



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection Report

British School of Sofia

Bulgaria

Date	17 th - 19 th May 2021
Inspection number	20210517

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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 the 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 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, teachers were observed by inspectors in the classroom and online, on 33 separate occasions. 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 in school was Dr Mark Evans. The team member on site was Ryan Rearney and Charlene Carrett worked remotely.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School of Sofia (BSS) meets all standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school offers a high-quality of British education that meets the needs of its pupils. The curriculum is rich and inspiring. Teachers make good use of the resources and of outdoor spaces to plan and provide interesting lessons across all subject areas. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they really enjoy school. As a result, they make good progress and become confident and articulate learners who speak English well.

3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths including:

- a broad and balanced curriculum
- a caring and nurturing environment
- confident and articulate pupils
- thorough and effective governance
- hardworking and effective leadership
- positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- develop teaching further, to ensure that all lessons are of a quality that matches that of the best;
- enhance teachers' understanding and fluency in the use of attainment data, so that it has maximum impact of learning;
- refine the leadership of subject areas, to ensure provision is secure and focussed in all parts of the curriculum.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	British School of Sofia				
Address	Bulgaria, 1700, Sofia, Vitosha quarter, 1 "Ekaterina Nencheva" 1				
Telephone number	+359 886 510 510				
Fax number	+359 2 979 00 60				
Website	www.bssofia.bg				
Email address	office@bssofia.bg				
Headteacher Principal	Matthew Osborne Teodora Nenova				
Chairman of Board/ Proprietor	Teodora Nenova				
Age range	3 years to 18 years				
Total number of pupils	291	<i>Boys</i>	141	<i>Girls</i>	150
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	6	<i>12-16 years</i>	106	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	36	<i>16-18 years</i>	25	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	118	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

The British School of Sofia (BSS) was established in 2009. It is an international school providing a British international curriculum. There are over 290 pupils from 42 different countries. Approximately 36% of pupils are Bulgarian nationals. BSS is still the only BSO accredited school in Bulgaria.

The school has moved from quarterly terms to the more familiar three terms. These are divided up into the half-terms as you would find in UK. In 2019, due to growth, BSS moved to newly built premises, which means that the school is now located in three buildings, in close proximity to one another.

The school was first accredited with BSO status in 2015. BSS is a member of COBIS and ECIS. The school offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (from 2016) and International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (from 2021) for the eldest pupils after successfully completing the IB inspection.

BSS promotes an ethos of inclusivity and encourages both staff and pupils to embrace diversity and celebrate differences.

4.1 British nature of the school

- The school delivers the English National Curriculum and follows the UK's Early Years and Foundation Stage guidance.
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision, curriculum activities, displays and events.
- The school is well resourced in materials that are in use in British curriculum schools.
- The school has a uniform policy, like many English schools.
- The school's house point and rewards system reflect those used in UK schools.
- English is the language of instruction and both pupils and staff are expected to use English throughout the school day.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by BSS fully meets the requirements of the BSO Framework.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of curriculum at BSS is good, with many aspects being outstanding.

BSS offer an inclusive, engaging and high-quality curriculum which is reflective of the pupils' individual needs. Effective schemes of work are in place and ensure that the curriculum provide opportunities for pupils to learn and make good progress.

The thematic approach to learning supports pupils from all educational backgrounds to transition into the school. During parent and pupil meetings, many parents expressed how well this process is managed. The curriculum has been built around the strong values of the school and it drives a holistic approach to developing the pupils' personal and social skills, preparing them well for the future.

In Kindergarten (KG), the curriculum is underpinned by the EYFS principles and offers the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). The provision provides many opportunities for child-initiated learning and a safe environment for children to develop their independent and exploration skills. Pupils in KG are working towards the Early Learning Goals and the staff skilfully adapt the curriculum according to the child's ability and interests.

