



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report**

**British School Algiers**

**Algeria**

Date	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Inspection	20220522

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

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

During the inspection visit, over 50 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team member onsite was Marcus Wild.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School Algiers (BSA) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

BSA provides a good education for its students, with many strong elements, as highlighted throughout this report: it is a fast improving school.

Students' behaviour is excellent and they have positive attitudes to school. The care and support offered to students helps to ensure they feel safe and grow into confident, responsible young people. Relationships across the school are a strength.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

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

- The students, who are well-behaved, polite, hard-working and focused on making the most of the opportunities that BSA offer them
- The ethos of the school, which is based on strong, positive relationships
- The emphasis on giving students a global perspective, inclusive, respectful and welcoming of other cultures
- The support provided by the school's proprietor for strategic and financial matters
- The focus on further school improvement by senior and middle leaders
- The teachers, who create a warm, supportive environment in which their students enjoy being in school and make good progress
- The care provided for students, which helps them develop as rounded, confident, caring individuals
- Communications and relationships with parents

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. To enhance the shared vision of excellence in teaching, learning and assessment for all teachers across the school, leading to the development of:
  - high levels of challenge and expectation in all lessons, particularly for the most able students
  - suitable differentiation of learning and support for the lower ability students
  - more opportunities for creativity, collaboration and critical thinking
- ii. Continue the process of curriculum enrichment at all levels, monitoring its success
- iii. Pursue improved internet provision, and then further develop the use of ICT in lessons to engage and support learning

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	British School Algiers				
Address	36 Lot Kaouche Villa N° 17 Cheraga, Algiers, Algeria				
Telephone Number/s	+213 (0) 5 5525 1971				
Fax Number	-				
Website Address	<a href="https://www.britishschoolalgiers.com/">https://www.britishschoolalgiers.com/</a>				
Key Email Address/s	head@britishschoolalgiers.com				
Headteacher/Principal	Mr Justin Blakebrough				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Mr Graham McAvoy				
Age Range	5-16 years (at present)				
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>86</b>
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	107	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	16	<i>17-18 years</i>	0	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	85	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

BSA is the first British international School in Algeria, and is the product of several years of negotiation with the Algerian government, Graham McAvoy (the Founder) and the British Embassy. This resulted in a Presidential decree which dictates the terms on which the school operates. The school is permitted to follow the English National Curriculum, instead of the Algerian curriculum, and to prepare students for UK qualifications.

The school must teach Arabic to all Algerian students but is not required to follow the Algerian Arabic curriculum. The school is not permitted to teach religion.

The school opened its doors on the 2nd November 2020; it opened in challenging circumstances due to Covid.

59% of students are Algerian, 14% are dual nationality Algerian and 27% of students are from expatriate families. There are students from 27 nationalities.

The school is currently housed in rented accommodation. Recent works have been carried out to improve facilities, including creating a new outdoor learning area for Year 1, outdoor basketball and all-weather pitch, and improvements to play areas, the library, lunch hall and increased security measures.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of the school is explained to parents at information evenings and admissions meetings: these include how the British curriculum works together with British teaching methods and a focus on the development of the whole child.

The school's values are closely aligned to British values. Displays around the school in both primary and secondary sections recognise and actively promote these. The school's website demonstrates how these feed into the vision and mission statements.

There have been two international days which included representatives from the UK and there are strong links to the British Embassy: for example in November 2021, Year 11 girls had an afternoon session with the British Ambassador on female equality and aspirations in Algeria.

- There are a number of displays throughout the school that relate to the UK and all things British e.g. British landscape and landmarks.
- Students in Year 10 recently started on the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- Teacher planning in primary and the schemes of work in senior include topics relating to Britain such as the Romans and Vikings in Britain, and British artists such as Banksy.
- All staff undertake safeguarding training in line with British standards.
- A high proportion of teaching staff are British. Staff in senior positions as well as the owner are all British.
- The school follows the English National Curriculum and students study for UK qualifications and is accredited by Cambridge International Education.

## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided meets the standard for BSO accreditation.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The BSA curriculum is good: it is based on the English National Curriculum (ENC), as prescribed by the Presidential Decree that allows the school to exist. The school must teach the Arabic language and Arabic Humanities to Algerian students. The teaching of Algerian humanities is integrated into the teaching of Arabic: although not obliged to do so, BSA provides support for the Algerian BEM (*Brevet d'Études Moyennes*) if a student or family requests it.

