



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

British School Muscat (Primary School)

Oman

Date
Inspection #

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Contents		page
1	Purpose and scope on the inspection	2
2	Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
3	Overall effectiveness of the school	3
	3.1 What the school does well	3
	3.2 Points for improvement	5
4	The context of the school	6
	4.1 The British nature of the school	8
5	Standard 1 The quality of education provided by the school	10
	5.1 Curriculum	10
	5.2 Teaching and assessment	12
	5.3 Standards achieved by students	14
6	Standard 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students	16
7	Standard 3 The welfare, health and safety of students	18
8	Standard 4 The suitability of the proprietor and staff	19
9	Standard 5 The premises and accommodation	21
10	Standard 6 The provision of information for parents, carers and others	22
11	Standard 7 The school's procedures for handling complaints	24
12	Standard 8 The quality of provision for boarding	-
13	Standard 9 Leadership and management of the school	25

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 covers 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 their 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.

This inspection focussed on the Primary School. During the inspection visit, the whole of the first day and much of the second day were spent in classrooms with the students and teachers. All teachers were observed and many learning walks took place during the visit. School documentation and policies were analysed and attainment data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the Head of School, the Head of the Primary School, members of the senior staff, teachers, other school staff, and with representatives from the Board of Governors, parents and students. The team spent two full days in the Primary School.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team member was Usma Zaffar.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School Muscat (Primary School) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

British School Muscat (Primary) is an outstanding school with some exemplary features. Standards attained by the students are very high, both academically and in other spheres. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding. Parents, staff and students interviewed were very supportive of the school: this is confirmed by the latest surveys, which show that more than 97% of parents felt that their children liked the school. From a high baseline, the Primary School has made excellent progress since the last inspection. Some aspects of the learning and care provided at the school are highly innovative.

3.1 What the school does well

The Primary School at British School Muscat (BSM) has many strengths:

- The standards of attainment are very high. End of Key Stage results are well above the UK average in all subjects.
- Students' progress is at the heart of the school: students are closely monitored and where necessary, interventions put into place quickly and effectively.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary: they have excellent manners, and there are very positive relationships between adults and students.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the students effectively across all key stages, for example in the Early Years where 'in the moment' planning is used to plan very effectively according to specific needs.
- There are strong vertical links across the primary and secondary school, where both value the other's expertise and views.
- Transition between Early Years and Year 1 is exemplary, as well as transition between Years 6 and 7.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding.
- High quality provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) provides the appropriate and successful intervention for individuals.

- The school's use of the online 'Perspective' tool for recording and monitoring is outstanding and used effectively by the staff for identifying areas for improvement.
- The best teaching is innovative, engages students very well and focusses very successfully on individual learning needs and strengths.
- The school's approach to welfare, health and safety of the students is exemplary.
- Communication with parents is outstanding. Parents are very positive about the ease of communication with the school and regularity of information provided.
- The Parent Friends Association works very well with the school and has been key in organising a range of successful events.
- Leadership of the school is outstanding: it successfully focusses on continuous incremental improvement, innovation and empowerment of staff and students.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently as high as that of the best by:
 - considering a more consistent synthetic phonics approach, so that all students receive the same high-quality expert teaching;
 - maximising challenge in learning for all students, especially for the most able, ensuring that the pace of all lessons is appropriate for that activity;
 - promoting the full range of computing activities to enable learners more routinely to use investigative, enquiry and other IT skills.

- Exploring ways to reduce further the impact of out-of-room activities like swimming and PE, on the next lesson in the classroom.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	British School Muscat				
Address	PO Box 1907, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman				
Telephone number	+968 24600842				
Fax number	+968 24601062				
Website	www.britishschoolmuscat.com				
Email address	principal@britishschoolmuscat.com				
Principal	Mr Kai Vacher				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Mr Dominic Myers				
Age range	3-18 years*				
Total number of students	1,236	Boys	631	Girls	605
Numbers by age	0-2 years	Nil	11-16 years	491	
	3-5 years	108	16-18 years	95	
	5-11 years	542	18+ years	Nil	
Total number of part-time children	Nil				

*The primary school only was inspected during this visit.