'Jolly Phonics', a synthetic and multi-sensory phonics programme - informed by the DfE 'Letters and Sounds' - is delivered from KG to Grade 2 and then transitions into Jolly Grammar from Grade 3 – 6. Grade 1 to 6 follow the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), alongside the Cambridge Curriculum for mathematics and English in Grades 1 to 4. The Cambridge Curriculum for science is introduced from Grade 1 onwards. Grades 7 to 8 continue to follow the Cambridge Curriculum for English, mathematics and science and the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC).

The IEYC, IPC and IMYC offer opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific, technological, linguistic, creative and artistic talents which is set out in the schools' curriculum policy. Pupils have the opportunity to share these talents through exit points, extra-curricular activities and the school's talent competition, 'BSS Got Talent'.

Pupils study IGCSE courses in Grades 9 and 10 and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Grades 11 and 12. The BSS 'Keys to Success' facilitates and

continues the development of communication and listening skills, encouraging pupils to direct their own learning and solve problems through collaborative group work.

English is the language of instruction but the BSS ethos is that nurturing and developing a child's mother tongue is essential. From KG, Bulgarian and French native language are offered as well as Bulgarian, Spanish and German as foreign languages. French, Greek, Arabic and Chinese is available to IGCSE pupils and other languages are considered upon request. There is a strong focus on the development of language skills and meeting pupils' individual needs.

BSS have small class sizes and flexible streaming takes place for English and mathematics from Grade 1. Additional English lessons and personalised individual educational plans where needed, ensure all pupils can access the curriculum and make progress.

The extensive extra-curricular activities available to all pupils is a real strength of the school, pupil participation is high. BSS provide an extensive range which include sport, music, chess, Russian language, Taekwondo and dance, as well as the Duke of Edinburgh International Awards. Educational trips and excursions are related to topics allowing pupils to make relevant links, deepen their understanding and create memorable learning experiences.

From Grade 7, pupils are given excellent personalised support in choosing careers and have the opportunity to engage with guest speakers from universities and different sectors, most recently a journalist from the BBC. From Grade 10, pupils are allocated a mentor and can talk through their career pathways with the school's counsellor and careers advisor.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The school meets the standard. The quality of teaching is good with outstanding practice evident in some classes, though some lessons are less successful.

In all lessons, teachers are confident and have developed effective working relationships with pupils. They provide lots of praise and encouragement. Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Classroom time is well managed, and pace is appropriate.

BSS uses a thinking-based learning programme. This involves infusing instruction in higher-order thinking skills into content instruction in ways that prompt pupils to use these skills to develop a deeper understanding of the curricular content they are being taught. This links with concept based learning and the expectations for the IB programme. In classes observed, pupils achieved this through collaborative work, group activities and independent work. The best teachers encourage different strategies for different pupils in order for all in the class to make progress and achieve the learning objective

In the best lessons, the level of challenge for pupils is high, but appropriate. For example, in a Grade 11 IB physics lesson on work, force and displacement, the teacher asked "When the Earth is rotating around the sun, is work done?". Management of the pupils' behaviour is excellent; the quality of relationships is very high. In some Early Years classes, the pupils were challenged with physical tasks like pouring sand and water. Their attention was to the tasks was very clear, and they learnt well.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the English National Curriculum and they plan purposeful lessons which sustains pupils' interest. For example, in one Grade 2 Bulgarian language (for foreigners) lesson on myths and legends, the teacher skilfully used the whole corridor to display key words. The pupils were really motivated and learned all about the labours of Hercules in a fun and engaging manner.

Teachers plan lessons and put them on to the school management platform. Here planning is monitored by the stage leaders and senior leaders. Parents and pupils also have access to the platform and to the lessons stored. The system creates a presentation for each lesson taught and this allows parents to check on the lesson taught on a specific day. It also offers the opportunity for pupils who are absent to have access to what is happening at school.

Relationships throughout the school are strong and positive. Even when teaching is not engaging, the pupils behave well and remain on task.

