 and care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. 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, 85 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, parents and groups of pupils. Two and a half school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Mark Evans. The team members were Ben Atkinson, Bernie Babkirk, Jayne Bennion, Inderjit Dehal, Colin Dyson, Craig Halsall, Nicola Singleton and Alison Wood.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British International School (BIS), Ho Chi Minh City, meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

BIS is an excellent school. The quality of learning, teaching and assessment is at least good and very often excellent. The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. Leadership and management are very effective. The pupils, parents and staff are strongly supportive of the school.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at BIS.

- The pupils' attitude to their learning and their personal development are exemplary;
- The rapport between teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves is outstanding;
- Parents are very positive about the school and support it strongly;
- Much of the teaching is excellent, with a clear emphasis given to independent learning, research skills and critical thinking;
- The high quality of support provided by the teaching assistants is a major strength of the school;
- Provision for those pupils who have special educational needs and for those who speak English as an Additional Language, is outstanding;
- The attitude to learning from the pupils and the high quality teaching lead to excellent attainment;
- Nearly 99% of BIS pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C grades, significantly above UK national levels (at 69%);
- Nearly 70% of all grades awarded were A* or A, with 100% A*-A pass-rates for biology, information and communication technology and music, again much higher than UK averages (at 21%);
- International Baccalaureate Diploma examinations results also underline the excellent achievements of the pupils: 97% achieved the IB Diploma, with an average score of 36.2 points, significantly above the world average;
- The mission statement of the school (known as the *aide memoire*), is embedded in much that goes on in the classroom, especially in the primary years;
- The community outreach programme is exemplary, and has a significant impact on the personal development of the pupils;
- Effective working relationships between staff and pupils ensures for a happy and productive learning environment; further supported with a high visibility and presence of the senior management team (SMT) around school;

- There is a very broad range of opportunities for pupils to engage in extracurricular and other related activities;
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is strong;
- The support provided to the teachers and pupils by the BIS administrative team is excellent.

3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school should consider the following points for further development:

- In recognition of the new ownership and governance structure at BIS, review and revise the school development plan, to refresh the strategic direction of the school;
- Further refine the performance management of leaders and managers to clarify the accountabilities on each site and those that run across all three;
- Raise expectations of teaching to meet the BIS excellence criteria in even more lessons.

4. The context of the school

The British International School (BIS) is a selective, independent, co-educational day school. It provides a British-style education for international pupils aged between 2 and 18 years old from more than 50 countries. Prospective pupils must demonstrate that they have the ability, skills and knowledge to access the curriculum successfully. English is the language of communication throughout the school, and in lessons. Consequently, prospective pupils must demonstrate that they are sufficiently fluent in English to be able to communicate effectively. Nevertheless, the school does provide some help for children who may initially need support with their English. The school admits children with minor specific learning difficulties and provides support at no additional cost.

The school started in August 1997 as a pre-school called 'Tiny Tots'. A second pre-school called 'Fundino' and the original villa was extended in 2000 to accommodate an additional 10 primary classrooms, bringing the total school roll at that time to 300. In 2002, a new primary campus was built in the residential An Phu (AP) area of the city and enrolment jumped to 600. In August 2005, a purpose-built secondary campus was opened on land close to the new primary campus in An Phu. The number of pupils on roll had then risen to almost 1,000. In 2007, another new primary school was built on Tu Xuong (TX) Street in District 3 of the city, combining the first two pre-school campuses into one new school. The school roll was then 1,350 children aged 2 – 18. In August 2008, an extension to the An Phu primary campus was opened followed by an extension to the secondary campus in August 2010. There are now more than 1,800 pupils.

BIS (and the four other schools in the group) recently merged with Nord Anglia Education.

