



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

British International School, Al Khobar

Saudi Arabia

Date

11th – 13th April 2022

Inspection number

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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 pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. 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, over 65 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Karen Hanratty. The team members were Benjamin Atkins, Natasha Hilton and Elizabeth Lamb.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British International School, Al Khobar (BISAK) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.¹

¹ Excluding those that are illegal in the country

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The British International School, Al Khobar (BISAK) provides a high standard of education, as a result, pupils make excellent academic progress and attainment. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. The levels of care provided ensure all pupils feel safe and thrive at school. Strong leadership ensures a focus on continuous improvement. Pupils and their parents are proud to be part of the school community.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the following:

- The pupils, who are polite, hard-working and committed to their own education; they are strong ambassadors for the school
- Positive relationships across the school
- The support and guidance provided by the governing board, who set clear legal and financial parameters for the school
- The drive for high standards set by leadership throughout the school, who are committed to continuous improvement in outcomes for all pupils
- The teachers, who are committed to pupils' overall development and provide a warm and supportive learning environment
- The high levels of pastoral care which leads to a safe and happy school environment in which pupils thrive
- The standards and progress achieved by pupils across the school, and particularly in external examinations in Key Stages 4 and 5, where pupils attain extremely well relative to their targets and peers in the UK
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- BISAK values, which guide the school and are well embedded
- The new school campus, which provides a range of facilities for specialist teaching, is well matched to the needs of pupils and demands of the curriculum
- The quality and range of continuous professional development (CPD) for staff, particularly in the Prep school
- Communications with parents and the school's responsiveness to any concerns raised

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. further promote effective strategies in teaching and learning across the school, for example by:
 - a. personalising provision even more for the most able and the lower attaining pupils, to maximise progress and attainment
 - b. offering even greater opportunities for pupils to engage in independent and self-directed learning
 - c. broadening the range of teaching methods used, to promote active and exploratory learning
2. further develop the use of learning technologies within lessons, to support, extend and enhance pupils' learning in all subjects
3. ensure facilities management adheres to best practice

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4. The context of the school

Full name of School	British International School, Al Khobar				
Address	3909 As Sadafah District, Al Khobar, 34215-8640 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia				
Telephone Number/s	(+966) 0 1 3831 7300				
Fax Number	N/A				
Website Address	www.bisak.org				
Key Email Address/s	receptionist@bisak.org registrar@bisak.org stephenviner@bisak.org				
Principal	Mr Stephen Richard Viner				
Chair of Governors	Mr Joseph Stephen Vaz				
Age Range	3-18				
Total number of pupils	893	Boys	487	Girls	406
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	269	
	3-5 years	130	17-18 years	54	
	6-11 years	440	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

BISAK was established in 1977 to serve the British and wider community in the Al Khobar area of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The school offers the National Curriculum for England, the Early Years Foundation Stage Programme and GCSE, AS and A level examinations. The school maintains close links with the British Embassy, including a representative from the Embassy on the governing body. The school is a not-for-profit charitable foundation.

The school moved to its current premises in 2019, however, owing to extended closure during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has only just properly begun to establish itself on this site in recent months. The campus comprises purpose-built facilities which provide well for the needs of different age groups and the demands of the curriculum. There are good sports facilities, including a large sports hall and shaded, open-air swimming pool. Teaching spaces for creative subjects are suitably adapted and well resourced.

There are currently 893 pupils on role, representing 55 different nationalities. 20% of pupils are British, the largest nationality group. The school has a selective admissions policy, and whilst the large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, most join the school with good levels of English.

The board of governors was re-established in June 2020, after a lengthy period when the school was overseen by the Ministry of Education and the UK Embassy. Until the board was formed the school leadership worked hard to protect and maintain a viable school. The new board comprises four people, three of whom have children in the school. They have established their role and relationship with school leaders along with an understanding of their legal requirements and responsibilities.