The best teachers are keen to follow the pupils' interests, even if it means straying from the lesson plan. In one Grade 2 class, the animated discussion about the differences and similarities between apples and oranges was correctly encouraged by the teacher, even though part of the lesson had to be postponed to another occasion. In IB world languages lessons, the continued use of the target language was challenging for many pupils, but really helped them to make good progress.

Most BSS teachers create attractive classroom environments that support the learning in class and promote high standards of work. In many EYFS, primary 1 and primary 2 classes, displays were attractive and celebrated pupils work well. Resources are used creatively by teachers to enable pupils to grasp concepts quickly and make good progress.

In the few less successful lessons, the needs of the pupils are not as well met and behaviour management is not sufficiently effective. In some Key Stage 1 lessons, pupils' attention was not sufficiently focussed on the task in hand, and so some did not learn as well as they could have.

IT is used effectively in some lessons, for example a Year 8 history lesson, when pupils were encouraged to research the background and impact of the atomic bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Without prompting from the teacher, one pupil offered the thought that 'maybe the USA was attempting to demonstrate that they had that power and to assert dominance'.

iPads are a requirement for each pupil from Grade 1 and above. Teachers are also issued with iPads. As the school gradually moves away from using paper based resources, teachers are encouraged to use applications to enhance lessons in order to help the pupils utilise these successfully. Through the school platform, pupils, teachers and parents access the school library both for hard copy and online resources.

Google classroom is used to enhance lessons and now *Bitrix* is used as a communication tool for the teachers, parents and pupils. The school library contains a range of additional resources for the use of teachers and pupils.

During the remote-learning period of the Covid-19 pandemic, staff worked effectively to ensure all pupils had access to high quality learning through well adapted teaching. During a focus meeting, parents expressed their gratitude and admiration, not only for the education their child received, but for the support and guidance from staff.

Partisan political views are precluded in the teaching of all subjects. The content of the curriculum is presented impartially with an appropriate balance of opposing views were applicable. In an observed lesson, pupils compared and

contrasted democracies with dictatorships, as well as forms of political and media censorship.

5.3 *Standards achieved by pupils*

The standards at BSS are good, with pupils' personal and social development being outstanding.

Results gained at IGCSE and IB are excellent. On entry, most pupils are speakers of English as a second language. The school benefits from the small class sizes, enabling teachers to know individual pupils and monitor their progress closely. Teachers have a strong understanding of their pupils' personal and social needs.

After returning to school from remote learning, the schools' main priorities for KG pupils were to focus on the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Placing great emphasis on the pupils settling back into their learning environment and re-establishing friendships. The staff created a curriculum that was progressive and supportive of the current climate and needs of the pupils, ensuring they made good progress from their starting points.

Most of the Kindergarten pupils attended the Summer Camp allowing staff to continue to support and address any gaps within their learning. From KG to Grade 2, the staff have implemented a range of UK modified assessments to ensure each pupil's progress is carefully tracked.

In Primary, Cambridge progress checks confirms that almost all pupils are working in line with UK expectation. Cambridge checkpoints were completed at the end of Grade 6 and results show that the percentage of pupils achieving the highest levels in English, mathematics and science, were 62%, 54% and 86%.

Pupils who have special educational needs have Individual Educational Plans that are closely monitored by the schools' counsellor and class teacher. The progress against the individual targets are closely monitored and appropriate levels of support are always available.

A significant achievement was that 85% of IGCSE pupils achieved a C or above in 5 or more of their subjects (UK average 76%), 54% of IGCSE candidates achieved an A or above (UK average 25.9%) and 17% of IGCSE candidates achieved an A*. IB examination results highlight the positive achievements of the oldest pupils with 100% pass rate, the average point score was 35, five points above international averages. The highest candidate point score at BSS was 41.

Attendance on the first day of inspection was 90%.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils is a significant strength of the school.

A significant emphasis is placed on developing the whole child and this is evidenced through the planning and embedding of planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons, the Youth Effectiveness Programme and accompanying pupil club (YET), circle time in the lower grades, and the fifty-two virtues approach to assemblies. The SMSC team, along with the school counsellors, have designed and successfully implemented a series of thought-provoking activities based around a weekly virtue. This approach using metaphors, habits of mind, real-life contextual examples of each virtue, and pupil reflection was evident throughout upper primary to Grade 12.