As the school's curriculum is based on the ENC, it is a broad and balanced curriculum. For example as well as the traditional academic subjects, there is an emphasis on drama, music and art. In primary, the school produced *London's Burning* which included acting, dancing and music. In senior, the students are preparing for a production of *Romeo and Juliet* which will be put on in the Summer term, also including music and drama. In art, students have worked with a local ceramics artist to produce tiles which are on display around the school.

Students' different needs and interests are well provided for. Options in KS4 allow them to choose 4 of their subjects from a wide range of subjects considering the size of the school.

Phonics groups are set across Years 1, 2 and 3 in the Autumn term and thereafter in differentiated reading/phonics classes within their own year group. Setting throughout senior school for English, Arabic and French languages and in mathematics in Year 11, allow for a good match to students' abilities and prior learning: some students join the school with limited English language, but others are fluent, for example. Similarly in French and Arabic (Derja), many Algerian students are fluent in one or the other (or both) whereas some expatriate students have none at all.

The head of lower primary is a qualified special needs coordinator (SENCO) and gives training and advice to all staff with regards to working with students with special educational needs (SEN).

The school works hard to provide a good range of extra-curricular/enrichment activities. Many parents are not keen for their children to remain after-school to participate in after-school clubs because of issues with traffic in the locality. Therefore BSA provides an enrichment afternoon for both primary and senior.



This allows all students to participate in extra-curricular activities. Activities on offer vary from half-term to half-term, but since the loosening of pandemic restrictions, include activities such as different sports activities, music club, cooking club, theatre club, arts and craft, robotics and dance. The school runs the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and now offers speech and drama lessons which lead to external qualifications for individual students.

School trips and visits have been hampered by the Covid-19 virus, but recently have included a trip to a local dairy factory for Year 10 students which related to science and business studies in December, a trip for lower primary to the Bardot museum linking to their theme of “Peering into the past” and to a local mausoleum (the tomb of Cleopatra’s daughter). Lower senior have been to the Kasbar including to the Pasha’s palace which related to both history and art and included students making sketches of ceramic tiles for an art project. Year 11 girls have visited the British Embassy to meet with the British Ambassador to discuss female aspirations in Algeria.

Two successful international days involved parents of international and Algerian students during which students learn about different countries including appreciating food, music and traditions from different countries.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment at BSA is good.

A variety of resources and practical teaching methodologies are used to promote creativity, critical thinking, independence, interest and a wide skills base. Lessons with a practical element are well received by the students and widely adopted by the school. For example in a Year 8 science lesson the students were actively engaged and learning purposefully, whilst measuring their breathing rate and investigating the effects of exercise on their breathing rate. In another Year 7 science lesson, the students were investigating soil drainage and enjoyed their practical approach to this objective.

Teaching in most areas was challenging, delivered confidently and effectively, ensuring progress is well supported, especially between the key stages. Some teachers were less successful with highly able students. Behaviour systems are embedded and lead to a good standard of participation and learning.

Students are assessed 'in the moment' and misconceptions addressed and discussed. Assessment opportunities are varied and it is evident that the teachers have a good knowledge of their students' levels and next steps: 'feed-forward' comments are delivered in a supportive manner. Even with the youngest students, this teaching style enables good progress to be made during most lessons: strengths and weaknesses are identified and acted upon. Incisive feedback is effectively given and personalised goal setting recognised and accepted by the students.

A noticeable strength of the school is the importance placed on vocabulary acquisition and the rich use of the English language. This is particularly evident in a Year 1 class, where students were discussing elephant seals, blubber and flippers, and in a Year 7 humanities class where the students were discussing key vocabulary related to castles and castle buildings. Further examples were seen in a Year 10 English lesson, where students were taking part in a fast paced, entertaining discussion of the language used in the text they were currently reading.

The use of mini whiteboards and assessment for learning (AfL) techniques were effectively used in the majority of lessons observed, including Arabic as a Foreign Language. Teaching assistants are well deployed to ensure support was given where it was needed: this included small group and/or individual intervention, and whole class support, with effective feedback and communication between members of the teaching team clearly evident. The EAL team support, assess and have impactful systems in place for students.

The proprietor, through the SMT ensures that pupil performance is evaluated as an ongoing process. Performance is monitored in respect to UK norms via external baseline tests such as GL and CEM assessments.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

The standards achieved by students meets the standard for BSO. Students across all key stages make at least good progress.

