



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

The English School of Mongolia

Ulaan Baatar

Date 18th – 20th September, 2017
Inspection # 20170918

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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 2017 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, more than 40 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. Members of the Board were interviewed. Three school days were monitored.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Dr Colin Dickinson and Nichola Ryan.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The English School of Mongolia (ESM) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

ESM is a developing school which is making strong progress. It has many good features.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at ESM:

- The students enjoy their learning and are very proud of their school
- There is an upward trend in examination results
- Teaching staff are competent and committed to ESM: they enjoy working at the school
- The leadership provided by the Director is strong and purposeful
- ESM is a school that listens to its parents
- There is an open-door policy, which encourages parental input
- Parents are positive about the school and the progress it has made
- The introduction of the IB is expanding and developing the curriculum
- Classrooms assistants offer good support
- The administration team provides strong and effective support to the senior managers and teachers at ESM.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- 1) Further improve the quality of learning and teaching by:
 - a) extending the use of active learning/teaching techniques in lessons throughout the school
 - b) planning continuous professional development programme from both inhouse and external providers
 - c) developing teachers' understanding and implementation of differentiation
 - d) in the Junior School, consider introducing a Foundation Reading Scheme
 - e) training staff to make more effective use of ICT for developing learning
- 2) Develop the focus on individual pupils' needs, for example by:
 - a) whole school formative and summative assessment, and a strong tracking process
 - b) ensuring individual teachers are confident analysing assessment and tracking data
 - c) developing support mechanisms for pupils with particular learning needs
 - d) ensuring all pupils are academically challenged in lessons
- 3) Cultivate middle managers' skills, knowledge and understanding of how to best support learning and teaching

4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	The English School of Mongolia				
Address	Tokyo Street, 1 st Khoroo, 12 th Khoroolol, Bayanzurkh District, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia				
Telephone number	+976-11-451230				
Fax number	+976-11-451230				
Website	www.esm.edu.mn				
Email address	info@esm.edu.mn				
Director	Mr. Graham Hill				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Mrs. Sergelen Davaakhuu				
Age range	3 – 19 years				
Total number of students	636	Boys	277	Girls	359
Numbers by age	0-2 years		12-16 years		235
	3-5 years	45	16-18 years		50
	6-11 years	235	19+ years		3
Total number of part-time children	0				

The school is based in the downtown area of Ulaan Baatar, the capital city of Mongolia. It is a medium-sized school with approximately 650 pupils. Most of the pupils are Mongolian citizens (approximately 85%) with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls.

New pupils join the school at different points in the academic year, and in all different academic years. They come from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, including international schools in Ulaan Baatar, local state schools, and schools overseas. Disruption to pupils' education is common in Mongolia due to volatile economic conditions and to a large number of Mongolian citizens working on short contracts overseas. It is not always possible to obtain credible reports or academic data from pupils' previous school. ESM is not selective, accepting pupils with English as an Additional Language and/or special educational needs.

Ulaan Baatar has an extreme continental climate, with a long and harsh winter season: temperatures of -20 to -30°C are typical. It is therefore not possible to organise outdoor activities or trips during the November – March period.

Due to the remote location of the city within East Asia, it can be challenging to obtain a full range of teaching resources, to host visiting speakers and to organise events with other British international schools in Asia. The remote location, along with high levels of air pollution in winter and the fluctuating Mongolian economic situation, creates a challenging context for recruiting teachers from overseas.

The last full external inspection of the school was the International Baccalaureate Verification Visit in April 2015; as a result, the school was accepted as an IB World School and authorised to offer the IB Diploma Programme.

4.1 British nature of the school

ESM is proud to be a British school, and this is reflected in many aspects of the school's operations.

The school's curriculum is based on the National Curriculum for England (2014). The staff aim to offer a broad educational experience which recreates the UK independent school experience. There is active promotion of the arts, the humanities and physical education in addition to core subjects. Several pupils have made a successful transition to schools and universities in the UK.

Music and drama are celebrated throughout the school. There are several school choirs and a school band. Peripatetic music teachers offer individual and group lessons in violin, guitar, piano, and traditional Mongolian instruments. There are termly concerts, a Christmas concert, and a songs evening involving the whole school. Staff and pupils stage large-scale musical productions each year, including 'The Phantom of the Opera' (2017), Tchaikovsky's 'Eugene Onegin' (2016) and 'Les Miserables'. There is a biannual Shakespeare festival involving every middle school class performing a well-known play.

The sports programme at ESM is highly successful. The girls' and boys' football teams, volleyball teams, and basketball teams compete successfully at the highest level. In addition, there is also a broad and inclusive sports programme, both during games lessons and during extra-curricular activities, including tennis, yoga, taekwondo and boxing. This term, the school has an external cricket coach working with the pupils.

