



Inspection report

The British School Caracas

Venezuela

Date 17th – 19th September 2018
Inspection number 20180917

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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 the report 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, where applicable); 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, the whole of the first day and much of the second day were spent in classrooms with the pupils and teachers. All teachers were observed and many learning walks took place during the visit. School documentation and policies were analysed and academic data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the head, the senior staff, teachers, other school staff, representatives of the school council, parents and groups of students. Interviews with key members of the board of The British School Caracas and administration team took place before and during the visit. The team was in school on three days.

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

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School Caracas (TBSC) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The British School Caracas (TBSC) is a very good school with many outstanding features. It provides a high quality British education, in a context that is often trying. All aspects of the school are at least good and many are excellent. It easily meets the requirements for accreditation under the UK government's scheme for British Schools Overseas. The curriculum is very well focussed on students' individual needs and desires. The resilience of the staff, especially the principal, is remarkable. It has great capacity to improve even more. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding. Parents, staff and students are very supportive of the school. The sense of belonging and community at school is palpable, which promotes enthusiastic learning.

3.1 What the school does well

TBSC has many strengths:

- The rapport between staff and students.
- The provision for health, welfare and safety.
- The effective focus on pastoral care, continuously improving, as in the vertical grouping in the senior school.
- The support from and positive impact of the school's board.
- The resilience, energy, passion and enthusiasm of the head of school has had significant impact.
- The flexibility of the curriculum, which really meets the needs of all learners: the mathematics programme is outstanding.
- Students' behaviour is of a very high standard.
- Teaching is good: much is excellent.
- The emphasis on community ethos at TBSC is very strong.
- Students feel they are very well supported, feeling safe and secure in school.
- Parents are very supportive indeed: they believe the school is outstanding
- The premises are well maintained and provide appropriate learning spaces which support all students: the campus in the senior school is particularly good, giving a university feel to learning.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Regularly and systematically revisit and refresh the mission and vision of TBSC, to ensure its unique nature and purpose are evident and obvious to all, as well as implicit in the day-to-day operations of the school.
2. Maintain the ongoing drive to improve the quality of learning and teaching further, including by
 - ✓ emphasising independent and student-led learning approaches at all levels in the school by reducing the proportion of teacher-centred lessons
 - ✓ promoting and sharing innovative and creative teaching techniques, including more strategies for assessment for learning
 - ✓ reviewing the role and function of classroom displays (for example interaction, information, celebration...)
3. Identify and implement staff training and professional development to promote further the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language, in all lessons

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	The British School Caracas				
Address	Altamira, at the end of the principal avenue Luis Roche with 9na Transversal. 1060, Caracas, Venezuela.				
Telephone number	+58 212 6271000				
Fax number	None				
Website	www.tbscaracas.com				
Email address	info@tbscaracas.com				
Head	Yasir Patel				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Cristina Trinca				
Age range	3 to 18 years				
Total number of pupils	224	Boys	132	Girls	92
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	11-16 years	84	
	3-5 years	31	16-18 years	17	
	5-11 years	91	18+ years	1	
Total number of part-time children	n/a				

At the time of the inspection, Venezuela was suffering from the highest level of inflation in the world: 450,000% so far. The security situation is difficult and even food is hard to find for many people. Approximately, 1.7 million people have left the country. The current FCO travel advice is to avoid Venezuela and this adds to the complicated situation. Recent elections in 2017 were rejected by most nations and sanctions continue to be imposed.

Naturally, this adds to the difficulties and challenges of staff recruitment, but the school is managing to retain staff, with 20% turnover average for last 3 years. There is a large budget

to recruit replacement staff, and the school has introduced a local teacher training programme that follows NQT standards.

Founded in 1950 for 37 primary-aged students, TBSC moved to its present location in 1954.

Despite current difficulties, TBSC has been able to maintain the number of students on roll: (300 in 2015, 270 in 2016, 230 in 2017 due to 100+ days of major protests and 224 in 2018), compared to the two local international schools who have both gone from over 1,000 students to 150.

4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of the TBSC is evident throughout the school.