British School Muscat (BSM) was established by a Royal Charter granted by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said in April 1973. The objects of the school were to provide education for English-speaking children in Oman in accordance with best British practice, in order to enable students to qualify for subsequent education in the United Kingdom without disadvantage. English has to be the official language of the school and the medium of

instruction. This Royal Charter means that BSM has more autonomy than Omani government schools and other international schools. It allows the school to set its own priorities and develop its own curriculum, in line with best UK practice.

There are about 650 students on the roll of the Primary School, representing 55 nationalities.

The school was last inspected in 2014, under the same framework for British Schools Overseas.

4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of BSM is very evident.

The language of instruction in the school is English. The school is organised according to the structures used in English schools. It is an accredited member of the British Schools of the Middle East and the Council of British International Schools. BSM was accepted into the membership of the international division of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference in April 2015 and is an accredited AQA, Edexcel, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) Centre and accredited BTEC Centre. The school has also achieved the UK Careers Mark accreditation. The British Ambassador serves as the School's President.

The curriculum used is based on the Early Years guidance and National Curriculum (NC) of England, leading to GCSE examinations in Key Stage 4, with A Level and BTEC qualifications in Key Stage 5. This ensures that students can join or re-join the British education system without disadvantage, at any stage. Time allocations and the allocation of subjects at least meet requirements. Assessments are based on national standards from the UK and UK examination boards.

A significant majority of BSM teachers are recruited from and trained in the UK, or have UK teaching experience. Performance management processes, staff target setting and annual review meetings are based on best UK practice and DfE model policies. A significant majority of the professional development for staff is provided through membership of COBIS, BSME, HMC, SSAT and other UK-based providers.

Of the 650 students on roll in the Primary School, more than 40% are British.

Enrichment provision including clubs and school trips are important in the life of the school, and are in line with British best practice. The school marks Remembrance Day; students with musical ability are invited to play every year for the British community in Oman; there is celebration of cultural festivals in line with British values, such as Christmas and Easter.

Visitors to the school are often from the UK: for example, the author Harry Baker, Liz Simmonds the British Olympic swimmer and the British Ambassador have all been to BSM recently.

The majority of BSM students go on to British curriculum schools either in the UK or internationally, or go to top UK universities including Imperial College and UCL. Since September 2015, almost 20 UK universities have visited the school.

BSM is structured according to the pastoral systems used in English schools, organised by both year groups and houses. Communications from the school to families and students are provided in English, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided at BSM is outstanding.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum across the Primary School is outstanding. It is broad, balanced and innovative, meeting the needs of all students effectively across all stages, this is especially evident in the Early Years. The teachers are committed to and experienced in matching the curriculum to support students who have specific English language or special educational needs.

In the previous three years, the curriculum has been broadened to include:

- 'In the moment' planning for Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- 'Free Flow' for Year 1
- Challenge Time into Year 2
- Arabic in Years 4, 5 and 6
- Brass instrumental tuition programme introduced in Year 6

There is full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age, meeting local regulations and international norms. The principal language of instruction is English. The curriculum is British within an international context. The external benchmarking tests such as Year 6 SATs are those commonly used in schools within the UK. This enables students to enter, or re-enter the UK educational system at an appropriate level, if that is what they wish to do. The subject matter is appropriate for the age and aptitudes of students.

The curriculum enrichment is outstanding; since September 2016, 132 clubs have been offered by teachers, which have been attended by 89% of the primary students. The enrichment is enhanced significantly through an extensive programme of assemblies and trips. Students at BSM also have the opportunity to attend clubs such as the Emirates Literacy Festival and the International Maths Quest in Geneva where a secondary teacher has also accompanied the primary children as well as a range of sporting, drama, dance and musical activities.

