



**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 students; 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 students and students' 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. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, a range of teachers, representatives of the Education Office, parents and groups of students. Three school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Mark Evans. The team members were Colin Dyson, Geraldine Cranfield, John Cranfield, Tania Moonsinghe, Ciaran Harrington, and Marion Sinclair. Karen Hanratty joined the team as an observer.

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. It provides a very high quality of education and care for its students. The quality of learning, teaching and leadership is outstanding. The students, parents and staff are passionate about the school.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths. They include:

- The very high standards of attainment.
- The excellent teaching.
- The impact of the mission statement and the vision.
- The exceptional relationships within the school.
- The attitude, behaviour and personal development of the students.
- The spiritual and cultural development of the students.
- The thoughtful and patient manner in which policies are developed, which maximises their impact.
- The high quality of staff appointments, at all levels.
- The flexible and innovative use of the buildings.
- The influence of the teaching assistants on the students' learning.
- The support provided to the teachers by the administrative team.

3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Ensure that all teaching is as good as the best.
- Improve the impact of assessment further by making sure that:
 - marking always links overtly to learning objectives;
 - assessment for learning techniques always inform planning;
 - the marking policy is both current and followed.
- Refine the use of assessment data to have maximum impact on learning.
- Seek ways to spread around the school, the notable expertise in use of creative assessment strategies, the teaching of English as an Additional Language and in planning for the most able students.
- Define an appropriate comparator group, against which to benchmark relevant aspects of the school.

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 students aged between 2 and 18 years old from more than 50 countries. Prospective students 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 students must demonstrate that they are sufficiently fluent in English to be able to communicate effectively. That said, the school does provide some help for children who may initially need support with their English on payment of an additional EAL fee. The school does admit children with minor specific learning difficulties and provide 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 students 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 almost 1,800 students.

4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of the school is clear. The owners and leaders adopt the best practice from the UK, and keep a close eye on relevant developments from the DfE.

The ethos, nature and appearance of the school are recognisably British, and mirror what would be found in the independent sector in the UK.

The school uses the National Curriculum (NC) of England at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 leading to IGCSE examinations and the International Baccalaureate (IB). This combination ensures that children can join/re-join the UK education system without disadvantage, at any stage. The curriculum has excellent breadth offering English, mathematics and science from the NC and International Primary Curriculum (IPC) topics for history and geography in the primary schools. Specialist teachers deliver primary PE, music, ICT and modern foreign languages.

Mathematics is set by ability from Year 3 onwards: these groups have a good level of fluidity and students may move between groups at different points during the year, regardless of the last assessment point. Very able mathematicians are catered for in a Gifted and Talented club; those needing support are identified by the Learning Support team and appropriate interventions planned for.

As well as implementing the NC for England, assessments are based on national standards from the UK.

The school is organised according to the pastoral structures used in English schools. The school house system is successfully implemented: children take a very keen interest, through assemblies, sporting activities and house competitions.

UK practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting and annual review meetings.

Communications from the school to families and students are provided mainly in English, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website (although parents are encouraged to translate for the nationality group, if appropriate). However, certain key documents are translated by the school into Vietnamese and Korean.

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 South East Asia and East Asia (FOBISSEA).

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. It is broad, balanced and offers students a wide range of learning opportunities, tailored to meet their needs and to challenge them.

The curriculum in the Early Years departments at both An Phu and Tu Xuong is underpinned by the Foundation profile from the UK. Teachers show a thorough understanding of the criteria for effective learning and design the curriculum accordingly. Children learn through a variety of rich, varied and imaginative experiences: all show very high levels of engagement. Effective questioning from both teacher and teaching assistants encourage children to apply intellectual, physical and/or creative efforts to think and learn for themselves. The approach engages all, as it requires the commensurate level of skills in the seven Early Years Profile areas, with scope for challenge at every level. Teachers know their children well, as is evidenced in their learning portfolios, and tailor the curriculum appropriately.

In Key Stage 1, the curriculum provides a breadth of experiences for students in all areas of education. A particular focus on the development of children's linguistic ability is evident in the vast majority of lessons observed. Classrooms provide rich language environments and displays in shared areas further enhance this. Focussing the curriculum on language and grammar has great benefits later in the school. Teachers ensure that tasks set are appropriate to age and aptitude, and that there is suitable differentiation. Additional support is provided for those with special educational needs (SEN) and for those whose first language is not English.