- The language of instruction is English; signage and most communication amongst pupils, is also in English.
- The name of the school refers to 'British' and the vision maintains a strong element of Britishness. TBSC aims to be in line with latest British practices with an international touch, whenever possible.
- The school provides the English Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum from years 1 to 9. In primary, the school embellishes learning with the International Primary Curriculum. In years 10 and 11, the school offers the IGCSE programme: in years 12 and 13, the IB Diploma Programme is provided.
- The school has 34 expatriate teachers and 10 local teachers (7 for Spanish, 1 for music, 1 for PE and 1 for science).
- The expat teachers are from native English-speaking countries: the vast majority, almost 90%, are from Britain. Other nationalities include Canadian, American, Irish, New Zealand, American and French.
- Since 2015, the school has been recognised as a *British School Overseas*, by the UK government.
- Students tend to go to American universities, but a few go to the UK (Warwick, Nottingham, Middlesex).
- Staff keep links with schools in the UK and aim to Skype when possible, for example sharing resources.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided at TBSC easily meets the standard required for BSO accreditation.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum is a strength of the school. It is based on the national curriculum of England and is suitably broad and balanced. It gives students experience in a wide range of areas of learning including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, as well as aesthetic and creative education. It meets and reflects the needs of the Venezuelan community: this is particularly well planned. The curriculum and the way it is delivered, strongly promote a love of learning.

There is a full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age, meeting local regulations. The principal language of instruction is English. The school has a detailed written curriculum which is supported by detailed schemes of work. These are implemented effectively. There is a prominent focus on a three-part lesson with starters and plenaries, often reflective and metacognitive, to the lessons. This promotes the acquisition in students of the skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The school uses 'backward planning' from Key Stage 5 down, to ensure students are prepared for the full school curriculum.

The curriculum takes into account common practice for UK schools. This enables students to enter, or re-enter the UK educational system at an appropriate level, although some students commented that they felt that there also needed to be a focus on the US system, given that some students wish to study at North American universities.

The school has clear transitions policy in place. They take great care in ensuring the transition from primary to secondary (and year group to year group) is as smooth as possible. This includes academically backward planning as well as social/emotionally where 'passports' are used to keep teachers informed of each student's needs. The vertical tutor group system in secondary school also helps with these transitions.

In the primary school, the curriculum is engaging and promotes a love of learning, and well as supporting literacy and numeracy. This develops well into Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the school provides a wide range of IGCSEs, including English, mathematics and science, as well as various electives. At Key Stage 5 students have the opportunity to follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme. A varied subject choice is offered. The vast majority of students take the full diploma. The IB programme is relatively new in the school, but have already shown very promising results. The innovative mathematics programme is outstanding.

The school does all it can to provide as personalised an education as possible. This is especially noticeable in Key Stages 4 and 5, and is a real strength. Students are able to take exams early, for example IGCSE mathematics, in order to have more time to prepare for the IB exams.

Furthermore, the school provides a wide range of electives, and even when only one student chooses an elective that subject is still provided. For example one student in Year 12 has three IB electives where he is the only student and therefore benefits from one-to-one tuition. As one student put it, 'the school builds around you'.

The school has an appropriate policy for educating students with special educational needs (SEN). There is a SEN register and teachers are very aware of who these students are. Some differentiation of activities takes place. Issues of social and emotional care are well addressed. The school uses a traffic light system to monitor any student at risk/potential risk and any (even minor) issues are shared and dealt with, quickly and effectively. The use of a vertical tutor group system fosters collaboration and friendships between year groups, and even here there is a flexibility so that PSHE classes, where difficult issues are discussed are taught in year (or two year) groups, so that older students feel comfortable talking about the topic without younger students present. Clearly a lot of thought and planning have gone into these decisions.

Extra-curriculum activities are varied. There are many new activities in the secondary school Added since the last inspection. Activities include scuba diving, Model United Nations (MUN), debating, chess, football and volleyball. Because of safety considerations, some activities are not possible, such as a running club. School trips have to be carefully planned: there is a detailed excursion policy that involves risk assessment, for the same reason but still take place, to the great benefit of the students. There are also social service activities on offer such as the Language Project where students English teach peers from less privileged schools.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are good: some aspects are excellent.

Lessons are well planned and teaching methods are effective. In the best lessons, the learning is fun, too. Teachers enable students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability: they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. This fosters in students the skills and attitudes of self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work, resilience and the ability to think and learn for themselves. Some teachers miss opportunities to enhance this with more student-led learning.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. For example, the teachers of Spanish are not just engaging teachers, but also speak the language fluently. They manage the classrooms well and show a real understanding of the aptitudes, cultural backgrounds, needs and prior attainments of the students. In a year 13 mathematics lesson, students worked well together, while the role of the teacher was to prompt: “How do you know that?”, “What can you do next?”.