Pupils gain a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship in Bulgaria, the UK, and internationally through the topics they study. The implementation of the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) and Diploma Programme (IBDP) has also bolstered pupil understanding of what it means to be a global citizen in the 21st century. The promotion of tolerance, respect for self and others, and development of pupil critical thinking skills permeate all aspects of school life. The observed rapport between pupils as well as teacher-pupil relationships is built on a secure foundation of trust, respect, and understanding. Fundamental British values are instilled both explicitly and implicitly through topics of study including the Suffragette movement and extracurricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Cultural understanding and development are outstanding. Pupils are given the opportunity to celebrate diversity in a range of local and international festivals throughout the academic year. Pupils studying modern foreign languages organised a bake sale exploring foods from a variety of countries including Egypt, Sweden, Greece, and many more. The teaching of modern foreign languages such as Bulgarian, French, Spanish, and German allows pupils to be immersed in other cultures from as young as grade 4. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and lower primary, parents have presented to pupils and explored different foods and cultures. PSHE topics such as 'Responsible Citizen' together with IPC topics on 'Society' and 'Internationalism', further enhance international mindfulness. In addition, the sharing of experiences between peer groups, and presentations by visitors to the school from a wide range of cultures enhance provision such as the British Ambassador to Bulgaria.

Pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to explore and develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence through a wide range of experiences in and beyond the classroom. The school has put in place a detailed assembly scheme from upper primary to Grade 12 based upon allowing pupils to reflect upon personal characteristics.

The Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) component of the IB Diploma programme enables pupils to further develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. The Duke of Edinburgh Award encourages pupils to develop resilience, independence, and key interpersonal skills. Grade 12 pupils presented confidently to a class of Grade 11 pupils regarding the highs and lows of the Extended Essay (EE) aspect of the IB programme.

There is a very palpable community feel to the school. This is evident in interactions between pupils in lessons as well as around the school setting. Pupils are open-minded and supportive of one another. They enjoy the regular celebration of individuals' and group success. In the lower primary building, pupils participated in a "design your own COVID-19 mask competition". Pupils of all ages are comfortable and confident when contributing ideas, responding to questions, engaging in discussions, and performing in front of their peers. They are offered a range of spiritual experiences and show a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them. In Grade 1 pupils completed a portfolio of work based around the concept of, "Who am I?". This allowed pupils to question what makes them unique and explore the concept through a variety of subjects ranging from body systems in experimental science to self-portraits in art.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. The moral development of pupils throughout the school is excellent. The school prides itself on ensuring that pupils understand how individual liberty, tolerance, respect for the law, and each other contribute to a caring, forward-thinking society. The school encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong. It employs a restorative justice approach to behaviour interventions, encouraging pupils to reflect and propose solutions. The school counselling team has worked tirelessly with each year group to help pupils explore their emotions and how this links to their actions and the consequences. Pupils with emotional issues are encouraged to express them through expressive means in carefully designed sessions such as movement, drawing, and the use of musical instruments. Grade 8 pupils had thought-provoking conversations on the topic of, "why is the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a controversial topic?". Pupils have also been consulted about and provide input on appropriate consequences for the breaking of rules. Pupils are polite, respectful, and excellent ambassadors for their school.

Social awareness and cooperation between pupils are evident in many lessons. Pupils in lower primary compared different families across the world. This included the British royal family and a family in sub-Saharan Africa who complete a 5 kilometre "water walk" each day. Collaborative learning and peer assessment are significant features throughout all key stages. At the heart of the school is the wish to foster a feeling of togetherness and 'family'. This was repeatedly emphasised by parents in their meeting with the accreditation team. Parents praised the efforts of the school. Parents stated consistently how happy and safe their children feel and how they really look forward to coming to school.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school meets the standard.