Like many schools, BISAK is working hard to fill gaps in pupils' learning caused by the enforced school closure and switch to distance learning over the last two years. The school is consciously prioritising this, together with support for pupils' emotional and social well-being.

The school enjoys a positive relationship with the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE), which reportedly holds the school in high regard.

4.1 British nature of the school

BISAK has a distinctly British look and feel. The union flag and a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, to celebrate her platinum jubilee, are prominently displayed in the school's entrance. The school's own values are closely aligned to British values, and both are highly visible around the school.

The school's structure and style of education mirrors that of British schools. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum of England, with pupils in Key Stage (KS) 4 and 5 sitting British public examinations at GCSE, AS and A level. Many pupils go on to universities in the UK. Pupils are in year groups and Key Stages aligned with schools in the UK. A house system, rewards programme, school uniform, and structure of the school day and year add to the British feel.

Most teachers are UK trained; the majority have prior UK teaching experience. The school also employs recently qualified teachers (RQT) and early career teachers (ECT) and provides appropriate mentoring and support in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance. The National Professional Qualification in School Leadership (NPQ) suite of qualifications are offered to staff in posts of responsibility, all members of the senior leadership team (SLT) hold relevant NPQ qualifications.

Pupils are aware of the rules of law and democracy; selection of house captains and school council members is done through a democratic process with pupils being voted in by their peers. School displays highlight the British constitution and encourage debate on topical British issues.

Systems for reporting to parents emulate best British practice, with written and face-to-face feedback provided at key points in the academic year. All communications are in English, including the school's website. All teaching, support and administration staff are fluent English speakers.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is good, some aspects are excellent, including some lessons and the standards which pupils achieve. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The school follows the 2014 National Curriculum for England along with the EYFS 2021 Framework Guidance. In addition, the curriculum is fully compliant with MoE local statutory requirements. Policies and schemes of work are in place which take into account UK curriculum expectations, adapted to consider: current affairs, the context of the school as well as the diverse pupil population. The school provides full-time supervised education for pupils from 3-18 years.

Curriculum enrichment is provided through a programme of school events and special days, educational visits, visitors and pastoral initiatives aimed at developing the whole child. A wide and varied programme of after school activities along with high-quality peripatetic music lessons and sporting activities further enhances the school's curriculum offer whilst supporting the development of individual pupils' talents.

In the EYFS, teachers secure pupils' engagement in their learning through a balance of teacher led, play-based and child-initiated learning. An outdoor learning area provides a safe and stimulating environment. The *Read, Write Inc* phonics programme, recently introduced, has rapidly become embedded throughout EYFS and KS1. The consistency of teaching impacts positively on pupils' acquisition and use of phonics in their reading and writing. A cross-curricular approach in the Prep school further reinforces pupils' development of core literacy and numeracy skills.

In all areas of the school, where support and intervention are required, pupils' personalised needs are planned for, resulting in pupils making excellent progress. Individual education plans are shared with parents and reviewed every six weeks.

In the senior school, the curriculum includes specific teaching for exam readiness and preparation from KS3. Pupils in the senior school highlighted the breadth of subjects offered as a strength of the school. At KS4 and 5, pupils are well prepared for GCSE, AS and A level examinations, resulting in high levels of attainment.

Transitions between phases are positive and well established. Continuous provision introduced in year 1 provides a seamless transition from EYFS into KS1. A well-planned transition programme for year 6 to year 7 which includes a transition day as well as

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‘taster’ sessions means the pupils describe their move into the senior school as exciting and something they feel well prepared for.

The school provides opportunities for pupils take on responsibilities within the school. Pupil leaders are actively involved in organising events, house captains lead their teams during sports days and sixth form pupils support the learning pupils of pupils in the prep school. With the introduction of a careers advisor, senior pupils have access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance and support when considering options for exams and life beyond school. *Unifrog* provides support with university applications. Assemblies on ‘personal statement writing’ and careers days as well as virtual visits from people describing a variety of careers also enhances the advice given to the pupils.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment across the school is good, some aspects are excellent. Most lessons observed were good, with some outstanding lessons.

