



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report
St Lawrence College
Athens
Greece

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Inspection number

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

During the inspection visit, 84 full or part lessons were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with senior staff, the management team, the owners/members of the board and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils.

The lead inspector was Mark Evans. The team members were Terri Hadfield, Sheila Smith and Sarah Wild.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

St Lawrence College, Athens meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas accreditation.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

St Lawrence College is a good school which provides a sound quality of education. It is making good progress and has some significant strengths.

3.1 What the school does well

These strengths include:

- The Headmaster and the Headmistress of the Junior School work well together and have been very effective in guiding and developing the school further.
- There is positive attitude amongst nearly all staff towards the idea of continued improvement.
- The attitude and behaviour of the pupils are excellent.
- They feel safe and well cared for – the school's pastoral system is strong.
- Communication with the parents is excellent: they are highly supportive of the school.
- The promotion and nurturing of multiculturalism in the school is excellent.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better, especially in the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Junior School and in many senior school English and science lessons.
- The arrangements for the Year 6 to Year 7 transition are very effective.
- The day-to-day organisation of the school is excellent.
- The school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Refresh and re-energise the strategic vision for the school, including revising job descriptions, budgets and lines of accountability, to ensure it is fulfilled in a timely manner.
2. Reconstitute the board of governors, to provide better critical support for the owners and the school.
3. Agree a school development plan that supports the school's vision and gives attainable targets for the senior managers and administrators.
4. Develop a sharper assessment strategy that guides marking, target setting and grading of individuals' progress.
5. Improve quality of teaching to match that of the best, including
 - a. Increasing the challenge for all pupils, but especially the most able;
 - b. Encouraging less teacher-talk;
 - c. Through the use of more creative and innovative teaching techniques;
 - d. Making more consistent use of learning objectives.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school/college	St Lawrence College				
Address	Anemon Street, Koropi, Attiki, 19400, Athens, Greece				
Telephone number	+30 210 891 7000				
Fax number	+30 210 891 7010				
Website	www.slc.gr				
Email address	info@slc.gr				
Head	Mr Phil Holden				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Mrs Kiki Karakostas				
Age range	2½ - 18 years				
Total number of pupils	715	<i>Boys</i>	371	<i>Girls</i>	344
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	-	<i>11-16 years</i>	272	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	50	<i>16-18 years</i>	95	
	<i>5-11 years</i>	298	<i>18+ years</i>	-	
Total number of part-time children	3				

The school is located in the southern suburbs of Athens on a location that was developed over the period 1996-2004, originally consisting of many independent rural plots. There are no other British schools of significant size in the southern suburbs of Athens.

The collapse of the Greek economy following the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, combined

with the specific and ongoing governmental fiscal crisis and political developments, has, understandably, been a threat to the school. Successive governments' attempts to rein in budget deficits by cutting spending and raising taxation in the context of a shrinking economy, and structural reforms demanded by international lenders in return for bailouts and the difficulty with which these have been implemented have all directly impacted the school's ability to realise progress in a number of ways. These include:

- a) An increase in costs, reducing liquidity and the availability of financial resources and credit for investment. The school faced higher taxes on employer national insurance contributions, employment taxes and higher VAT on energy bills, resource purchases and fuel, and also new property taxes that are based on square metres of buildings and land. These have had the impact of reducing availability of finances for other objectives.
- b) A government order that no private school is permitted to raise its school fees.
- c) A freeze on the gross salaries of staff, which has led to increased difficulty in recruiting the good staff from the UK.
- d) Sharply increased income tax rates, the abolition of the personal allowance before income tax and increased personal employee national insurance contributions have all caused sharp declines in net pay for staff.
- e) A reduction to Greek pension entitlements has further reduced the incentives for working in Greece.
- f) Greek government directives have banned what might otherwise be considered "standard" educational practices, including holding staff appraisals and introducing performance-related pay.

In the past year, the school has ensured all pupils are in age-appropriate classes. The new admission policy requires all pupils to be placed in the proper class, and is now aligned to local regulatory requirements.