ESM was the first centre for the Duke of Edinburgh's award in Mongolia. Last year, pupils earned a large number of bronze and silver awards. Currently, there are over 50 students aged 14 to 18 working towards bronze, silver and gold awards.

The school has welcomed a wide range of visitors. Recently, the British Ambassador to Mongolia came to speak to senior students about higher education in the UK. Last year ESM appointed a musician-in-residence, Dr Andrew Fisher, from Southampton University to work with middle school students and stage a musical drama over several weeks. In keeping with the British independent school tradition, the school welcomes a range of speakers from the local community. The school is a full member school of FOBISIA (Federation of British International Schools in Asia): several teachers and members of the school management team have attended FOBISIA conferences.

Around one in three ESM teachers come from the UK: there are British teachers working in the junior school, middle school, senior school and in the school management team. Several of the Mongolian staff completed their higher education in the UK.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by ESM is satisfactory with some good features. It fully meets the requirements of the BSO Framework.

5.1 Curriculum

The English School of Mongolia (ESM) follows the National Curriculum of England, which provides a framework for teaching, taking into account the local Mongolian context. Thus pupils have the opportunity to work towards proficiency in the Mongolian language and study Mongolian history and culture throughout their education. The curriculum of the school is sound and is being used effectively.

The preschool curriculum is based on the UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance. In the Primary School, the curriculum is delivered in a cross-curricular approach, linking learning within topics. A phonics programme is implemented throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.

At Key Stage 3, the English National Curriculum guides the knowledge required by pupils. At Key Stage 4, Cambridge iGCSEs are taught. The International Baccalaureate (IB) is in its second cycle of implementation and is proving popular. For those pupils unable to access the IB, the school have an introduced an ESM Diploma. This is an evolving programme of courses and subjects designed to continue and develop the education of local pupils, post-16 years of age.

The school has a curriculum policy and departments have produced schemes of work. The Director of Studies oversees the Heads of Departments in this process. The documentation produced was of a satisfactory standard, and in the process of being developed further.

The school provides formalised Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) in the Primary School, but, not in the Middle or Senior School. For the older pupils, it is therefore taught through intrinsic and extrinsic ways such as modelling, assemblies and community outreach.

The school has an inclusive entry policy and thus caters for a wide range of abilities. There is no formalized testing or interview process prior to entry to the school. The school has no Head of EAL or SEN: once pupils are admitted, their language ability is evaluated by the head of English. If any appears to have any special educational needs, the head of the Primary School, who is trained in meeting the needs for pupils

with special educational needs (SEN) is consulted. There are currently no individual learning plans in place. English classes are streamed according to language ability.

Careers guidance is available from the Senior School Coordinator and Director of Studies, who is also the IB Coordinator. This involves guidance on university applications to a diverse range of countries. Universities are encouraged to visit the school where possible, and many do. In addition, day visits have been made to local businesses and industries (such the Stock Exchange, a power station and a private bank) to raise students' awareness of different career options. Local companies also come into school to talk about careers

The school has an extracurricular programme for one hour each day after school, except Friday. It is compulsory for all students to attend these. The programme is diverse and includes sporting, creative, fun and academic activities.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment is satisfactory. This allows the pupils to make sound progress. The pupils are engaged in their learning and happy to be at school. Staff are caring and aware of the pupils' needs.

Teaching enables most pupils to acquire new knowledge, and to make progress according to their ability. They increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught, as they move through the school. Most teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts, to show interest in their work and learn and think for themselves. Many teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, needs (including the needs of EAL and SEN learners) and sometimes of the prior attainments of the pupils. They ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. Class time is managed appropriately.

The pre-school is a bright welcoming environment. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are eager to learn. Lessons/activities are at the appropriate level in each class. All preschool staff are engaged, understanding and knowledgeable about preschool needs, regardless of the class of the child. There is a limited range of age appropriate resources to support play-based learning activities within the school day.

Throughout the school, staff are enthusiastic and keen for the pupils to learn. Planning is standardised at each year level, which is supportive but stifles creativity. Although differentiation is planned for, this is not yet embedded in classroom practice. Staff have limited opportunities for continuous professional development to develop their understanding of differentiation or other teaching issues.

Subject knowledge amongst the teachers is mainly strong. Because of the interest shown by the vast majority of pupils, this leads to good learning on many occasions.

Behaviour management throughout the school is good. Pupils' behaviour is excellent: they have very good manners, care for one another, and there are very positive relationships between adults and pupils.

ICT is used by teachers within the school, especially the digital white boards, but there has not yet been sufficient opportunity for teachers to share and develop their expertise. There is a regular local problem with internet access.

