



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

The O'Brien International School

**San Miguel de Salinas
Spain**

Date **23rd – 24th October 2023**

Inspection number **20231023**

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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, if appropriate); 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, all year groups were observed and all available teachers were seen. 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 other stakeholders, including students. The inspection took place over two days.

The lead inspector in school was Dr Mark Evans. The team member was Kirsty Sharpe, working online.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

This was a compliance inspection, in which standards are judged as *met* or *not met*: no other grades are given. As a result of the inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The O'Brien International School, San Miguel de Salinas, Spain (TOIS) meets the standards required to be an accredited British school overseas.

3.1 Strengths

- i. There are excellent relationships between students and staff;
- ii. Home school communication are good - parents feel they can contact the school and discuss concerns easily;
- iii. Students receive detailed and personalised support in their learning;
- iv. The school premises are a very good fit for the current school;
- v. There is a an onsite *psicopedagoga* who studies students in their learning situation, evaluating, diagnosing and helping those who have learning difficulties;
- vi. There is an evidently strong belief at TOIS that inclusion is a basic right of everyone and that its objective should be to embrace everyone regardless of race, age, gender, disability, religious and cultural beliefs and sexual orientation;
- vii. The school provides well for students who have a history of under-performance or school refusal;
- viii. There is a close and effective working partnership between the administration, the teachers and the proprietor of the school.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Further improve the quality of teaching, assessment and learning in order to raise standards for students, in all subjects, for example looking pace and challenge in lessons, use of IT to enhance learning and the use of classroom display for celebration, information and curriculum personalisation;
- ii. Raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection, by reviewing the current safeguarding policy and associated documents, to ensure it is following best UK practice;
- iii. Review and refresh all the school's policies and protocols, to better include local context and regulations, for example by ensuring the TOIS complaints policy includes *Hoja de Reclamaciones*, clearly distinguishes between head of school and owner.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	The O'Brien International School and College				
Address	C. Gran Vía Balcón Costa, 62, 03193 San Miguel de Salinas, Alicante				
Telephone Number/s	0034 615466398 0034 965076678				
Website Address	https://theobrienlanguagecen.wixsite.com/-the-obrien-academy				
Key Email Address/s	info@theobrienlanguagecentre.es				
Head of curriculum	John O'Brien				
Chair of Board of Governors/ Proprietor	Proprietor John O'Brien				
Age Range	6- 18 years				
Total number of students	50	Boys	25	Girls	25
	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	22	
	3-5 years	59	17-18 years	8	
	6-11 years	216	18+ years	0	
Numbers by age					
Total number of part-time children	0				

4.1 British nature of the school

Many aspects of the school make up its British nature:

- TOIS delivers the English National Curriculum (ENC);
- The school is organised into key stages and year groups;
- The school offers GCSEs and A-Levels;
- The school has a uniform policy, like many English schools;
- All teachers are either trained with UK qualifications or experience of teaching in ENC schools;
- The academic calendar replicates that of a British school.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education at TOIS meets the BSO standard.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum meets the requirements of the BSO standards.

In Key Stages 1-3, subject planning follows the guidelines of the National Curriculum for England and matches the requirements of students. The curriculum mainly takes into account the needs of the individuals and the cohort. End of unit assessments for literacy and numeracy can be oral, or recorded, depending on the age of the children involved, and information from assessments is used to form intervention and add support and challenge to the curriculum. Adequate resources, useful assessment and feedback, enhance and develop the curricular needs of the students. The curriculum is more developed in some areas than in others and there are more opportunities for some students to achieve when expectations and learning objectives are clear.

Teachers are able to quickly identify their students' particular needs and useful feedback enables support to be put into place in a timely manner. The school provides equal opportunities for students to learn and make progress, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), English as a second language (ESL) or those who are particularly talented.

Students with SEND receive additional support after their additional needs are identified, through individual or small group sessions, where the activities are suitably adapted for

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their needs. Adaptation of the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the national and international cohort, whilst still providing a clear British focus and relevancy.

At Key Stages 4 and 5 students have a good range of GCSE subject choices including biology, business, citizenship, English language, geography, maths, sociology, Spanish and statistics. Students take an average 6-9 GCSEs. In 2023, the school offered business, English language, English literature, physical education, psychology, Russian, sociology and Spanish at A-Level and achieved a good pass rate.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment meets the requirements of the BSO standards.