4.1 British nature of the school

St. Lawrence College is recognisably British. It provides an education that is demonstrably influenced by UK practice, to the wide range of nationalities of pupils that attend.

- a) The school follows the EYFS guidance and the English National Curriculum, while adjusting for local Greek requirements regarding the compulsory teaching of the Greek language.
- b) High importance is placed on pastoral care - class teachers in the EYFS and junior school, and form teachers plus deputy heads and assistant heads in the senior school recognise the need for and the benefits of high quality pastoral care. It is a concept that has required definition for many parents and some Greek staff for whom it is not a known part of local curriculum in the Greek educational system.
- c) The school takes an inclusive approach to the education of children with special educational needs (SEN) with a dedicated SEN team as of September 2015.
- d) The layout of the school and its facilities meet the expectations set by high-quality British schools.
- e) The organisational hierarchy of the school follows common UK practice. There is a single overall head of school and then divides between the junior and senior sections. In the junior school, there is a head, a deputy head, a head of EYFS and a key stage coordinator for each of Key Stage 1 and 2. In the senior school, there are two deputy heads (one academic and one pastoral), three assistant heads, one assigned to each of Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.
- f) As with British schools across the world, importance is placed on educating the whole child and that means extracurricular activities are widespread, diverse and strongly encouraged. This is very different to the experience of many children who join the school from the Greek education system. Extracurricular activities may happen at lunchtimes or after school. Some are free, while others require an additional payment from parents.
- g) The school further demonstrates its British nature by the public examinations taken by all pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5. This is the case not only because the pupils sit for British qualifications in that they take IGCSEs at the end of Year 11, AS-Levels in Year 12 and full A-Levels at the end of Year 13 – but also because the school is not selective in who sits for the examinations.
- h) The vast majority (just over 80%) of school-leavers progress to British universities.
- i) All staff are either native or fluent speakers of English and all are qualified teachers.
- j) By joining the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) the school is part of a worldwide British educational community. For example, the school can take part in the COBIS games, get access to more webinars and training, get legal advice and expert commentary on the impact of world events (notably

Brexit) and utilise COBIS processing of DBS checks following recruitment of UK-experienced teachers.

- k) Unlike Greek private schools, children at St. Lawrence College wear a school uniform every day.
- l) The school holds an Autumn Festival, as a Halloween and Bonfire Night combined. A Christmas Carol Concert, Carnival and Easter Bonnet parade are all part of the annual calendar. British anniversaries and unique celebrations are marked – thus in the 2015-16, there was a two-week celebration of the 800 Years of Magna Carta, the centrepiece of which was an exact replica of the document, borrowed from the British Library and the British Council.
- m) The school considers the education of the whole child and the development of the broader skills and awareness towards becoming a valuable, contributing citizen in society, as the most fundamental and important way in which it distinguishes itself as a school that is founded on British educational values.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

Overall the quality of education provided is good, fully meeting the standard for accreditation.

5.1 Curriculum

The school's curriculum meets the standard. The quality of the curriculum is good.

The school broadly follows the EYFS guidance and the National Curriculum of England: this meets all local and BSO regulations, and is supported by a range of extra-curricular activities. The language of instruction is English in all lessons, except Greek and other modern foreign languages.

A curriculum policy for both the junior and senior sections is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. The policy is implemented effectively, enabling pupils to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The curriculum gives pupils experience in a wide range of areas of learning, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic.

EYFS and Key Stages 1 and 2 offer a broad curriculum which is delivered by qualified teachers supported by specialist teachers for music, PE and swimming. In the lower key stages, the curriculum is supported by parents who receive a weekly activity sheet linked to what their child is covering in class. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) features heavily and is successfully embedded in curriculum planning in the lower key stages.