Off-site learning opportunities are varied and well attended, offering a wide range of

excellent learning experiences, including:

- Dubai for the Literature Festival
- Maths Quest in Geneva
- Visit to the White Mosque
- Visit to the Natural History Museum
- Residential trips in Year 4 for 1 night's camping at Muscat Dive Centre, Year 5 for 2 nights in Nizwa and Year 6 for 3 nights at a campsite in Sifah.
- Trips in and around various sites in Muscat

PSHCE and citizenship are strong with well-developed programmes. The breadth of the curriculum provides all students with the opportunity to learn and make progress.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are excellent: teaching is always at least good, and often outstanding. Assessment is excellent.

Teaching enables students to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability. Prior learning is effectively used to reinforce, therefore increasing the students understanding and developing their skills. Teachers use questioning highly effectively and are looking constantly for ways of teaching in the moment. The learning environment encourages students to lead their own learning. Examples of this can be seen in free flow in Foundation Stage and Year 1. The introduction of the 'focus child' has had a positive impact on the learning and progress made by the children, and is well received by the parents.

Active, independent learning is a key feature of the best lessons. In a Year 1 mathematics class on "doubling", for example, the teacher set the scene very clearly, then focussed her attention on groups and individuals, allowing the others to work autonomously.

Lessons are well planned, taking into account students' strengths and weaknesses, matching learning objectives and activities to different needs, interests and abilities. Teaching methods are effective, suitable activities are used and class time is managed properly. Collaboration is encouraged, for example in the Year 3 science lesson on muscles, during which students worked together to contract and relax their own muscles, showing great focus. The teacher did not give the answers, but allowed the children to find the answers themselves, thus greatly increasing their engagement and understanding.

Learning is also planned very effectively through project days, such as the Year 6 Chocolate Day or Year 4 India Day. During the latter, students rotated between cooking, dancing, 'travelling' and so on, thus learning in a wide variety of ways and developing a detailed understanding of the country. It was a fun day with exceptional engagement from the students, but had involved a great deal of detailed planning and preparation.

Teachers show an excellent understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, needs (including, in the main, the needs of EAL learners) and prior attainments of the students. They also demonstrate very strong knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they teach, which further enhances learning. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to facilitate critical thinking skills.

Classroom resources are of an excellent quality, quantity and range. They are used effectively. All classrooms are inviting and stimulating learning environments. They all have working walls which are interactive and are used to record, visualise and assist learning.

There is a very robust framework to assess student progress in learning. This is used regularly and thoroughly through a centralised tracking systems monitored by the Primary Extended Leadership Team

The styles of teaching, learning and assessment equip students very well with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter (or re-enter) the UK educational system at an appropriate level.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

The standards achieved by students at BSM are outstanding. Ongoing daily formative assessment is used to track individual student progress, set targets and inform planning and provision.

Key Stage 1 teacher assessment results	2016 at or above expected standard
Reading	88%
Maths	85%
Writing	85%

Key Stage 1 results are consistently well above the UK national average in reading, mathematics, and in writing. Attainment in reading is well above the 74% UK national average with 88% of students reaching the expected level. Attainment in maths is above the 73% UK national average with 85% of students reaching the expected level. Attainment in writing is well above the 65% UK national average with 85% of students reaching the expected level.

Students continue to make excellent progress and attain high standards in Key Stage 2.

2016 Results	Reading: at or above expected standard	Grammar: at or above expected standard	Mathematics: at or above expected standard	Writing: at or above expected standard
All (86)	81%	87%	88%	82%
Boys (39)	74%	82%	95%	74%
Girls (47)	87%	91%	83%	87%
EAL (22)	68%	77%	77%	63%
SEN (8)	25%	37%	50%	82%

70% of students achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, well above the UK national average of 53%. Attainment in reading is above the 66% UK national average with 81% of students reaching the expected level. Attainment in grammar is also above the 72% UK national average with 87% of students reaching the expected level. Attainment in mathematics is above the 70% UK national average with 88% of students reaching the expected level.