Policies to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils are in place and regularly reviewed. A designated safeguarding lead and deputy are in place, they monitor the implementation of policies regarding safeguarding and child protection.

There are comprehensive risk assessment processes and policies for both school and off-site visits. The school reported that regular fire drills take place. These are held appropriately on a single spreadsheet. Evacuation maps and procedures are visible in all classrooms. Pupils knew what to do and where to go in the event of a drill.

The school has a formal written behaviour policy that promotes good behaviour and manners. This is available on the parent portal. The policy is displayed and implemented across the school. The general behaviour of the pupils observed during the inspection was good. BSS *Golden Rules* are displayed in all classrooms. The school has an online procedure and system for recording poor behaviour and sanctions taken. This information can be accessed by parents immediately through the parent portal.

Parents receive notifications keeping them informed as well as other notifications regarding homework assignments and attendance. Parents stated they are incredibly happy with the response time of the school with regards to incidents or parent queries. Pupils stated they are grateful for the intervention of the counselling team to help them work through any behaviour issues they have had.

BSS has an effective anti-bullying policy available on the parent portal. Significant effort has been made through staff training, assemblies, PSHE/YET lessons, and an Anti-Bullying week to raise awareness of bullying. The school has also taken measures to raise awareness of cyberbullying specifically. With the transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, e-safety was a priority for the school. Monitoring of pupil activity on school iPads as well as an active watching and listening approach helped reduce significantly issues relating to cyberbullying.

The school meets all local health and safety requirements and is regularly inspected by Bulgarian authorities. The school has a health and safety policy published on the parent portal. The school is successfully building a culture where health and safety is the responsibility of all. The school doctor with his vast experience of working for the UK National Health Service and exposure to school policies in the UK has helped to transform the school approach to pupil health and welfare in a very positive way. Weekly meetings are conducted and a 'team-around-the-child' approach has been taken. This includes school medical staff, counsellors and if necessary, stage leaders. Staff raised concerns regarding a lack of external facilities to identify

the learning needs of pupils on a local and national level.

Comprehensive records of regular fire drills were provided upon request. Fire standards conform to UK requirements. A hands-on approach to fire safety has been adapted with staff demonstrating in role-play scenarios what to do in the event of a fire. A philosophy of, "it is better to ask for help and training, rather than to think you know everything and make a situation worse" approach has been firmly embedded.

There is a first aid policy in place that is followed by staff. The school doctor and nurses play an integral role and ensure that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner. Staff have been trained in first aid with two or three staff in each Key Stage or floor of the main building being trained. A focus is being put on training drivers and support staff as well. Voluntary first aid courses are now offered as extra-curricular activities to pupils.

Pupils are appropriately supervised during the school day. The school has a well-organised duty rota that ensures good supervision of pupils during the day. A security guard is present at the entrance gate. The entrance to the school is always locked. Staff use their wrist keys to sign in at the secondary building. All visitors to the school must produce proof of ID to be issued with badges. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained which conforms to local regulatory requirements. Attendance registers are taken for each lesson and parents receive instant notifications through the online system. Risk assessments are completed for all school trips in line with the health and safety policy. The school doctor or nurse will be present on school trips. All classrooms have an automatic locking system and can only be accessed using wrist keys.

Science labs in the secondary school building have a first aid trained technician. The technician has access to a first aid kit. Chemicals are double locked in a storage unit inside a locked room. Solutions for acid or base burns are available. The chemical cupboard has a separate ventilation system. An eyewash and chemical shower facility are available.

8. Standard 4

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

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

The suitability of the proprietor is clearly evident. She is a passionate and caring owner, who ensures the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for all pupils. In addition, she takes responsibility for the recruitment and checking of staff credentials.

All members of teaching staff undergo appropriate checks to ensure their suitability for the role when they are appointed to the school. Identity, medical, qualifications and police checks and references were in place for teaching staff appointed to the school and these are held in individual files. The Ministry of Education and the school require that all teaching staff have a minimum of 3 years' experience before being appointed to a teacher position at the school. New staff are invited to visit the school before being appointed.