Teachers in the nursery and reception classes use assessment information to plan focused tasks and continuous provision that meet the needs of the children. The EYFS leader has a good understanding of the revised EYFS framework and expected outcomes. Progress is closely tracked, as a result, children make sustained progress in all areas.

Children in reception experience free-flow, continuous provision. They are guided in their play, with some children following their own interests and others working on more focused tasks. In reception, a varied range of provision engaged the children, with an outdoor 'potions' activity being especially popular. Some provision is accessed with the guidance of the teacher or teaching and learning assistant (TLA) while other children's work independently. The TLAs effectively support learning, leading to good levels of children's progress.

In reception and Key Stage 1 (KS1) there is a strong focus on phonics. Through streamed teaching across classes, the vast majority of pupils make rapid progress. Opportunities are given for pupils to apply their phonics knowledge to 'real life' writing. In reception, children enjoyed discovering the 'theft' of their chocolate crispies by the Big Bad Wolf, then writing about their experience. The writing was displayed around the classrooms.

In the best lessons, teachers plan engaging and challenging activities. During a year 1 mathematics lesson, effective resource selection and teacher modelling supported an active independent task in which pupils weighed and compared physical objects, identifying which object is heaviest or lightest. A year 5 class took part in a practical science investigation, testing the buoyancy of tin foil boats. Pupils were asked to make predictions, collect data, record results and carry out each test three times 'for accuracy'. In some lessons, additional challenge is promoted through targeted questioning and extension tasks. Teachers also provide support to those who need it, within the lesson. TLAs are used effectively to support in-class learning in EYFS and KS1. They enhance progress by asking questions and clarifying understanding. TLAs also work with individuals or small groups from KS2 classes for personalized interventions outside of the classroom, providing support for mathematics and English in particular.

Across the school, strong classroom management and effective teaching methods ensure there is pace in lessons. Positive teacher-pupil relationships foster trust and motivation. Pupils are motivated, enthusiastic learners. In the best lessons teachers plan for collaboration and pupils are able to learn from each other. In a year 10 psychology lesson, pupils collaborated in small groups to complete mind maps, whilst the teacher circulated and asked prompting questions of the groups. A peer assessment

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activity in year 6 enabled pupils to improve their writing, through a guided editing process. Across KS2 there is a particular focus on the acquisition of new vocabulary, leading to a positive impact on the quality of written work.

Pupils are encouraged to think about their own learning, reflecting on methods and approaches to problems and tasks set by the teacher. Most lessons begin with a review of prior learning. Pupils are given clear learning objectives and success criteria, often differentiated, to ensure structured progression for all. In most lessons, teachers revisit these in order to check on understanding and pupil confidence.

The majority of teachers across the school demonstrate good or excellent subject knowledge. This enables lessons to be adapted quickly based on the needs of the class. Teachers plan lessons using assessment information and routinely check that previous learning has been secured. In a year 12 mathematics lesson, pupils identified topics they wanted support with, in preparation for their upcoming external examinations. Based on pupils' self-perceptions and their own ongoing assessment, the teacher prioritised the topics that individual pupils worked on to address both subject content and pupil confidence.

In many lessons, 'live marking' and continual formative assessments are used effectively to revise plans both 'in the moment' and for the next day, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Verbal feedback pointing the learner to improvement and progression was evident in most lessons, in both prep and senior schools. Pupils are involved in self and peer assessments. In a year 10 psychology lesson, pupils undertook peer assessment of each other's work before completing a knowledge map. One pupil said, "This is really going to help me for my revision".

