



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

# **Inspection report**

## **British School of Alexandria**

### **Egypt**

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

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

During the inspection visit, 63 full- or part- lessons were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, a range of teachers, representatives of the governors and group of students. Two complete school days were monitored, and time was spent on all sites.

The lead inspector was Mark Evans. The team members were Sue Croft and Andrew Williams.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School of Alexandria meets the standards for British Schools Overseas.

## 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides a sound education. The school Board is ambitious, keen to underline the school's position as one of the premier schools in the region. This aim is understood by the staff and other stakeholders, and provides focus for the many school development initiatives currently being undertaken. There is a detailed strategic plan in place, and priorities ('The British School: 2020 Vision') have been developed in partnership with the community. This year for example, sees the launch of the British School Foundation to support scholarships, arts development and community outreach activities.

The school is held in high regard by the parents and the local community. The students are pleased to be part of the school, and speak highly of the teachers and other staff.

### 3.1 What the school does well

The school's strengths include:

- Examination results are good.
- Many students are confident speakers of English, despite it being their second or third language.
- Students feel happy and relaxed: they are happy to attend school.
- Assessment data is starting to be used effectively to improve further individual student outcomes.
- The abundance of teaching assistants frees teachers so that (sometimes) they are able to do more focused work with individuals.
- There are positive relationships between students, and students and staff.
- The school's detailed self-evaluation process clearly identified areas of strengths and weakness.

### 3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school should consider the following ideas for development:

- Clearly and overtly define the overall aim of the school, linking this to the strategic priorities already in place;
- Sharpen further the focus on learning in all aspects of school life, from assessment and marking, to improvement planning and development strategy;
- Clarify consistent operating procedures that ensure the highest quality in all things, to ensure that the standards overall are as good as the best;
- Involve all – staff, students, parents and the local community – in the relentless pursuit of excellence in all things.

## 4. The context of the school

The British School, Alexandria operates under the auspices of the British Consulate General Alexandria: the Patron of the school is the British Consul General. The school's Board is a voluntary group of British expatriate and Egyptian professional people, unpaid, who operate the school. It is registered as a not-for-profit charity regulated under UK charity law, with Egyptian national approval.

The school is exempt from Egyptian Ministry of Education regulations although it does take all necessary steps to comply with local law.

The school is currently based on two campuses with four buildings. Euclid block houses students in Years 7 – 13, Heron provides for Early Years (EY), Foundation Stage (FS) and Year 1 students, and Stables and Wilson blocks are for Years 2 – 6. The residential suburb of Roushdy is a little way out of the main city. Most British School of Alexandria families live within 10-15 minutes of the school.

Over 85% of students remain in school throughout their education, from FS2 to Year 12. Parents suggest that they choose the British School of Alexandria because it represents a stable and high quality British-style international education, leading to entrance to UK or other universities. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum (NC) of England, followed by GCSEs and IGCSEs for Year 11s.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

Until 2012, the status of the school was informal: it was unapproved, and until recently, it could only be registered as a 'social organisation promoting British education in Alexandria'. Thus, external inspection was not possible at that time, but efforts were made to maintain strong links with the UK.

The Board was reconstituted in 2011 with newly elected leadership and increased membership. New institutional status was secured for the school which is now legally recognised as a British international school by the relevant national Ministries in Egypt. This new status has allowed the school to expand and emphasise its British roots.

The recent social, political and economic circumstances of Egypt have made international teacher recruitment more challenging, but the Board has continued to seek UK-trained and qualified teaching staff. Most British School of Alexandria teachers are British and/or have UK-recognised teaching qualifications. Although staff turnover has been relatively high recently, Board members, administrators and some senior teaching staff have provided stability and continuity. The school is currently increasing admissions and expanding provision specifically in the arts and Sixth Form.

As well as implementing the curriculum for England, assessments are based on national standards from the UK. The importance of extra-curricular provision including clubs and school trips, are reminiscent of British practice. Most textbooks, materials, educational equipment and software are sourced from the UK.