In Key Stages 3 and 4 the curriculum offers fewer creative subjects, (for example music and drama). However these are offered as extra-curricular activities during lunchtimes and/or after school and pupils can opt to partake if they wish. The school has employed a music teacher whose intention is to offer more musical opportunities to the senior pupils. Furthermore, the school employs a drama teacher to organise the school productions.

The school is non-selective: it supports pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) well, both in class and through specialised English language support which provides help to those pupils whose lack of English is a barrier to their learning. It is designed to assist the pupils with reaching a level in which they can integrate in mainstream lessons and follow the full curriculum. It is appropriate for the age and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school SEN coordinator assesses and supports pupils, across all phases within the school, by providing an individual education plan which is regularly reviewed. Support staff are assigned to those pupils requiring additional support in lessons. There are also timetabled learning support lessons for pupils who need them.

Across all key stages in the senior school the curriculum is enhanced by a planned Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) which is delivered by form tutors during form time and reinforced each morning. The weekly themes are planned clearly and learning is consolidated in lessons across the curriculum. This is monitored by the assistant heads responsible for Key Stages 3 and 4.

Key Stage 5 tutors ensure pupils are well equipped for life beyond school, particularly with progression to university. Careers advice is offered in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 in designated form time. Ex-pupils and guest speakers are invited into the school to talk and advise the current pupils on career choices.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching meets the standards required for BSO with a significant number of lessons good or better. The teaching of English throughout the school is a strength.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good, and much is excellent. Teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability. They increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects that are taught. Teachers encourage pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort, to show interest in their work, and to think and learn for themselves.

Lessons are well planned, teaching methods are effective, suitable activities are used and class time is managed properly. Teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, needs (including the needs of EAL learners) and prior attainments of the pupils. They ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. They also demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they teach. Teachers encourage pupils to behave responsibly.

In the best lessons, teachers listened more than they talked, and gave clear indication that the pupils had significant responsibility for their learning. There were clear learning objectives which were used during the lesson, for example in a year 4 literacy lesson on non-chronological reporting. There was good pace and pupils were challenged to develop and expand their learning. In the EYFS classes and in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers supported learning well and gave responsibility to the pupils.

Similarly, in a year 12 English lesson on the Ted Hughes poem *Swifts*, the teacher showed great skill listening to pupils' input, and rephrased their comments with sensitivity. The pupils obviously felt that their contributions were valued.

The most commonly used styles of teaching and assessment equip pupils well with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter (or re-enter) the UK educational system at an appropriate level, as many do after leaving St Lawrence College.

In the less successful lessons, the teachers talked too much and there was little regard for pupil input into the learning process. Challenge was limited for some and too much for others, in some lessons in the senior school.

Classroom resources are of good quality, but the range and quantity is sometimes limited. They are used effectively, especially in the junior school.

There is a satisfactory framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly. However, the impact of the assessments on learning was not always as effective as it could have been. Opportunities to use the information from assessment are sometimes missed, and thus

pupils are sometimes not sufficiently challenged. Target setting is developing, but the school is aware that there is room for further improvement.

Similarly, the framework in place by which pupils' performance can be evaluated by reference to the school's aims, is developing, but will benefit from regular review.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Overall the standards achieved by pupils are good. The pupils achieve to a high standard throughout the school.

Pupils in the primary years attain well. A range of standardised summative assessments from the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University have been introduced this year to run alongside the ongoing formative assessments.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the InCAS assessment data indicates the majority of children are meeting UK national expectations: 92% of pupils are achieving in line with National Curriculum expectations in mathematics. In reading, 92% are achieving in line with National Curriculum expectations with 46% achieving above average or higher.

The school has a range of assessment strategies to enable pupils to be more effectively tracked; however the school is in a transition period and will need to prioritize identifying and implementing an effective assessment strategy to support and inform planning challenge for the pupils. Test results at the end of Year 6 show pupils continue to make progress through the Primary years. 89% achieved UK national expectations in 2016 in reading. In mathematics, 84% achieved expected levels in-line with the UK and 36% achieved the higher levels

In the senior school, the 2015-16 school year saw the use of CEM Insight at the end of Year 9. The data provided showed strong performance in science, mathematics and English by pupils as they prepare for the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. In the Insight programme, children are tested in science, mathematics, English and their overall developed ability. In each of these areas from the entire population globally who take the CEM Insight tests, the top 25% are awarded an A band status, the second 25% are placed in B band, the next quarter in C band and the lowest achieving 25% in D band.