Across the school, summative assessments take place regularly. A baseline test and observations are used to assess pupils' development against the Early Years Outcomes and Early Learning Goals. In prep, end of unit tests such as *Rising Stars* and *Viper* are used to track pupils' progress. The assessment framework incorporates regular *Read, Write Inc.* assessments and the National Curriculum for England phonics test is completed at the end of year 1. Teacher assessment takes place in a variety of forms. The head of foreign languages in the senior school and sixth form has devised an assessment system that tracks progress and attainment of pupils across the phases. Cognitive ability tests are conducted in the senior school, which provide additional information for teachers when judging progress and attainment. CAT4 scores and teacher assessments inform teacher planning and enable school leaders to track pupils' progress. Individual targets are set using CAT4 'if challenged' levels. At KS4 and 5 pupils sit external assessments from Cambridge and Edexcel-Pearson examination boards, for GCSE/IGCSE, AS and A level.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Pupil monitoring and the tracking of attainment data demonstrates that most groups of learners, including those who are low attainers, make at least good progress and a significant number make excellent progress and achieve to very high standards, as evidenced by the school's value-added measures in external examinations.

The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is impressive; it is a strength of the school, which enables learning to take place in a positive environment. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to achieve. This attitude is reflected around the school, there are very few examples of behaviour issues and pupils clearly enjoy school.

As in all schools, attendance at BISAK has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, now that pupils are back on campus full time, attendance is returning to the standard expected in British schools. The school actively follows up long term absentees and encourages reluctant pupils to return to school. During the inspection, attendance was good. Pupils arrive on time to lessons and are ready to learn.

Across the prep school pupils are set aspirational targets. 'Live' feedback, marking and formative assessments mean that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Assessment is moderated and pupil progress meetings take place termly in order to accurately modify provision to meet the needs of the pupils. The school tracks pupils' progress towards meeting or exceeding their targets.

Prior to the pandemic, the number of children in EYFS achieving a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) was above that of the UK national average. Year 1 phonic screening checks need to be fully embedded in the assessment cycle. However, current data indicates that pupils are broadly on track to meet the UK standard. In 2018 standards at the end of KS1 were below that of the UK national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school has worked hard to narrow the gap in recent years and now broadly meets or exceeds the UK national average (based on the 2019 national averages). The proportion of pupils making or exceeding progress in reading, writing and mathematics exceeds UK national averages at the end of year 6. Throughout the EYFS and prep school, pupils make substantial and sustained progress from different starting points. On leaving the prep school, pupils are well prepared for the transition to seniors.

Across the senior school, small class sizes combined with a clear teacher understanding of the learning needs of each pupil, ensure excellent progress is often made. Based on pupils' self-perceptions and through ongoing assessment, teachers prioritise the topics that individual pupils need to focus on to address both subject content and pupil confidence.

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A range of assessment strategies are implemented in lessons, with self and peer assessment effectively used. Marking in the senior school is not yet consistent within a few departments. Despite the challenges pupils faced due to the restrictions from the pandemic, they have maintained high standards, gaining knowledge skills and understanding at a very good rate. Attainment in external examination at GCSE, AS and A level is exceptionally high and well above UK national averages.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent; it is a key strength of the school.

The friendly, welcoming community atmosphere is highly valued by both parents and pupils. Relationships are particularly strong. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, both in the classroom and when moving around the school. Pupils are polite and welcoming; they understand right from wrong. Their self-confidence and self-esteem are clear across the school. Pupils listen to one another's thoughts and, when they challenge them, do so with respect. Pupils at BISAK value their education. This is evident in their good attendance and engagement in all lessons.

The BISAK values of belief, internationalism, success, aspiration and knowledge underpin the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural principles. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) in the curriculum promotes physical and mental well-being, supporting the young people of the school to explore issues around community, family and relationships, as well as keeping safe, including online. The school actively promotes tolerance, a respect for human differences and acceptance of a range of lifestyles: this is achieved within the laws of the host country.

Children's sense of 'awe and wonder' is developed through structured activities in the EYFS, promoting a connection with nature. Children were given a variety of flowers to discuss, draw and paint as part of an observational opportunity. Children also experienced a range of naturally fragrant materials in their messy play, such as coriander leaves and lemon slices, promoting a sensory response.