Classroom management, displays of work, the three-term year and age-related year groups contribute to the British feel to the school. Communications from the school to families and students are provided in English, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website. Parents are appreciative and approve of the British nature of the school.

The school is a member of the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) and the Council of British International Schools (COBIS).

## 5. *Standard 1*

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided at the British School of Alexandria meets the requirements of the BSO Framework: some aspects are good.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at the British School of Alexandria is based on a Curriculum policy statement from 2012. The school provides a broad balanced curriculum, overtly based on the NC of England and Wales. Senior managers suggest they watch UK developments closely, but modify changes to meet the needs of students and the aspirations of British School of Alexandria families. Curriculum content features a balance of intercultural and Egyptian-focused content.

The students are at school for 38 weeks each year on timetabled educational activities. Children enter FS1 when they are 3 years old, progressing on to FS2 and beyond, until Year 11. At this point, optional admission to the Sixth Form is considered based on GCSE grades gained, behaviour reports and (for new admissions) English as an Additional Language (EAL) assessment.

The school is exempted from Egyptian Ministry of Education regulations under its legal and business status. Nevertheless, it exceeds requirements for the teaching of Arabic as a first and second language, and provides optional Islamic Studies and religious education.

At Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a curriculum focus on literacy and numeracy skills. The school attempts to tailor learning opportunities to meet all needs. At Key Stage 3, students are taught by subject specialists and the curriculum is in line with the NC, excluding design and technology and music. In Key Stage 4 in particular, the senior managers go out of their way in their efforts to satisfy the wishes of the students. Options are not blocked and the timetable endeavours to accommodate all student choices. Students have access to GCSEs/IGCSEs in Arabic and English as first and second languages, computer studies, humanities, French, mathematics, sciences and visual arts.

The Additional Educational Needs Coordinator (AENCo) focuses on developing an understanding of the individual needs of every student. Where necessary, intervention programmes are initiated through individual education plans (IEPs), though many of these focus on behaviour and attitude, rather than curriculum and learning.

The academic curriculum is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities. Plays and other productions, including debating, develop speaking and listening skills further.

The school has recently started to develop its alumni to maintain contact with past students and their families.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment meet the standard required: some teaching is good, but a few lessons are inadequate. In the main, teaching enables students to acquire new knowledge, and make progress. The best teaching encourages students to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts: they respond by showing interest in their work.

Students in the Foundation classes benefit from a flexible approach to teaching: for example in a FS1 class, students were able to choose their own occupations from a range of learning activities well organised by the teacher. One student was completing a computer programme on colour matching, two were listening to a story tape, and small group sat with the teacher drawing pictures of “people that help me”. The teachers in Heron building classrooms arrange numerous such activities. Not all the work students were doing was named and dated, however. There is good emphasis in the Early Years on independence: in another FS class, students poured their own juice, and at the end of snack time, cleared their own plate and cup.

In the Year 1, some lessons are team-taught. Some students were making excellent progress: a few were operating at NC Level 2, which is well above expectations, and is due to the good teaching. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asked for feedback, with any concerns that they had, and one child said “no - I understand everything”!

Teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2 is good: some is excellent. In the best lessons, teaching focussed on meeting specific learning needs, and was engaging. A variety of approaches were used in Years 1 and 2. An Arabic language teacher 1 used a number of methods in her lesson. For example, she had a written sentence on the board, which she then copied underneath, explaining the sound of every letter, asking the students about every letter and highlighting distinct letters. She then went round the tables, stopping at all the students, to make sure they understood. The students enjoyed the lesson, and learnt well. Although teaching is sound, guided reading books were not used consistently and the teaching assistants were under-utilised, for example, spending too much time just listening to the teacher.