The curriculum in Key Stage 2 is also broad and balanced. Time allocations and the allocation of subjects are in line with NC requirements and those of Vietnam. Through the effective planning of topics of study, students enjoy a wide range of learning experiences that encourage the development of higher order learning and support the school's ethos. For example, Year 6 students engaged in a "Conscience Alley" which supported them in analysing consequences and outcomes as part of a literacy lesson. Students enjoy and respond to the level of independence they are given, and the opportunities to share in the ownership of the learning.

Curriculum documentation in the primary parts of the school is well-planned, clear and concise. Daily lesson planning provides clear differentiation strategies and opportunities for effective assessment. Learning enhancement opportunities are provided to those students who need support to access the curriculum. The partial use of IPC enriches the learning

opportunities, as do a range of celebrations (local and international), sporting competitions and cultural opportunities.

Specialist teaching extends the primary curriculum and enriches students' knowledge and experiences in music, modern foreign languages and PE. Using IPC for geography, history, art and design & technology. Teaching is effective in relating different types of information and skills in a meaningful way, within an international context.

The implementation of an information literacy programme on the TX campus has had considerable positive impact on the curriculum. For example, in Year 6 the IPC topic culminated in their 'Great TXhibition', where groups of students had different stands from which to present their research into a topic such as farming or transport. These book and internet research skills had been taught in information literacy lessons. The students' presentations of their findings were made on the computer, by a speech, using information booklets, through display of work by the students and using interactive activities for visitors.

Primary students for whom English is an additional language are supported well: much work has been done to increase awareness and employ effective strategies in the classroom, such as speaking and listening targets, improving grammatical errors in speech and writing and checking understanding of key vocabulary and text. Speech competitions, poetry recitals and encouragement to speak in assemblies has done much to improve students' spoken skills and confidence.

The use of ICT in lessons impacts significantly on students' learning. Year 1 students were able to programme Beebots using given directions and apply the knowledge to programme the robots to follow a given path. Year 4 students videoed their planned story endings against the blue screen. A Year 5 maths lesson recorded data on Excel and then used it to test a hypothesis.

At Key Stage 3, all students follow a common curriculum based on the National Curriculum for England. Fourteen subjects are on offer. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is greatly enriched by a planned and coherent personal, social and health (PSHE) programme, Vietnamese language and culture and careers education. Able students begin iGCSE mathematics in Year 9. In Key Stage 4, all students are prepared for iGCSE examinations. They study a common core of subjects: English, mathematics and double science. In addition, students select four subjects from the fourteen on offer. Physical education is compulsory, although it is not examined.

In the Sixth Form, all students follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. Nearly all transfer onto the IB Programme, enabling access to the most prestigious universities.

Overall, the secondary curriculum is extensive and well matched to students' needs. As students move through the key stages, they become increasingly proficient in speaking and listening, literacy skills and numeracy. The expectation at BIS is that students are fluent in

English. Some support is available for students whose first language is not English. The school implements an 'Academic English' policy across all years, to support students' understanding of the technical and more formal aspects of the English language.

The learning support department offers effective support for a limited number of students with mild learning difficulties. Teachers effectively plan to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all students.

The school's PSHE programme supports the personal development and well-being of all students effectively. It is enriched by the academic curriculum, for example, healthy lifestyles in science and physical education and e-safety in information technology. Throughout the Sixth Form, students receive high quality advice and support from the school's university, careers and guidance counsellor.

The taught curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of additional activities and an exceptional number and range of after-school clubs which extend students' skills and interests. The range of extra-curricular activities is an exemplary feature of the school. At any one time, there are more than 100 clubs on offer in total across the three campuses. All students are involved in community service work. Personal development, citizenship and the teaching of personal, social and health education is enhanced by student's involvement in community projects as an integral part of their curriculum. There are many opportunities for students to take responsibility and to become involved in groups such as Eco-Warriors and School Council.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are excellent: the proportion of top quality teaching is outstanding.

In the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), well-qualified teachers, very ably assisted by diligent teaching assistants, expertly support all areas of the children's learning. In both 'Fundinotots' and EYFS, the teaching practice is firmly based on the best education research on child development. Moments of awe and wonder are in abundance as new learning takes place, and children are motivated and encouraged to 'take their learning' on their chosen journey. Mixing colours using tubes and pipettes, digging for bones, water spraying letter sounds and learning about the propulsion of balloons and rockets in the splash pool are all part of the children's day.

