



## **Inspection Report**

# **The British International School, Cairo**

**Egypt**

Date	<b>11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b>
Inspection number	<b>20191111</b>

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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 management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of; 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 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, 51 full or part lessons were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the senior staff, the management teams, a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. Two and a half school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Nicola Walsh. The team members were Siobhan Brady and Brett Neilson.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British International School Cairo School fully meets the standards for British Schools Overseas.

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The British International School Cairo maintains a high reputation both within Cairo and regionally. Academic standards, particularly in key stage 4 and 5, are high. All stakeholders take a keen and committed interest in the success of the school.

The school's senior leadership team and board of directors have managed the school effectively during a period of change both internally for the school and externally within Cairo.

The school offers a rich and broad curriculum that is well resourced and enhances the learning experience for all its pupils.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths which include:

- clear vision, mission and sense of purpose aligned to its guiding statements
- high academic attainment particularly at IGCSE and IB Diploma
- high standards of achievement particularly in mathematics and science
- confident and articulate pupils who are proud of their school
- a highly committed board of directors and leadership team who maintain a clear vision for the school
- positive contributions by parents in the life of the school
- a wide range of extracurricular activities, off site trips and events
- teaching resources and learning environments that inspire pupils and effectively promote learning
- ongoing high quality professional development activities and opportunities for teaching staff
- strong pastoral care and safeguarding protocols which promote pupils' well-being
- motivated and happy children

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- further improve long term strategic planning through accurate and robust self-evaluation
- raise the impact of pupil voice across the school
- raise the level of challenge for some pupils in some classes in KS3 in line with current good practise in KS4 and KS5
- embed a more consistent practice of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning across the whole school
- further develop and embed the early years foundation stage curriculum through staff training in assessing pupils against the early learning goals.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	The British International School Cairo				
Address	Km 38, Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road Beverly Hills 6th of October City Egypt, 12451  P.O. Box 137, Gezira, Cairo, Egypt				
Telephone number	+202 3827 0444				
Fax number	+202 3857 8720				
Website	<a href="https://www.bisc.edu.eg/">https://www.bisc.edu.eg/</a>				
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@bisc.edu.eg">info@bisc.edu.eg</a>				
Head	Graeme Keslake				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Yasser Hashem				
Age range	3 years to 18 years				
Total number of pupils	1,099	Boys	593	Girls	506
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	11-16 years	411	
	3-5 years	114	16-18 years	102	
	6-11 years	472	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

The British International School in Cairo was established in Cairo in 1976 as a not-for-profit school with charitable status. It is owned by a 'perpetual' trust of elected parents of pupils on roll at the school referred to as The British International School Society (BISS). The society, through an elected board of directors, manages the strategic direction of the school. The school's mission is to be a vibrant international community offering an outstanding British-style education, focused on independent learning and the promotion of global citizenship.

The school has doubled in size in the past 10 years and moved to its new site in 2008. 53% of pupils are Egyptian and there are 43 nationalities within the school. Over 80% of pupils have English as a first language with Arabic as a second language. Standards of English are high although the school does need to continue to provide a curriculum which includes elements of second language acquisition. Almost all teaching staff are UK qualified or experienced in teaching the English National Curriculum. The School has high retention rates with 45% of expat teaching staff being at the school since the last inspection, four years ago.

## 5. British nature of the school

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum
- The school works with other British agencies including the British Council and British Embassy in Cairo
- The school is organised into Key Stages and year groups
- The school's board of directors is like that of a British schools governing body
- The organisation of staff at the school has an essentially 'British' hierarchical structure with Principal, Primary and Senior Heads, Heads of department and subject leaders
- The school's core curriculum, assessments and resources are UK sourced
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision, curriculum activities, displays and events
- A school council and house system replicates those in the best British schools
- A uniform policy replicates that of most British independent schools
- 52% of pupils leaving sixth form went to UK universities in 2019 including some of the top universities in the UK
- Systems and staff awareness training for safeguarding pupils are in line with best UK practices



## 6. *Standard 1* The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by the British International School Cairo is high and fully meets the requirements of the BSO Framework.

### 6.1 Curriculum

The school excels in its provision of a high quality British based curriculum which fully meets the needs of its pupils. It follows the EYFS curriculum in the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum in England in Key Stages 1 to 4. Pupils study GCSE and IGCSE courses in years 10 and 11 and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in years 12 and 13, with an alternative BTEC program offered for those who choose it.

The curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet local requirements. Arabic is offered across the school and the curriculum incorporates aspects of Egyptian culture through the Global Citizenship (formerly PSHCE) curriculum.

A range of policies support the comprehensive curriculum policy; assessment and reporting, marking and feedback, language, talent development and curriculum support. Curriculum planning documents, schemes of work and overviews support the medium-term plans and lesson plans which ensure UK age-appropriate teaching and learning for all pupils. Online learning platforms are in use across the school such as Google classroom, Education City, Century Tech, Epic, Kognity, Myimaths and Literacy Planet to embed learning in class and to support learning at home.