Teachers' assessments of writing are above the 74% UK national average, with 82% of the students reaching the expected level. Almost all children make good or outstanding progress throughout each academic year.

The introduction of nine student progress meetings throughout the academic year highlights any concerns. It allows BSM to put in interventions and check for their effectiveness. Parents are well informed and students are regularly monitored by the inclusion team.

In the 2017 Parent Survey, more than 90% of the parents who responded, confirmed that they were happy with the progress their child/ren made at school.

6. *Standard 2*

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding, especially taking account of the needs of the diverse student body.

Spiritual development is excellent. 92% of the parents think that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility. The school takes pride in developing global citizens through the BSM Learning Ethos which aims to create learners who are reflective and able to show empathy. The ethos underpins the school's commitment to developing positive characteristics in students: it is used as the framework for the assembly programme, and the rewards and awards scheme.

Relationships are positive and there is a relaxed and purposeful atmosphere around the school. There is a diverse enrichment programme that inspires students to develop their passions: levels of engagement are high. Students develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence in many different ways, for example through the aforementioned enrichment programme and through the curriculum itself. The PSHCE lessons, pastoral support and assembly programme enable students to reflect on their understanding of themselves and develop self-knowledge.

They also support students understanding of right and wrong, which is excellent. There is a consistent approach to tackling occasional behaviour issues and the Positive Behaviour policy is consistently applied by staff which minimises incidents. Both in lessons and in other school spaces, students co-operate very well in groups, and are friendly and considerate in their dealings with each other.

Students are confident in their manner to one another, in their relationships with adults in school and in their approach to visitors. There are strong links to charitable organisations and students involve themselves in community projects enthusiastically, for example during a Year 2 'Monster Day' which raised money for charity. Year 6 students worked with Dar Al Atta'a on the 'Charity Clothes sort' which supports the local Omani community and villages in the mountain regions. They also completed the Chocolate Enterprise Initiative and donated the money to the Sri Lanka school appeal.

The school provides students with a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship in the host country, the UK and internationally. It helps students acquire in a variety of ways an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. This is done in a manner that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. In lessons and in social spaces, students co-operate in groups, and are friendly and considerate in their dealings with each other.

Through the PSHCE lessons and assembly programme, the school explores and celebrates the multicultural community. Within the curriculum, teachers encourage students to learn about other groups to promote understanding and engender tolerance of other cultures. The Year 6 'Dragons' Den' initiative allowed students to explore their responses to world issues. National Day in Oman is observed with an international theme, celebrating the many nationalities represented in the school.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the students are exemplary.

There are well developed policies in all the required areas. These are implemented carefully and with thought, and are reviewed on a regular basis. The school has an effective written policy to prevent bullying. There are also specific policies that safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school. For example, there are written policies relating to the health and safety of students on activities outside the school and to promote good behaviour. An admission register and an attendance register are kept up-to-date, both of which conform to local regulatory requirements.

There is due regard for health and safety issues which conforms where appropriate to UK standards and exceeds local regulatory requirements, including those of fire safety. There is an appropriate written policy on first aid which is implemented suitably.

Despite the school's complex and often difficult topography, staff are deployed suitably to ensure proper supervision. Written records of sanctions imposed upon students are maintained for serious disciplinary offences; these events are very rare.

Pastoral support for students is excellent with well-developed and adaptive systems that predominantly rely on excellent class teacher support. The development of mindfulness highlights the holistic nature of the school's approach to student welfare. 100% of parents confirm in the 2017 survey that their child feels safe at school (compared to 94% in 2013).

The positive behaviour policy provides clear guidelines on sanctions and recording of behaviour issues. Staff meet at regular intervals to discuss issues of concern. The ICT code of conduct sets out appropriate behaviours for all students. The firewall is CIPA compliant.

The safeguarding policy is written to UK standards and the school operates child protection processes in line with UK best practice. There is a confidential child protection register and all child protection records are securely stored centrally. There is a designated child protection teacher, who works closely with the child protection officer.