The vast majority of students speak English as an additional language (EAL) with English often being their third or fourth language. This only being the second year of operation for BSA means no students yet having taken any external examinations.

Considering their starting point and issues with lack of fluency in the English language, students make very good progress. A majority of students have been previously educated in the Algerian system, where the language of instruction is Arabic/French and where the emphasis is on rote learning. In addition, they have experienced several months of school closure before joining BSA, due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Students are very enthusiastic in lessons and willing to participate including asking and answering questions in class and enjoy lessons. They are increasingly able to think for themselves and become self-motivated: this is not something to which they have been accustomed.

Attendance in general is good, but punctuality is an issue. The traffic situation in Cheraga in particular and Algiers in general may be partly to blame. The attendance register is taken in form time at the beginning of the day: students are not permitted to leave the site at break or lunchtimes. The receptionist contacts parents of any students who are late, shortly after registration is taken to establish the reason for absence and also for safeguarding reasons.

Students are very positive about being in school. In general, students' behaviour in lessons is good. This is partly due to skilled teachers, as well as to professional development given at staff meetings, plus feedback given to teachers from lesson observations that enables teachers to develop their behaviour management skills further. Students' behaviour outside of lessons is also good.

## 6. Standard 2 Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students at BSA is good.

Students are respectful towards one another and demonstrate good behaviour and positive attitudes. There is a family feel to the school and students are supported by a caring staff. This was evidenced during playtime, when two KS1 students were sat at a tree of remembrance for a friend who had recently passed away. The children were reading the memory rocks placed at the bottom of the tree and were having an open conversation about what had occurred. An older student was also on the playground interacting with the younger students as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award Program.

The school has a strong commitment to promoting good relationships between people regardless of age, race, gender, disability and ethnic heritage. Students are confident, kind and mutually supportive, and on the whole, students were observed to be polite, thoughtful and caring.

British values are promoted and reinforced through the primary school's PSHE program, which follows the requirements of the National Curriculum for England and Wales, where culturally appropriate, and includes all safeguarding elements. In the senior school, this takes place in the form of the Global Perspectives Program (GPP), where students discuss current affairs, linked to PSHE requirements. GPP is enthusiastically led and delivered by the head of senior school: students make good overall progress in developing the personal qualities that enable them to contribute effectively to their community. They do this (for example) through non-uniform days to raise money for charities and bottle top recycling to help save the planet.

Students have good moral values that guide their actions. An inspirational assembly was observed, where an example of the influence of GPP was delivered. The assembly focussed on hospitality and welcoming others. Several students shared their own experiences and the GPP lead shared a heart-felt story with the students.

Students generally love their school, their teachers and their learning experiences. Overall, they are confident and have good self-esteem. They have a good attitude to learning and this has a positive impact on their progress. The students are guided with behaviour through the implementation of the HELP mnemonic. This aids responsible behaviour in seniors. The school places emphasis on good behaviour, tolerance and responsibility: in primary there is a *Good to be Green* system, whilst senior students carry a rewards/sanctions card.

International days are examples of the respect that the students have for other people's feelings, values, beliefs and cultures and are well embedded in the school ethos.

## 7. Standard 3

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety is good, and meets the standard for BSO. It is given due priority and students feel safe, listened to, cared for and valued.

All staff, including ancillary and auxiliary staff, are encouraged to contribute to the day-to-day safety of the students. There is an embedded culture of care that runs throughout the school. Attendance registers are taken and information is recorded. There is both a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and an assistant designated safeguarding lead (ADSL) who have both had sufficient and regular safeguarding training. The DSL and ADSL are responsible for the training of current staff, the induction to safeguarding of new members of staff and the dissemination of updated and new information to their teams. Records are well kept and are monitored regularly.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and fresh, healthy food is prepared on the premises. The school council are actively involved in the preparation of the menu, encouraging the student body to recognise and participate in the promotion of keeping your body healthy.

Effective policies are in place for the prevention of bullying and positive behaviour management is strongly encouraged. Instances of bullying and other forms of harassment are rare, and the school deals swiftly and effectively with any instances that do occur. The school ensures a calm environment for learning through promoting good behaviour. Secondary students bring in their own devices and are taught how to use them safely in order to avoid online abuse. They have a good understanding about how to stay safe online and responsible uses of devices is promoted. Any infractions of irresponsible use are logged and can result in confiscation of a device.