Within the timetabled curriculum in the senior section subject specialist teachers deliver lessons and in the junior section specialist teachers deliver Drama, Music and Physical Education lessons alongside class teachers. All pupils in the junior school learn to play a musical instrument as part of the timetabled curriculum. Peripatetic instrument lessons are offered in addition to timetabled music classes in the senior section. Pupils can choose to take externally validated examinations in music through Trinity College, London.

Across the school the curriculum is rich and varied and is supported by relevant and high quality resources and technology. Lessons generally demonstrated the good use of the available technology in classes and teachers used interactive whiteboards effectively. For example, in a year 8 art lesson pupils studied the work of Seth Clarke and the teacher effectively used a visualiser with pupils to draw attention to the detail in his work. A year 7 music lesson used electronic keyboards to teach pupils to read music and perform a short melody with both

hands. In a year 9 boys football lesson, iPads were used to record the actions of pupils so that they could review their own technique and discuss ideas on how to improve. iPads and personal devices are used effectively as learning tools across the school providing access to personalised learning through online resources. The school is well resourced with excellent facilities to provide opportunities for children to develop their sporting and creative talents.

Cross curricular approaches are used to enhance the learning experiences of pupils across the school. In a Foundation Stage 2 class the themed planning around 'Jack and The Beanstalk' very effectively engaged all pupils who brought into school magic beans from 'the magic bean shop, somewhere in Cairo.' Pupils in a year 7 history lesson relevantly applied their maths skills to calculate and interpret dates. Lessons in the PE department are planned to ensure pupils develop life-skills of self-reflection, autonomy and leadership alongside specific physical education skills. A synthetic, progressive phonics programme is delivered in FS1 and 2, and KS1 based on the DfE Letters and Sounds.

Throughout the school reading time and designated class library times are timetabled. In the senior section pupils are set in ability groups for maths so that the delivered curriculum is more closely matched to pupils' needs. All senior pupils are prepared to and achieve success in GCSE Maths with the more able also completing GCSE Further Maths. An accelerated reading programme has been successfully implemented which has helped to address gender bias in reading outcomes through a broad curriculum approach.

The curriculum is enhanced across the school by a range of co-curricular activities and educational trips. Visits to local areas of interest such as El Alamein, Luxor and Alexandria are complemented by a range of educational trips abroad. A programme of residential off-site trips are offered to pupils from year 4 onwards. The school also offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities to pupils which include sport, music, chess, STEM, literary activities and drama, as well as Model United Nations and Duke of Edinburgh International Awards. The range of activities offered is a strength of the school and is supplemented by extra private provision on the campus after school.

Pupils have many opportunities to participate in external competitions at regional and international level and often secure a place in international school's competitions. Recently the school's U11 football team secured first place in the Mediterranean cup. Pupils successes in sport are celebrated with the community - including those of alumni who have left the school.

Children typically remain at the school, most Sixth Form graduates have been at BISC since the Foundation Stage. Transitions between curriculums and key stages of the school are managed effectively. Information is shared between Heads of

Year and senior leaders within the school to ease transition. In the junior section assessment data migrates with pupils as they progress through school. Teachers meet routinely to discuss data of the pupils they are receiving and create specific programmes called raising attainment plans (RAPs) so that they can tailor the curriculum plans to the identified needs of the cohort.

Pupils joining the school from other settings follow a 4-week transition plan in order to ensure their full integration into school life at BISC. A comprehensive induction programme is in place for both children and their parents when they join the school in Foundation Stage 1 or 2.

Pupils in sixth form are well supported through the university application process by a designated team. The introduction of an online platform has helped enable pupils to access university and careers guidance internationally. Pupils can search for suitable universities on a global platform and populate their applications. University fairs visit the school and Cairo often in partnership with the British Council. Pupils and parents are well advised on suitable courses, options and careers. The school reviews curriculum options on offer in the sixth form and adapts the IB programme accordingly, with psychology for example being introduced this year. The school offers a wide and varied IB Diploma programme achieving excellent value added and results.

Access to the school's curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met through a dedicated curriculum support team of 8 teachers, shared equally across the junior and senior school. They work with teachers to provide curriculum support that is matched to the individual needs of each pupil. Individual education plans detail the support that a pupil receives and include the pupil's views. Plans and specific needs are shared with teachers through the Engage MIS and the effectiveness of the provision is monitored and reviewed. Access arrangements are put in place for external examinations where required.

The curriculum for most able pupils is provided through appropriate differentiated activities and is currently being reviewed by the talent development coordinator, drawing upon recent international research. The existing curriculum is being developed to further extend and challenge the most able pupils. Some of the more able pupils for example successfully competed in the Tournament of Minds 2019, CIBSA Highly Able Day and CIBSA Gifted Writers. The school's after school activity provision offers a number of specific advanced programmes including for example art, dancing, further mathematics and Spanish.