4.1 British nature of the school

BIS has a strong British flavour and ethos:

- The school is organised in a typically British way, both academically and pastorally. The BIS curriculum for Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) and for Key Stages 1-5 is strongly based on the English National Curriculum, adapted to a local context.
- The school provides a wide range of educational visits, after-school activities as well as musical and drama events, typical of good independent schools in the UK.
- Management and administration terminology used in school is British.
- More than 90% of teachers are British qualified and trained.
- Teachers' continuous professional development is based on UK developments, and is often run by trainers flown from Britain: Sir John Jones, Professor Guy Claxton and Jenny Mosley, for example.
- The school looks to the UK for educational guidance, developments and initiatives.
- School resources are largely sourced from the UK.
- The BIS house system and school uniforms mirror those seen in the UK independent sector.

- The school maintains strong links with the British embassy and consulate in Vietnam: the principal attends regular events at the Consulate.
- The school also maintains good links with the British Business Group in Vietnam – the school marketing manager is a recent member of the executive committee.
- British culture is recognised in a variety of ways – the annual Poppy Appeal, a traditional red phone box on one site, an annual carol concert, a Christmas bazaar, the Spring Fete, pantomimes, and the option of traditional British food in the school canteens.
- Communications from the school to families and pupils are provided in English, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website.
- Extra-curricular provision, including clubs and school trips, are very important in the life of the school, and in line with British best practice.
- The school is an active member of the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA) - the school principal has been until recently, the chair.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided at BIS is excellent.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at BIS is excellent.

BIS offers a very broad and well balanced curriculum. It meets the local regulations and the pupils' needs. The English National Curriculum provides the framework for teaching and learning across all three campuses. The EYFS programme precedes a modified national curriculum in Key Stage 1 and 2 at both primary schools. The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) provides a structure for a thematic approach to foundation subjects that further supports the adaptation to meet pupils' interests and experiences, for example exploring the impact of tourism following a recent residential trip to Hoi An. Secondary pupils follow a modified National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. Key Stage 4 pupils are prepared for a wide range of IGCSE examinations through the University of Cambridge International Examinations Board. Key Stage 5 pupils work through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations Board programme, before sitting the IB Diploma.

Schemes of work are in place throughout the school. At their most effective, they make a significant contribution to lesson planning and thus to learning. Planning is comprehensive, and supports teaching and learning effectively. The school adheres to local requirements in that the Vietnamese language is taught.

There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities (ECAs) and projects provided by the school such as the Eco Warriors, as well as regional events such as the FOBISIA maths challenge. At the time of the inspection, there were more than 220 activities ongoing. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their involvement in the Rube Goldberg Challenge. Additional ECAs have recently been added for FS2 and FS3 at TX Campus, following a request by parents.

The transitions within school are well managed. The TX pupils benefit from the small community ethos of the campus – all pupils are well known by their teachers, as they are at AP1, too. Transition to secondary is satisfactorily managed in terms of the transfer of information, and some activities are in place to support pupils to prepare socially - most notably the residential trips in Year 6 that include children from both TX and AP1 campus.

Learning is further supported by effective intervention and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The impact of this was observed during the inspection when two pupils clearly presented a secondary assembly to promote 'sleep

awareness week', both of whom spoke little English upon their admission to the school two years ago. There is also strong support for pupils who have special education needs (SEN).

There is setting in place for mathematics and modern foreign languages from Year 9 with three separate science qualifications available for higher ability pupils. There is also setting (at TX) in modern foreign languages (MFL), English and (across the whole school) mathematics from Year 3, including early entry of IGCSE mathematics in Year 9. An independent learning programme provides highly effective provision for the development of personal, social and health education (PSHE).

The curriculum supports pupils' academic progress effectively. External baseline data, together with the school's own tracking models, shows strong progress in both primary schools and positive value-added throughout the secondary school in all subjects except art: strategies are being implemented to ensure attainment in art is enhanced further.

Whilst there are many successful subject areas in the secondary school, MFL provides pupils with a wide range of appropriate languages that reflect the school's geographical location within Asia, and its commitment to develop pupils as 'global citizens'. This is further supported by well-planned and delivered curricular and extra-curricular programmes. The school also benefits from a range of community links with schools locally and internationally, which provides extensive opportunities for pupils to compete in a variety of subject areas across the curriculum, including mathematics, music, STEAM, arts, drama, model United Nations and leadership.

