



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Cairo English School

Egypt

Date 13th -15th May 2018
Inspection number 20180513

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); 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, 80 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 teams, a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. Three school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Sheila Smith. The team members were Terry Creissen, Abigail Fishbourne, Farida Jamali, Silvana Murphy and Peter Smith.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

Cairo English School meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The Cairo English School provides high quality education, much of which is good with some outstanding features. Students make good progress as they move through the school. IGCSE results exceed UK national expectations. Personal development is of a high order. Students feel secure and valued within the friendly mutually trustful learning environment that prevails throughout the school. Students are well supported by the pastoral care and robust welfare, health and safety policies and procedures. The students, parents and staff are highly committed to the school and feel valued and appreciated. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by a range of extracurricular activities.

The Esol Board (Educational Services Overseas Limited) and senior leadership team identify future priorities and have the capacity to continue to move the school forward.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths, which include:

- High academic expectations
- A strong community and pride amongst the student leaders – a sense of belonging
- Supporting parent body
- Happy, polite and engaged students who are keen to learn
- The operational team which ensures the day to day running of the school
- Dedicated teachers who want the best for the students
- The excellent facilities, and the attractiveness and the maintenance of the site
- The clear vision for students to be future leaders
- The Esol Board, which is committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to raising student attainment
- The capacity for future development.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- 1) Put in place a rigorous cycle for monitoring and improving teaching and learning supported by a CPD programme that builds on existing good practice.
- 2) Develop the systematic and rigorous use of data to include:
 - formative and assessment for learning (AfL) opportunities including marking and feedback
 - the use of summative data and examination outcomes
 - whole school progression and attainment/achievement data
 - identification of relevant groups for analysis
 - a wide range of effective differentiation in lessons to provide for all groups of students
- 3) Provide for open-ended and enquiry-based activities to promote critical thinking and problem-solving to further engage students in in-depth learning.
- 4) Ensure the middle and senior leaders in the school have the continued support and training needed to fulfil their role within the school.

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4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	Cairo English School				
Address	Mirage City, New Cairo, Egypt				
Telephone number	+20222490200				
Fax number	+20224091625				
Website	www.cesegypt.com				
Email address	info@cesegypt.com				
Head	Steve Lewis				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Walid Abau Shakra				
Age range	3½ - 17 ½ years				
Total number of pupils	1,675	Boys	950	Girls	725
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	11-16 years	344	
	3-5 years	317	16-18 years	66	
	5-11 years	948	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

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Cairo English School (CES) was established in 2005 and opened in 2006. The school is situated 35km from historic Cairo centre in an area of new development known as Mirage City. The school operates under regulations from the Ministry of Education that requires only text books approved by the Ministry can be used in classrooms. Arabic, Religion and Egyptian Social courses must be taught according to the Egyptian National Curriculum, with official examinations set by the Ministry in Years 6, 9 and 12.

The school is a member of the Esol Education group of schools and is directly accountable to the Esol Education Board of Directors. All academic aspects of the school are delegated to the headmaster and his Senior Leadership Group.

The school presently has 1,675 students enrolled, the majority (over 90%) are Egyptians or partly Egyptian.

The school's vision is that today's students will become future leaders who will use their skills to serve the country.

The school operates three sections: Early Years (Foundation Stage FS1-FS2 and Year 1); Primary (Years 2-6) and Secondary (Years 7-12). Egyptian Ministry of Education requirements are that students must complete 12 years at school.

The educational programme is structured on the Early Years Foundation Stage and English National Curriculum. The Secondary school has a focus on preparing students to undertake IGCSE and A-levels. To comply with Ministry of Education requirements the IGCSE exams are taken in Year 10 and A-Levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) are completed in Year 12. As a result, exams are taken one year earlier than anticipated in the UK. As a consequence the curriculum is accelerated from FS1 to Year 12.

The school has been accredited by the Council of International School (CIS) and the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. A ten-year accreditation was awarded by both bodies until May 2023. The school is also a member of the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME). The school was awarded IB 'World School' status in 2010.