The styles of teaching, learning and assessment equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter (or re-enter) the UK educational system at an appropriate level. Teaching at TOIS encourages students to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability. They increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects that are taught. In the best lessons, active learning experiences and 'awe and wonder' moments shone through.

Throughout the school student behaviour is generally good, with very little outside of normally expected instances of disengagement in classes. The school states that this has been improving consistently for the past few years. The school's to behaviour and discipline is recognised as fair, consistent and transparent, emphasising promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and effort rather than punishing negative behaviour. However, it acts quickly and firmly when necessary.

Classroom resources are of a satisfactory quality, quantity and range. They are generally used effectively. Students' achievements and academic results are also celebrated in school in various ways.

Teaching at TOIS enables students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability, so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. For example in one business studies lesson on the factors that may cause a shift in the supply curve, there were excellent relationships and a very clear learning objective, so all made progress. The students worked on a case study about Nigeria and fish farming.

Teachers show good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and mostly ensure that these are taken into account in the planning and delivery of lessons. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. Most utilise classroom resources effectively; the resources are of a good quality, quantity and range. In a Spanish lesson, the teacher gave written feedback as the lesson progressed. In a GCSE maths lesson on understanding equalities, there was very good individual work showing inequalities on a number line. This was very well explained.

Teachers know individual students well and nearly all lessons are relaxed and purposeful. They encourage students' application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves. Teaching generally involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, suitable activities and sound management of class time. For example, in a Key Stage 2 English

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lesson, the learning objective was clear “to write a short poem using alliteration”. The lesson plan was excellent with clear differentiation and amusing use of the “Peter Piper picked peck of pickled peppers...’.

Teachers utilise effective strategies for managing behaviour. They encourage students to act responsibly; they do not undermine the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. There is no evidence of discrimination against students because of their individual characteristics. In a Key Stage 3 lesson on accents and dialects, there was excellent discussion, and all contributions were valued.

5.3 Standards

Pupils enjoy school and attend well.

The staff are working hard to increase pupil attendance but it is now showing an improving trend. Pupils are punctual and arrive to lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupil’s behaviour at school and their attitude to school is good.

Pupils actively engage in their lessons. Standards of attainment are at least satisfactory, with good features. The school aims that all students leave with a minimum of GCSEs and works individually with students to achieve success. The school offers a good range of GCSE and A-level options. Results are consistent.

Pupils from TOIS successfully secure places at a wide range of colleges, apprenticeship schemes and universities to further continue their education.

The school works hard to be inclusive so that no child who can access the curriculum is refused a place at the school. Many students join the primary school with reading and writing below age related expectations. Progress in reading and writing is good across the school, with students demonstrating good reading standards in most lessons observed.

The systematic teaching of phonics through a published scheme ensures progression of phonics skills through Key Stages 1 and 2. These students utilise a good standard of phonic knowledge to decode words in reading and this was also evident in their writing.

Standards in students’ workbooks were good in books observed in the secondary section of the school. Examples of constructive and purposeful feedback were evident, helping students make progress and improve their work.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students meets the BSO standards. There are some good features.

The school is successful in helping students to develop their personal skills and qualities. Pupils are motivated learners. By the time they leave school, they have the personal and social skills needed to move successfully to the next stage of their lives. University guidance is provided for the students and other activities that develop skills needed for life after TOIS.

Pupils come from different backgrounds and clearly enjoy the cultural and religious diversity within the school. Pupils display an awareness, appreciation and respect for each other, the wider world and other cultures. Pupils show a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves and others. The school works hard to develop knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values. The school actively promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs in many areas. There is a firm understanding of these values across the school.

The opinions and views of students are valued and they have many opportunities to share and discuss these during lessons. Students are courteous and respectful to others, with good manners. They share positive views when talking about TOIS and enjoy attending school. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted through the curriculum. The school encourages students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence in many ways.

The school respects the various traditions and festivals of the community by celebrating events, including a Chinese New Year; Christmas and Easter; Halloween and Diwali.

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

The standard of provision for welfare, health and safety of students at TOIS meets the BSO standard.

The school has all the required policies in place such as health and safety, behaviour and safeguarding. Visitors and staff are required to wear identification badges and access to the building is limited and monitored.

Welfare, health and safety is seen as integral and parents said that they were happy that the school took such good care of their children. All staff contribute to the day-to-day safety of the students, especially during movement around the school.

