



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

British School Muscat (Senior School)

Oman

Date 13th - 15th February 2017
Inspection number 20170213

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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 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 Senior 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 Senior School, members of the senior staff, teachers, other school staff, and representatives from the Board of Governors, parents and students. The team spent three days in the Senior School.

The lead inspector was Mark Evans. The team member was Steven Priest.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

British School Muscat (Senior School) is an outstanding school with some exemplary features. Standards attained by the students are very high, both academically and in other spheres. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding. Parents, staff and students interviewed were very supportive of the school, and this is confirmed by the latest surveys: more than 97% of parents felt that their children liked the school. It 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 Senior School at British School Muscat (BSM) has many strengths:

- The standards of attainment are very high. For example, GCSE results are well above the average for similar schools in the region and across the world. At A-Level, 64% of students in 2016 gained A*-A grades, significantly above UK national average of 52.9%.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary: they have excellent manners, and there are very positive relationships between adults and students.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding.
- The curriculum is innovative and exciting: for example, in addition to the more usual subjects, students can study textiles in Key Stage 3, astronomy and photography in Key Stage 4 and critical thinking and creative media at Key Stage 5. All students in Years 7 and 8 learn to play a brass instrument.
- 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.
- 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:
 - developing further the teachers' use of attainment and progress data;
 - maximising challenge in learning for all students, especially for the most able;
 - considering the range of computing activities which would enable learners to use investigative, enquiry and other IT skills more routinely.

- Further extend cultural links, by developing stronger connections with local Muscat and Omani society.

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	1,242	Boys	637	Girls	605
Numbers by age	0-2 years	Nil	11-16 years	497	
	3-5 years	106	16-18 years	96	
	5-11 years	543	18+ years	Nil	
Total number of part-time children	Nil				

*The senior 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 just fewer than 600 students on the roll of the Senior School, representing 55 nationalities. A very small number of students attend the Dutch School which is housed within BSM and managed by its own staff. They were not included in the inspection.

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 National Curriculum (NC) of England at Key Stage 3 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 600 students on roll in the Senior School, 42% 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. Students take part in Mock Trial and Law Society debates which gives them insight into the workings of the UK legal system.

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 Senior School is outstanding. It is broad, balanced and innovative.

The curriculum gives BSM students experience in a very wide range of learning areas, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative spheres. In particular, the promotion of aesthetic and creative subjects is a strength.

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

- Arabic language in Years 7 and 8
- Computing and textiles in Key Stage 3 and/or 4
- Spanish in Year 9
- Brass instrument lessons in Years 7 and 8
- Year 7 students have the opportunity to take ABRSM grade 1 in an instrument or singing
- Optional GCSE in Astronomy and/or Photography
- The 6th Form curriculum expanded in response to students' requests to include psychology, critical thinking, computing, BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Creative Media Production (Television and Film), A Level Music and the Level 3 Extended Project Qualification.

More than 86% of parents agree that there are a good range of activities available, an increase from 2013 when the number was 78%.

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 examination accreditation and benchmarking tests 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 is enriched and enhanced significantly through an extensive programme of assemblies, visits from guest speakers, leadership opportunities, curriculum enhancement days, an extensive after school activities programme and trips. The International Award is a popular and highly effective programme, with nearly 80% of the current Year 9 cohort electing to participate in the Bronze Award.

This makes a significant contribution to their character development, in line with the BSM Learning Ethos.

Since September 2016, a total of 132 clubs have been offered by teachers at BSM. This includes the World Scholars Cup, Model United Nations, Law Society, sports, drama, dance and musical activities. Off-site learning opportunities are varied and well attended, offering a wide range of excellent learning experiences, including:

- Field trips in Arabic, art, computing, geography, history, and PE
- Trips to Dubai for the Literature Festival, Design and Technology Exhibitions
- International Awards - Bronze, Silver and Gold
- Year 7 and 8 Camps - 41 Year 7 and 41 Year 8 students participated
- Exchange visits with Yitti School (Oman) and Shenzhen (China)
- Visit from Taiwanese delegation
- Attendance at BSME Games, football tournaments and BSME Music Festival
- Curriculum Enhancement days help prepare 6th form students for University life through the Politics Day and Enterprise Activity sessions.

Student subject choices at GCSE and A level are almost invariably met, leading to high levels of motivation, course completion and personalised learning.

The curriculum is fully supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. These are implemented effectively, enabling students to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. There is strong communication between primary and senior colleagues which guides planning for transition units.