The school's curriculum ensures a variety of opportunities for pupils to learn about and celebrate other cultures. The 'Golden Age of Islam' topic in the senior school was described by a pupil as "Giving us the opportunity to consider the beliefs and ideas of others and respect different opinions". Cultural and social diversity in this multi-ethnic school is celebrated through occasions such as International Day, which is a highlight of the school calendar.

The school successfully promotes British values, including democracy, through such things as the election of pupil leaders. The debating club also promotes opportunities for learning about the democratic process. During a year 9 registration period, pupils discussed the skills needed to be a 'group leader'. They discussed the need to consider the feelings of others in the group, how to listen and how to avoid potential conflicts.

Pupils' show awareness of their responsibilities as global citizens. Pupil leaders organise fund raising events for local charities and are proud to have a positive impact on their community. Sixth form pupils also offer academic support to their younger peers.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good: many areas are highly effective.

All adults employed by the school have annual child protection training. Systems and processes regarding child protection are in place. Weekly pastoral meetings ensure that any child protection and safeguarding issues are continually monitored and discussed. Admissions and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Whole school attendance is good, and attendance is tracked and analysed. Any issues are followed up with the families concerned.

The supervision of children throughout their school day is highly effective. Visitors to the school are logged and are issued badges. Whilst the school does not provide a bus service, it conducts some basic checks on partner transport providers. Start and end of day routines are clear, calm and well-organised.

The school has two full-time nurses, based in a well-equipped clinic. Care plans are kept up to date, and relevant staff are trained regarding the care need of specific pupils. Selected staff receive first aid training and accompany pupils on school trips. When educational visits take place, careful risk assessments are carried out and safe levels of supervision are ensured. The clinic provides first aid bags and informs staff regarding any medical needs of pupils.

The health and welfare of the pupils is a strength for the school. Pupils feel happy, safe and are well cared for. Behaviour in the school is excellent, children are supportive and kind towards each other. Bullying is rare in the school. The school's policy is implemented effectively, and data is analysed to drive improvements. Pupils are taught from an early age how to keep themselves healthy and this is woven into the curriculum. Children in pre-prep are aware of healthy foods and as pupils move through the school, they become more aware of healthy choices and keeping fit.

The school's pastoral care is a key strength of the school. In the prep school, class teachers know their pupils well and act quickly on any concerns. In the senior school and sixth form, the heads of year, form tutors and teachers all play a role in the pastoral care of pupils. The pastoral lead works across the school, although she is mainly based in seniors. Senior pupils can self-refer to talk to her about any anxieties or worries they may have. Pupils say that they know who they can talk to if they have a worry and feel that they are safe and listened to.

School facilities are excellent. The school is litter and obstacle free and high regard for cleanliness is evident throughout the large campus. There are regular drills for evacuation. Some health and safety issues were discussed with the principal, and these will be rectified shortly. The school is tidy and clean. The regular cleaning of pupil and staff toilets, which provide adequate cubicles and washing facilities, results in high standards of hygiene.

8. *Standard 4*

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

Through rigorous checks and practices, the school ensures that all members of staff are fit and suitable to work in the school. Procedures fully meet the standard for BSO accreditation.

Thorough recruitment procedures including advertising, interview processes, checking of documentation and induction ensure that teachers are qualified and fit to teach the age group and subject areas for which they are employed. Identification checks are carried out, together with confirmation of academic credentials, the applicants' employment history, suitability to work with children, right to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and medical fitness.

The head of human resources (HR) conducts an initial scrutiny of applicants to ensure they meet statutory requirements. Heads of school conduct interviews with regard to specific role requirements and short-listed candidates then meet with the principal for final confirmation. Prior to appointment, three references are sought, including the candidate's current principal and line manager. These may be followed up with a phone call if required. Detailed job descriptions are provided for all teaching staff.