For example, one child experienced putting his head into a bucket of ice blocks, which prompted the discovery that 'my head feels cold and my brain is freezing'. Asked why his head was wet from the ice, he said "because it is melting by the sun". Teaching is clearly rooted in firm knowledge of the learning and development requirements, and a full understanding of how children learn and progress. Emphasis is placed on exploration and speaking and listening in readiness for more 'formal' aspects of learning.

The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is at least good: in the majority of lessons, it is outstanding. Well-planned, engaging and fast paced lessons enable students to make rapid progress. The school has a clear and common understanding of what constitutes outstanding learning. This has been focused on by the Learning and Teaching Development Group, who have gathered ideas from teachers and students, and are beginning to seek the views of parents. A display of the shared understanding is prominent in the entrance foyer, and a coffee morning exploring parents' views on teaching and learning was observed. All primary teachers use the agreed *What I Am Learning Today* (WALT) and *What I am Looking For* (WILF) acronyms in lessons. Effective teaching and learning methods and well considered resources are deployed in classrooms to promote high achievement: as a result, students are eager to be involved in learning activities. For example in Spanish, a variety of games using cards had been set up to allow students to reinforce their vocabulary from the Spanish text they were studying. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the curriculum and of their classes, allowing them to provide exciting lessons. Effective practical learning activities are common, for example in an English lesson plenary, where students had to demonstrate their understanding of the vocabulary introduced in the lesson through body posture and facial expression only. Students are encouraged to talk to each other and share ideas in almost all lessons, e.g. in science where circuit investigations required significant collaboration

A particular emphasis on acquisition of skills and language development resulted in focused teaching. Lessons are active and teachers are lively and animated. Students engage in a wide range of tasks which are practically based. Learning is exciting, innovative, thoroughly

planned and students' own interests are taken into account. High expectations of behaviour, personal responsibility and achievement are a feature of the high number of outstanding lessons. Students actively discuss and develop ideas throughout the lessons, refining and developing their understanding. For example during a Year 6 lesson, analysis of the techniques used by Pablo Picasso led to high level discussion on how key events in his life were reflected in his paintings.

In the very best lessons, teachers use targeted questioning to students throughout the lesson in order to review progress and to support with intervention when necessary. A Year 5 lesson on time for example, enabled students to understand the importance of 24-hour timing when booking flights, and the consequences of getting it wrong. Students are often inspired by tasks and by using high level technology. For example, some Year 5 students used *Google Docs* to write individual questions on a visit to Hoi An, then combined their responses into a single class presentation.

Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. The school has invested in training them and they are able to interact independently with students, to move learning forwards. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, groups were taken both in and out of the classroom with their own specific learning objectives: these were based around the whole class objective to 'add and subtract bridging multiples of 10'. The teaching assistants' work supporting learning was exemplary.

Learning support procedures are well embedded. Students are referred either by a teacher or through the tracking process. Quality First Teaching (QFT) strategies are used as an initial response to ensure class teachers are making appropriate provision. Group intervention and individual programmes are implemented, if progress is still not in line with expectation. The learning support teacher has access to a local group of professionals who meet monthly to discuss and share ideas. The current Year 2 Numicon mathematics intervention has had a significant impact, with fewer Year 3 and 4 students being referred for difficulties in this area.

Nearly all secondary students are making at least good progress, because the quality of teaching is good or better: it is often outstanding. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Good subject knowledge is demonstrated by all teachers. Nearly all teachers ensure that students enjoy their learning and make excellent progress.

The best lessons were characterised by effective planning to ensure the needs of all students are met, with high expectations, pace and energy. In these lessons, students are stimulated by appropriate tasks, active involvement in their learning and enthusiastic teachers. Examples were seen across all key stages and in all subjects. For example, in a Year 7 geography lesson, story cards were used to stimulate student interest and encourage thinking. Students are eager to learn lessons, and nearly all teachers provided appropriate levels of challenge. Effective questioning techniques facilitates high order thinking skills, as seen in a Year 7 history lesson and in Year 13 mathematics. High quality interaction between the teacher and the students in nearly all lessons promotes these higher order skills.

Students' contributions are valued and praised. Teachers promote independent learning very well. Paired activities and group work are used to enrich the students' learning experience in most lessons. In a Year 9 physics lesson, the teacher challenged groups to design, fly and measure the distance flown by a paper aeroplane with a paperclip strategically attached, to understand momentum on a javelin.

