



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

# **Inspection report**

## **British School of Ulaanbaatar**

### **Mongolia**

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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 ownership on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for students and students' achievements.

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

During the inspection visit, 37 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 Board, parents and groups of students. Three school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Mark Evans. The team members were Kathy Faulkner and Craig Halsall.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School of UlaanBaatar (BSU), UlaanBaatar, Mongolia, meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

## 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

BSU provides a sound education and excellent care for its students. The students are very proud to attend the school. They speak very highly of the teachers and the support provided for them. The school provides for predominantly Mongolian students. Staff and students are committed to working together for the mutual benefit of all, within its community.

### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths. They include:

- the recruitment of good quality and well-qualified staff within a challenging recruitment context
- good well-maintained facilities
- high quality teaching, backed by high quality and consistent planning
- excellent day-to-day administration and management of the school
- outstanding behaviour from students, which contributes to a high quality learning environment
- a Board that is focussed on providing excellence, both within the context of Ulaanbaatar, and globally.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- link the Board’s strong vision for the school more closely to the school development plan, and the processes of ongoing self-evaluation, performance management and continuous professional development, so that the combination starts to drive the school in the desired direction
- ensure that all teaching is as good as the best, including by ensuring high standards of
  - differentiation
  - use of assessment data
  - provision for gifted and talented students
  - student-led, independent learning at all ages
  - coherent English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision in all lessons
- improve the impact of assessment and tracking of students’ progress by making sure that:
  - teachers understand the use of assessment data
  - assessment for learning techniques inform planning
  - marking links to learning objectives
  - ensure students understand their current working grades and targets, including their next learning steps
  - there is more consistency between marking and the school’s marking policy
- promote more distributed leadership to drive these points for improvement, beyond the senior leadership team.

## 4. The context of the school

The British School of Ulaanbaatar was founded in 2010 by the Eco School Garden Company. The Eco School Garden (ESG) Company is a Limited Liability Company. The Company is registered as a business entity in Mongolia. ESG attempts to meet the demand for a modern British English-speaking School which can supply the human resource needs of the rapidly growing Mongolian business and economic sector.

The goal of the school is to enable the residents of Mongolia to have their children educated in English, with western teaching methods and learning resources at an affordable level. The school also provides lessons in Mongolian literacy, language, geography, history and local culture, events and lifestyle are often used to compare and contrast other topics within the National Curriculum of England and Wales. The school offers a unique local opportunity for children to receive a British education, while still maintaining their cultural roots.

The climate in Mongolia over the winter is a barrier to learning, as it restricts access to the outside. The long summer (over two months) for the students also proves to be a barrier due to them not communicating in English for a long period of time.

### 4.1 British nature of the school

BSU is proud to be a British school not only by name, but in many aspects of the operation of the school. The school has purpose built, modern facilities, which provide students with the amenities that would be expected at a school in Britain. Many parents stated that they send their children to BSU because they want them to be able to access educational and job opportunities, either in Britain or in comparable countries. They want opportunities for their children to study abroad, particularly in British universities. The school's values and ethos of the school are modelled on those of schools in the UK, and policies are based on the expectations and procedures of British schools. It runs a house system, named after the four patron saints of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

BSU promotes student leadership by electing a head boy and girl, and house prefects. Students are elected from Year 5 to be part of the Student Council. Each class is named after a county in Britain. The school's year group system and pastoral style is reflective of UK independent schools.

The school runs events that would be expected in UK schools, such as a Christmas fair, talent shows, sports days, swimming galas, house events and weekly assemblies. There are a wide variety of extra-curricular activities in line with what is offered in British Schools. The uniform policy and behavioural expectations are very clearly British.

BSU provides the National Curriculum of England and Wales. In addition, Mongolian history, language, geography and literature are integrated into the school timetable. iGCSEs are offered to Key Stage 4 students.

There are some challenges in attracting relevant British visitors to the school, given the extreme weather conditions and the relative international isolation. In spite of this, in the past two years, BSU has had visitors such as Julien Seal who is driving around the world for charity taking with him the London Olympics football, mining employees from England, the CEO of 'Rock Challenge' and the Mongolian Ambassador based in London. In September 2013, Years 9 and 10 attended an afternoon with Sir Andrew Motion, poet to Queen Elizabeth II.