There is a strong pastoral element in the school and effective systems are in place to provide students with the support they need.

Behaviour in the school is very good. Expectations are reinforced in the classrooms, with visual reminders and classroom displays encouraging the children to make the right choices. Playtimes are well supervised. Most students were engaged in collaborative play. The atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Students feel confident that an adult will help them resolve issues, should they arise. This was evidenced by the observation of several teacher and student interactions on the playground, that arose due to small incidents occurring.

Auxiliary staff were visible throughout the school and maintained a good level of cleanliness within the premises.

Corridors and passageways are wide and generally uncluttered, with directions and spacing measures clearly labelled. Movement around the school is controlled and calm. A security team were noticeable at the school gate and during home time, when doors were opened to parents and carers.

Systems are in place to ensure health and safety laws and fire standards are met. Fire extinguishers are evident throughout the school. Evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the school and systems are in place to ensure students are safe and accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is in line with the standard for BSO.

The owner has established positive relationships with the principal and SMT with very effective two-way dialogue. He meets all requirements for BSO schools. The owner is ambitious for the further development of the school. A representative from the head office of Alligan together with the head of administration in the school oversees human resources (HR) procedures to ensure that all local requirements and legislation are fully met.

There is a full complement of staff including teaching assistants in primary school. Staff have appropriate training and the UK staff are all qualified teachers with PGCEs. Local teachers have been (and continue to be) trained and mentored by UK teachers. The majority of local staff are also studying an online PGCE course provided by Leeds Beckett University. In primary, class teachers are UK qualified teachers. In seniors, core subjects (English, mathematics, science and humanities) are taught by UK qualified teachers. No supply staff are employed.

The head of HR maintains a single central record of all staff working at the school. This includes assistants who are employed by individual families to support their child/ren. The register includes an international child protection certificate (IPCP) check or equivalent for both local and overseas staff. The register is 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 meet the standard for BSO: they are satisfactory.

The premises are well maintained and have been modified to adapt to their current usage. The school has its own kitchen, where food is prepared and cooked. Classrooms are well lit, with appropriate furniture. Some of the classroom areas are quite small, but space is well utilised. Ventilation is good, with some classrooms having air conditioning units installed.

Outdoor sports facilities are available, with adequate shade. Corridors are wide and generally uncluttered. Movement inside the school is calm and orderly, with the corridor areas allowing for fluid movement of students and ease of passage. There is a well utilised multi-purpose area at the bottom of the building which is used for assemblies, productions, providing shade at break times and when required.

There are no obvious hazards, security problems, or significant lapses in hygiene.

Cameras are located at points around the campus and there is 24-hour security on site. There are regular maintenance checks carried out by the management team. Fire alarms and emergency equipment are installed throughout the campus: regular checks are made to ensure they are in good working condition.



## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents and others is good and meets the standard for BSO.

The BSA website provides easy access to contact details, curriculum information, academic results, key policies and to the school's vision. Google Classroom and Zoom were successfully used with students as a learning platform during the pandemic, and the school has retained this as a means of support and for the dissemination of resources.

Parents suggest that they are very satisfied with the information they receive, and in the way that the school is open to their thoughts, questions and concerns, if any. There are for example, fortnightly newsletters to update them. A parental survey completed in January 2022, showed that 97% of parents said they were very pleased with the school. The 'open door' policy is appreciated, in that parents can easily arrange meetings to see staff (including the headteacher). Similarly, parents are able to email staff with any questions or concerns they might have. The school's aim is to reply within 24 working hours. Primary make extensive use of *Class Dojo* to communicate with parents.

There are regular parent meetings and reports are issued to families termly in primary and half-termly in senior. Reports include a comment on students' personal, social and emotional development, while in primary they also include targets. Reports for secondary students focus on academic performance and attitudes to learning, with comments on external examination subjects related to mock examinations. Parent-teacher meetings also take place twice yearly.

Recently, there have been workshops in primary on phonics and on the teaching of mathematics. There are half-termly curriculum overviews given for parents. In seniors, there is a homework website, so that parents can see exactly what work their children have been given.

In primary, parents are invited to attend end of *Topic Wrap-up* afternoons, for example the classroom 'museums' students created for their families, showcasing work done on the theme 'Peering into the past'. Each classroom had examples of artefacts and models, written pieces and pictures showing the period the students had studied. There were also oral presentations given.