## 6.2 Teaching and assessment

Across the school, teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers plan lessons that are matched to the age and aptitude of pupils. This is most evident in the senior section where pupils seem to make particularly good progress. The quality of teaching and attainment at KS4 and KS5 is a clear strength of the school.

Across the school teaching enables pupils to develop good language skills and strategies for independent learning. In a number of lessons, teaching was clearly personalised, with good differentiation and pupils could demonstrate their learning.

In the senior section there was generally a sense of pace and challenge for all pupils. Questioning techniques were well used by teachers to check on pupils understanding. It was felt that on occasions questioning could have been targeted more carefully towards individual pupils, to ensure that all pupils had understood concepts. In many lessons support teachers and peer to peer activities were also used to help ensure all children understood the concepts.

Pupils in the senior section have developed excellent peer-to-peer support strategies and know what to do when they are unsure. Mentoring for pupils after class helps to consolidate understanding and eradicate any misconceptions. A focus on exam techniques is used well by senior school teachers to ensure pupils know what to do in order to make progress. Small class numbers in the senior section allow for personalised support to pupils. A year 11 English class for example offered very personalised support to two ESL pupils studying 'Of Mice and Men' for GCSE literature.

In the junior section imaginative teaching around the use of imagery to create a setting enabled pupils to perform at a level above what is expected for their age. Pupils confidently used the terms metaphor, simile and alliteration in year 3 before beginning to write a description of a setting for a quest story.

All teachers have very positive relationships with the pupils. Pupils feel safe in the classroom environment and are able to answer questions and ask for help when required. This produces a positive learning environment where children learn effectively. Teachers regularly plan collaborative tasks that facilitate the participation of all pupils. In a year 5 science lesson pupils were asked to collaborate to define challenging vocabulary around forces in a good example of cross curricular work.

Teaching assistants are used very effectively in the junior school. They play an important role in helping differentiate and support children's learning. In a year 3

English lesson for example the teaching assistant encouraged pupils to select powerful adjectives to improve their writing. Personalised support to two individual pupils was provided by a teaching assistant in a year 2 class whilst the class teacher worked with the class, ensuring that support was well matched to the abilities of pupils. Teaching is clearly a partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant, assisted by shared professional learning activities and opportunities.

The Curriculum Support Team work in class with identified pupils across the school. It was observed that the team have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils and offer appropriate support. The Curriculum Support Team has its own resource base and classrooms.

Teachers' effective application of behaviour management strategies are applied consistently across the school. The Class Dojo points reward system is particularly well used in the junior section. Behaviour issues are recorded on the Engage MIS and shared with parents. In most classes, children are well engaged while in a small minority of classes observed, some pupils appeared passive and less well engaged.

In the junior school standardised assessments are used alongside formative teacher assessments so that trends or gaps can be identified. PUMA and PIRA (Rising Stars) are used at the end of terms 1 and 2 whilst PIE and PIM are used at the end of term 3. At the start of each year, Term 3 data from the previous year is used to set RAPs (Raising Attainment Plans) for each class. Class teachers and Heads of Year meet every term to discuss pupil progress and review planning. These meetings also take factors such as behaviour and attendance into consideration.

In response to a careful analysis of the assessment data the school has introduced reading interventions in FS2 which will improve comprehension in year 1. They are broadening opportunities for developing speaking and listening and have introduced 3 weekly, guided reading sessions in years 1-6. This is already resulting in rigorous progress for higher achievers in English.

In the junior section most pupils exercise books provide evidence of marking and feedback. In general marking is regular and consistent, providing qualitative feedback and identifying next steps for progress. This gives pupils the opportunity to respond or to self-assess and reflect including whether they have enjoyed the lesson. Some classes have printed assessment grids which are pasted into books and allow teachers and children to colour code or comment on objectives and reflect on their enjoyment of the lesson. This is a positive move towards aligning best practice in a consistent manner.

In the senior school, teachers use formative feedback and a range of tracking and monitoring systems to inform their teaching. This information is maintained, shared and available through the school MIS. Tools include MidYIS, YELLIS and CEM IB Data.

Data from testing is compared to CEM data to evidence value added and track individual pupil progress. Summative tests are administered on a regular basis. Evidence available in KS3 pupils exercise books suggest that pupils could make more progress over time although many pupils also work and store their work online especially through Google classroom which is used throughout the school. In key stages 4 and 5, there was clear evidence of a high quality work and good exam technique in exercise books. Teachers feedback provided clear guidance on how to improve. In some classes this was given as whole class feedback and not necessarily personalised.

Across the school pupils are very clear about the pride they feel in their school. They are generally happy at school and well supported in their learning. It was felt that in such a positive atmosphere and with such a conducive environment that more work could at times be produced by some pupils.

## 6.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Over the past three years it is clear that pupils' attainment is either in line with or exceeds UK expected standards including at GCSE and IB where the outcomes are excellent and well in line with standards achieved by the UK independent school sector.