A notable strength of the school is the ILS, a bespoke personal growth and development programme which is taught across the curriculum and is regarded as a significant contributor to the growth and development of pupils.

Similarly, the breadth of curriculum offered at the 6th form level is exceptional, even when this means running courses/classes with minimal uptake, for example higher level design and technology.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are excellent. The styles of teaching, learning and assessment equip pupils very well with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter (or re-enter) the UK educational system at an appropriate level.

Teaching in general enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability. They increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects that are taught. Teachers encourage pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort, to show interest in their work, and to think and learn for themselves. For example, in an outstanding lesson observed with Foundation 2 and 3 teachers, the lesson was introduced by both teachers in the F2 classroom through imaginative, engaging use of language and then was developed into a science lesson using scientific language and a Venn diagram sorting activity. Phonics taught at the same time across Year 1 meant that pupils' needs and ability levels, whilst they were challenged, were suitably provided for.

Control of lesson pace and variety of teaching technique are strengths, generally. The best lessons across the school used differentiation, high order questioning skills, encouraged collaboration and enquiry skills. The pupils were encouraged to investigate aspects independently and also to articulate their learning to others. Respect for their ideas and the ability of adults to listen to and engage with the pupils' input also played a big part in the best teaching. There was dynamic activity in these lessons: a clear sense that teachers continued to take well-calculated risks with their teaching, not deterred by the formality of inspection lesson observations.

The few less good lessons were predominantly those in which pupils remained more passive, relying on the teacher for input and taking a less active part in their learning. There was a tendency in these lessons for these teachers to over-talk and over-direct, rather than letting the children take responsibility for their learning.

Lessons throughout the school are carefully planned. Planning is consistent in quality and detail. Accommodations of differentiated content for gifted and talented pupils and those with SEN was evident in observed lesson planning: practice did not always match the planning, however.

Use of IT to support learning varied. There was excellent use of iPads in swimming, with pupils videoing their peers' attempts at diving then analysing and giving feedback which then led to improvement in technique. Laptops were used successfully in one Year 6 guided reading lesson observed. Good practice concerning the use of instructional technology was seen in a Year 9 Chinese lesson: its use was supported by excellent teacher interjection. PowerPoint presentations were integrated into most lessons in AP2. Google docs is becoming an increasingly valuable and integral part of communications between teacher and pupils with some excellent practice observed, such as a Year 10 lesson where

pupils used it effectively to collaborate on a 'Dragon's Den' pitch which was further supported by sharing the document with the teacher.

An excellent Year 7 geography lesson on weather, used data generated at the school's own weather station. Pupils compared data collected over a period of time and discussed what it looked like in real life. They then watched a time-lapse video and looked at the data provided for each of the times to see how the data was represented in real life in HCMC.

But the opportunity to exploit the 'BYOD' policy was missed in many lessons. Interactive whiteboards were rarely seen being used in an interactive way.

Marking and feedback to pupils was on some occasions, variable. There is non-compliance with the school's stated policy in secondary lessons in mathematics and science, in terms of regularity and nature of written teacher feedback. Some examples of good practice were observed within these departments, but other departments reflected greater consistency, such as English and MFL.

The best lessons across the school used differentiation, high order questioning skills, encouraged collaboration and enquiry skills. The pupils were encouraged to investigate aspects independently and also to articulate their learning to others. Respect for their ideas and the ability of adults to listen to and engage with the pupils' input also played a big part. One Year 9 English lesson observed required pupils to move around different 'Museum' stations: they learned about the 1930's context of the novel by visiting a 'library', listening to radio plays, exploring popular culture and incorporating various learning resources which engaged the learners.

Assessment overall, is excellent, providing robust insight into pupils' attainment and progress. Centrally stored data is used effectively to profile the needs of individual pupils as well as cohort trends. Lesson plan information in secondary was provided to contextualise most lessons observed, included current attainment data: some teachers provided data sheets offering a broad insight into assessment history.

The school has recognised the challenge and opportunities of an assessment regime without levels, and is actively pursuing a BIS solution, seeking a cohesive, cross-campus strategy.

Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of learning: they are highly valued as members of staff, very well trained and positively supported.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by primary and secondary pupils at BIS are excellent, both academically and in other aspects of what they learn.

The school has large numbers of children in EYFS (163 mornings, 136 afternoons as well as 61 0-2 years) of which a significant proportion enter with little or no English. The majority enter EYFS at below age-related levels and make sound progress across all prime areas, especially literacy and numeracy. Outcomes on exit from EYFS have increased steadily across 2013 to 2015, although they are still considerably below UK averages on entry to year 1.

The pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1. There has been volatility over time in the end of key stage outcomes, due at least in part to increasing numbers of EAL learners joining the school. Across Key Stage 2, pupils make outstanding progress in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing lags a little behind other areas, but is still very good. This has been identified as an improvement area and action is being taken, for example by introducing "Talk for Writing".

End of Key Stage 2 outcomes have increased overtime and exceed UK averages. One would expect top end maths results (level 5+) to be higher, but the school have identified this as an issue and acted on it. The prediction for 2016 will represent a significant increase if realised. Current data suggests the school will at least meet the target. Pupils who are at BIS longer, make better progress over time, making 8 to 11 sub-levels of progress, Year 2 to Year 6, which represents outstanding progress.

Pupils make very good progress across the secondary school and excellent progress during the Diploma Programme. Through the use of a range of tracking and monitoring systems, such as INSIGHT, data collected over a three year period highlighted significant progress in almost all subjects resulting in high levels of achievement in IGCSEs and the IBDP.

Exam results from IGCSE for 2015 show that nearly 98.9% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades, significantly above UK national levels. 69.9% of all grades awarded were A* and A with 100% A*-A pass rates for biology, ICT and music.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme examination results highlight the excellent achievements of the oldest pupils. The 2015 results show 97% of pupils achieved the IB Diploma, with an average score of 36.2, very significantly above the world average. 64% of examinations scored from level 6 to 7, out of the maximum 7.

The school is also very successful in helping pupils to develop their personal skills and qualities: pupils are thoughtful and behaviour is exemplary. The standard of work is almost always high in all parts of the school.

6. Standard 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding: it is a key strength of the school. It is promoted in primary by the effective integration of the *aide memoire* into everyday practice, and more subtly integrated in secondary.

Pupils are open, friendly and happy to receive and welcome visitors into their school. They show a high degree of confidence around all areas of school life. They are very happy and benefit from highly effective working relationships with staff and their peers, as evidenced by the enthusiastic reception staff gave to the introduction of the new pupil prefect team at a staff briefing during the visit.

This is also reflected by the continued development of pupil voice in the school, which has a positive influence on many aspects of school life, including the introduction of *F1 in Schools*, Student Councils and House Captains.

Pupils know how to conduct themselves, a view supported by the exemplary behaviour observed throughout the inspection. No unpleasant or poor example of behaviour was witnessed throughout the visit. This is supported well by a positive behaviour management policy. There is great respect for each other. Secondary pupils are able to confidently empathise and articulate a very mature and measured approach to a range of modern issues facing citizens from different countries and cultures. The sixth form benefits from a vertically integrated form system. This provides exemplary role models for pupils new to the sixth form and Key Stage 4 pupils aspiring to become prefects in the future.

The success of the Early Years pupils in meeting personal and social goals, their participation in the IPC and planned PSHE activities all show the depth of understanding for the pupils' moral and spiritual development. Respect and harmony between different cultural traditions and between different ages is the norm. All year groups are proud to participate in community service projects on a regular basis which gives them a better understanding of their social and cultural responsibility.

Pupils' care for one another is of the highest standard, for example through the community programme, class buddies, peer tutoring, and even by a number of pupils helping a fellow pupil on crutches to move around the Bistro at break-time. Pupils from all three campuses make significant and sustained contributions to a range of local projects, most notable of which includes excellent relationships with a local children's orphanage. The school also runs a successful social service project, which recently included a 'Helmets for Kids' awareness raising campaign. It was also obvious during a lesson which matched TX pupils with pupils from a community school who come from disadvantaged backgrounds (mostly orphans and street children). During these community partnerships, the pupils are prepared by discussing what makes them the same rather than what makes them different. This approach is exemplary: the pupils look forward to these collaborations and have built bonds with the visiting children. It is noteworthy that when

this class was observed, the inspector was unaware of the visiting children and noted how well the children were supporting and helping each other.