BSS follow a 'safer recruitment' policy and process. Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks, including police checks in the country of origin, are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in Bulgaria, previous employment activity, character references and suitability to work with children. Attested copies of qualifications are required for all teaching staff. The school does not employ supply staff. There is no evidence that any member of staff or volunteer who carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school is in contravention of any local, overseas or British disqualification, prohibition or restriction.

There is a single list of all adults who work or volunteer in the school. This is regularly updated and shows when they started and stopped working in BSS. Staffing levels are more than adequate for the successful delivery of the curriculum. All teaching staff have qualifications appropriate to their role; many have further academic or teaching qualifications that enhance school development.

9. Standard 5 The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet the required standard for BSO.

The school is spread across three sites. Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils are accommodated in different buildings with the Key Stage 1 building sharing some facilities with a local Bulgarian school. Key Stage 2 and above are in a new school building acquired in the past two years.

Space is limited but utilised well on each site to maximise the provisions available for both pupils and staff. In the main building, rooms have a multi-use approach with ECAs taking place throughout the school day in various rooms. The school has identified the need for more space.

Separate toilet facilities for boys and girls in Grade 2 and above are provided, with hot and cold-water washing facilities. Toilet and washing facilities and fittings are age appropriate. During school hours, staff and visitors have separate designated washroom facilities in the Key Stage 1 building. On the main site, two individual washrooms for males and females are available on each floor and were utilised by both staff and pupils due to ability to lock them while being used.

Suitable outdoor space is limited at the main site. Physical education is delivered in accordance with the school curriculum and outside play can be facilitated. The transport used to convey pupils is fit for purpose. Lighting and heating systems are well maintained and in good working order. Local municipality street lighting ensures footpaths outside the school gates are illuminated.

The three sites are well secured, with a security team monitoring those entering and leaving the sites. Each classroom has an automatic lock which can only be accessed through wrist keys. There are medical clinics on each school site which are staffed by qualified paediatric nurses and managed by the school doctor. The clinics meet all local regulatory requirements. The clinics are equipped with beds, first-aid supplies and running hot and cold water.

The proprietor has invested in air ionisers which have been installed in each classroom across all three sites. The school doctor and medical staff liaise effectively with the cleaning team to ensure effective sanitation of school facilities. Hand-sanitising stations are distributed throughout the sites and staff monitor the wearing of face masks at all times. All fixtures, fittings and furniture on each site are age appropriate. Sound insulation, air conditioning units, lighting and acoustics allow for effective teaching and communication. The flooring is in good condition throughout the school. The outdoor surfaces at the lower primary site are not flat and could constitute a trip hazard. The drainage system allows for the effective disposal of wastewater and surface water.

Classroom lighting is appropriate and well maintained. Good recreational equipment is available for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. Pupils have access to fresh drinking water available from several water coolers and can purchase bottles from the canteen on the main site. All toilets have washing facilities with hot and cold running water. The temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

The school canteen is well staffed, clean and regularly sanitised. The proprietor listened to the views of pupils and parents, changing the food provided on the main site. This was much appreciated by staff, parents, and pupils. School menus are available through the online portal for parents to access. Records of allergies have now been centralised and are kept online. Records of pupil allergies are immediately available to classroom staff when taking attendance registers as well as a paper record which was available to canteen staff.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, prospective parents and its' wider community is excellent.

The school's mission, vision and aims are clearly shared on the school's website. Contact details for the principal and headmaster as well as the school's addresses and appropriate telephone numbers are provided on the website, too. The school's policies are accessible through the parent portal and are reviewed regularly by both of the senior leaders.

Communication was quoted as a strength of the school by the parents and senior pupils. They reported that they can contact all members of staff and will always receive a response within a good time.

Parents are kept well informed of key information through the e-school platform and also via the school's website, coffee mornings and by the daily conversations that they have with their child.