In EYFS attainment across the 17 Early learning Goals is generally in-line with UK national averages by the end of FS2. Attainment of the early learning goal, 'communicating language and literacy' was below the UK national average. This was also observed in FS lessons where children's pronunciation and use of age appropriate vocabulary was below expected levels. The lack of a clear baseline test across the 17 ELGs on entry meant that it was difficult to accurately measure progress during the FS. It was noted that most children were achieving at expected levels by year 1.

At the end of Key Stage 1 (year 2) progress data indicates that pupils perform above or at UK expectations. Over the past three years an impressive 82% to 92% of pupils were performing at or above age-related expectations. In lessons observed it was clear that pupils performed at age related standards, in line with the curriculum expectations. Pupils used phonic knowledge to write simple sentences in English at an age appropriate level in year 1. Pupils read at an age appropriate level and confidently worked through maths problems clearly in line with expected UK standards. A significant number of children were working at much higher levels

At Key stage 2, pupils talked confidently and articulately. Pupils read to inspectors and reading was in line or above for almost all pupils sampled. The school's data indicates that almost all girls and boys were at the expected standard or above in maths and English. Cognitive ability testing scores indicate average levels of attainment in years 4 – 6. This was reflected in year 6 maths books where content indicated that pupils were learning at an age appropriate level. English books scrutinised did not always evidence year 6 pupils writing at length or across a variety of genres. The school has recognised this issue and is currently investing in external professional development in this area.

Over three years pupils' attainment in year 11 has remained constantly high and well above UK averages.

In 2019 year 11 pupils mean IGCSE scores were 48% attaining A-A\* this is well above the UK GCSE average of 22%. 87% of pupils attained a mean average A\*-C, again well above the UK average of 67%. Overall girls tend to outperform boys in terms of value added and partly to address this the accelerated reader programme, has been introduced which is expected to help close this gap as it was noticeable that in line

with other schools, boys were reading less than girls. The school is generally monitoring and responding to gender issues in positive and practical ways.

At key stage 5, over the past five years pupils have consistently achieved IB average scores of 33-35 points with a pass rate of over 95%. (2019-33; 2018-35; 2017-34; 2016-33; 2015-33.) IB scores have been consistently well above the world average of 29, indicating that the standards of achievement are high for pupil attainment at key stage 5. The school does well preparing pupils for external examinations and has established a strong programme. BTEC results are also high and add to the breadth of the sixth form curriculum.

The school monitors the standards for different groups of pupils such as boys, girls and SEND. The progress of different groups of pupils is tracked and regularly reviewed. Most pupils who have received support for GCSE examinations achieved a positive value-added score over the past three years. In 2019 the average value-added score was 0.95 for the pupils identified as needing curriculum support. The school is rightly proud of their successes.



## 7. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of pupils

The pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development meets and exceeds the standard required. It is a key strength of the school.

The school has a strong pastoral system which promotes respect and helps ensure pupils show consideration for one another and respect for rules. Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school and they are respectful to one another and to all school staff. Attendance across the school is in line with UK standards and pupils are generally punctual, arriving at class on time and ready to learn. Pupils consistently reported that they enjoy school and their learning

The older pupils generally act as very good role models to their younger peers. A pupil leadership team led by an elected head girl and head boy represent the views of pupils along with the elected school councillors from both the junior and senior sections.

Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different beliefs and cultures within Egypt and in the wider world. This was particularly evident in the Armistice Day assembly in the senior school where pupils presented the message that it is everyone's collective responsibility to stand up for the rights of others. The assembly was highly respectful, prompted deep thinking and reflection amongst the assembled pupils.

The junior school library displays books which promote British values, including a collection on a variety of world faiths. In an afterschool activity, the junior choir were rehearsing a traditional carol for the Christmas celebrations. Red Cross poppies were on sale for Remembrance Day. The school successfully promotes a range of British events and activities in positive and appropriate ways, interpreting them to the local context and the pastoral care programme.

Pupils have the confidence and self-esteem to share their opinions and answer questions in class. Many of them are highly articulate. The pupils are welcoming and friendly to visitors, talking positively about their school. It was clear that the pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils engage well with the rewards points system, although senior pupils commented that they would like more rewards for positive behaviours.

In lessons teachers give fair arguments for both sides of a debate and encourage pupils to give their own views. In class pupils listen to the opinions of others and learn readily from each other. Books in the 'Global Citizenship' section of the senior library promote equality, diversity and philosophy. In a sixth form History lesson pupils discussed current economic affairs in other countries. They were able to link this to their learning.

Senior pupils reported that although they can see the benefits of ability setting in mathematics classes, they felt that this was not beneficial overall. They liked the diverse nature of classes where there was a wider mix of abilities. The school has responded to this feeling, moving towards more mixed ability classes.

Outstanding pupil leadership opportunities exist across the school, including a junior school pupil council and senior school student council. One pupil leader said that the 'pupil council exists to promote ideas which help to enhance the learning experience of children in this school'. In the senior school, there are elected year group and house leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors. In the junior school, there are house captains, pupil counsellors, playground pals and assembly leaders. Pupils are encouraged to apply for leadership positions and are elected to office by their peers. Elections are effectively used to model the idea of democracy and participation in making rules and laws in a society for the benefit of all.