Secondary teachers use a range of high quality resources which are used very effectively and appropriately, to support and stimulate learning. The expert use of interactive whiteboards in nearly all lessons, and the opportunities given to students to use a range of computer hardware, motivates students and enhances their learning further. The carefully managed active learning approach encourages independence and responsibility in all.

Assessment is good, with some excellent features. The framework includes teacher assessments largely based on assessing student progress descriptors, standardised tests such as GOAL online and National Curriculum tests, including the optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5. Data is input into the SIMS information management system and then used to track progress for all students. In primary, challenging targets of 2 sub-levels progress per year are set for all students in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These targets are carefully tracked termly in meetings between the class teacher and mile post leaders or subject leaders (primary/secondary), and may include input from the learning support and EAL departments.

Trends are quickly identified and targets put into place for students who are not making expected progress. The school has used its tracking to monitor an initial dip in language performance after the summer break for students with EAL and ensure that these students are quickly brought back up to their expected standard.

There is a clear assessment framework that establishes procedures for all teachers. The effective monitoring throughout the year provides a range of assessment data to enable cohorts and individuals to be appropriately tracked. The data is beginning to be used well to inform planning and establish challenging targets.

In a number of lessons, students were involved in self- and peer- assessment. For example, a Year 2 lesson involved reviewing writing completed the previous week, against a clear set of assessment criteria. The review of homework against clear criteria is not all of such good quality, but in many classes, specific time is set aside for students to consider marking and comments made by a teacher.

Effective questioning from both teacher and teaching assistants encourage children to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts to think and learn for themselves. The approach engages all children in requiring the commensurate level of skills in the seven early years profile areas with scope for challenge at every level. Teachers know their children well, as is evidenced in their learning portfolios.

Progress is well documented against expected outcomes. Individual electronic portfolios can be easily accessed by parents through the students' blogs on a regular basis and comments are invited.

Student self-assessment is evident higher up in the primary school. Year 6 students were observed self-assessing their speaking and listening targets, and they are encouraged to grade their writing using child-friendly assessment criteria.

In the best lessons, assessment for learning (AfL) techniques are having a very positive impact on student learning. For example, in a Year 8 drama lesson, peer assessment enabled students to focus on areas for improvement. Students then went on to rehearse and improve their performances based on the feedback from their peers. Nearly all Sixth Form lessons were characterised by high quality questioning, supporting reflective, creative and critical thinking.

Although many teachers are reviewing and reflecting on assessment outcomes to inform lesson planning, this is not consistent across the school. Heads of core subjects and senior leaders conduct a detailed review and analysis of iGCSE and IB Diploma results by gender and groups, identifying areas for improvement. The school plans to conduct a similar analysis of Key Stage 3 results.

Whilst many examples of detailed and well-focussed marking with specific targets for improvement were seen, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of the marking policy. Nevertheless, students have a clear understanding of the standards at which they are currently working.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

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

Student performance is evaluated on a range of accredited systems including NC Key Stage assessments, cognitive ability test (CATs) data and CEM testing. Overall in Key Stage 1, for example, in 2011 students demonstrated a stronger performance in mathematics than in reading and writing, but in all three areas, their results were well above UK national averages. Almost all students achieve Level 2 at the end of Year 2 in all subjects. Many achieve Level 3 in mathematics, which is well above the UK average.

At the end of Key Stage 2, students score above UK national averages for Level 4 in English and mathematics, the number of students scoring Level 5 in mathematics is significantly higher with 57% achieving this grade. Teacher assessment is accurate and in line with test results. Moderation of teacher assessment is carried out by the teachers in the year ahead of the one that the student is in, which clarifies requirements well, and clearly informs all involved. The school has set high aspirational achievement targets for the percentage of children achieving the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 2.

AfL techniques including targeted questioning, starter activities, plenaries, peer and self-assessment were evident in nearly all lessons, in primary and secondary classes.

Teachers in the secondary classes regularly assess students' learning through internal assessments, as well as external tests and examinations. End of Key Stage 3 assessments for the last academic year indicate that 97% of students achieved level 5 or above and 63% achieved level 6 or above in English. In mathematics, 98% achieved level 5 and above and 92% level 6 and above. Over 50% achieved level 8. In science, 100% of students achieved level 5 and above; 94% achieved level 6 and above. These are very high figures, even given the relatively selective nature of BIS.

In 2012, all but one of the ninety-four students in Year 11, gained 5+ A*-C grades; 63.1% of the entries were graded at A* or A. These results are well above the UK standards. The school's results year on year since 2007, have been significantly higher than those for the UK. In 2012, 100% of the twenty-six students who sat iGCSEs at the end of Year 10, gained an A or A* grade.