4.1 British nature of the school

- Cairo English School follows a British curriculum.
- The school offers the Early Years Foundation Programme, a modified version of the Key Stage (KS) 1, KS2 and KS3 curricula, CIE IGCSEs and A Levels.
- A large percentage of staff are either British/Commonwealth (approximately 70%) or have taught within the British system.
- The key management post holders are currently all British or Commonwealth citizens, whilst the actual organisation of the school has an essentially 'British' hierarchical structure with headmaster, Heads of School, Deputy Heads of School, Year Group Leaders, Pastoral Heads and Heads of Department.
- The style of teaching and learning is British.
- The school values and principles are linked to British values.
- Students are divided into Houses for competitions and are in horizontal year groups, common to English schools.
- There are Primary and Secondary Student Councils.
- The school has a uniform policy, similar to many English schools.
- Students are divided into Houses for competitions and are in horizontal year groups, common to British schools.
- Parents are supportive of the British style of education.
- Visits and extra- curricular activities mirror those found in the British system.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by Cairo English School is good. It meets the requirements of the BSO Framework fully.

5.1 *Curriculum*

The curriculum meets the BSO standard

In the Early Years and Key Stage 1, the school uses a topic-based approach that is linked to core/exemplar texts. In the Early Years these topics are reviewed yearly and may change to appeal to the interests of the cohort. The teaching of phonics is accelerated with pupils in FS1 Term 3 segmenting and blending (Letters and Sounds Phase 2) and children in FS2 are able to tackle unfamiliar words using their phonic knowledge. After-school activities (ASAs) are available to children in Term 3 of Year 2.

In Key Stage 2 the topic based approach continues in Foundation Subjects and links are made, where appropriate, to the Core Subjects; English, Mathematics and Science. In observations, reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills were in line with the English National Curriculum expectations and pupils had the necessary core skills to make progress. A range of after school activities are offered from Year 3. They further extend subject learning and offer sporting opportunities.

The vast majority of pupils in Key Stages 3-5 are well served by the curriculum, with a small group in KS4 and KS5 having to pursue areas of interests through the after school activities as they are not offered as a qualification. The curriculum takes good account of curricula and external examination accreditation commonly used in schools within the UK and ensures that nearly all pupils can enter or re-enter the UK educational system at the appropriate level.

The curriculum provides some opportunity for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but special opportunities for pupils that are gifted and talented were not observed.

Curriculum planning in secondary school does not always meet the needs of each individual pupil. Differentiated lessons were seldom seen and progress and attainment data was not always used to effectively plan lessons. The schools procedures for assessing and tracking progress need to be consistent throughout the different Key Stages.

5.2 *Teaching and assessment*

The quality of teaching and assessment in Early Years is good.

In the Early Years the key focus is on developing the whole child and teachers and support staff have detailed understanding about each student. This understanding is underpinned by a culture of high quality care and respect that enables every student to flourish and grow.

Lessons are characterized by high expectations of participation and strong behaviour management strategies. Teachers use baseline assessments to enable them to know their students as individuals. Their individual needs are met through differentiated activities and developmental and intervention plans if required to ensure that progress is made.

Students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively, independently or as part of a focus group identified within teachers' planning. Integrated learning is achieved through matching appropriate activities and tasks to learning objectives.

In the better lessons, teachers have an infectious energy and communicate a "can do" approach to the children. They provide a range of activities to stretch and challenge the children to explore for themselves.

The teacher instructions are short and focused so that the children can spend more time engaging in adult or child led activities. There is a sense of purpose and order in the classroom, with children following embedded, pre-set routines.

There is a need to improve student centred activities that increase participation and willingness to make choices and decisions as active and inquisitive learners.

In the primary section of the school staff know all the students well and clearly recognise the uniqueness of each child: teaching is good. A strong learning support team is in place, which, together with the teachers, provides targeted support to meet successfully the needs of the students.

Teachers take into account the students' interests and plan activities to develop the students' understanding and deepen their thinking. The personal interaction between teachers and students is very positive and mutual respect is evident. The students thrive, are valued and supported in a very safe and inclusive learning environment.

The best lessons contain differentiation, assessment for learning and regular interaction and encouragement from staff which give students the confidence to

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signpost their future learning. Children know exactly what they have to achieve by the end of the lesson. They are encouraged to research and be creative thinkers

Many teachers plan engaging learning activities, providing high level of praise and encouragement, which enthuse students to learn. As a result, the majority of students contribute fully and, in some lessons, reflect productively upon their learning.

Some classes use individualised targets in the core subjects that students find useful. This is not currently adopted in other areas of the primary school.

In KS2 expectations are generally high with regards to both behaviour and learning. Classroom management and the level of student engagement with their learning is good or better especially in English and ICT. The use of iPads and many on line resources is integral to many lessons and homework tasks.

Oral feedback to drive students learning is well embedded, but written feedback although frequent, could benefit from detailed improvement targets and opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning.