There is an established Safeguarding Team who meet twice termly to discuss causes for concern. Safeguarding is a key aspect of induction, INSET and ongoing CPD for all staff including maintenance staff and governors. There is a link maintained to the Buckinghamshire Child Protection team and to the UK charity Kidscape. All teaching staff carry out annual online certified training with Educare. There is a suitable School Trips policy in place which closely follows UK guidance. It has been modified to accommodate conditions in Oman and the Middle East.

8. *Standard 4*

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

Prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff appropriate checks are made to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in Oman, previous employment history, character references and, qualifications and professional references; such information is taken into account in determining whether appointments are confirmed.

Some 95% of the teachers employed at BSM are UK qualified; all teachers have experience of teaching in the UK and/or of the British Curriculum. All recently recruited teachers are UK trained and qualified, and/or have qualifications recognised by the DfE, generally with a minimum of 2 years' experience of teaching in the UK. There is one newly qualified teacher for whom the school has specially trained senior staff providing support.

The staff levels in the Primary School are high to support teaching and learning. The nursery staff/student ratio is 1:8, in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, it is 1:11 and in Years 3 to 6 it is 1:16. In addition to this the school has specialist teachers that work part to full time with provision of ICT, music, swimming, MFL, dance, drama and PE.

In addition, the Primary School also has 6 teachers working with SEN and EAL. Of the inclusion assistants employed at BSM, currently 85% are educated to degree level. The majority have experience of working within a classroom setting in the UK and/or abroad. All assistants receive induction training.

The Ministry of Education in Oman pre-approves all of the school's visa applications (teaching and non-teaching staff) before an actual work visa can be applied for. Before confirmation of appointment and issuance of employment contract, the school requests copies of passport, screens qualifications and experience to ensure the applicant is eligible for a work visa in Oman and receives at least two professional references. For teaching staff, one of the references has to be from the current headteacher. The visa application process requires a request for police clearance and a health assessment form followed by an actual medical check.

BSM obtains a certificate of good conduct/police clearance from the last country resided in. In addition to this, the school requests a Children's Barred list check from the UK for any future staff member that has a connection with the UK. The school also obtains recent CRB checks.

For companies providing services on site, for example the school tuck shop, the school requests copies of commercial registration, service agreements, copies of passport and visas, copies of resident cards and certificates of good conduct are also required.

The school's governors are well established citizens of the wider community in Muscat. For each, the school holds a nomination letter from the subscribing company, biography, copy of passport, visa page, copy of resident card, certificate of good conduct from Oman and a Children's Barred List check from UK. The school holds a central database on all current staff working and staff who have worked for the school since 2007.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent.

There have been significant improvements in the last three years. The school has consulted widely with its stakeholders and a master plan for developing the site resulted. Approval was given by the board in June 2014. Phase 1 has so far resulted in a new science block with 10 laboratories, a full-sized all-weather pitch with undercroft parking, a completely refurbished 4-lane swimming pool and a learner pool. Consolidating staff parking has led to a car-free campus for students.

Currently work is in progress on 2 new sports halls and completion of the aquatics centre with the addition of a further 8-lane swimming pool built to FINA standards. There will also be a new sixth form and Year 12 classroom block. This work is expected to be completed in time for the start of the 2017/2018 school year.

The premises have been inspected by external consultants for any structural and condition issues and given a clean bill of health. The cleanliness and condition of the premises is good and this is regularly checked to ensure that it remains so. There is no reason to believe that the water supply does not meet local regulatory requirements. Drainage is appropriate for hygiene purposes and for the disposal of waste water and occasional surface water. Load-bearing structures are built with due regard to Omani regulatory requirements. Security arrangements for the grounds and buildings are excellent. The buildings provide resistance to penetration by wind, sand and dust, and have regard to temperature control via air conditioning. There is sufficient access for safe emergency evacuation, including for those students with special needs. It also allows all students, including those with special needs, to enter and leave the school safely and comfortably, although the many steps and staircases cause insurmountable difficulties for anyone with limited mobility in some locations, simply because of the terrain on which the school is located.