Thus an “average performing school” could expect the distribution of their pupils at the end of Year 9 to be 25% in each of the four bands. St Lawrence College pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 performed as below:

Subject	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
Science	50	18	21	11
Mathematics	28	36	9	27
English	23	21	25	31
Developed Ability	41	25	23	11

At the end of KS4 the proportion of pupils achieving at least five IGCSEs of at least grade C was 92% and the proportion of IGCSEs taken that were A*/A grade was 44%. At AS/A level 88% of pupils gained A*-E with 36% gaining A* or A.

Attendance on the two days of the inspection was 94% for the whole school.

6. Standard 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.

The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. PSHE programmes, assemblies, extra-curricular activities and a caring environment all contribute towards this goal. Pupils are also encouraged to deliver assemblies. In the junior school, the new PSHE programme being piloted this year will provide pupils with all the tools needed to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. PSHE takes place every morning for 10 minutes in the senior school, and will benefit from increasing time planned for the future. Pupils take part in many joint activities with other international schools. The trophies displayed are a clear testimony to the talent and confidence gained by pupils.

Good manners and respect are the expectation. The school believes that by focusing on the positive, pupils will be less likely to do wrong. The PSHE programmes and parts of the curriculum also support pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the law. The pastoral and SEN team work closely with individuals who may be at risk and know pupils very well.

There is clear evidence that pupils behave responsibly, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life. The mutual respect held by all members of the community towards each other is very apparent. Belonging to a house within the school also helps bring pupils of different classes and ages together. In the junior school, for the last few weeks the focus has been on being a member of a community. It is an opportunity for pupils to reflect about their place and role in more depth. There is a team of prefects in the senior school. Because of the inclusive nature of the school, they are no longer selected on academic performance but because of their contribution to school life. The reaction of the senior pupils to the needs of refugees and the collections that take place are good examples of initiative and compassion, as is the popularity of clubs such as the environmental club. Recently, pupils have embraced the idea of supporting the building of a well in Ghana, an idea triggered in geography lessons. Each year, pupils collect olives from the school grounds, which are then pressed and bottled locally. The money raised from these sales goes to charity. The spiritual, moral and personal development of Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils is also enhanced by the popular Duke of Edinburgh programme.

Pupils gain a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship in Greece, the UK and internationally. Greek history is a core subject in the curriculum. The pastoral teams ensure that citizenship is studied across the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. The school comes together to celebrate national and international events, which help pupils acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a manner that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. For example, each year, parents are invited to celebrate an international day, serving food from

their own country to raise money for charity. Pupils and many teachers speak at least two languages and many are dual-nationals: subsequently opportunities to mix with many nationalities prevail.

Through the English National Curriculum and the use of textbooks mainly from the UK, pupils also clearly gain general knowledge and an understanding about modern British life, including UK attitudes towards tolerance, democracy, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights. Pupils are well prepared with 80% going to British universities.

When walking around the school, there is a sense that all pupils are behaving responsibly and are caring towards each other. They are courteous when greeting staff and visitors, stand up when a visitor enters the room and put their hands up to answer questions. They work well together. They have many ideas and are usually heard by members of staff. There is currently no formal process to ensure that the views of all year groups are represented, limiting pupil voice, except for the sixth form: there is an active council for the oldest pupils, with pupil-elected representatives, who work with staff to express the views of the sixth form. This is planned to be extended down through the key stages in the future.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils throughout the school are good. A high priority is placed on ensuring that the education and well-being of pupils are well supported by a consistent and caring approach. Written policies to prevent bullying are in place for junior and senior school and staff take bullying seriously. Issues are dealt with at an early stage. Pupils are clearly aware about whom to see if there are any issues and look out for each other. Parents may be involved by the school if appropriate.