The school's curriculum offers extensive opportunities for pupils to develop cultural understanding and awareness of others. For example, use of native language-speaking MFL teachers allows pupils to learn about the culture of countries, which is a strong source of motivation for them. The curriculum promotes cultural empathy and understanding through lessons. For example, in an IB geography lesson, pupils were encouraged to debate and reflect upon the values, feelings and reactions of European citizens to a fellow EU member country undertaking a trade deal with a non-European country. In a year 11 Vietnamese lesson, pupils talk passionately about how they enjoy the way they are able to improve their Vietnamese language skills whilst also learning about many social and cultural issues, including the methods and impact of using different media to report news.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils through the school are excellent: nevertheless, a small number of issues were discussed with the school.

Policy, processes and practice to promote and safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils across the school are mainly very effective. The school places a high priority on the health, safety and well-being of all pupils and it is at the heart of all relevant school policies, strategies and initiatives. Appropriate written policies are in place across all key areas including safe use of the internet and bullying.

An excellent pupil-led assembly on internet safety was observed during the inspection. The school has done a significant amount on child protection over the last year, for example training all staff including external ECA providers and teaching assistants, improving signage (now evident throughout the building) and creating a code of conduct, which is given to all visitors on entry – although this does not happen consistently. The safeguarding policy is reviewed annually.

Clear and effective procedures are in place for fire and lockdown. These are tested termly and twice a year respectively and improvements put in place as appropriate. Similarly, effective policies and procedures govern transport and trip safety.

An admission register is in place and up to date. Attendance registers are taken twice a day with any absence followed up after 3 days.

Nurses are based on the sites to provide medical support and advice. All aspects of the work of the clinics was thoroughly audited in July 2015 and improvement action taken. The school is supported by a nurse consultant who continues to audit practice on a regular basis and support follow up.

The new ownership arranges audits of the areas covered by this standard annually, and makes recommendations for improvements. The last audit was carried out in January 2016. Overall the schools were judged to be compliant with UK and local regulations. A number of minor areas for improvement were identified, which are being or have been actioned. In addition to that audit, the deputy heads and campus facilities managers carry out a monthly campus and canteen walk through, identifying and addressing issues.

Pupils at play all wear sunhats and had water bottles available to them, and recognised the importance of this. The school does place an emphasis on healthy life styles, which is evident in the displays in corridors and around school. Children know about making healthy choices for example they describe the kind of foods they should have a limited amount of, and how important exercise is. The quality of the food on both primary campuses is not consistently well regarded by the pupils.

Children across the primary school have age appropriate targets to support their academic progress. All children were aware of the targets but not all could demonstrate how they supported their learning in specific lessons.

The school has a written policy on bullying, and children know that this is not acceptable behaviour. They are clear about what to do if incidents do occur and trust their teachers to act upon any concerns, including cyber bullying.

8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The recent merger of the school with the Nord Anglia Education Group is regarded by stakeholders as a positive development. Staff speak highly of the access they have to robust, substantive professional development, for example. Teacher retention rates are high: only 16% will move on from secondary this academic year, for example. This rate has reduced annually over the past 3 years.

Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in Vietnam and previous employment history. At least two professional references are taken up, as well as qualifications and personal references. There is a list maintained of all staff and volunteers who currently work in the school. This 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. Academic staff are almost all UK qualified.

Staff are supported professionally by a positive, affirming professional review and development cycle. Senior staff underline that this process is non-judgemental, supporting the culture of the school, which is very much centred on the premise that nurturing teachers' creativity and innovation is best done through affirmation. Whilst this is important to the school, the accountability measures are not always as transparent as they should be, to ensure quality of teaching.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent.