In Years 3 and 4, relationships are good and the students enjoy their work. Lessons are sometimes supplemented with meaningful trips, such as the Year 3 trip to use microscopes. In specialist subjects also, such as PE and art, learning is fun and even when attainment is weak, such as the throwing and catching skills of Year 5, the teachers support patiently and appropriately. Occasionally, lesson objectives are not as sharply focussed as they should be to extend learning. In Years 5 and 6, relationships are also good, and there are excellent routines established, that support quick and easy learning. The display of students’ work in Year 6 and the way it is used to develop students’ learning, is excellent.

Assessment for learning is at an early stage of development in the primary classes. Although there is very good focus on extending English language skills, marking of written work does not always give clear directions on how to improve.

The quality of teaching in the secondary school is variable, ranging from very good to poor. In some instances, for example in Years 8 and 9, teaching effectiveness is hindered by being pitched at an inappropriate level. These lessons fail to offer the desired challenge. For example, a storyboard exercise was well within the capabilities of a Year 8 English language class. Similarly, establishing a simple timeline for only 4-5 events drawn from a text did not stretch a Year 9 Humanities class. As a result, students were neither fully engaged nor stimulated. There was a tendency for their attention to wander and for the lessons to be disrupted by persistent low-level chatter.

Sometimes in Key Stage 3, teaching was thoroughly planned, but ill-thought out and poorly executed. This was due over-ambitious planning, which pressured the timing and created an unnecessary sense of urgency. Objectives, whilst appropriate, were not fully clarified or explored. As a result, students were working detached from coherent aims, without guidance.

Nevertheless, the expectation that senior teachers tend to teach examination classes, seems to work. This tendency appears to reflect the priorities of the school in terms of GCSE successes, of which the teachers are justifiably proud.

The best examples in the secondary school were thoughtful, well-structured and challenging lessons, mainly seen in Year 10. As such, in English literature, geography and physics for example, the lesson objectives were made clear and provided a coherent theme for what followed. Starters, explanation and activities were in line with objectives. The objectives were at the appropriate level for the class, providing the requisite level of challenge. Activities were also pitched appropriately, and resulted in engagement, creativity and guidance towards the established aims. Both the geography and English classes successfully related the concepts to the students' local situation. In the case of English by relating a poem set in London, to Cairo and Egypt, and in geography, by relating urban growth to changes in the locale. The geography teacher also utilised locally acquired resources such as town maps from the 1930s. A Year 10 physics class made use of a projector to demonstrate waves: the simple animation helped to clarify the concepts.

### 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved overall at the British School of Alexandria are satisfactory or better. End of school examination results are good. Progress is not as consistent or as rapid as it could be, however.

The school has started to compile assessment data on students, targets are being written and baseline testing is being complied. In Key Stages 1 and 2, students make good headway: in English language, many progress very well. There are opportunities for extension for the more able, gifted and talented students. Approximately 10% of the school's population has been identified as requiring an IEP, most of which pertain to EAL. However, for about 6% of each cohort, there are students who are not making sufficient progress to achieve Level 2B at Key Stage 1, Level 4a at Key Stage 2 and/or 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE. These students are a group for whom EAL remains the key barrier to their attainment. The school is introducing an EAL Additional Service, and is planning to carry out more detailed screening of students admitted at all stages, to assess their English.

Key Stage 3 standards are monitored using grading and NC levels. Levels of attainment are tracked on a half-termly basis, being presented in tabular and graphical formats. All levels of attainment are based on teacher assessment, however. Where progress has been tracked for three years, progress is usually by two whole NC levels. In some cases, especially in English progress is more dramatic – occasionally up to 10 NC sub-levels. Whilst such progress is always to be welcomed, such phenomenal examples perhaps merit further investigation into the assessment methods.

GCSE grades demonstrate that the students achieve high standards. The picture is blurred by the amount of private tuition taken: teachers and SMT members remarked that it is likely that all Year 11 students take tuitions in some or all subjects.