Subsequent monitoring of staff through appraisal processes, together with less formal procedures such as lesson drop-ins, provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on and develop their practice. Professional development targeted towards school priorities, pupils' academic achievement alongside teachers' own development needs ensure teachers have the opportunity to grow professionally.

The relatively newly formed governing body is starting to have an impact on the management of the school. The board, currently comprising four full members including a representative from the British Embassy and three parents, works closely with the principal. The opinions of teaching staff are sought where appropriate.

The head of HR maintains a single central register of all staff working at the school. There are currently no volunteers or supply staff. The register includes an ICPC check or equivalent for everyone in the school. Staff employed by partner providers as well as the governing board have similar checks and their information is updated annually with the school. The central register is very well documented and stored securely. It was made available to the inspection team.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation of the school are good with many impressive features. The school's new buildings and premises provide an excellent range of specialist teaching facilities, which are well equipped to meet the ages and learning needs of the pupils and for the delivery of a broad and balanced British style curriculum.

The site is secure, with two main points of entry and exit for pupils. A large area on campus is used for buses to pick-up and drop off at the start and end of the school day. Signage is clear throughout the school. Accommodation covers three floors, with the older pupils on the first and second floors. Benches and tables are available throughout the school's outdoor areas for use at break times. Shaded areas are appropriate and offer suitable protection from the sun. The pre-prep has separate outdoor learning and play areas, divided into discrete zones by low level fencing, with permanently installed, age-appropriate play equipment, including large sand pits and climbing frames.

The school has a wealth of specialist facilities. An auditorium, swimming pool, dance studio, well-equipped gymnasium, large sports hall, outdoor pitch and running track enable the delivery of a good quality broad PE curriculum well matched to the age and stage of pupils' physical development. There are suitable changing and showering facilities for boys and girls. In addition, the school has well equipped science laboratories, food technology, design technology, art, music and drama rooms along with two well stocked libraries.

Classrooms are clearly marked with room numbers. Fire exits are signposted, and first aid boxes are located strategically throughout the school. Wide staircases provide access to the first and second floors and have adequate handrails. Classrooms across the school are well lit. Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard or television, which are in regular use. All areas have appropriate ventilation and are well furnished with age-appropriate tables and chairs. The pre-prep outside areas are well equipped, safe and gated. There are age-appropriate washrooms. Provisions for people with disabilities is excellent. Lifts to each floor and ramps allow easy access to all areas.

The bursar is active in ensuring the schools site is maintained, safe, and provides a positive environment for learning. Fire, water, electrical and PE equipment checks meet the required standards and are carried out at least annually by external contractors. There is adequate external lighting around the perimeter of the school.

The school clinic is well equipped. During Covid-19 restrictions, a separate isolation room is available if needed. As the automated external defibrillator in the medical centre is located on the ground floor in the pre-prep, an additional device is located within the senior school area.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The range of information provided by the school to parents, prospective parents and its wider community is excellent, it meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

A group of parents was consulted during the inspection. Without exception they were all satisfied with the provision of information regarding operational matters, school events and their child's progress in school. Parents enjoyed the British aspect of the school. They like the focus on academic standards and the 'family atmosphere'. The parents felt their children were 'lucky to have a place here' and appreciated the progress and academic standards achieved by their children.

Formal reports regarding pupils' attainment and progress are provided twice a year in EYFS and twice a year in the prep school and three times in senior school and sixth form. Parents commented that they would prefer to receive the reports prior to the last day of term, in order to digest the reports and seek clarification from teachers before the holidays. Parent-teacher meetings are offered formally after every report. Parents spoke enthusiastically about virtual meetings and were keen for these to continue, stating their 'convenience and practicality'.

Parental workshops are offered at all phases of the school and have run both virtually and face-to-face. These have included 'How to support your child in year 11' exam preparation workshops, year 6 transition information and an introduction of EYFS play-based learning. The school makes many online and virtual workshops available on the virtual learning platform for parents to access at a later date.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an active parent teacher association is involved in supporting the school. This had representation from across different year groups and is involved in organising school events and fund raising.