At the TX campus, the premises and the accommodation are good. The campus was built in 2007 and accommodates just over 300 pupils. The school recognizes that a general refurbishment of the school is needed to help freshen it up after 9 years in use. Pupil council noted that they too have been part of the discussion regarding priorities needed in the refurbishment of the campus. Classrooms meet the range of pupil needs and provide ample opportunity to have a variety of activities simultaneously. This is especially evident in the Early Years with areas for self-initiated play, teacher-directed and class organisation for collaborative work stations.

The outdoor play area is very limited but the school has made good use of the area, mostly through organised staggered play time. The Early Years play area is shaded and has a variety of activities for children to pick and participate in. The play areas are well fitted out to provide pupils with ample opportunities for creative play. The primary play area is not shaded but is able to provide many creative opportunities as well as the use of the foyer of the school provides quiet spaces, reading areas and some games such as a large "snakes and ladders" game painted on to the floor which pupils enjoy.

The school has encouraged teachers to form improvement committees in order to look at priorities in premises development and put the ideas into action. During the visit, the TX school development group were concentrating on the school foyer, an improved surface area for primary play area, as well as refurbishing the library with new furniture.

The AP1 and 2 campuses have benefitted from extensive building works over recent years to expand site capacity, and are of high quality. Classrooms flow off wide corridors; the layout of the secondary school is sensible and appropriate. Classrooms are of suitable size; ventilation and a/c makes for a comfortable learning environment. The wide range of specialist classrooms includes well-equipped science labs, which support learning. Elevators service both secondary buildings, and are accessible by pupils who are mobility-impaired.

There are sufficient bathroom facilities for the pupil and staff population; however cleanliness of these was not always consistent.

Limited space accessible by pupils in AP2 during breaks is a recognised concern. Arrangements have been made to use part of the shared pitch during lunch.

Entry to and from the school is strictly supervised and there are security guards on site 24 hours a day. Play times and outdoor activities are appropriately supervised and a posted duty rota shows good supervision. Parents or guardians have electronic access cards and must swipe in whenever entering the school in the mornings or afternoons. There is adequate supervision provided both inside the school area as well as outside the school walls. Outside staff ensure good movement of

traffic in a very congested street area. A waiting area is provided for parents at the end of the day and parents are not permitted into classroom areas before the end of the day. When parents pick up their children from the classroom, it is a quick and orderly transition allowing teachers to keep a strict supervision of the children.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided by the school for parents, carers and others is excellent.

A comprehensive range of important information is available on the school web site, blog and through published documentation. The school's mission statement (*aide memoire*) and aims, contact details, curriculum information, key policy document information, relating to admissions, health and safety, bullying and child protection are easily accessible.

Focus groups of parents on all sites were complimentary about the level of communication offered by the school. They were very positive about the use of the school diary as a means of communication and especially liked the blog, the improved e-mail system and the regular text messages sent to them. The information on the web-site was also seen as a great tool. Weekly learning letters along with the weekly newsletter from the headteacher help to keep parents informed.

Parents said that they were extremely happy with the education provided for their children. They consider the standards to be high and valued the educational opportunities and the level of pastoral care available to their children considering both to be excellent. They appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities and community service opportunities available to their children. They feel fully engaged in their children's education. The reporting procedures are clear and the school regularly reports to parents, in either verbal or written form. Parents meet formally with class teachers twice a year to discuss progress and pastoral issues. They receive a written report detailing their child's progress, effort, attainment and next steps in learning, twice a year.

Parents commented positively on the family feel of the school. Informal pop-ins can take place in the morning or at the end of the school day if they have any concerns. More formal appointments can be arranged through the office or online as and when is needed.

Another significant strength of the school is a classroom blog for each class along with a blog for each pupil. Parents found this to be an excellent opportunity to follow their children's progress and also add to the information. They suggested that they are a part of their children's daily educational activities, and believe the school leadership is welcoming of their contributions and participation. They also expressed their appreciation of the schools many community partner initiatives stating they fear their children will grow up in "a bubble" and the community initiatives provide their children and understanding for those less fortunate than themselves.