Teachers are recruited from the UK, through the normal channels. The school follows the same yearly structure as British schools - 3 terms. It is a member school of the Council of British International Schools. Most resources are purchased from Britain.

## 5. *Standard 1*

### The quality of education provided by the school

BSU provides a satisfactory quality of education that meets the standard required.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. BSU follows the National Curriculum for England and Wales, adapted to meet the needs of the students, as the vast majority are at an early stage in their written and spoken English. It is broad, balanced and offers students a wide range of learning opportunities, tailored to meet their needs and to challenge them. The mission statement of the school is reflected in the planning, and there is clear commitment to the facilitation of high student achievement in both Mongolian and in English.

The school has strong curriculum, teaching and learning policies in place. These policies inform planning as evidenced by lesson plans that contain clear objectives. This ensures they retain a clear focus. Policies are updated on a regular basis. The school provides an appropriate and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of students. The school curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet local Education Ministry requirements. There is strong provision for teaching of Mongolian language, history and culture.

Curriculum planning is good, as overseen by the senior management team. As yet, there is no specific subject co-ordinator appointed to monitor progress in each subject. Planning documentation is consistent in style and presentation across the primary section of the school.

In some lessons, curriculum links are highlighted so students are able to use and apply learning skills. For instance, a Year 3 science investigation to design effective water filters was given real purpose because it was connected to the students' learning about the lack of clean water in an African village.

Students have equality of opportunity in their learning as all classrooms are comparatively resourced and equipped. The curriculum is further enriched through the provision of and access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are tailored to meet the students' needs and the constraints of the local weather and the location of the school.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching is good; assessment is satisfactory.

Teachers and students enjoy outstanding relationships across the school. Students are exemplary learners, eager, enthusiastic, are keen to please, concentrate well and have an exceptional work ethic.

The majority of lessons observed were good or better; some were outstanding. Teachers prepare well for each lesson and most make provision for the range of abilities in each class. Teaching assistants are well briefed and support identified students in most lessons to help them to successfully access and achieve the learning objective.

Classrooms are attractive, well organised and resources are readily available so that there is efficient use of learning time. Teachers' competence and enthusiasm, plus the students' positive responses contribute to the successful achievement of the learning objective in most lessons.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are making excellent progress because of the happy and secure learning environment. Parents recognise this and comment upon the high standards that their children have achieved, as well as their daily enjoyment of school. The home-to-school diary and weekly homework complement the classroom learning. The gentle guidance and encouragement from the teacher is helping the children gain confidence and is making a secure base for their future challenges in learning.

This sense of purpose and a rich learning environment continue to be built upon as the students move through the primary school. Learning objectives are shared and written on the whiteboard at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher uses focussed questions to help each student understand and make progress within the lesson and over time. Most lessons have a good balance between direct teaching, paired or individual work and a review of learning at the end of lesson. Opportunities for independent group work and challenge for the more able are not yet secure in all lessons.

The provision of specialist teachers in physical education and music is giving students further confidence in personal and social development. They very much enjoy and actively participate in lessons. The leadership team systematically monitor lessons and there is some peer assessment to help improve the quality of teaching.

There is support for students who have English as an additional language, mainly targeted at those with most need. They benefit from strong teaching within small groups. There is good use of teaching assistants to support students, although this is not always consistent. The school currently lacks a strategic approach to ensure all teaching is tailored to better match the needs of students who have English as an additional language. For example, most classrooms display key specialist vocabulary, but this is rarely referred to in lessons. In

the best lessons, teachers pause to explain key vocabulary which has a positive impact upon the pace and depth of learning.

Teachers and students use the interactive whiteboard as a teaching and learning tool in most lessons, despite the power cuts! However, there are limited opportunities for the students to use computers in lessons. This is due to a lack of mobile technology such as laptops or tablets in the classroom. There are regular timetabled lessons in the ICT suites to give students access to the internet and suitable educational programmes to support and practise classroom learning.