Attendance is monitored closely and information is regularly shared with parents regarding both attendance and punctuality. Behaviour in the school is generally good, with occasional issues of low level disruption being dealt with efficiently. Expectations are reinforced in the classrooms and corridors, with visual reminders and displays encouraging the students to make the right choices. Playtimes are well supervised, with adults clearly visible on duty. Most students engage in collaborative play. The atmosphere was happy and playful. Corridors and passageways are wide and generally uncluttered. Movement around the school is controlled and calm.

Systems are in place to ensure health and safety laws, and the school has a positive approach to health and safety. The facilities meet and sometimes exceed local requirements; fire standards are met. Fire extinguishers are visible 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.

A central digital record logs behavioural incidents along with key medical and attendance data. When students are absent, the school makes contact with parents directly on the first day of absence. There is a single central register that appropriately details all adults at the school, with dates of reference checks, *Certificado de Delitos de Naturaleza Sexual* and other relevant details, as required.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

The proprietor has a clear vision for the school and supported it enormously. The school ensures that staff have a local police check prior to starting work. Qualifications are checked and references are taken up to provide assurances that the person is qualified and suitable to work with children.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The primary and secondary schools operate within the school building. The building has internal staircases with adequate handrails.

The classrooms are spacious, rooms are labelled, and fire exits signposted. The proprietor is responsible for ensuring the building is fit for purpose. The building is clean and well maintained. Teachers are encouraged to report safety issues. Systems are in place to support effective procedures.

Classrooms across the school are well-lit, have appropriate ventilation and are furnished with age-appropriate tables and chairs. Adequate resources and storage facilities are available within classrooms and communal areas. Shared areas in corridors are utilised effectively. Classrooms and halls are used as working walls and are decorated with displays of students' work. In the best classes, the displays support and stimulate learning. The learning environments are of a good standard.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers and its wider community meets the standard for BSO.

The school works hard to engage at many levels with parents. The school's address and phone number are provided on the school's website and repeated in all newsletters sent to parents. There is a mission statement on the website that is referred to when communicating with parents. The admission policy and others are all available on the website to clarify and explain many scenarios. Parents suggest that they are happy with the information offered.

The website contains a lot of information although it is not always personalised and fully reflective of TOIS. The school's social media page provides a wealth of material about the school and includes contact details, the name of the head teacher and regular academic updates for parents and carers.

Parents are highly supportive of the school and value the opportunities it provides for their children. They receive regular updates about their child's learning.

Parents interviewed were complimentary about the ease of communication with the school. They stated that they were impressed at the school's ability and flexibility to meet the needs of each child. Communication is cited as a strength by the parents: they feel they have a voice and communication with the school is easy.

Written reports, and parent teacher conferences are scheduled in advance and communicated to manage expectations of parents and carers. All parents were confident that teachers are very proactive and support students with their learning. Teachers are approachable and work with parents to overcome issues.

Additionally, the school's admission policy and various other policies are readily accessible on the website, and need to be updated and personalised to the school. The admissions policy and exclusion policy are currently one policy, which is not best practice. Safeguarding and child protection policies however could be merged, and associated policies including whistleblowing created.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

TOIS meets the BSO standard.

The school implements a clear policy for handling complaints which meets host country requirements and reflects good practices from the UK. It is made available for the parents and sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint following informal and formal stages.

12. Standard 8

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school meet the BSO standard. Students make progress, enjoy good academic success and are well prepared to move on to universities in the UK and around the world.

The school's mission is well understood by the school community including staff, parents and students. The school's leadership has a plan to continue to grow the school and support more of the local community.

Leadership team members' attitude towards teaching and learning practices is highly commendable. The team's decisions regarding activities that support the TOIS mission, vision and values ensure strong development of the learner profile. Being independent, respectful and caring are the core values that are practised by the school leaders and they lead by example.

All leaders and teachers are ambitious for the outcomes for each and every student. Senior leaders and teaching staff engage in a range of management duties alongside their teaching commitment. At all levels of responsibility, the leadership and management of TOIS are effective in achieving its aims: in particular, meeting the needs of each student.

Role modelling has shaped the school's culture and has a strong impact on learners. Clear job descriptions are provided to all employees to ensure that the expectations for all staff are understood and consistently applied. The job descriptions are reviewed periodically to ensure that they are up to date.

There is a very genuine desire on the part of the school leaders for every pupil to become the best they can be and leave school with the best qualifications to support them in life beyond TOIS.