Excellent relationships already exist between the local and international 'families' of BIS and Nord Anglia Education schools. There is also extensive collaboration, particularly with sport, with other local international schools.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The BIS procedure for handling complaints is effective and meets the BSO standard. It is transparent, effective and meets local regulatory requirements. The policy aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution.

Complaints are rare, but the policy allows for complainants to be parents, guardians, grandparents, neighbours of the school or anyone with an interest in the work of the school. Complaints may be made by telephone, e-mail, in person or be written. A complaint is defined as a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the work of BIS.

The procedure deals with specified day-to-day complaints against the management and/or operation of the school. Records of all conversations and meetings with parents to resolve formal complaints are kept. Heads of campus keep a file of hard copies of any formal complaint forms.

The policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils and sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint. It also allows for complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis. The school aims to resolve the concern at this point in a speedy and effective way. However, if the concern is not resolved immediately and a complaint is confirmed by the parent, the opportunity to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff will be given, for example deputy head, mile post leader or head of subject. If the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant is asked by the member of staff dealing with the issue whether s/he wishes the complaint to be considered formally at stage one of the procedure.

12. Standard 8

The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

13. Standard 9 Leadership and management of the school

BIS is very well led: leadership and management are excellent, and strengths of the school. The vision and drive of the Principal is outstanding.

The school is led by a Principal/CEO, three heads of campus and their respective leadership teams. The senior leadership team has been successful in building an ethos of trust in the school. This is supported by the school's successful links with other schools within its immediate 'family': these are expected to continue to flourish within the new Nord Anglia Education group of schools.

There is a continued ambition to be a reflective school that is open to new initiatives in order to learn from all opportunities that will assist it in meeting its' own school improvement needs. Senior leaders form an effective team with complementary skills, capabilities and expertise.

In secondary, there is acknowledgement that redistribution of responsibilities may be of benefit and further improve efficiency and effectiveness. The collective capability of the sixth form leadership team is evident: the school's investment in supporting this area of the school is generous and fruitful.

The school has a sound school development plan. School development priorities are set and regularly reviewed by senior managers, with some consultation from middle leaders. There is some evidence of cascaded whole school priorities to middle leadership curriculum plans in the secondary school, although these are not yet providing sufficient consistency and detail.

There is a performance review development policy provides systems and procedures to ensure staff are set performance targets that are reviewed throughout the academic year. The school supports this programme through a range of CPD strategies and is proud of the opportunities it offers staff including 'teachmeet' sessions. The school is also beginning to take advantage of opportunities provided by the recent merger, including senior and middle leadership development programmes. The school has successfully built a strong trust between the senior team and the rest of the staff.

Staff feel valued and happy in the school. The school benefits from its ability to recruit high quality teachers and currently receives around 40 applicants per vacancy. This has been supported through the development of a trusting culture and the internal production of a high quality recruitment video. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, the positive ethos of the school and public examination results.

Seniors leaders are committed to promoting a strong mission-driven culture through its *aide memoire*, and to developing a culture of 'marginal gains'. The culture of trust that has been established is reflected in lower than average staff turnover rates.

Relationships between all levels of school leadership are purposeful, guided by defined role descriptions and a clear line management structure. The lack of opportunity to support fully senior leadership development, results in day-to-day management being more effective than leadership. School-wide communication is effective through a weekly whole staff briefing, a weekly meeting schedule and a streamlined email communication system with mailing groups for specific target audiences. Positive relations and effective communication between the principal, senior staff, teachers and non-teaching staff encourages a team approach from practitioners who work together effectively.

The development of focus groups to steer the future development of the school is seen as highly positive by the staff. The impact of these groups is not yet clearly defined due to the limited time in operation.

The day-to-day running of all three campuses is good. The daily management of school life is notably smooth, calm and welcoming to all. This is further supported by the SMT team being highly visible around the campuses each day.

The school now benchmarks itself against UK schools using value-added data, which helps inform future academic targets. The school performs well when compared to UK state and independent schools.

Whilst the ownership of the school has recently changed following its merger with Nord Anglia Education, the values and ethos of Nord Anglia Education have, so far, been successfully integrated into the school's own culture and development. This is a view shared and welcomed by staff and parents.