School leaders have introduced changes in playground provisions, cafeteria food and provisions, and gender equality regarding playtime arrangements. Pupil leadership plays an important role in providing a voice for the pupils and shaping decisions and changes made in school. Pupil leaders in assemblies introduce the speakers, allocate awards to star of the week and in the junior section 'craze of the week,' which introduces new games/toys for pupils to enjoy during break time. Pupils generally felt their voice was respected but appreciate that the school is looking for ways to formalise the process of including pupils more in decision making.

The whole school, supported by a very active PTA, organise a range of special days and weeks throughout the year to celebrate the diversity and inclusive aspects of the school thereby promoting a positive attitudes towards others. These include, International Week, You Go Girl, World Arabic Language Day, the annual Christmas Bazaar, Anti Bullying week and Online Safety Day. In April, the school held the first Neurodiversity Month with a focus on autism. Ice cream days and non-uniform days are popular with pupils to raise money for specific causes. Each House, Earth, Wind, Fire, Water, supports a chosen charity. Pupils raise money to support charities in Africa, Syrian refugees and Cairo's blind women's orchestra. The school has a strong commitment to community service which is promoted across the school and involves considerable input from sixth form students participating in the IB CAS programme

Both sections of the school use PASS assessments to track pupils' attitudes towards themselves and school. Year 3-13 PASS results indicate that all the children have a high satisfaction level about themselves, their teachers and school confirming they are generally happy and well-motivated. Pupils across the school clearly have a very positive attitude towards school, their teachers and their learning. Pupils reported that they like the involvement of teachers in after school activities as this develops different relationships between pupils and teachers and they felt this was a strength.

The school maintains contact with past pupils and regularly hosts reunions or invites them to address the sixth formers. This year, for example, the school will invite all graduates from university courses around the world back to the school for a reunion at both the old and new BISC campuses. A BISC Alumni association currently has 100 active members. There is a clear sense of community in the school.

## 8. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils meets and exceeds the standard.

Pupils at the school report that they feel safe. Parents report that pupils' safety and well-being is a very high priority in the school. There is a well-established culture of risk assessment. The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles and teaches pupils how to stay safe. Posters around the school and curriculum based awareness days and campaigns advise pupils to stay safe online, prevent and report bullying and promoting positive social behaviours.

The school has developed a strong pastoral programme to support pupil well-being and provides intervention where it is needed. The pastoral team is supported by a UK qualified school psychologist. Good levels of fitness of pupils were observed across the school. The high quality of PE provision and after school clubs enable pupils to be safe and healthy. The school operates a zero tolerance to fighting. There have been no exclusions in the past three years. The school also is proactive in promoting good behaviour by contacting parents in response to incidents or issues in the local community.

All pupils remain on the school site for the duration of the school day. Some older pupils are permitted to leave the school site between the end of the school day and the start of the after-school activity sessions. Attendance in classes is recorded routinely on the school's MIS and absences automatically reported to parents and office staff alerted. The school operates a policy of emailing parents on the first day of absence. Attendance and punctuality are promoted by the school through policy, emails and regular contact with parents. This has resulted in pupil's attendance in school improving significantly over the past three years.

The school has clear and comprehensive fire safety, lockdown and evacuation procedures. These are regularly tested by fire drills and logs are kept of all evacuations as well as of the maintenance and inspection of all fire equipment. This equipment is accessible in the form of hose reels and fire extinguishers kept in closed and well-marked fire lockers. All exits are free of obstruction and clearly marked. A fire drill that took place during the inspection visit demonstrated that the school had well-established systems in place to evacuate the whole school community quickly.

The site is secured by a perimeter wall, gates and security personnel. Entrance and exits are via checkpoints where identity is required. All staff wear identity badges. Security staff know parents and pupils very well. Parents commented upon this as a strength, expressing their confidence in the security of the campus.

Every vehicle entering the school site must be cleared through 2 checkpoints, one at the entrance to the local neighbourhood in which the school is sited and the other at the school gate. There is only one vehicular entrance gate onto the campus.

Toilets are cleaned daily and schedules are kept in each toilet area. Electrical plants are checked and maintained during routine school closures. Water quality in the swimming pool and the safety of floodlight installations is monitored regularly. Drainage systems throughout the school are checked regularly in order to prevent flooding. Logbooks are kept for checks on fire safety equipment; fire and evacuation drills; Bus safety checks; science laboratory equipment checks, and IT equipment.

The premises officer has a plan of scheduled maintenance and site developments for the year ahead. For example, this year the school plans to carry out comprehensive maintenance to the main electrical switch gear room and to complete a new building project of 4 classrooms on the third floor of the senior school block between May and July when the pupils taking public examinations have completed their examinations.