Classrooms are spacious for the number of students that are taught in them and there are sufficient specialist areas and communal spaces to enable all aspects of curriculum delivery. There are appropriate facilities for students who are, or become, ill. Classrooms and all other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. Sound insulation, air conditioning units and acoustics allow for effective teaching and communication. Lighting, heating and ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school are excellent. The school is well decorated and maintained. The furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all students registered at the school, including those with special needs.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided by the school for parents, prospective parents and other interested parties is outstanding.

Parents of students and of prospective students are provided with all the appropriate information, including the school's address and telephone number, the name of the Head of School, and the name and correspondence address of the Chair of the Board of Governors. Names, along with a message system for all staff, are available on the BSM website. There is a clear statement of the school's learning ethos, vision and aims.

Particulars of all the school's policies and procedures are available on the website or on request. These include those pertaining to admissions, behaviour, curriculum, learning support, health and safety and safeguarding. The policies are clear, accessible and relevant. The complaints procedure is available to parents.

Communication between school and parents was highlighted by the latter has having improved significantly in recent years.

Parent survey results in 2017 show increasing levels of satisfaction:

- *My child likes this school* - 99% in the Primary School (97% in 2013)
- *My child feels safe at school* 100% in the Primary School (94% in 2013)
- *My child is making good progress at school* – 95% in the Primary School (94% in 2013)
- *The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility* - 92% in the Primary School in 2017 (91% in 2013)
- *The quality of teaching is good* – 95% in the Primary School 2017 (97% in 2013)
- *My child is being well prepared for the future* – 92% in the Primary School 2017(80% in 2013)

Parents are actively engaged through a range of measures including:

- Weekly coffee mornings with talks and informative sessions for parents
- Parents receive class news through weekly email newsletters.
- Active Facebook pages for the school:
- Main school Facebook page (3250+ followers)
- BSM Wolves
- BSM Parents Page (closed group)
- Year group pages (closed groups)

- BSM Buy & Sell groups (closed groups)
- Classroom open afternoons each term
- Parents meetings and reports to update on children's progress
- Focus Groups held on key topics arising from Parent Survey
- A parent "Class link" for each primary class
- Class WhatsApp groups run by Class Links.
- An active PFA (Parents & Friends Association)
- Active Social Media channels in addition to Facebook:
 - Twitter
 - Youtube
 - Instagram – BSM Wolves, managed by students
 - Snapchat – BSM Wolves, managed by students

In addition, parents are very positive with regards to the Parent Portal, which allows them to view information on their child/ren and sign up for parents' evenings and extra-curricular activities. Teachers use planners to communicate individual messages with parents, which are signed by parents and teachers.

Key Stage 1 and EYFS parents meet their teachers and have the opportunity to speak at drop-off and pick-up each day. The vast majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem (Parent Survey 2017). Parents are consulted on key developments in the school, including extensive consultation throughout the development of the school master plan. Focus groups are set up on key topics arising from the parent survey (for example, communication between school and home, reporting)

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints is excellent.

The policy in place is appropriate. The school's 'Who to contact and complaints procedure', with flow charts showing who to contact and how concerns should be escalated is available on the website. 83% of parents suggested that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Most concerns are raised informally and all are dealt with promptly. Members of the Primary Leadership Team (PLT) operate an open-door policy. They communicate clearly to parents what to do if informal concerns have not been resolved or they have not received a timely response. Complaints to the Principal are very rare. On the odd occasion when a formal complaint is made, it is dealt with in line with the complaints procedure.