Pupils are considerate and respectful to members of staff, visitors and to each other. Behaviour is good throughout the school. There are written policies to promote positive behaviour and sanctions are clearly set out but rarely needed. Although these occurrences are rare, the school keeps written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences. The next step for the pastoral team will be to create a clear system to set, monitor and review the academic targets of individual pupils.

There are written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. All members of staff have police checks. All teaching staff have recently received child protection training by an external provider. The Headmaster and Head of junior school have also recently undertaken safer recruitment training. The school is planning for non-teaching staff to receive child protection training and all managers involved in recruitment to undertake a course in safer recruitment.

The school has due regard for health and safety issues, and conforms to local regulatory requirements. These are clearly outlined in a detailed written policy. To conform to Greek law, the school has an external health and safety inspector who comes to carry out health and safety checks and maintenance on a weekly basis. There are also 3 maintenance staff permanently on site who deal with immediate issues. The school site is clean and well maintained. Drinking water is available around the site. A staff doctor comes for 4 hours every fortnight to comply with Greek law. There are two nurses available on site. They maintain a contact list of parents for all pupils, provide on-site care and support and liaise closely with parents on any medical issues. The school needs to become familiar with the risk management of curriculum activities and the use of written risk assessments for relevant activities taking place in and out of school, including for subjects such as PE, science and art and for all off-site visits.

Fire safety and evacuation procedures ensure that pupils and staff are fully aware of actions to be taken in the event of a fire. Procedures and equipment are compliant with the host country's regulations and are checked by the appropriate authorities. Verification documents are available for scrutiny. A fire drill is carried out once a term. Earthquake procedures are clearly displayed in every classroom. During the inspection, the team witnessed an unplanned evacuation. Procedures need to be tightened, as although all buildings and rooms used by pupils were

checked and emptied appropriately, this was not the case in the administration building which was not checked: one adult visitor was not evacuated.

The school has a high level of site security. Entrance is through one gate during the day. Visitors are required to sign in and out and identification badges are provided. An additional register of all staff and visitors who are present in the school at all times and in particular after 15:15 would be beneficial.

The school has a very comprehensive and detailed written first aid policy which conforms to Greek regulation. All teaching staff have been trained in basic first aid, priority teachers (i.e. P.E. teachers, swimming instructors, lifeguard and nurses) have advanced first aid and resuscitation certificates. The school is very well equipped and the local health and safety officer checks that all resources and medication are compliant on a regular basis. For trips and sporting events, one of the nurses is always present.

The school encourages pupils of all ages to have a good understanding of health and safety issues through their curriculum. The junior school takes part in the Daily Mile Initiative. During the visit, year 4 pupils were studying healthy eating in science. The year 10 PSHE topic of the week was health and safety.

School staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils. There is a duty rota for both junior and senior school and during breaks pupils are well-supervised. All school buses have a bus monitor employed by the school. There is a club coordinator who keeps registers of all pupils who are staying after school and keeps all relevant parties informed of any changes.

An admission register and an attendance register are kept up-to-date, both of which conform to local regulatory requirements.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff is of a high order.

The school has implemented effective systems for safe recruitment of all personnel. The owner and headmaster ensure all local employment checks are made regarding individuals' right to work in Greece. There is a list of all staff who currently work in the school. This is regularly updated when they start and stop working in the school.

Staffing levels are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum, although only because the headmaster teaches 16 periods a week. The school has been active in trying to recruit further staff to ensure coverage and qualifications appropriate to their role.

The owner has an effective working strategy with the headmaster and senior leaders. The vision of the proprietor has developed over time, and is due for renewal.