Students at the end of the Sixth Form in 2012 achieved an average IB points score of 34.2, which was 15% higher than the world average score in the same year. All students gained the full diploma and 86% achieved 30 points or more. The top student scored 43 points.

Students also attain very high standards in other fields, from the primary student who plays piano for the choir, to the many sporting and dramatic successes at all levels of the school.

6. Standard 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding: it is a key strength of the school. Their spirituality is developed through lessons – awe and wonder are evident, especially in the EYFS classes, where moments of discovery were in abundance and children were presented with opportunities to think about the world around them. Reflection, thinking about personal identity and awareness of others are key themes in BIS.

A keen focus on the school's core values and attitudes is evident in the school environment, in lessons and assemblies, and in written materials such as communication diaries. In discussion, students were able to discuss these values, and how they apply to life in school and the wider world.

Students act responsibly around the school, demonstrating a strong sense of care for others. Lessons and playtimes are characterized by a spirit of collaboration and cooperation. They clearly know right from wrong. Self-knowledge and self-esteem are built through a carefully planned PSHE programme. Students in Key Stage 2 follow a programme of citizenship lessons that enable them to develop a clear appreciation and respect for others. Opportunities for discussion are encouraged, and contributions are valued and respected.

Students are confident in their manner, their relationships with adults in school and approach to visitors. Their sense of social responsibility is excellent. They participate enthusiastically in activities and involve themselves in community projects, such as the helmet scheme with a local school.

The school is welcoming, and students are valued and known well as individuals. As a result, they develop good social skills. Students work and play together harmoniously. Students co-operate in groups, and are friendly and considerate in their dealings with each other. They behave well in lessons, thereby promoting concentration on learning for all. They follow the 'golden rules' which guide positive behaviour in lessons and in the playground, and are keen to contribute to the community.

They are strongly encouraged to contribute to society through a well-developed programme of community service. Strong links have been made with local charitable organisations. Support is offered in a practical way and through joint activities, rather than solely through fund raising. During the inspection, a group of children from Thien Phuoc Physiotherapy Centre and Orphanage visited the school. Students from Year 1 met with these disabled children and played with them in the school's soft play room. Such visits happen on a weekly basis and the Year 1 students are starting to forge simple relationships with these children. There is evidence in displays that the visits are followed up in class, by discussion and written work.

Local Vietnamese culture and cultures from around the world are promoted and celebrated through a range of activities. Vietnamese culture lessons are delivered every week by the teaching assistants, all themselves Vietnamese. The diversity of nationalities in the school is

celebrated in many ways – in the International Walkway outside the swimming pool, in International Week every year, and through on-going lessons and topics. Evidence of global awareness can be seen in classroom displays related to IPC themes and class visits. Examples include Year 2 sending postcards to family members and friends around the world on a visit to the post office, and Year 5 plotting Michael’s journey on a map of the world in the story of ‘Kensuke’s Kingdom’. Students work and play cooperatively and happily side-by-side with peers from over 50 nationalities in the school.

Tolerance, democracy, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights are developed throughout the school, particularly in upper Key Stage 2 and in to Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. Through a study of the book ‘The Lost Thing’, Year 6 shared ideas around empathy, feelings and respecting the uniqueness of others.

Students are well provided for in a range of opportunities for cultural and community development. Eco Warriors are deployed to ensure sustainable use of resources in school. A new Eco Scouts group has been started for younger students. Primary students suggested that the Green Certificate awarded to the best class monthly was popular. The BISCAT (Being equal, Internationalism, Sustainability, Community, Adventure, Taking Charge) programme encourages good behaviour towards one other and includes community action plans for all year groups. Toy animals with characteristics from the school mission statement are used as constant reminders of how BIS students are expected to behave. Assemblies address real issues to develop students’ awareness and make excellent use of staff technology. At TX, the BIS animals were used to ensure students understood the theme. Current affairs “News Blogs” allow students and teachers to research and discuss (‘find something out and tell someone’) real life issues in the world today. Vietnamese culture lessons address the differences between the host culture (to which many families belong) and British culture.