The science laboratories have running risk assessments for chemicals, fire and electrical emergencies. Hazardous materials in the science labs are kept in locked storage with warning signs evident. The fume cupboard is kept closed and is labelled with warning signs present. The central power shut off switch is clearly labelled, and all laboratories have fire extinguishers (powder and CO<sub>2</sub>) and fire safety blankets evident and accessible. First aid boxes are signposted and present. Washing facilities, aprons and paper towels are available for pupils to use.

Use of the swimming pool is governed by the normal operating procedures document which is available on the school hub. The swimming pool site is locked when not in use. There is green vegetation and well-kept gardens on campus, with ample shade provided by awnings and parasols in areas of the school where seating is provided for pupils and staff. The buildings are designed to make best use of shaded corridors and walkways and is kept cool with air conditioning units in every room.

Procedural safety is a priority at the school and rigorous policies govern health and safety, behaviour, supervision, safeguarding and child protection, pastoral care and counselling for example. Risk assessments are in place for all external excursions, as well as for regulating internal use of the swimming pool and science laboratories. The Health and Safety Committee monitors and follows up any incidents, issues or maintenance concerns.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school and children feel safe, secure and cared for. Child-centred programmes ensure that well-being is a reality for these pupils. Information on children of concern is shared internally with staff via the Engage Management Information System, although there are very few incidents in this school. The school liaises with local agencies and has set up collaborative links with other schools in Cairo to ensure that there is continuity in provision if pupils move between schools. There are several posters around the school and on the school network which identify the safeguarding leads for junior and senior sections. Playtimes are well-supervised, and the introduction of 'playground pals' in the junior school and anti-bullying ambassadors in the senior school has resulted in reduction of anti-social behaviours and given pupils responsibility for managing their own behaviour.

Contrary to statistics for the region, obesity is not a concern at BISC. Attitudes to health, exercise and nutrition are positive and many children actively participate in the P.E. and school sports programmes. Teachers and duty staff diligently monitor the quality of snacks and lunches brought from home and will send them back if they are deemed unsuitable, replacing them with a healthy option from the canteen. The canteen does provide nutritious meals and children reported that they really like the "Health House" section of the canteen which provides vegan and vegetarian options. There are regular awareness sessions for teachers and children on nutrition, healthy attitudes to body and health as part of the Global Citizenship classes which are shared with parents as part of the "Safer BISC" programme.

Pupils have access to drinking water in every area of the school. Bottled water is brought onto the site and ancillary staff regularly check and refill the drinking fountains. Children also bring their own water bottles to school which they have access to throughout the day. Washing and showering facilities are available in the P.E. department.

## 9. Standard 4 The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets fully the standards required for BSO.

The board of directors constitute a wide breadth and balance of skills which they draw upon. They have actively sought to broaden their expertise base further. The chairman and all members of the board meet the requirements to ensure their suitability for their role. They understand their role in 'Keeping children safe' and have received training on safeguarding. Directors regularly check that the single central record is maintained and updated. The board of governors have a separate email address on which they can be contacted directly.

The school's recruitment practices and procedures for staff are outlined in the recruitment and HR policy, child protection and safeguarding policy. All school staff are covered by the same policy guidance as well as Egyptian labour law with extra safeguarding checks for staff who directly have regular contact with pupils. Staff who are employed by outside agencies are also required to provide evidence of their suitability to work in a school.

All staff and directors responsible for the recruitment of teaching staff have undergone safe recruitment training. Training is also available to staff on the Edu Care site. The school maintains close links with safeguarding experts in the UK who have visited the school to provide on-site training.

The Human Resources department collects relevant documentation, including identity checks, background checks, qualifications, medical certification and references which are referenced on the Staff Central Register for all staff and volunteers working at the school. A list is maintained of teachers who have worked at the school since the last inspection. All qualifications, work history and identities are checked and must be notarised, attested and verified by the Egyptian authorities. All internationally recruited teaching staff must have a formal teaching qualification and at least two years' experience prior to joining the School in order to be eligible for a visa to work in Egypt.

All employees have their criminal records checked either via the Egyptian Police, foreign police certificates, DBS certificates or ICPC (International Child Protection Certificate) as appropriate. All checks are undertaken prior to commencement of work. Letters of appointment only sent (followed by contracts) once a minimum of two references have been provided and background checks completed.

The school does not recruit newly qualified teachers. The School employs its own full-time supply staff who are required to undergo the same checks as all teaching staff.

## 10. Standard 5

### The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet and exceed the standard required.

The school was purpose built on a new campus in 2008. The buildings and facilities are of a high standard and well maintained to ensure that learning is very well supported and matched to learner needs. The campus includes spacious learning areas, gardens, extensive sports areas, car parking and bus delivery and pick up areas inside a walled perimeter fence. All areas in and around the school are clean, tidy and organised.

Sports fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, swimming pools, sports halls and gym facilities ensure that a wide range of sporting activities can be offered within and out of the formal curriculum. The generous size of the site allows for extensive fields and playgrounds which promote active playtimes and recreation for the pupils. These facilities are well used for after school activities and by community groups.