The school has strong links with the British Embassy and the British Council. Year 11 girls for example met with the British Ambassador at the UK Embassy to look at attitudes and aspirations of females in Algeria; the British Council ran sessions for KS3 students on COP26. KS3 students have worked with a local artist in producing ceramic tiles using a visit to the Casbah as a stimulus. There have also been visits to a local milk and cheese factory for Year 10 and a KS4 visit to a local radio station. In primary, students have visited the Bardo museum and Cleopatra's burial mound.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school has in place and makes available to parents a clear complaints policy, which meets the BSO requirements. Concerns are rare, but occasionally parents wish to raise issues with the school. In such cases, the policy makes it clear that they will be treated fairly and with propriety. Parents and prospective parents have access to this policy via the school website.

At stage 1, it is hoped that concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. BSA staff are required to listen 'carefully and patiently'; parents are asked to initially contact their child's subject/class/house tutor. In most cases, it is expected that this leads to a resolution, to the parents' and teacher's satisfaction.

If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it can be necessary to involve the respective head of department or head of school. The member of staff dealing with the concern/complaint will make a written record of all concerns and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 15 working days or in the event that the teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parents are advised to proceed with their concern in writing to stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2 (known as formal resolution) requires the parents to put their concern in writing to the headteacher. The headteacher will then decide on the appropriate course of action to take. Action is promised within ten working days. In most cases, the headteacher will meet the parents concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. Full written records of all meetings and interviews are held in relation to the concern.

Once the headteacher is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents are informed of this decision in writing, giving reasons.

If the parent/s remain unsatisfied with the decision, they proceed to stage 3, where they would contact the founder and director of the company to which the school belongs. Stage 3 is a formal hearing conducted by the founder and a panel. The panel would be 3 persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed by the complainant and would include at least one person who is independent of the management and running of the school.

At this stage, the headteacher would be asked to submit the school's case in writing; this would also be sent to the parent by the company's administrator. Once each party has received the other party's statement, further written comments (if needed) would be sent to the founder via the company's administrator, within 5 days of receiving them. The parents and headteacher may then attend the discussions that take place at the panel hearing. The founder is required to deal with the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The outcome (findings and any recommendations) would then be sent to both parties. The decision of the founder/panel is considered to be final.

## 12. Standard 8

### Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management at BSA are excellent.

The school is run in a highly efficient manner. The SMT are supportive, inclusive and inspirational to the whole school community. A robust and well thought out school development plan is in the process of being implemented and will have a positive effect on the short-term future of the school. Leaders at a senior level have an accurate and shared understanding of how well the school functions and what needs improving. Staff morale and engagement is high and teachers are invested in being part of the school community.

Staff are proactive and enthusiastic about their own development, with shared CPD taking place in staff meetings. Examples of this are sharing effective assessment for learning strategies and group work strategies, and the use of the app *Kahoots*. Dissemination of new teaching styles and methodologies is working effectively and this has created a motivated and enthusiastic teaching team.

Teaching and learning lesson observations, 'book looks', learning walks and data scrutiny, identify training needs and curriculum reviews: they are regularly undertaken by the SMT.

Leaders have clearly and effectively communicated the school vision and this is embedded into the culture of the school and safeguarding the students and their interests is integral to the overall ethos of the leadership team. This is fully embraced by all stakeholders. Students' welfare is actively promoted and they feel safe.

There is a disposition of communication, independence, curiosity, risk-taking, resilience and creativity. These are at the heart of an already vibrant culture, which develops the whole child, enabling students to flourish and fulfil their potential. This is a direct result of the leadership and management of the school. Students at BSA are happy and motivated to learn. They enjoy their education and even the very youngest are able to develop their personal qualities to the full. Relationships in the school, at every level, are excellent. Leaders model the best examples of relationships and behaviours, so that respect, courtesy and good manners are the norm.

Senior leaders have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a relentless focus on driving forward an ambitious and collaborative school development plan, with the main interests of the students at the forefront.

Senior leaders are able to make and carry challenging decisions for the good of the school and the successful recruitment processes employed have resulted in maintaining a good quality of education and good progress and achievement for all students. As part of a new recruitment plan, staff retention has been identified by the SMT as an area for their attention: the school is currently preparing for the piloting of IQTS for local staff and is developing links with Canterbury Christ Church University, in order to offer this scheme.