The behaviour of secondary students is also exemplary, both in class rooms and as they move round the school. Students have strong moral values and a real sense of fairness as demonstrated by their relationships with adults, each other and the wider community. PSHE lessons as well as the implementation of the IB learner profile across the secondary school, further contributes to the development of the whole young person. Examples of spiritual development were seen in a Year 7 geography lesson which encouraged discussions on the impact of volcanic eruptions on communities, and in a Year 8 English lesson in which students reflected upon the impact of drought on the community.

Students participate with enthusiasm in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, events and competitions. Prefects in the secondary school exercise their responsibilities effectively. Throughout their schooling, opportunities are planned to develop students’ self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Discussions with focus groups of Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, students were proof of the efficacy of the provision. They were able to articulate clearly their feelings when they joined the school and how the school has enabled them to grow and develop.

The secondary school also positively promotes an appreciation of and respect for their own and others’ cultures. In the hall, every school nationality has its own flag displayed. Each year, the

school holds an international day/week, inviting parents and community members to celebrate their different cultures.

All secondary students are required to participate in a planned progression of outdoor education and residential experiences throughout Key Stage 3, providing opportunities for the spiritual development. All are involved in community service projects. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in the International Award Scheme. Active involvement in these activities contributes to the moral and social development of all BIS students.

Throughout the whole school, children and students increasingly acquire an understanding of modern British life in relation to social issues and values such as tolerance, democracy, freedom of expression and other human rights. This is done carefully and sensitively, and in a manner that recognises the local context. The school shares information about Britain to support those students and their parents who choose to move in order to live and/or study in the UK.

7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the students

The welfare, health and safety of students through the school are excellent.

BIS places a high priority on ensuring that the education and well-being of all students is at the heart of any school policies, strategies and initiatives which are developed. Students are well supported and guided in school due to a consistent and caring approach by all members of staff. Students are considerate, respectful and courteous to members of staff, visitors and to each other. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Even the two year olds manage their transitions around school well, and are as capable in the school routines as the older children. Procedures for transitions across phases are in place, and communication between departments is clearly documented.

The school has appropriate written policies supporting students' welfare, health and safety in place. These comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that students are protected and well supported. A new initiative, digital citizenship, provides guidance for children in appropriate use of the internet. The teachers understand what the policies are, and who the child protection officer is in the school. The school complies with the regulatory authority's requirements on health and safety as evidenced by ministry and external inspection reports. Fire drills are conducted, followed by an analysis of the procedures by staff and refinements are made to the procedures as required. Evacuation procedures are evident in every room. First-aid training is conducted for staff.

Students are well supervised during their time in school, both in the classroom and outside, with attendance registers taken at least twice during the day. Security staff are in attendance on all gates and there are strict procedures for entry to school for parents and visitors. The safety and security measures adopted by the school do not impinge on the opportunities for independence within the campus. Most students manage independently in finding their way to their classrooms in the morning after entering school in an orderly manner. Corridors are open and tidy. There is a separate play and canteen area for the Early Years children. Rituals for hand washing take place, and children are reminded from Early Years about good hygiene, healthy eating and physical fitness. Most students lead healthy lifestyles with the school offering students both the resources and numerous opportunities for sporting activities. The school's swimming pool is well supervised, with locked doors when not in use. The gymnasium and basketball courts are well maintained with appropriate safe flooring to ensure the students' safety. The extra-curricular sports are well supported by the students. An example of commitment to what the school has to offer was evident by the 6.30am training by the school swimming team. Food in the canteen and snack bar is monitored to ensure a balanced diet is on offer. The school nurse monitors the health of every student and liaises with teachers and parents as appropriate. More extensive medical help is available from a medical clinic close to the school.

Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained. Daily attendance is recorded on the schools' information system. Tracking of any daily absences is rigorous.

8. *Standard 4*

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is excellent. The owners are held in very high esteem within the local community, and ensure that there is significant positive contact and exchange between the school and the Vietnamese population nearby. They also oversee the school policies and procedures but do not interfere with management: there is clear delegation of duties. They ensure that the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for all students. Their responsibilities include the safe recruitment and checking of all staff and the effective monitoring of policy implementation to ensure all local requirements are met.

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, and qualifications and professional 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 all UK qualified. Teaching assistants make a remarkable contribution to the quality of learning: they are highly valued as members of staff and very well trained.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent.