The site is well secured with perimeter walls and gates as well as security personnel. A local ambulance service is situated at one end of the sports complex, giving immediate access in case of an emergency.

Buildings are well insulated, resisting the infiltration of heat, dust, water and noise pollution from outside. They are well maintained and decorated, with examples of pupil's artwork used effectively as decoration throughout the school. Flooring is flat and smooth and free from obstacles and hazards.

Classrooms are well lit, have good acoustics and are spacious. Specialist classes include music rooms and practice rooms, ICT rooms, drama studios and theatres, art rooms, science laboratories and libraries. The whole campus is supported by Wi-Fi separated to ensure access is restricted to specific users.

Some areas of the school have been clustered in order to reduce impact on other sections. For example, music and drama is housed in one area of the school, with attention paid to the acoustic insulation of these areas to reduce noise levels in other areas. The buildings are arranged as a set of three connected quadrangles on 3 floors and all the communal areas have displays and seating areas which promote socialisation and discussion. Different phases are accommodated in specifically adapted areas of the school which are designed to meet the needs of the learners in each phase. The early years foundation stage area is well provided with a designated outdoor area and suitable washrooms. The area is secure and well suited to the delivery of the EYFS curriculum.



Toilets and washrooms are located throughout the school. They are appropriate to requirements, clean and are well supervised by corridor security staff. Toilet facilities are clearly designated for use by children or adults. Facilities for changing and showering are provided in the PE and school sports facilities and there are separate accommodations for sole use of staff and pupils.

Access to the school is adapted to accommodate pupils with impaired mobility, including the installation of ramps in outdoor spaces and lifts in the 3 storey buildings. Individual toilets and washrooms are provided separately for pupils with specific needs.

A medical centre is situated on the ground floor near the middle of the complex, making it accessible to all pupils and staff. It is attended by a full time, qualified doctor and a nurse. The centre includes two examination rooms, four beds with partitions or screens, a washroom and several secure storage cabinets.

The school canteen is serviced by two external catering providers. The facility is regularly inspected and licenced by the local authorities. A range of hot or cold food options are offered to the pupils and staff and service staff are medically certificated.

Learning resources support the curriculum well and provision for ICT is very well resourced with interactive whiteboards in every class, access to other IT resources such as visualisers and ICT suites.

Signage is good throughout the buildings, allowing ease of access and all rooms are labelled and numbered. Entrances and exits are well signposted, ensuring that evacuation procedures are easy to follow. All firefighting equipment is clearly marked, as are the facilities for safe storage of hazardous materials in the science laboratories.

Pupils have lockers in the corridors which allow the safe storage of personal items without taking up classroom space. Classroom furniture is appropriate to the size and age of the children and promotes high quality learning opportunities. For example, the corridors outside KS1 created opportunities for children to learn through play and do group work outside the classrooms.



## 11. Standard 6 Provision of information for parents, carers and others

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

There is a wealth of information for parents on the school website and in the school handbook. Parents are very satisfied with the quality of information provided by the school. Communication is frequent. A bulletin is emailed every Thursday or can be found on the school's portal. In addition, social media in a variety of forms is used regularly to ensure contact with parents. Relevant policies are shared on the website and can be accessed through the school. They are updated at least biannually with key policies including the Safeguarding Policy being updated annually following staff training and liaison with an external verifier.

The school has developed a "Safer BISC" programme to help parents understand and respond to the outside pressures children face as they grow up. This has included a focus on understanding and responding to social media and mental health issues in young children and adolescents.

The school calendar is on the school website and parents report that they have all information regarding sporting events or school trips in a timely manner. There are opportunities over the course of the academic year for parents to be involved in and contribute to whole school events. Parents have informal access to teachers daily and emails are answered very promptly. Parents felt strongly that their opinions are sought, listened to and where appropriate acted on.

In the junior school a communication log ensures that regular and purposeful communication is maintained between home and school. Class representatives also ensure that all parents are updated with events and information regarding day to day events.

In the senior school social media is used effectively to keep groups of parents across year groups informed. Drop-in clinics by subject specialists also provide further information for parents and both parents and pupils find these informative and useful.

Pupils' written reports are age appropriate, detailed and informative and are issued twice a year. Parents can also discuss their children's progress at parent-teacher conferences. Junior school parent teacher conferences take place twice a year and parents reported that these are very informative. Senior school reports to parents on attainment and aptitude are more regular. They also ensure parents are informed where there are concerns about behaviour and celebrate positive behaviours where relevant. There are

messages directly to parents and regular assemblies to celebrate achievements to which parents are invited across the school.

Parents workshops are offered regularly including the “Safer BISC” campaign. Most recently workshops for parents have covered topics such as affluent neglect, cyber bullying and disability. They have been well attended and parents stated these were useful and informative. In the junior school ‘Parents in Partnership’ meetings are hosted by each year group. Teachers are given opportunities to address a range of subjects. As an example, year 3 presented on current research and practices related to homework. In addition, the safeguarding team leading training to parents on pupil well-being such as mental health, anti-bullying and road safety.