Assessment is not sufficiently well developed as yet. Teachers monitor student progress through informal assessment at the end of most lessons. Sometimes the teacher explains the next steps in learning but this is not consistent across the school. There are regular formal tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of each learning unit. Teachers use the school-marking key to review students' written work. It is not clear how this is used to help students make further progress in the subject or what they need to do to improve attainment. Students' individual targets were not seen in their workbooks and are rarely referred to by teachers. Sometimes self and peer assessment takes place at the end of lessons and this is giving the students confidence in asking for further help next time. However, there is no evidence to explain how teachers use this to inform the next steps in planning further learning in the short or longer term. All students are issued current grades, targets and aspirational targets based on baseline data. Most students are aware of their grades but are unable to contextualise these to understand better their next learning steps.

The school has a clear marking policy that supports other academic and related policies. Student work is of a consistently high standard and is supported by regular feedback. Marking is not however consistent with the school's marking policy, which reduces the impact on student learning. In the majority of secondary lessons observed, books contained feedback that was largely quantitative or informal. Students therefore do not benefit from more formal and qualitative feedback that informs next learning steps.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

The standards achieved by primary and secondary students at BSU are sound, both academically and in other aspects of what they learn.

As the school is newly established, it is at the earliest stage of collecting, analysing and effectively using student performance data to monitor the school's overall performance. The senior teacher responsible for assessment is working hard to establish a secure and robust assessment system that can be understood and used by teachers, shared with parents and reviewed by the board of governors.

The outcome of the class tests are reviewed at the end of each term and compared with each individual student's targets. Class bar charts show how each student has progressed and whether they are below, on or above the expected level. Overall class progress, in the core subjects, is then judged against the school's key performance indicators.

The observations from the monitoring visit through lesson observations, interviews and the limited review of students' work show that the majority of children are making sound progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are on track to attain or exceed the early learning goals. There was evidence in their learning journey record that some children were making exceptional progress and were already working within Level 2 of the national curriculum.

In Key Stage 1, students were making very good progress in writing. The more able write complex sentences use excellent vocabulary, have neat joined up writing and accurately use capital letters, question marks and full stops. Key Stage 2 teachers assess levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science against national curriculum levels. In lessons observed, the majority of students are working within or above the expected national curriculum level. Students are confident to read to the whole class in English, discuss the outcomes of their investigations in science, and demonstrate improved football skills to the rest of the class in physical education.

The school operates an appropriate rewards and sanction policy. House points are used throughout, and 'class dojo' in the primary school, are used to motivate students. Students talk highly of the house system.

Secondary students also make at least satisfactory progress in lessons: in some they make good or excellent progress, due to the quality of planning and teaching. The school produces various forms of student progress data for the secondary students, although this is not always used to maximise impact on students' learning. Students' progress, as based on internal and some external baseline assessment, appears to exceed national curriculum level expectations in the secondary school.

## 6. Standard 2

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good: they are strengths of the school. The only area of relative weakness is the limited impact of provision for students taking the initiative and personal responsibility: the SMT are aware of the issue and working to find more effective strategies.

Students, many of whom are just beginning to speak in English, greet adults with a cheery smile and appropriate salutation. This makes for a very sociable school and a happy atmosphere. The majority have an outstanding work ethic. They know what is expected of them and work diligently in lesson. When they have the opportunity to be independent, they respond well and enjoy lessons even more. A good example was in a Year 3 science lesson where students used the resources provided to design and make their own water filter.

Students' behaviour is excellent. Students are polite and respectful to adults in the school and most of the time to each other. In the very few instances of inappropriate behaviour in lessons, teachers quickly and quietly dealt with them, so that learning was not interrupted. Students know the difference between right and wrong. The school has an effective behaviour policy. There is sound application of the school's rewards policy, including the use of stickers, 'class dojo' and house points to motivate students. Whilst these are more frequently used in primary, secondary students expressed a desire for the school to continue to benefit from a similar rewards structure. The principal makes a weekly telephone call home to students who have worked well, which is valued by students. Student and class of the week awards are used to recognise and reward good effort.

The relationships between the students and adults are excellent. There is a warm rapport in student activities, both in and outside lessons. The school house system creates a great team spirit and friendly competition. House points are often used in lessons. Achievements of classes and individual students are celebrated in school assemblies.