PSHE, citizenship and careers guidance are strong with well-developed programmes. For those students identified with specific needs appropriate adaptations of the curriculum are made if necessary. The breadth of the curriculum provides all students with the opportunity to learn and make progress. Somewhat limited use of ICT by the students was apparent in some lessons, which was a missed opportunity.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are outstanding: teaching is at least good, and assessment is very strong.

Teaching enables 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. Teachers encourage students to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort, to show interest in their work, and to think and learn for themselves.

Lessons are well planned, teaching methods are effective, suitable activities are used and class time is managed properly. 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 ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons, for example in a year 13 biology lesson and a PSHE lesson on discrimination. They also demonstrate very strong knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they teach, which further enhances learning. Teachers encourage students to behave responsibly.

Classroom resources are of an excellent quality, quantity and range. They are used effectively: in the best lessons, the use of ICT is exemplary, for example in a year 8 mathematics lesson on prime numbers. All classrooms are inviting and stimulating learning environments: some are innovative and engage students particularly well, for example in a year 10 English lesson.

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 Head of Senior School, the pastoral team, heads of departments, and through the baseline assessments monitored by the Head of Key Stage 3 and the inclusion team.

As the students move through Key Stage 3, progress in all subjects is monitored through the regular reporting of grades throughout the year. These grades are linked to regular summative assessments which in turn are linked to learning milestones in each subject.

The milestones represent a pathway through the learning that almost all students follow. They are linked to the curriculum followed by the students and arranged in a particular order to ensure that the knowledge and skills covered at Key Stage 2 are built upon and that knowledge and skills covered at Key Stage 4 are built towards.

These systems provide benchmarking for and against externally accredited assessments. The information from assessments is available to teachers. In subjects such as mathematics and science, it is utilised effectively to plan teaching and student progress is enhanced. The use of formative assessment is very evident in the best teaching.

Data collated on the able, gifted and talented students is available for teachers to identify and plan appropriately for them. This was evident in the best lessons, but not in all. Marking and feedback is often detailed. Student reflection is encouraged, but it is less well established. Peer assessment is a widely and usefully utilised tool.

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. The school's approach to the removal of key stage levels is exemplary. The concept of using 'milestones' and 'big ideas' is both innovative and student-friendly.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

The standards achieved by students at BSM are outstanding.

The school benchmarks attainment and progress results against the top 5% of English government schools and a group of international schools. There have been year-on-year improvements in results over the last 5 years.

GCSE results are consistently in line with the top 5% of independent and state schools in the UK and place BSM in the top three schools in the Gulf region, according to The Times newspaper tables. Many students perform much better than expected of similar students in the UK. The school's overall results are significantly above the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) average and the COBIS Middle East averages on all measures at Key Stage 4.

GCSE	BSM	COBIS average worldwide	COBIS average Middle East	COBIS rank overall
% A*-A	56	52	52	7 th out of 21
% A*-C	94	92	91	7 th out of 21
% students 5 A*-C incl. English and mathematics	94	87	90	6 th out of 21

At A level, the 64% A*-B is again significantly above the COBIS average (58%). BSM is ranked 10th (out of 26) on this measure, compared to COBIS schools.

Overall, at GCSE, 94.4% of students achieved 5 or more A*-C which is significantly above the UK national average of 66.9%.

56% of grades were A* or A. This is significantly above the UK national average (20.5%). This is also a marked improvement compared to 2015 at 45%. There is a direct correlation between the amount of time a student has spent at BSM, and how well s/he does in the external examinations.

Some individual students did particularly well in their 2016 GCSE examinations, too:

- 2 students were ranked 3rd and 9th respectively in Oman in mathematics
- 2 students ranked 6th and 9th respectively in Oman in business studies
- 1 student ranked 7th in the world in ethics and philosophy
- 3 students ranked 4th, 6th and 8th respectively in the world in Arabic
- 1 student ranked 9th in the world in iGCSE English as a Second Language

Some 92% of the parents confirmed that they were happy with the progress their child/ren made at school.

6. *Standard 2*

The 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.

As evidenced explicitly in the Senior School's PSHE programme and through varied events and societies, the school is proactive in all areas of this standard. It is clear too in many lessons and other activities. Staff place great importance on developing global citizens who are reflective and able to show empathy, as described in the BSM Learning Ethos. This underpins the school's commitment to developing these characteristics in students and is used as a framework for the assembly programme, tutor times and the rewards and awards scheme. The PSHE, tutor time and assembly programme are often high quality and enable students to reflect on their understanding of themselves and develop self-knowledge. The PSHE programme highlights issues connected with respecting the law, for example through discussion about the consequences of drug misuse and teenage pregnancy in Oman.