Whilst most books are regularly marked and the quality of work at times acknowledged, this is not consistent. The use of 'next steps', to support and enhance students' progress is under-developed.

In the best lessons, learning is dynamic, interactive and challenging for the students. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, text deconstruction method was used for a deeper understanding of the literary message, combined with engaging pair and group discussion. In another Year 5 lesson, the teacher demonstrated an outstanding usage of targeted questioning at a very good pace in order to achieve differentiated learning outcomes.

In less successful lessons, the objectives are presented to the students, but there is limited reference to the success criteria. As a result, few plenaries were observed and the usage of formative assessment strategies at the end of the lesson is limited. Often teachers missed the opportunity to check on the levels of understanding and self and peer-assessment was underutilised.

In many lessons, 21st century skills, opportunities for inquiry explorations, open-ended tasks and a variety of problem solving in real life settings were not evident.

It is not common practice to give written feedback on displayed student work in class or around the school. Where work is displayed, there is no written feedback or description of the task or objective.

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In the most effective lessons, learning activities and resources are differentiated to appropriately support and challenge students. However, in many cases differentiation is limited; insufficient challenge is provided for the more able students to progress at their own pace or extend their learning. This is an area, which needs to be developed and be more consistent across the school.

Teaching across the secondary school was mainly satisfactory or better. In the best lessons the teaching encouraged independent learning through challenging group activities or motivational activities which enthused the students to achieve highly. When working in groups the opportunity for each student to participate was met and individuals listened to the contribution of others. The teachers' passion for the subject was evident as was their focus on student achievement. Short videos were used effectively to enhance motivation and student learning.

In the less successful lessons, tasks were more routine and lacked real excitement. Differentiation and formative assessment were not evident. Marking or feedback for improvement were not evident in books. As in the Primary section, there were few opportunities for inquiry, explorations, open-ended tasks and problem-solving in real life settings were not evident.

It was not possible to observe Year 10 or 12 lessons as they were engaged in examinations. However Year 11 classes **were** observed and the teaching seen here was of a high order. Tasks were challenging and students were able to engage in group discussion with each student making positive contributions in a mature way.

Across the school, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching with some outstanding practice, but much that lacks the excitement and rigour which stimulates student enthusiasm and achievement.

5.3 *Standards achieved by pupils*

Standards across the school are good overall. Staff are working to improve the progress of children across the age range, year on year.

Standards of attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are above expectations when measured against UK benchmarks. In the best lessons, children were seen to be enthusiastic and were encouraged to explore their learning independently and with their peers, leading to good progress. In lessons seen, the children were well behaved and were able to follow the directions of their teachers. Good routines were in place to ensure their well-being and to keep them focused on their learning. In some lessons, the focus on control and a more formal approach to learning limits the creativity of the children and inhibits the opportunity for discovering things for themselves. Nevertheless, good progress was seen to be made in the majority of classes.

In Key Stage 1, standards in literacy, maths and science are in line with expectations. Children are encouraged to develop their understanding through teacher-directed question and answer sessions, and in group discussions and activities. Good class management ensures that children make progress. However, in some lessons a lack of differentiated tasks resulted in a lack of challenge for the most able whilst the least able were supported well by the teacher and class assistant.

In Key Stage 2, standards in literacy, mathematics and science are in line with expectations when measured against UK benchmarks. It was noticeable that standards of literacy are improving year on year. However, in some lessons observed, children were passive participants and their development of understanding, knowledge and skills was minimal. Where high expectations were set and children were encouraged to find answers to their questions for themselves, the rate of progress was high.

At Key Stage 3, the school has moved from numerical levels to a grading system aligned to the IGCSE system. This transition was still being developed and teachers were working on defining the progress and assessment measures of this new system. Based on students' work in their exercise books and in lessons seen, overall standards of attainment were in line with expectations.

Attainment at Key Stage 4 shows a positive trend and is above UK benchmarks. In 2017, students achieved an overall pass rate of 87% with 79% achieving 5 or more IGCSE grades at A*-C including English and mathematics. Last year, 44% of grades were A* and A demonstrating improvement at the top end of the spectrum with girls performing slightly better than boys. Over the past three years, the school results have improved year on year.

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Some students elect to study AS and A levels and perform as expected. For those studying the IB Diploma, the senior students of the school have maintained a point score in line with world-wide averages.

Student behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Children are compliant and courteous, showing respect for their teachers, assistants and their peers. Children are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their lessons. In the few instances where behaviour was seen to be below the school standards, teachers quickly engaged with the children and students responded appropriately. The school is an orderly, controlled and safe environment.