External assessments have been in operation since 2011-12. These focus on the Key Stage 4 and the value-added data in the one year of available information is impressive. But as the SMT suggest, waiting for more data is sensible, in order to make informed judgements. There was no evidence that external assessment is used lower down the school. Again, the use of baseline assessment towards the end of the secondary process, suggests that using these assessments as a tool for improvement for students in Key Stage 3 is not yet developed. The lack of extension of the baseline assessment framework into Key Stage 3 is a failed opportunity to use an additional source of data and give a point of comparison for teacher assessments: especially useful, given the rapid improvement apparent with many Key Stage 3 students.

British School of Alexandria students achieve well above the UK national averages in GCSE examinations. For example, there are 8.6 GCSEs (on average) per student with an overall school average of 26% A\* for the past three years. Over 93% of students gain 5 GCSEs A\*-C. But AS grades tend not to reflect the high level of the GCSE results. The SMT suggest that

this is due to the fact that students gain unconditional acceptance to local universities on the basis of their GCSE grades. This leads to a dramatic fall in motivation, as the AS courses near their end. Nevertheless, the school hopes to persuade families to pursue further education abroad, in the UK. This will make full A-level qualifications a requirement. In order to facilitate smooth advancement to British universities, the school plans to recruit/train a university admissions counsellor.

Primary students participate in a good variety of sports activities with similar schools in Cairo schools through the CIBSA organisation and are well prepared and able to participate competitively. Secondary students compete against other Alexandrian schools and experience good interschool sports competitions. Secondary students also participate well in extra-curricular activities. Average termly participation over the whole school is over 65%. They make willing contributions to school plays and productions which they and their families value greatly, as part of their education

## 6. Standard 2

### The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is satisfactory: some aspects are good.

The quality and effectiveness of the British School of Alexandria's provision for the moral and social development of its students is good, and takes account of the diverse needs of the school population. Teachers and other staff enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. In the primary classes, pupils learn independence and value this. It is not always built on in the early years of secondary.

Clear expectations of conduct help to enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong, but in some secondary classes, there is low level irritating behaviour that is sometimes not checked. In these cases, not enough is done to ensure pupils behave responsibly, show initiative and understand the impact they have on the community.

Students learn about Egypt and about the UK. They leave school with a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship in the host country and the UK. Discussions in class are often guided towards the consideration of the current political status of the country, how it related to the UK and how students might be able to make a difference.

A spirit of internationalism is embedded in much of the curriculum. There are future developments planned, including the *Global Nomads* initiative. Many students have a heightened awareness of human rights: to develop this further, school projects such as 'Young Arab Voices' have been started/supported at the British School of Alexandria.

The school shares information about Britain to support their students and parents, should they wish to relocate to live or study in the UK. Currently, this is rare.

## 7. *Standard 3*

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

The quality of the welfare, health and safety of the students is satisfactory: some aspects are good.

The school has taken necessary measures to protect students. There is an anti-bullying policy and written procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. Amongst others, there are written policies on safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, health and safety, and school trips. Some procedures are in the process of being tightened even further. The full admissions register and the register of attendance exceed local regulatory by-laws, although the school is legally exempt from Egyptian regulations and procedures.

These features underline that the British School of Alexandria has an intrinsic philosophy of care. This was illustrated by senior management showing personal concern for a student with blistered feet, and by the attitudes of individual teachers, inside and outside the classroom. Care is strong in the Early Years and Foundation Stage. There is significant support available from teaching assistants, which means that students' choice of activities are wide, both in the playground, and at topic time in the classroom.

Occasionally, due to the intimacy provided by the size of the school, care seemed to tip over into indulgence, especially with Key Stage 3 students. Science teaching (Year 7) in particular seemed to show lack of care and support. Whilst the importance of health and safety issues was stated and restated, issues still arose. Safety glasses were worn, but lab coats were not. Lighted spills were carried around haphazardly, Bunsen burners were left burning, unattended. Instructions were not followed. Students were ill-disciplined and inattentive in the laboratory area. No lab technician was available to provide additional support and guidance for the students.

IEPs are in place for students in need of additional help. For the majority, the needs centred on English language. The basis for the evaluation of student difficulties is sometimes unclear, for example diagnosing specific learning difficulties. The IEPs make recommendations to teachers for the additional help to be given in class, but there was no evidence of these recommendations being implemented in any of the lessons observed.