Opportunities for student leadership are commonplace. Leadership skills are fostered through a variety of opportunities including the Model United Nations, the Law Society, the World Scholars Cup, dance leaders, sports leaders, sixth form committees and the international award bronze, silver and gold awards. These enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence to a high degree. This is further evidenced by the thoughtful, tolerant and respectful nature of the students.

The positive nature of the relationships between students, their peers and the staff is exemplary. The establishment of mindfulness is evident and developing even further.

The school's approach enables students to distinguish right from wrong and encourages them to respect the law. More than 90% of the parents think that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility (compared to 77% in 2013). The school applies a consistent approach to tackling behaviour. The positive behaviour policy is consistently applied by year leaders to any occasional incidents of wrong-doing; the rewards policy implemented to celebrate the regular incidents of positive action taken by students.

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, 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. Opportunities for discussion are encouraged, and contributions are valued and respected. Students contribute to school life by taking part in a whole range of Enrichment activities, numerous arts and sporting activities available to them. There are strong links with charitable organisations and students involve themselves in community projects such as World Food Day, raising funds for charity e.g. UNHCR, Oman Cancer Association, Fashion Show. Opportunities to work more closely with the local communities in Oman are not as well developed.

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. The appointment of a counsellor and the development of mindfulness highlight the holistic nature of the school's approach to student welfare. 99% of parents confirm that their child feels safe at school (compared to 76% in 2013).

The positive behaviour policy provides clear guidelines on sanctions and recording of behaviour issues. Year meetings, key stage meetings and pastoral briefings take place at regular intervals during which issues of concern are raised. 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 for the Senior School, who works closely with the child protection officer, who is the nurse and Well Being Manager.

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 charity Kidscape in the UK. All teaching staff carry out annual online certificated CP training with Educare.

There is a School Trips policy in place which has recently been reviewed. The policy 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 all 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 Senior School are high to support teaching and learning. Groups are in line with the school policy's which states the maximum group size in Key Stages 3 and 4 is 24 unless sanctioned by the Head of Senior School; the group maximum size at Key Stage 5 is 16. In fact the average teaching group size at Key Stage 3 is 22, at Key Stage 4 is 17 and at Key Stage 5, it is 7.

In addition, teaching is supported by the Inclusion Department (learning support department) through the Coordinator SEN and the Coordinator EAL, and the Inclusion Assistants. 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 schools 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.

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 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 have 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.

9. *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 and photographs 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 required 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.

Results of academic performance in public examinations during the preceding and past school years are published as a whole cohort. Parents receive a detailed annual written report of the progress and attainment of each student. Interim termly reports are also compiled for parents that indicate progress from previous reports.

Communication between school and parents was highlighted by the latter has having improved significantly in recent years: the school's Facebook page received particular praise.

Parent survey results in 2016 show increasing levels of satisfaction:

- 'My child is making good progress at school' – 92% agreed (90% in 2013)
- 'The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility' - 90% agreed (77% in 2013)
- 'The quality of teaching is good' – 89% agreed (86% in 2013)
- 'My child is being well prepared for the future' – 88% agreed (70% in 2013)

89% of parents reported feeling that they are kept well informed about what the school is doing – a new question for the 2016 survey. The school has made arrangements to make available and send (electronically) a copy of the full report to the parents of every registered student.

Parents are actively engaged through a range of measures for example:

- Weekly coffee mornings with talks and information sessions
- Active Facebook pages for the school, also Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and Snapchat
- Teaching and learning information evenings throughout the year
- Tutor 'Meet and greet' evenings at the beginning of the year as part of the Teaching and Learning Information evenings
- Parents meetings and reports to update on children's progress
- An active Parents and Friends Association
- Class WhatsApp groups

10. 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.

The majority of concerns can be raised informally with a student's teacher or tutor (depending on the nature of the issue) and are dealt with promptly. Members of the senior leadership team have an open door policy. 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.

11. Standard 8

The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

12. 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 Senior School are excellent.

The Head of the Senior School is ably supported by 2 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 Principal and Board hold the Head of Senior School to account through the Principal Performance Management Committee, through rigorous performance development, and through regular performance reviews. The Head of Senior School produces regular detailed reports twice termly with the help of the leadership team and key stage leaders.

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 well and suitably qualified staff. There is a wide range of in-house menu of over 50 professional development options which staff can access.

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

There is a rigorous appraisal process which includes teachers, leaders and inclusion assistants in an annual cycle. 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 by COBIS as facilitators. Participants completed a leadership challenge project which directly addresses a SDP priority.