The implementation of the policies and procedures and monitoring by the owner is developing, but without a board, it is not yet fully effective.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

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

The premises provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment. The quality of the site and space is sound and has more than enough capacity to support an excellent education, providing a range of facilities suitable for pupils' needs. These include an exhibition centre; open air theatre; swimming pool complex; cultural hall and excellent sporting facilities. Younger pupils have access to outdoor play and older pupils can use a range of multi-purpose sport areas.

Security arrangements for the grounds and buildings are good. There is 24 hour security for the premises with employed staff operating throughout the day and an external security company operating through the night. There is sufficient access for safe emergency evacuation, including for those pupils with special needs. It also allows all pupils, including those with special needs, to enter and leave the school safely and comfortably.

There are appropriate facilities for pupils who are, or become ill. Classrooms and all other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. Lighting, heating and ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school are excellent.

The school is well decorated and maintained. The furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all pupils registered at the school, including those with special needs. Buildings are fire-proofed as an extra measure.

10. *Standard 6* The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided by the school for parents, prospective parents, and other interested parties is excellent.

Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with the appropriate information, including the school's address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher. There is a clear statement of the school's promise and particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions are available on their website. Similarly, particulars are available of educational and welfare provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The particulars of the curriculum offered by the school and of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving, are made clear to parents. It is the school's intention to provide light versions of each department's scheme of work on the school's website for parents.

The school emails to parents two reports each year for pupils of the junior school and two reports for pupils of the senior school. In addition to these, electronic progress marks are sent three times per year, providing a score out of 20 for each senior school subject on the curriculum.

Results of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of public examinations, are published, taking account of the need to protect the identity of children.

11. *Standard 7*

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the required standard. The policy is transparent, open and effective. It has due regard to local regulatory requirements and circumstances.

It is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the school website and sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint. It also allows for complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis.

A formal complaint can be made in writing, if parents are not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint. If the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before the management panel of the school. However this does not have a member who is independent of the school and could therefore be accused of being less than transparent.

The procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied. The complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations, and stipulates that a copy of these findings and recommendations are given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, the panel and Headmaster. It provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, and whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (including a hearing before the owner).

The procedure provides that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential, except in cases where local legal requirements permit access or enable restriction by local authorities.

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 and meet the standard for accreditation. Some aspects are good or excellent.

The owner and leadership of the school provide educational direction and leadership. The leadership strives to deliver the school promise which is ‘We promise to provide an environment that gives our pupils the best possible opportunities to develop as: happy, curious, independent and eager life-long learners, who believe in themselves and in their limitless ability to learn; who are considerate of others and their needs and who care about their responsibilities as young citizens within a shared community and a diverse society’. Whilst this promise exists, it is not widely displayed or used as a tool against which to measure the school’s success.

However it has been brought more into focus in recent years following the change of leadership of the school, especially the new headmaster, and the new headmistress of the junior school. There have also been changes in senior positions in the senior and junior schools, posts all filled through internal promotion. Changes have been implemented that have had the broad purpose of introducing changes that would modernise school practice and create a school which could truly deliver high quality education and standards as befits a 21st Century British school. There is currently no board to provide independent overview of the school’s development.

Academic senior and middle leaders have accepted the need to rapidly make changes and developments to the school in order to modernise. Staff are fully committed to the programme of change that has been implemented. The aspirations and the hard work done by the headmaster and the headmistress of the junior school are excellent. The management roles and responsibilities are clear, but line management is sometimes less clear and lacks rigour. Formal monitoring of teacher performance is a challenging area, because of recent incidents in Greece.

The headmaster teaches sixteen lessons out of forty which combined with his overall whole school responsibilities means that he is constantly challenged in fulfilling either role to his own satisfaction.

The heads are involved in the recruitment of teaching staff, but not in the appointment of administration staff.

The head has control of the budget for professional development, which is good. However, all other budgetary decisions are at the discretion of the owner. The managing director and the business manager review requests for resources, including the requests submitted by the academic leaders of the school. There is a one year budget, but there is no longer term budget planning to inform future spending and development planning.