The school's website is a key source of information about the school, with the school calendar being the most visited page. It is well set out and easy to navigate. Relevant policies are available on the website, as is a copy of the most recent BSO inspection report. The 'Complaints Procedure' is easily located on the website as are the school address and contact details.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school has a clear, easily understood complaints policy which fully meets BSO requirements. The policy is available to parents through the school website.

The school deals with parents' complaints in the first instance at the point at which they are raised. Teachers and senior leaders are available to speak to parents at the beginning and end of the school day, or by appointment. Senior leaders are all highly visible, supervising school arrivals and departures, in this way most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

When an issue is more complex, the complaints policy sets out the process by which parents can seek a solution. All steps in the policy are time-bound, with a final resolution being sought within 40 working days. Matters are dealt with in a respectful and confidential manner. Detailed records are kept of all steps taken. The process also aims to be reflective, so that once resolved, similar issues do not arise in the future.

Concerns are initially escalated through layers of the school leadership – Key Stage coordinators, heads of departments, deputy or heads of school, vice-principal and principal. Matters not related to teaching are dealt with by the appropriate line manager.

If no satisfactory resolution is found, a formal complaint starts with a letter to the principal, or to the chair of the governing board if the complaint regards the principal. A response will be made within 7 working days. If the complaint is escalated to the chair of governors at this point, a sub-committee will be set up, comprising a minimum of three governors. An investigation will be conducted, and the parents kept informed of progress. If a meeting is required, there is provision for both the complainant, and the person named in the complaint to be accompanied by another person. The complaints sub-committee will send a written response within 10 working days. If still not satisfied, parents have the right of appeal, which would involve a meeting with the appeals sub-committee. The decision of the appeals sub-committee is final.

Since the previous inspection, the formal complaints process has not been used. Any issues and concerns have been successfully resolved at the informal stage, through discussions with teachers and school leaders. Parents commented on the ease of communications with the school, particularly through the single email address if they have a query but are unsure to whom it should be addressed.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good, with many aspects that are excellent. A recent restructuring of the school's leadership has led to clear roles and responsibilities and strong lines of communication.

The ethos of the school is set by its motto – 'Let there be peace on earth' – and reinforced by the BISAK values. The principal's aim is to develop "happy, contented, well-educated children". Morale amongst staff, pupils and pupils is high, with solid, trust-based relationships underpinning all aspects of the school. Staff turnover levels are low.

The recently reconstituted governing board has responsibility for ensuring all legal requirements are met and for overseeing the financial stability of the school. The board meets on a monthly basis and liaises closely with the principal and bursar to ensure continuity of purpose. Teacher representatives are consulted annually. Consideration has been given to succession planning, following the restructuring of the leadership team.

The senior leadership team, comprising the principal, vice principal and head of prep school and the bursar, meets weekly to set the strategic direction of the school. Both schools have a separate leadership team, which also meet weekly and focus on the specific development needs within their area. These priorities are led by carefully structured development plans, based on school self-evaluation, with particular focus on the curriculum and academic developments.

Staff accountability and development are strong aspects of leadership at BISAK. Through the appraisal cycle, teachers set targets which include a focus on school development priorities, pupils' achievement and a personal goal. These are monitored at regular intervals. Lesson observations, both formal and shorter lesson drop-ins, provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on, discuss and develop their classroom practice. CPD initiatives support staff development and provide opportunities for professional growth. New and recently qualified teachers are given excellent mentoring and support, to help them develop their skill set.

Relationships with parents are strong, supported by good lines of communication and an open approach. Parents appreciate the community feel of the school and the focused support which their children receive.

The school has strong systems and procedures in place, including for safeguarding and child-protection, and runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Resources are of a high quality and more than adequate to meet the learning needs of pupils.