The board of governors and the principal aim to make BSU an excellent reflection of Mongolian culture, heritage and values. All students learn Mongolian in school and there is a strong PSHE programme throughout the school. Teachers often promote related themes, including those which have a Mongolian and/or spiritual content. In one English lesson, the teacher briefly, but effectively, explained how toffee within the quotation "...her head felt like it was full of toffee..." was bad for teeth and should be avoided. Weekly assemblies are used to promote further related themes, including that of inclusion and anti-bullying. Students know whom to talk to, if they have any concerns. During an interview with students, one said "We can always talk to someone on the student council or to Ms Williams".

Students are respectful to each other and within their community. This fosters a calm atmosphere around the school and encourages learning. In one lesson, a Year 10 student politely reminded a teacher that the class had not been given a revision resource promised in an earlier lesson: the exchange was seamless and demonstrated the exceptionally high and mutually respectful relationships between teachers and students. The quality of teaching and learning is

enhanced further as a result of this.

Students readily engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided after school. Students enjoy participating in activities including football, jewellery making, street art and swimming. This range of activities provides good opportunities for students to improve their leadership, teamwork and physical skills.

Students have some opportunities to be actively involved in the wider community. The student council recently organised a visit to the local cancer hospital. Students enjoy contributing to their school and wider community. During an interview with students, they strongly expressed their wish to work more closely with younger children in the school. The school operates a vertically integrated house system, which is valued highly by students. During discussions, students identified the development of the house system as an opportunity to integrate further the primary and secondary sections of the school.

Student voice at the school is underdeveloped. Where it is emphasised, students require more support to achieve their goals. This is not currently effective and so reduces the impact of its work on the school.

## 7. Standard 3

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

The welfare, health and safety of students at BSU are excellent.

Procedures and systems are in place to safeguard the students throughout the school day. There are high standards of student supervision at all times. Staff regularly engage with students during break and lunchtimes, which facilitates further already excellent relationships between staff and students. This was particularly evident as younger students enjoyed the proactive contribution staff gave to playground games and use of equipment. The teaching assistants help the students use the outside equipment sensibly at lunchtime. They also monitor the well-being of students in lessons, during break times and in the extra-curricular activities. There is a full time lifeguard located in the swimming pool, which benefits further from appropriate equipment and non-slip flooring around the perimeter of the pool.

The school nurse and qualified first aiders deal with any minor accidents and injuries, contacting parents when necessary. The school maintains good information regarding students' medical conditions and allergies. There is good awareness amongst staff of the students with allergies as evidenced by allergy lists displayed around the school. Students benefit from a healthy lunch every day and displays are used to promote healthy eating.

PSHE is an integral part of the curriculum. For example, in lessons, the older students consider the effect their actions may have on the feelings of others. Younger children are learning about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. This is helping the students to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and towards others. In PE activities, students wear their PE tracksuit and safe footwear.

Security staff monitor the school entrances: at the end of the day, students are dismissed safely. Administrators contribute to the safety of the students by closing security doors and ensuring visitors wear the school name badge. The whole school site is kept immaculately clean, making the environment a pleasant and safe place to learn.

Students feel safe in the school. There is a well-developed and effective anti-bullying policy, which ensures students are aware of related issues and promotes a mutually cooperative atmosphere in the school. Students commented in a discussion that: "we feel the students are a strength of the school because we all get along with each other". Students know who to go to if they require additional support.

Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained. Daily attendance is recorded on the schools' information system. Tracking of any daily absences is rigorous. The school runs a number of local educational trips for students: staff are required to complete a risk assessment for each one. Students and staff benefit from a number of successful fire drill drills throughout the year.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is good. The owners are held in high esteem within the local community. They also oversee the school policies and procedures but do not interfere with management: there is clear delegation of duties. They ensure that the school meets the safety, care and guidance requirements for all students. Their responsibilities include the safe recruitment and checking of all staff and the effective monitoring of policy implementation to ensure all local requirements are met. All board members meet local 'appropriate persons' criteria. The vast majority of teaching staff are highly qualified against UK maintained sector standards.