Students across all key stages are happy young people who are proud of their school and thrive on the rich variety of learning experiences that it provides.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is good. The school is registered in the UK and Egypt as a charity, and operates under the patronage of the British Consulate General Alexandria. The school's Board is a voluntary group of British expatriate and Egyptian professional people.

The Board ensures the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for students. In addition, they take ultimate responsibility for the recruitment and checking of staff credentials. Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks including with the police in the country of origin, are carried out to confirm identity, fitness, and right to work in Egypt. There is a list maintained of all staff and volunteers who currently work in the school. This shows when they started and stopped working in the school.

Staffing levels are adequate for the successful delivery of the curriculum. Teaching staff have qualifications appropriate to their role; some have further academic or teaching qualifications that enhance school development. A few teach subjects that are not their main specialism, but this was not seen to hinder students' progress. Teaching assistants in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 contribute to the quality of learning; they are appropriately valued as members of the team.

## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet the standard required by BSO.

The school is based on two sites, in four buildings: Stables Block, Wilson Building, Heron and Euclid. Heron has all of the Early Years, Foundation Stage and Year 1 children, whilst Stables and Wilson are for Years 2–6; Euclid houses the students in Years 7 – 13.

British School of Alexandria students benefit from safe and properly maintained buildings. Infrastructure appears sound. There are some imaginative outdoor spaces, including roof top playgrounds. Plans are underway to rent a field to extend physical education and outside learning space. In 2013-2014, the school will expand facilities as it changes to 2-form entry, using an additional nearby villa, and takes on new office space. Extra teaching space on the Heron campuses will be used to accommodate the growing Sixth Form.

Floorings are appropriate to the current use of each room. Decoration is in sound order. There is adequate lighting and when required, artificial lighting. Temperature is controlled with the use of air-conditioners in all rooms. Furniture in classrooms is appropriate for the age and needs of the students. Toilets are adequate for the number of adults and children on the site.

Although some teaching areas are compact, they are suitable for purpose. There are specialist facilities for example, for art and science, though the laboratory facilities are basic, allowing only simple experiments. French, humanities and English language are taught in cramped conditions which make it difficult for teachers to circulate to examine and discuss the work of individuals. Furniture in many classrooms is robust, but old and in need of repair. Tennis balls have been attached to chair legs in order to reduce the noise of chair legs scraping the floors.

The school has a Virtual Learning Environment to which teachers and students have access. It is in an early stage of development, being used mainly as a noticeboard, rather than an interactive site. School noticeboards are plentiful. Displays are colourful and tidy. Many are predominantly generated by staff. The few high quality displays of secondary student work were from the art department. There was a display of student work from the English department, which was based on presentation alone, not on content.

Beyond the facilities, classroom resources are basic, but adequate. Teachers tended to rely on the standard textbook for their subject. In some subjects, this means that material is a little dated. For example the Year 10 geography class discussed urbanisation data that was six years old. Students and teachers would benefit from access to a broader range of resources, especially the internet.

A very small library is available to secondary students. It is stocked, mainly, with paperback fiction. The library was unmanned during my visits. Students seemed unclear about whether library periods were offered as part of the timetable or during English classes.

The secondary school benefits from a single ICT laboratory, which is used for the ICT and computer studies classes. In addition, subject teachers use the facility for their own classes when appropriate. I observed a mathematics class in this laboratory.

Given its small site, the school suffers due to its lack of common areas. A play area is available for use during break and lunch times. Other students choose to make use of the limited 'balcony' style spaces on other floors, as well as the roof, which is used as an additional common area. As the school expands its roll, the pressure on common areas will grow. This could threaten the pleasant school environment and, ultimately, lead to health and safety problems. The Principal reported that the school has plans to expand its facilities on to additional sites. This would give more space to secondary students, including playing field facilities.