Assessment is developing within the school. Staff track pupils' test results, but the use of this data is less well established. Relatively little assessment is shared with the year above or below. There are some baseline tests used in the Junior School. In grade 3, teachers are beginning to use *HeadStart* assessment and tracking. The junior

and middle school do not have access to a structured reading scheme, so pupils do not have this kind of foundation on which to build their reading prowess. The Middle School collect their own assessment data, but overall there is a lack of coherence in the assessment process throughout the school. This is a missed opportunity to drive forward the teaching, learning and planning further.

Marking of books is carried out, but only at a basic level. There are many missed opportunities to support pupils' understanding of how to improve their work and how to work at the next level. Pupils are aware of the importance of understanding what the teachers think of their work. Conversations were observed during which pupils engaged in discussions related to learning and progress. Use of assessment for learning techniques is currently underdeveloped.

The school has arranged some offsite professional development which was attended by the senior staff who then shared it with teachers. There is currently no inhouse continuous professional development programme.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for human differences. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school.

Spiritual development is satisfactory. During their time at ESM, pupils gradually develop more self-awareness and a greater understanding of others. Pupils are tolerant and supportive of one another, and enjoy the regular celebration of individuals' success. Older pupils help younger ones through their roles of responsibility, and the importance of good behaviour is well understood. Personal development is advanced through drama productions and concerts, educational visits and visiting speakers.

Moral development is good. From an early age, pupils show a clear understanding of right and wrong, and the need for rules. They are polite, respectful and excellent ambassadors for their school. Their attitude to learning is positive and they recognize and appreciate the opportunities that are available to them, not only in an academic and extracurricular context, but also in the manner in which the school is run and that the student voice is listened to and taken seriously. House captains in the primary school, class representatives in the Middle School and prefects in the Senior School all provide vehicles for students to learn about leadership and serving the school.

Social development is good. Relationships between pupils and staff and within the pupil body are a positive aspect of the school. There is a mutual respect evident in all areas of the school community. The prefect body are an impressive cohort of pupils.

The school has an active Model United Nations (MUN) group, which hosted the first MUN pupil conference in Mongolia in 2017. This, along with pupil leaders throughout all sections of the school, is a tangible working of the democratic processes which the pupils are exposed to at ESM. The structures and teaching in the school allow a good understanding of British life and attitudes. The pupils believe they have the right to voice respectful opinions in the appropriate forums for pupil leaders.

Behaviour in the school was almost all of a good standard. Students take responsibility for their own behavior. The school enhances this by the use of a merit system, which may result in an end of year trip as a reward.

Cultural development is good. The students are given the opportunity to celebrate diversity in a range of local and international festivals throughout the academic year. This includes an International day. Students are aware of issues of need in the local community and are involved in outreach programmes. This has been enhanced by the service component of the International Baccalaureate.

7. *Standard 3*

The welfare, health and safety of the students

The welfare, health and safety of the students are satisfactory. The school meets the requirements for BSO.

Good quality of care for pupils was seen in the high level of commitment of the staff and their competence in promoting health and safety. Pupils feel that they could speak with staff or nurse on issues that concern them. All staff have open-door policies. Bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and when the occasional incident arises, it is dealt with immediately.

There is a full-time nurse available on site and she has an appropriately provisioned nurse's station. The pupils are weighed, and their height checked twice a year. If there are any issues, parents are informed and a plan put in place. Records are kept of all pupils, which include age, height, weight, illnesses and visits to nurses with comments.

The public relations director ensured that all staff have had the appropriate police checks. Staff details are recorded on a single central register. Staff are well looked after: they are initially given accommodation and at a later date find their own using the same budget. Accommodation is monitored by the public relations director. If staff have any issues, the public relations director is quick to support: a school lawyer is available should he be required.

Good quality, balanced healthy food is available for lunch. There is a choice of two main dishes. The canteen is well organised, clean and functional. Both staff and pupils eat in the canteen. There is a coffee shop that sells healthy and balanced sandwiches and drinks. Drinking water is available around the school.

School staff are deployed suitably to ensure the proper supervision of pupils, during break time, lunch time and end of the day.

An admission register and an attendance register are kept up-to-date. Both conform to local regulatory requirements.

All areas of the school are very clean. The team of cleaners do an excellent job, particularly considering the age of the school.

There are 5 security guards, who rotate day and night shift. All visitors are requested to report at the reception where they are given visitors' passes. The school has secure doors into the school.

There is an issue with cars dropping off pupils between 8.00am and 8.20am. The school are in the process of finding solutions for this.

8. *Standard 4*

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets this standard.

Responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are clearly understood and effectively discharged. Clear procedures have been put in place to ensure staff appointed meet best practice regarding safe recruitment procedures. Prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, appropriate checks, including police checks in the country of origin, are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in Mongolia and their previous employment activity.

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. Background checks are carried out on all staff (including part-time and peripatetic teachers) and volunteers at the school. Health checks are completed in accordance with Mongolian law; in addition, staff complete a health declaration form. At least two reputable references are taken for all staff before giving a job offer. The relevant checks and supporting documents are kept by the HR manager.