Attendance rates were satisfactory across the school, but attendance rates of senior students dropped significantly as they moved closer to their external examinations.

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

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Overall the pupils are respectful towards one another and staff. They are enthusiastic about their school life and demonstrate this by their considerate behaviour and positive attitudes. The school has a strong commitment to promoting good relationships between people regardless of age, race, gender, disability or ethnic heritage and this is reinforced through the values of the month, PSHE lessons and assemblies. They understand and model British values.

Attendance is 90.6% so far this academic year.

The student council meet every two weeks with a member of staff to voice pupil concerns. The school organises fund raising events and culture events to involve students in charitable activities and to develop cultural interests and awareness.

Pupils in Y9 receive career guidance within their year groups and are prepared to make choices about the next stage of their education. Year 11 pupils are involved in a 3 day work experience allowing them to have some training or employment opportunities, with some pupils securing an internship, however the curriculum does not allow all pupils to pursue their areas of interests.

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

The welfare, health and safety of the students meet BSO standards

The school has a safe and caring ethos. This is supported by high levels of supervision of students and a safe environment in which the students are able to learn.

There are procedures in place for fire safety and lock-down, including evacuation practice every term, well marked escape routes and fire doors. The site is secure, exceptionally clean and in an excellent state of repair. Supervision of students is obvious and efficient. Visitors to the site are required to be checked through security.

The site has many areas for students to relax, play and socialise. There is a cafeteria in the main block which is kept clean. There is a good level of hygiene in this area. There is a range of foods and drinks available with an emphasis on a healthy diet. Additionally, senior school students have access to a quieter area away from the main school building. There is access to drinking water fountains on all floors and around the site. The water quality is monitored regularly.

Most of the students arrive at the site by bus. The fleet of 50+ vehicles is well maintained and comply with local regulations. Drivers and the attendants on the buses are careful that all students use the seat belts. There is first aid equipment and an accompanying adult on all buses. The procedures for students' arrival and departure by bus are exceptionally efficient. Parents are able to drop off their children at a second entrance. This is also well monitored and it is locked after the morning arrivals.

There are two doctors on site aided by two assistants. Together they provide an excellent level of service to all students and when required, members of the staff. They monitor and record their work using IT, which enables them to liaise with parents and share records with the family's doctors. They are highly valued by the school community.

The parents are kept informed by the school of their child's progress and any incidents in which their child has been involved. The school also keeps records of all contacts made by the parents to the school.

The Health and Safety committee meet once a month, review the well written policies and effect changes where necessary. There are regular inspections by outside organisations such as the Fire Brigade and the Ministry of Education. The records show that their standards are met and any advice given is taken. Work done in respect of this is recorded.

A School Student Council enables the students to voice concerns and enables the school to act as one community. Students enjoy being here and appreciate what the staff do for them.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is of a high order. The proprietary body (ESOL Education) oversees the running of the school and ensures that it meets all regulatory requirements. The Board shares a passionate vision with the senior leadership of the school for the students to become the leaders of tomorrow and to have the commitment to return to support the country's future development once they become fully qualified in their specialist field.

The running of the school is delegated to the headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team. The school is positively supported by ESOL consultants.

Staffing levels are good and enables the curriculum to be delivered effectively. The recruitment of an extra science teacher for KS2 has recently been agreed and this will provide extra support for students' transition to KS3. The majority of teaching staff are from the UK or Commonwealth.

All of the necessary checks have been completed and there is a comprehensive central record which records the required documentation. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good team spirit. Teachers are supported in the classroom by TAs. There are adequate good resources to support the curriculum and students' needs.

Excellent provision of administrative, finance and support staff enable the school to run efficiently and effectively on a day to day basis. The partnership between the ESOL Board, the Leadership team, the administrative team and all other workers supports the delivery of ESOLs vision ' to provide outstanding education to students and excellent professional opportunities for educators in international communities, instilling the knowledge, skills, and character necessary for success in the 21st century'.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet BSO standards

There are three entrances to the site all of which are monitored throughout the day by security guards. There is a recording system in place should students need to leave the school before normal finishing time. The students are able to attend and leave the school safely. Visitors are recorded and required to wear identity badges.

The external areas are well maintained. The well kept gardens lead to play areas for the range of different age groups. A central quadrangle is used for assemblies and for play during break-times. Sufficient shaded areas are available. There are a wide range of PE facilities, including a safe surface running track and several basketball courts. There is a large swimming pool with changing and showering facilities. The evacuation areas are clearly marked and are sufficiently away from the main building.