The use of Google classroom has helped to ensure that all pupils can reflect on classwork, know what their homework is, and teachers are able to give feedback on the app. A new learning platform has very recently been introduced to school and this is being used by pupils in the senior section to embed learning in school at home.

Some senior pupils reported that sometimes lines of communication between school and pupils could be improved so that information was shared promptly. The internal MIS is not as widely used as it might be by some pupils and staff. A revamped school newspaper has been introduced this term led by pupils.

## 12. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets BSO standards.

A parental complaints procedure is in place detailing the steps that will be taken by the school in the event of a complaint being made in writing to the school. This clearly states the stages of resolution to be followed and provides the school's working definition of a complaint.

The parental complaints procedure is made available to parents and pupils on the school website and in the parent's handbook.

The initial stages are informal and have a clear timescale set for response by the school. Parents raising a complaint must first contact the pupil's teacher and raise the concern with the class teacher. A response is provided by the school within 2 working days and details are logged on the school's MIS system. Records of complaints are kept confidential. The procedures allow the complainant a procedure to appeal and to raise their concern next with senior leaders in the school and if not resolved, then with the board of directors.

The board of directors will establish a director's complaints panel which will consist of at least three persons who have had no prior involvement in the case. Parents can attend the meeting held by the director's complaints panel and be accompanied if they wish. The decision of the panel will be final and sent in writing to the parents, principal and directors, if relevant.

Parents reported that the school deals with complaints promptly and fairly. The school reported that complaints that are unresolved are extremely rare. Effective processes are in place to deal with complaints made by staff. A sample of senior pupils reported that some teachers did not always take seriously issues that pupils raised with them.

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

The quality of leadership and management of the school meets fully the standard required.

The school is effectively led and managed by a board of governors, a newly appointed principal and a committed team of senior and middle leaders.

The board of governors constitutes 9 parents of pupils in the school and are elected by parents to the board every 2 years. The board is represented by an executive committee of four directors; the chairman, vice chair, secretary and treasurer with separate sub committees. The constitution is broad and balanced. The principal and heads of senior and junior school attend board meetings each term so that the directors are informed. More regular meetings take place with the executive committee, the principal and school business manager to ensure the communication between the board and the school is frequent. The school business accounts inform the longer term 3- and 5-year strategic plans that are in place. 'A Vibrant International Community – Moving *forward* with purpose 2018-2021 was published by the board detailing its plans for the next three years. The school's accounts are audited annually. The directors have a clear vision for the school, and this is communicated through the published three year and five-year plans.

The school's self-evaluation is detailed and benchmarked against the British Schools Overseas standards. It contains evidence to support the judgements and is accurate. However, it is not yet used regularly to inform school improvement planning. The school's development plan is in place for the junior and senior sections of the school.

All teachers are qualified with a high percentage of UK experienced and qualified teachers. The school only recruits teachers with a minimum of two years of relevant experience. A staff induction programme for teachers new to the school is highly valued by staff, including finding a home when the teacher arrives in the country. A comprehensive programme of social activities ensures that teachers feel supported and valued. Teachers are further supported at school to ensure they quickly learn the practices, policies and procedures at BISC. For local non-teaching staff, the pay-it-forward fund offers financial support. School staff buses provide transport for staff to and from school each day.

The school has a high regard for the professional development of staff. There is a generous professional development budget and UK based trainers frequently provide bespoke training at the school. An external advisor has supported the school in leading teaching and learning. The school is an active member of BSME, COBIS and CIBSA. The senior leadership team regularly attend annual conferences and network with other

colleagues. The school invests in training teachers and recently hosted a professional learning and development conference inviting teachers to attend from other leading schools in Cairo. This was an opportunity for the schools to share good practice and learn from one another. Teachers were able to choose professional learning workshops that best suited their needs.

The middle leadership team have been developed to take a lead on monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching across the senior school. Regular learning walks and drop ins are helping the school to focus on its training needs for teachers. Middle leaders' moderate pupils' workbooks and in the junior section KS2 teacher's network with other local schools to moderate writing samples. Recently middle leaders across the school attended a four-day course which they reported improved their self-confidence and motivation to lead.

All staff have clear roles and responsibilities. The whole school leadership team is made up of senior leaders from both the junior and senior sections. All senior leaders including the principal have a class teaching responsibility. The junior principal and senior principal meet regularly with the principal to set the agenda for the weekly whole school leadership team meeting. This meeting ensures that all senior leaders in the school are informed and updated.

Meetings are regular and informative. The board of governors hold three full meetings a year and a range of sub-committees meet regularly. All staff meet weekly. Google calendars are used to share the details of events occurring across the school. A weekly bulletin ensures information is shared. The day-to-day management of the school is efficient and smooth and there are clear structures in place for effective medium and long term planning.

#### 14. *Standard 9*

##### The quality of provision for boarding

Not Applicable.