The primary school at AP is well-suited to its purpose. Use of outside space has been maximized to make full use of its potential, with suitable areas for PE and sports, and for playtime and recreation. The buildings themselves are sound, well-maintained and clean. Decoration is in good order and a schedule of planned redecoration is in place. Floorings are appropriate to the current use of each room. Music rooms have good levels of sound insulation, which ensure these lessons do not impact on other lessons taking place in the vicinity. There is adequate natural and, when needed, artificial lighting. Temperature is controlled with the use of air conditioners in all rooms. Furniture in classrooms is appropriate for the age and needs of the students and the school has implemented a rolling programme of refurbishment or replacement of older items. Toilets are adequate for the number of adults and children on the site. A schedule for regular cleaning of toilets is displayed. Lunch is prepared in the school kitchen and served in the main dining room for all but the youngest children. Standards of hygiene meet local requirements, but constant vigilance is required to ensure standards of cleanliness are maintained at all times. A medical room is located centrally in the school, on the ground floor. A nurse is on duty during the school day and for the period of extra-curricular activities before and after school.

Water and drainage systems meet local requirements and are tested regularly. Regular fire drills are conducted and the results of these discussed to target any areas for improvement. Two such drills have already been conducted during the current academic year. Security on the site is good. Guards monitor the entrance gates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Parents are issued with swipe cards for access, visitors are registered before entry. Access around the school, particularly to upper levels, is well planned and managed. The buildings are not equipped with suitable facilities for the disabled. School admissions policy makes this clear to prospective parents. The school premises are solely used for school business.

The outside play area at TX is small, but good use is made of the entrance atrium at break times along with well-chosen play resources. Flexible spaces have been designed by removing walls such as in the General Purpose room used for assemblies, parent coffee mornings, group work and ICT. The leadership team constantly evaluate the spaces they have and put forwarded proposals to create even more effective learning spaces. While the TX site lacks outdoor sports' facilities, the PE programme is strong and has developed a range of indoor sports such as basketball. The regular use of a 25 metre swimming pool is also a strong element within the PE programme. All the facilities meet requirements, including those for students who are ill. Even though there is limited outside space, it is planned well with shaded areas and places to play and to sit quietly that enable students to relax in their own way. The school's accommodation is used to maximise and support students' learning effectively. Specialist rooms for music and ICT support the school's curriculum and students' learning.

The initiative at TX to make large free-flow classrooms in Foundation Stage 1 and 2 has had an excellent impact on learning: learning areas are highly stimulating, creative and well-planned.

Good use is made of available space, including corridors which have high quality, attractive, interactive displays. Improvements have been made to physical entrance, reception area and offices to encompass the BIS ethos of being welcoming to students and parents.

At the secondary school at AP, the overall quality of the premises is of a similarly high standard. The campus is new, purpose built and well maintained. The school benefits from designated ICT suites which support not only discrete IT lessons, but learning right across the curriculum. The design and technology department, music and art have access to their own suite of computers. The library is particularly well equipped with computers. Nearly all secondary classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard. Specialist science laboratories, drama theatre, music room, art rooms, food technology room, indoor sports hall, hard court PE area and indoor swimming pool support the learning of students. In addition, students have access to a grassed playing field located in the primary section across the road.

The school has pedestrian access through monitored gates at the front of the building. Access to emergency vehicles is possible through larger gates. Emergency evacuation routes detailing access points are clearly marked in all rooms of the school. Well-maintained lifts in the building ensure that all students, staff and visitors are able to access all areas of the school.

Decoration throughout BIS is good. All buildings are clean and well looked after. The school has ensured that the needs of all students registered at the school are met through a programme of innovative building and re-construction. This includes, for example at the secondary school, enlarging classrooms, providing sound-proof practice rooms for music and enlarging drama rooms. Adequate facilities are available for the preparation and serving of food.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is excellent. The school mission and aims are clearly stated, and further prompted with *aide memoires* throughout the school.

The school website provides comprehensive information. Contacts are available for school personnel. Particulars of the school policies for admissions, discipline and exclusions are available on the web and in the parent handbooks. A parent commented “...before I sought admission for my children, all the information I required was on the website”. Parents enjoy accessing weekly newsletters and the many blogs the school shares gives them an insight into daily school life, as well as providing a variety of activities to support their children’s learning. The parents of EAL children can access the wonderful stories with musical accompaniment read expressively by the teacher.