There is a recruitment policy that ensures all new staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. The school has used professional agencies and the UK press to meet its recruitment needs. In both cases, new staff recruitment is subject to satisfactory references and criminal records checks.

Staffing levels are more than adequate for the successful delivery of the curriculum. Teaching assistants make a sound contribution to the quality of learning: they are valued as members of staff and mainly well supported.

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

The premises and accommodation are good: some aspects are excellent.

The school opened 2012. The building was purpose built and meets students' needs being spacious and well equipped. BSU is situated at the foot of the Mongolian steppes, on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar which allows the school to provide unique opportunities for outdoor education and exploration. In addition to well-equipped classrooms, the school has a sports hall, an indoor swimming pool, a drama room, a conference centre, a library, two ICT laboratories, two science laboratories, a music room, soundproof practice rooms, a dance room and two canteens. It is equipped with an AstroTurf field, a Key Stage 1 playground with a spongy base and an outdoor relaxation area. The school is secured with fences and security huts in order to ensure safety for all. There is some limitation because of the newness of the school, for example in the provision of resources such as books for the library and classrooms. All of primary classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard as well as three of the secondary classrooms. There is also a large Key Stage 1 room that is utilised for extra-curricular activities.

Teachers work hard to provide a stimulating learning environment for their students that support learning or display students' work in a range of subjects. There are a few displays in the corridors to show student achievements in creative aspects of learning. The classroom furniture and equipment are well matched to the age group of the students, which enables them to work comfortably. The Early Years children do not have access to a specific outside space to meet their physical and social needs. The lack of a sink or easy access to water makes creative work more difficult.

There are 2 ICT suites for students that are regularly used by classes to develop computer skills and knowledge. The lack of mobile technology such as laptops and smart tablets limits the students' opportunity to carry out research or work more independently in lessons.

The facilities for sport, gymnastics, drama and dance are very good. They are well used by the students and are of great benefit to the students in improving skills in a range of sporting and creative learning.

## 10. Standard 6

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

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is excellent. Parents welcome a British school in Mongolia. They are very satisfied with the quality of information provided by the school. This is because their children enjoy school, are successfully learning English and making excellent progress in all areas of learning. The small numbers of students in the class ensure that children have individual attention. Parents find the school to be welcoming and friendly and this means they are confident to ask questions about their child's education. One parent commented "This is a listening school".

The school carries out two annual surveys with students and parents. This provides the school with rich data. It is incorporated into short and long term goals. All feedback from the surveys is reported back in board meetings and assemblies to promote transparency. Parent data is shared on the web site. In term 3 of each year, an update is given to all stakeholders what has since been achieved. Reports are appreciated by parents and provide quality information about their child's progress. Parents do not however understand national curriculum levels as shared in reports.

The teachers' written advice in the communication notebook helps parents to understand the everyday learning and planned events in school. The parents explain that the teachers respond to any concerns quickly and are easy to contact. One parent said that the engagement of the teachers with the children is exceptional. Teachers know the children very well. The parents recognise that the school is a secure and safe place for their children to learn.

The range of information provided by the school is very good. The school makes many efforts to involve parents in a collaborative way such as parent evenings and regular progress reports. Parents thought homework was helpful to support and extend learning but having a set day would be very useful. A new parent valued the opportunity to spend a whole day as a student in a class. This helped her to better understand the learning and expectations of the school. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are appreciated as they enrich and widen the learning opportunities. The Parent Teacher Association is committed to running events for the students as well as promoting the school in the wider community. Earlier information about changes to fee levels would further please the parents, enabling them to plan family finances more easily.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school has established a complaints procedure that meets all requirements. Parents know how to proceed if they have a complaint that needs the board of governors to resolve it. It relies heavily on the principal handling most complaints, whilst they are still in the early stages.

## 12. Standard 8

### The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

## 13. Standard 9

### Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some strengths and some areas that need to be developed further.

The day-to-day management of the school is excellent. There are robust systems and procedures in place resulting in a well-run school. Staff and students know what is expected of them and there is a sense of calm throughout the school. Little time is lost as students move between lessons and activities. Students and staff are punctual and so lessons start on time, maximising learning opportunities for all.