The main building has three floors. Each floor is designated to an age groups – the older students being on the top floor. A theatre and gymnasium complex is attached to one side of the building. The theatre has seating for 400 people. The stage is used as a teaching area. The gym is of good size and there is access to a multi-purpose studio. There is a large design Technology area. All of these facilities are excellent and enable students to learn in a comfortable and appropriate learning environment.

There are sufficient student toilets available on each floor. They are constantly monitored and are very clean. There is at least one cubicle in each that has been adapted for students with special needs. Staff toilets are also available on all floors. They are clean and well maintained. Changing facilities and showers are provided for the gym area and for the swimming pool.

Classrooms are of good size and quality. They are well maintained. There is air conditioning, window shades and lock-down shutters for the classroom door windows. There are adequate laboratories, specialist rooms for music, art, ICT rooms and two age-specific libraries.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

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

Parents feel that the school fully engages them in their child's education and their views are regularly sought both informally and formally. A focus group of parents was highly positive about the level of communication offered by the school and they felt that the school "always listens to them".

The school has extensive documentation and policies covering all aspects of the school including admission policy and Egyptian Ministry of Education policies on student exclusions. These are made available to parents and carers as handbooks or via the website, which is updated regularly.

Written reports are issued twice a year and these are written in a manner that can be transferable to the UK should it be necessary. These reports include attainment as well as personal, social and moral development.

Coffee morning meetings, parent information evenings, workshops, newsletters, class meetings and comprehensive handbooks are published to assist parents and carers to understand school protocols, curriculum and assessments. Induction and transition between school departments are well planned and effective.

The school uses email and SMS for emergencies and there is also a continued presence on social media, for example the Facebook School Page, Shobie, Pass, Parents Information System, DoJo and Merit System.

There are a number of open days and social events every year and the PTSA committee meets regularly.

Parents reported that there are many occasions for them to support the school and are pleased with the engagement the school has with the local community and are particularly impressed with the organisation of school trips locally and overseas.

11. *Standard 7*

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets BSO standards.

The school has effective processes. These include detailed policy documents for handling staff or parent complaints. These policies include clear lines of reporting, recording, timeframes and a process for escalation. In addition, parents receive a yearly Key Stage Parent Handbook which includes the procedure.

Parents report that complaints are followed up in a timely manner and, where possible, positive resolutions have been found. Where the issue is related to staff performance, parents reported that staffing changes had been made.

12. Standard 9 Leadership and management of the school

The owners have a strong vision for the school and are passionate about providing high quality education for the students. The school board is effective in its management of the non-educational responsibilities of the school including finance, HR functions and managing the requirements of government agencies. They work collaboratively with the headmaster to ensure that educational aims are met.

The headmaster has been in post for a year and is working hard to embed fully a culture of high expectations and rigour amongst the staff: progress has been which is significant. He is seen by the Board as the educational leader of the school who should be focussed on the quality of learning, the care of the pupils and the management of academic staff. He undertakes numerous lesson observations and monitoring walks, teacher support sessions, and at regular pastoral meetings with parents and students. He also spends a lot of time around the school at break, lunch, after school and in lessons talking with students. With the support of the head of Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the head of Key Stage 2, and the head of secondary, he is ensuring that the school offers a positive and safe learning environment.

Individually, the heads of schools have drive and purpose. However, it is not clear how aligned they are to the strategic intent and the vision of the school, and how well they operate with the headmaster and the board as a team. The senior leaders in the school have access to data on student progress and teaching quality. However, this is not always shared with middle leaders and teaching staff. Middle leaders are working independently to use data within their areas rather than working collaboratively on a common standard. There is some way to go to ensure that management information is disseminated well in order to impact on improvements in the quality of teaching for effective learning.

Staff are able to access professional development as individuals and are provided with a grant for this purpose. However, staff felt that opportunities for whole school professional development were limited and want to see this better coordinated. Processes of staff accountability were through informal reviews of staff performance.

There have been challenges for the school in recruiting and retaining high quality teaching staff. This has been a focus for the school and they are being more effective in appointing, developing and managing staff performance to enhance the learning of the students.

The school operations are well run and there is a team of high quality administrative and support staff. These members of the school community ensure that the school is well maintained and that children are looked after, working in collaboration with the teaching and class support staff.

Systems throughout the school for monitoring the quality of teaching, the use and collection of data and holding individuals, to account lack rigour.

13. *Standard 9*
The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.