Staffing levels appear to be satisfactory at this point. As a result of the recent political changes and the impact this has on recruitment, the school has taken sensible measures to cover classes in difficult circumstances. In addition, the school is lacking a number of teaching assistants who would usually be available in the secondary school.

Classroom observations suggest that the quality of teaching improved higher up the school, where teachers can concentrate more on their specialist subjects. In Key Stage 3, the need for teachers to be generalists within limits (for example, general science, and humanities teachers) perhaps limited overall effectiveness.

The school is staffed appropriately to deliver the curriculum offered. The teaching assistants are drawn from a variety of backgrounds. Staff qualifications, subject-specialisms, background and health checks meet (or exceed) local requirements and regulations.

## 10. Standard 6

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

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is good.

Appropriate contact details are provided for parents and other stakeholders, including the address, telephone number and the name of the headteacher. The website and parent publicity material clearly states the school's ethos and aims: new strategic intents have been developed also. Policies on matters such as admissions, discipline and exclusions are available for parents and others.

The school has run a number of workshops for parents to explain the philosophy of the school, and to elucidate the British curriculum. The summer bazaar is a fun-oriented event that is very popular with parents. This year, Year 1 students are joining with members of the senior school in a song from "The Lion King" musical: Year 1 students will be singing the chorus, and a senior student singing the main melody, while the school orchestra provide the music. Parents report they are already looking forward to it!

The parent handbook details particulars of educational provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for those with English as an additional language. It outlines the curriculum offered by the school, and alludes to policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and the sanctions that the British School of Alexandria adopts in the event of pupils misbehaving.

The school reports student progress on a regular and frequent basis. Effort and attainment grades are reported every half term: full reports are issued twice a year. Such frequent report may not add sufficiently to parents' knowledge to justify the time taken by teachers to prepare them, especially when parents can approach teachers at any time if they have questions. Parents are invited to parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's progress.

Reports do not always follow a consistent or standardised format. In secondary, some report using levels, other use grades. The latter having the advantage of being more easily understood by parents, but the disadvantage of not being referenced against published criteria. The grading of effort grading is also somewhat subjective, as there are no criteria available to guide teachers, students or parents.

## *11. Standard 7*

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

Complaints are uncommon, but the school has procedures in place that meet both local requirements and reflect good practice in the UK. Parents and carers are kept well informed about the process through school documents and the website. This information is regularly updated.

Most concerns for handling complaints mirror the management structure of the school. The class or subject teacher is the first port of call. If an issue is not resolved, progression through the management follows. Appropriate written records are kept and confidentiality is assured.

Parents interviewed by inspectors, stated they felt confident with the way the school dealt with concerns.

## *Standard 8*

### The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

## 12. Standard 9 Leadership and management of the school

The British School of Alexandria meets the leadership and management standards required for BSO status.

After a period of relative instability in the SMT, the new principal is set to lead the school towards further improvements, building on the school's existing strengths, and of significant expansion. The 'legalisation' of the school is a significant step. The Board drives this work and will monitor the success of it. The process, led and implemented by governors also resulted in the production of the school's first handbook for governors. There has been great investment of time and effort in good governance and sub-committee development. The Board has been pivotal overseeing this important transitional phase.

There is a deep personal commitment to the success of every individual student. The ethos that emanates from the Board and the SMT is positive, supportive and caring. But the security of this in terms of a rigorous systemic structure, that is fully supported by stakeholders and truly focussed on excellence in all things, is still at an early stage. For example, there has not yet been time to ensure that administrative staff, who are committed and hard-working, are fully aware of the changes taking place, leaving them sometimes unable to access data and information.

The website and parent publicity material clearly states the school's ethos and aims: new strategic intents have been developed also, though the overall focus on excellence is apparent in these, than in conversation with the Board.

As a result of the high staff turnover and the small size of the school, the structure of the SMT is still a little fluid. Middle management, such as Heads of Departments, has arisen on an ad hoc basis: they are well able to manage downwards within their department, but have less impact or opportunity to contribute to school strategy and policy.