Relationships with parents are positive. They feel welcome in the school and can meet with teachers to discuss any concerns they may have. They share in their children’s learning experiences. Concerts, sports events, and community links are often ‘family affairs’. The recent ‘BIS Spring Fair’ proved to be a most popular event. Parents speak highly of the enriched curriculum that the children enjoy through these events and the activities programmes. They are effusive in their praise of ‘Fundinotots’ for children from 6 months of age to two years old. The Early Learning Centre serves as a dynamic and exploratory learning experience for young children and family members in a social environment. They appreciate the opportunity to engage with their children and other parents, as well as the support provided by the caring staff. A parent explains “...it develops their learning, it’s an outreach to the community and they are providing a great service. This really is the best place to be, it’s so caring. My child knows everyone here and the TAs are wonderful, too. These kids are only 1 year old and they get to go to the library!”

The leadership team have worked hard to welcome parents and to work in partnership with them. For example at TX, setting up international parent representative groups and holding regular coffee mornings where various speakers from the staff talk to parents about different school initiatives. The school hosts parents’ workshops, for example about teaching phonics and discussing teaching and learning. These are organised by staff to explain approaches to teaching and learning, and what students will be learning each year. The workshops help teachers and parents to work effectively together.

Good partnerships with parents are developed from the earliest days when children start the school and at parents’ information sessions at transition between the separate Foundation Stages and Foundation Stage 3 to Year 1. This ensures that parents understand what the school is aiming to provide, for example the play-based nature of the Early Years’ Curriculum and the different structures of the school day as they get older.

11. *Standard 7*

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school provides clear information about what should happen in the event of a complaint. These procedures are in line with local Vietnamese Ministry requirements. As a result, the school meets the standard. The leadership team operate an 'Open Door' policy to ensure all parents have easy access to senior staff: every morning, heads of school are seen standing in the playground every day talking to the children and their families. Parents reported feeling very confident regarding dealing with any issues they had.

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 governance role fulfilled by the owners, the leadership of the Principal/CEO, and the leadership/management duties of the heads of campus and their teams are all outstanding. The senior leadership team provides a strong sense of strategic leadership and have empowered staff to take key roles in the management and leadership. Through this effective delegation, staff feel a strong sense of accountability and willingly contribute to the continual development of the school.

Mile-post leaders in the primary schools and teachers with subject responsibilities share the school's strategic vision and high expectations. They work together as teams, to drive forward initiatives that have a positive impact on all aspects of teaching and learning. A recent whole school initiative on identifying 'Outstanding' in teaching, empowering staff to lead and support in areas of expertise, has had a highly positive outcome. This clear educational direction and setting of priorities enable staff to be both involved and held accountable, in the drive to ensure consistency across the school and to raise attainment and achievement further. A very good range of whole school policies are in place: the leadership team ensures middle leaders monitor standards and outcomes, in their areas of responsibility.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, in no small way because of the high quality of the administrative and support staff. Their skill allows the teachers to concentrate on teaching. The leadership team is successful in securing and motivating high quality staff: they then ensure that staff are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all students, and in safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. This includes the training of teaching assistants through in-service training, and a visiting trainer from the UK specifically for them. This has resulted in well-trained and valued members of staff who impact greatly in the teaching and learning in classrooms. Initiatives are being implemented to raise the standard of teaching and learning, including staff development groups identifying learning-focused indicators of an outstanding lesson and learning walks with specific criteria.

The leadership has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school's building and resources are used well, and the leadership works hard to overcome constraints of time and space. Leadership staff are quick to recognise obstacles, and are open and inventive in seeking solutions. This is seen, for example, in the imaginative development of the Foundation areas to maximise opportunities for play, and in corridors to maximise potential for interactive displays.

Regular staff appraisal is evident, with targets linked clearly to the school's priorities. These targets are available for all staff to see on the school intranet, and form part of the performance management process. The primary middle managers are becoming more involved in the strategic leadership of their campus, and work well with colleagues on the parallel site. Heads of department of core subjects in the secondary school are highly effective in identifying priorities,

planning to meet those priorities and implementing decisions. The school is ensuring that recently appointed middle managers receive appropriate training which will enable them to support the school as it strives forward. The school has recently strengthened its management team by appointing an assistant head teacher to lead on the application of new technologies to learning – this is already having a positive impact on learning.

There are positive and productive relationships between senior leaders and middle managers. Regular meetings with coordinators and heads of department ensure efficient and effective communication, as well as an opportunity for dialogue. The senior leadership team, under the guidance of the principal, has identified the need for more robust performance management, which is linked more closely to priorities identified in the development plan, and better informs continuous professional development. The school recognises the need to move from being “data-rich” to being “data-powerful”, to ensure that each student reaches his or her academic potential, thereby fulfilling an important aspect of the school’s mission statement.