There are no supply staff are employed at the school. The relevant background checks are carried out on all staff at the school (including full-time and part-time teachers, visiting teachers, non-teaching staff). Records of all staff and volunteers are kept by the HR manager.

Board members can demonstrate that they meet all local requirements and in addition have the right to work in Mongolia. Where appropriate, certificates of good conduct are obtained, from the relevant embassies or police forces of all countries in which Board members have resided.

Staff recruitment policies and practices are embedded and meet all safeguarding requirements. The policies for safeguarding and for health and safety are available for all to see, on the school's website.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory and meet the required standard for BSO.

The school is housed in a large three storey building with a well utilised basement level. The building is functional, with reasonably sized classrooms and corridors. Furniture and fittings are generally appropriate.

Classrooms are relatively traditional with desks mostly arranged in rows. There are no break out rooms or spaces for group work out of the usual classroom context. There is no common room area for older students.

The corridors and classrooms are generally fairly sparse in terms of displays and many, especially in the senior part of the school, lack vibrancy and colour.

Toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of children of different gender are available. Changing accommodation is provided for all pupils, but showers are not available.

There is a medical room, staffed by a qualified nurse. There is only one bed for use of short term sick children, screened from the rest of the facility.

Drinking water facilities are available for the use of children. They are located strategically and met all the BSO standards required.

There are indoor and outdoor area for PE and co-curricular activities. There were good outdoor play areas for children which were well supervised during break and lunch times.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided by ESM for parents, prospective parents, and other interested parties is satisfactory.

Parents of students and of prospective students are provided with the appropriate information, including the school's address and telephone number and a site map along with various documents about admissions and policies.

A focus group of parents stated how proud they are of the school. Key policies, including those regarding the admission policy, behaviour/discipline policy, code of conduct, safeguarding, health and safety policy, and anti-bullying are readily available to parents. Details of the particulars of academic performance are available on the website.

The school has recently updated its website. It is bilingual, easy to navigate and informative. Each department has uploaded the curriculum and activities they have done and achieved. The website does not currently have much information about the ethos of the school, or about the Headmaster. ESM is a caring school and this is not highlighted suitably.

A school report to parents is sent twice a year. These reports have grades and have a general comment for each subject. However, the reports are rather generic and are therefore not as useful to parents and pupils as they would be if they were more strongly individualised.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school provides clear and precise information about what should happen in the event of a complaint. These procedures are in line with local Ministry requirements.

Complaints are very rare. The school nevertheless has a detailed policy and procedure in place which reflect good practice from the UK, outlining both the spirit and details of the process. Parents are informed of the process through the website.

The aim of the procedure is to ensure a fair, effective and as rapid as possible resolution of all parent complaints. It is clear about time limits, record keeping correspondence and matters of professional judgement. The policy also states clearly the role of the board of directors.

Stage 1 of the process is informal resolution. It is hoped most complaints and concerns will be made, considered and resolved quickly and informally. Stage 2 is invoked if formal resolution is required. The complaint is put in writing to the Director and replied to within 10 school days. Records of all meetings and interviews are kept for three years.

If parents are not satisfied with the Director's response the parents write within 10 working days to the Chair of the Board of Directors. He/she would investigate the matter and aim to respond to parents within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they can proceed to Stage 3, which is a Board of Directors' Panel Hearing.

Stages 2 and 3 have never actually been required.

12. *Standard 8* Leadership and management of the school

Overall, the leadership and management at ESM is satisfactory. The vision, hard work and patient approach of the Director is outstanding: the support and strategic planning shown by the Board is excellent.

The senior leadership team provides clear educational direction, reflected in the sound quality of education, the emphasis on the care of students, and the fulfilment of the school's vision, mission and core values. There is a positive relationship between the Director, senior staff and the school's Board.

The board of directors have a clear focus on strategy. They support the principal and the leadership group well in their function of running the school. They are effective in their emphasis on financial and business development. They hold the school to account for the staffing provision and financial management. There is less clarity about how to pursue and monitor for educational excellence, however.

The Director provides strong, effective and thoughtful leadership and direction for the school. He focusses strongly on the quality of education and the care of the pupils. With the support of the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, he ensures that the school is a positive and constructive place to work.

The senior leadership team has started the process of delegating more responsibilities to middle leaders, but this is not yet fully embedded. Further development in this respect, will ensure greater security and sustainability for the school.

The leadership team is increasingly successful in securing and motivating high quality staff. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are recognised as valued members of the school team. This has created a sense of community amongst the professionals who support, encourage and work together.

The whole school runs well on a day-to-day basis, in part because of the high quality of the administrative and support staff. Their skill and work allow the teachers to concentrate on teaching.

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

Not applicable.