The school aims to respond to informal concerns as quickly as possible; a resolution (or action taken as part of seeking a resolution) is expected to take only a few days. Formal complaints are responded to within 5 working days. Clear timescales are prescribed for the appeals procedure. Stage 2 of the procedure provides for a formal complaint to be made in writing if not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint. Stage 3 provides parents with the opportunity to write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors if they are not happy with the response from the school to a written complaint. There is provision for the establishment of a hearing before an appeals panel. The panel would consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint: where practical one member of the panel would be independent of the management and running of the school. Parents may attend the panel hearing and may be accompanied by one other person.

If possible, the panel resolves the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. If further investigation is required, the panel decides how it should be carried out. After consideration, the panel reaches a decision and make recommendations, if appropriate, within five working days of the meeting. The panel then writes to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The findings and any recommendations are sent in writing to the parents, the Head of School, the Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about.

All formal complaints are logged on a confidential record in the Principal's office and the nature of the complaint is reported at the following meeting of the school development committee, though not the names of complainant or employees involved.

12. Standard 8

The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

13. Standard 9

Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are outstanding: the vision and direction provided by the Principal, the Board of Governors and the Head of the Primary School are excellent.

The Principal and the School Development Committee are effective in holding the Head of Primary School to account for the standards and quality of education achieved. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly.

The Head of Primary has created a culture that enables students and staff to excel. She and her team are committed unwaveringly to the setting of high expectations for the conduct of children and adults alike.

A new leadership structure was implemented in the Primary School in September 2016. It has further improved communication, as demonstrated in Year Group Reviews and through parent feedback. It has also encouraged a brisk pace of change, with Assistant Heads each leading on an area of the school development plan. Examples of the results of this are the refreshed approach to teaching and learning in EYFS and Key Stage 1 and a new assessment and reporting policy being successfully implemented across the Primary School. Monitoring of learning and teaching is rigorous.

The Head of the Primary School is ably supported by two Deputy Headteachers. Their vision, in line with the whole school vision, is clearly articulated in a development plan: this guides progress towards achieving excellence in all areas of the school. The school runs smoothly and is very well managed, including financially, enabling teachers to focus on the raising of standards through high-quality teaching.

Governors make a significant contribution to the school's success: they are genuine critical friends. They are supportive, attending many events held during the year. Feedback from stakeholders is sought actively and used to further improve the school performance.

All posts at BSM are filled with suitably qualified staff. There is a wide menu in-house of over 50 professional development options, which staff can access.

The results of excellent leadership and management have seen sustained improvements in students' attainment and progress, in the quality of learning and teaching, and in very positive parental and teacher surveys. There has been excellent use of monitoring data to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and to plan precise improvements.

There is a rigorous appraisal process that has been established as part of the school's annual cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review. Up to five objectives are agreed with all colleagues against which progress is monitored throughout the year. These objectives reflect school development priorities and personal needs based on the DfE teacher standards for teaching staff. Progression on pay is dependent on performance. In addition, senior leaders also identify professional development requirements from learning walks and other self-evaluation processes.

Middle leaders have benefitted from an excellent development programme led and delivered by BSM staff trained as facilitators. Participants completed a leadership challenge project which directly addresses a SDP priority.

An innovative and impressive programme for the training of inclusion assistants (IA) has had a positive impact on the whole school, including the Primary classes. A key aspect of its success is the lengths the school goes to, to ensure Omanis are included in the programme. The IAs support the cognitive, learning, communication, social, emotional, behavioural, sensory and physical needs of the students, as well as encouraging and creating a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment. The programme includes initial training to understand the job description, the general procedures and specific administration procedures; this is followed by continuous on-the-job training and mentoring from the class teacher, opportunities for 'team assisting' with the project manager and higher level inclusion IAs, shadowing of other IAs with specific strengths, professional development through small group training on specific aspects such as behaviour management, and training from inclusion/'language for learning' coordinators.

Progress since the last inspection has been excellent. Formative assessment including marking is monitored robustly. Staff have much more confidence in the online tracking system. Every teacher now has an innovation target, many of which relate to the use of IT. There is much more child-initiated learning and more independent learning opportunities. Links between the Primary and Senior Schools are much more effective.