The school has a mission statement which is recited by students in weekly assemblies and displayed in classrooms. There is however, some disconnect between the mission statement and other key strategic documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form and development plans. This lack of cohesion results in strategic planning that can be a little uncoordinated, and to inefficient allocation of time and resource.

The school has a supportive board comprising five members, four of which are also shareholders. All are prominent members of the local community. They have a wide range of expertise and are well placed to support the school's development. They have an ambitious vision for the school and openly express their desire to achieve the highest quality education for its students "...We dreamed of creating this school for our local community...". The board states its passion to

provide a UK-based curriculum for Mongolian students and their families. There is informal daily contact between the board and the principal. As the principal does not attend board meetings, more formal links are restricted to the three written reports provided by the principal to the board.

The school has a new development plan, which is supported further by very detailed action plans. Staff have a voice in shaping and determining development objectives. However, too much detail contained within the plan reduces its effectiveness. For example, the senior leadership team and the board are not always clear about the school's priorities for development. Too little time is given to evaluating formally the impact of the development plan. Informal and superficial evaluation prevents the leadership team correcting action and therefore redirecting resources to drive further school improvement. The relatively flat organisation structure of the school is unsustainable and limits further the ability of the senior leadership team to devolve responsibility to others.

The leadership recognises the benefit of providing staff with high quality appraisal and continuous professional development. Systems for staff appraisal are embedded within the school's annual cycle of improvement. Staff are required to set a number of professional targets, some of which are related to the school's development plan. There is a programme of continuous professional development. This relies heavily on the good will of staff and is not connected to the school's development priorities. The impact of continuous professional development is not formally measured and so it is not possible to measure its impact on learning.

The leadership team correctly identifies some of its strengths and weaknesses. For example, the school believes that it provides staff with: "an extensive in house CPD programme which allows staff to share best practice in the delivery of these key skills". This is not a view shared by that of the inspection team as best practice is not shared effectively. Best practice in terms of differentiation as seen in the minority of lessons, was not replicated elsewhere. Strengths and areas for development are not explicitly linked to its development plan and self-evaluation process.

The principal is a strong and purposeful voice within the school. Although members of staff take the lead on operational matters such as ECAs, mentoring, field trips, the student council and the PTA, there are opportunities for greater distributed leadership, to enhance the school's ability to improve the quality of educational outcomes. The principal is currently required and involved in too many day-to-day decisions, which hampers the school's capacity for further improvement. The principal does aim to distribute leadership roles throughout the school staff, but this is not yet fully implemented, because of the turnover of staff and a lack of a clear management structure. Too often she is required to undertake roles during the school day that should be the responsibilities of other members of staff. Nevertheless, she and the deputy have developed a very positive learning culture that permeates the school day in lessons, at lunchtimes and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The whole staff including the administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, cleaners, security guards and kitchen staff work well in cooperation. As a result, the learning environment is safe and hygienic.

The executive chair of the board is based in the school: she has good knowledge and works closely with the principal. The principal keeps her informed of school matters on a daily basis and this is regularly reported to the board. The board are determined to improve their role as critical friend, but recognise that they need further training and guidance to become more effective. The provision of support and challenge to the school's staff are also at an early stage.

The school has an established system for continuous professional development and staff give freely of their time to support it. The school has identified the need to source further external providers of professional development as a priority in order to develop further teachers' pedagogical and professional development. The school undertakes informal evaluation of its professional development provision. Currently, there is no systematic formal method of evaluation to measure the impact of professional development against the school's whole school objectives.

The school has systems and procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The school undertakes regular learning walks and all staff are observed three times per year. This provides useful performance data that is used to inform strengths and areas for development. The absence of a robust performance management cycle leads to an inconsistent implementation of strategies to further improve strengths and address areas for development. Prior to lesson observations, the SLT meet with staff to go through the criteria, and to talk about the objectives. After the observation, the observers meet with the teacher within 48 hours to give feedback and set further objectives. Nevertheless, some staff are still unsure about judgments and how they match UK/OFSTED criteria. The principal checks teachers' weekly planning which ensures a consistent approach to lesson planning. This management responsibility carries a heavy cost in terms of the principal's time.