Throughout the school, teachers use technology to share information with parents. Information about the curriculum and each pupils' achievements are stored on the parent portal. This provides parents with detailed feedback on their child's attitudes to learning, attainment and progress across all subjects. Parents expressed how easy it was to navigate around the e-school platform and that they always felt well informed.

In KG, parents add to this information by sharing their own observations of their child's achievements at home. These profile records help to build a comprehensive and ongoing learner profile.

A detailed formal report is sent termly, followed by a parent meeting to talk through the information on children's attainment, progress and attitudes to learning. During the inspection, parents spoke about the clarity and usefulness of these meetings and how they have supported them in clearly knowing how to support their child at home.

Pupils have access to their grades, attendance, timetable, homework and can catch up with lesson materials, if absent. KG pupils have additional communication logs, detailing the amount of food and water they have consumed and examples of their learning experiences.

Parents are always welcomed into school and are invited to regular themed coffee mornings to make suggestions and meet senior members of staff. Parents stated that they are very happy with the school. They spoke about the family feel to the school, the staff's passion, and the high level of care for their children.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

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

The BSS complaints policy goes above and beyond the necessary local requirements. It is open and transparent, allowing for quick and effective dealing of complaints. The policy is to be found in the parents' portal section. There is a form they can fill in if there is a complaint they may have. Parents also have the option of using a special email address if they choose.

Formal complaints are dealt within 2-7 days, or as promptly as possible. Parents are kept informed during the process as well. This is also mentioned in the policy itself.

The school manage to resolve most complaints informally via discussion. Meetings with parents are arranged if necessary. If the school is able to resolve the problem at a class or stage level, we will use this route first. This is also explained in the policy.

To date, complaints have never reached such a point where they have needed to be brought in front of a panel. The escalation beyond an informal level is very rare, not even proceeding to written formal complaints. However, any matters in which parents were dissatisfied with the dealing of a complaint it would be brought in front of the appropriate people.

In such a case, the principal, headmaster, deputy or administrative director would review it. If needed, a stage leader may also be involved. It is also possible to call on the academic dean.

The school generally also calls on the *lead class parent* for the particular year group. If a complaint reached this stage, the written findings would be made available to the relevant people, after an agreement on the way forward had been reached.

The findings and recommendations would be kept with the head of administration and also the head of the school. A written record of any complaints that had reached this stage would be kept with the head of administration and the head.

The written findings would be provided to relevant parties. A copy of these would be held by the head of administration and also the head of the school.

If the matter is one that can be resolved without outside intervention, then all records would remain confidential. If the issue concerned would be of significant magnitude, any complaints or suggestions are made public, in order for a wider array of solutions to be investigated and adequate measures duly taken by both the school and families.

12. *Standard 8* *Leadership and management of the school*

The leadership and management of the school are good and meets the BSO standard.

The proprietor/principal oversees all school policies, ensuring all local requirements are met. She ensures sufficiency of resources through careful financial management, especially during the pandemic.

The school is very well organised and runs well. Operational procedures are well established and understood. The head teacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school. He is well supported by his senior leadership team. Throughout the recent self-evaluation process, the senior leadership team have shown a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

BSS has met the recommendations of the last BSO report well. Rapid growth in pupil numbers is providing increasing opportunities for teachers to undertake leadership responsibilities.

There are regular minuted meetings of the managers to track progress on tasks relating to their roles. In these meetings, the middle and senior leaders discuss each stage and any other issues that may need to be discussed. Performance review is conducted via formal appraisals. The focus has been to develop a confident and consistent approach with the leaders in the school. The proprietor meets with the head and deputy, and in some cases the academic dean, twice a week. This helps with the smooth running of the school as a whole. Stage meetings also happen every second week and the feedback from these are discussed in the leaders' meeting held with the proprietor.

The stage leaders have all completed the Cambridge Professional Development Qualification Certificate (Teaching and Learning). This covered understanding principles of teaching, learning, effective lesson planning and facilitating active learning. This has allowed staff to have a more consistent understanding of what is expected from a lesson.