Many teachers are creative and use student-centred lessons. However, not all teachers are equally adept promoting and student-led learning approaches. Whilst many use innovative and creative teaching techniques, not all do. One PE lesson in the primary school, saw highly motivated students, really excited and engaged - but only when it was their turn. Some teachers would benefit from a deeper understanding of assessment for learning.

The relationships between adults and students are very strong. Behaviour management is excellent, with staff utilising effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging all to act responsibly. Poor behaviour is rare. Teaching promotes those fundamental values which can be characterised as ‘British’, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. There is no discrimination against students because of their individual differences and/or specific needs.

In the classes where there is a second adult working alongside the main teacher, there is often good impact on the quality of learning. For example in a year 6 English lesson, the assistant was skilled and her support added another dimension to the teaching and therefore the learning .

In the vast majority of lessons, teachers utilise classroom resources effectively; these are of a good quality, quantity and range. For example, one year 10 history lesson started with good use of a PowerPoint presentation on the Cold War. The teacher had high expectation of the students and they were actively involved in their learning: supported by excellent use of resources.

Classrooms are mainly attractively decorated and there is good use of signage and other routines to highlight the schedule for the day. Not all rooms have an appropriate balance of

display: some have too much ‘bought’ and too little students’ work, although it is indeed the beginning of the school year.

One aspect for development across many parts of the school, is the role of all teachers in helping students who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Although teachers are aware and supportive, not all have a deep enough understanding of the specific strategies and techniques that can assist students to learn fast. The specialist EAL teachers do not always have sufficient opportunities to share their skills with others.

There is generally a good understanding in TBSC as to how to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment even more. The head of school and his senior leaders are focussed on the need to ensure students understand what they are learning, why they are learning it and how they can make progress.

TBSC has a good framework in place to assess pupils’ work. It is used regularly and thoroughly. Information from that assessment is used to plan teaching, so that students make progress. Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT4) are used regularly, amongst other tools, to benchmark students learning and measure value added. Use of a detailed tracking sheet triangulates various pieces of data and evidence to ensure students are progressing, identify underachieving students and challenge the more able students.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

TBSC is achieving high standards in many areas. There is a very close monitoring and tracking of student progress throughout the school using a number of tests and indicators. These include cognitive ability tests, to ensure rigour and to make sure no one slips through the net. Students make progress in line with their ability, many do even better.

On entry to the school, almost all students are speakers of English as a second language. They quickly develop their English and are soon able to communicate confidently in both English and Spanish. This is a real strength of the school.

In lessons, students are engaged learners. The vast majority take part actively in class and clearly want to learn and do their best. They are confident speakers and respectful listeners. Teachers have high standards, as to the students of themselves. Students are mature. There are specialist teachers in a wide range of subjects and therefore students develop, amongst others, computing skills as well as in the creative arts. The results in mathematics are outstanding, 10 students gaining A*-B in year 10 in 2018, UKMT gold winners and Olympiad participant in 2016, IB HL students gaining a 7 and 6 in 2018, and four year 9 students sitting IGCSE in 2019.

Students take a wide range of subjects. IGCSE results have remained steadily high with over 80% of students for the past four years attaining A*-C grades. These results are good compared with other students internationally. The school undertakes PISA tests every two years in order to benchmark internationally.

The school started the IB Diploma course five years ago, therefore it is still relatively new, with only four years of results to date. With small classes, the sample size is difficult to analyse sensibly. However, there are signs of good progress. The number of students taking and passing the diploma are on the rise.

Sports is an important part of the school's programme with students developing good skills. Football and volleyball achieving the most notable results. The school has a MUN team and they regularly compete. Recently one of the debaters won a prize for his contributions in a MUN event.

Students' personal development is excellent. This is another real strength. They are confident and engaging individuals, who are a positive reflection of the school's mission. Nearly all students are thoughtful, well behaved and motivated learners. The personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) part of the school is well planned and well executed. It is a key element of the school. Therefore students leave school with well-developed personal and social skills: they are well prepared for the next stage of the educational process.

6. *Standard 2*

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is excellent: social development is particularly strong.

TBSC school actively promotes tolerance of and respect for human differences, for example through assemblies. The students and staff sit together in the amphitheatre, which gives the teachers time to talk to the children if they have any queries they want to bring up, or discuss their answers to the questions given in assembly. The new head of primary gave an assembly which highlighted personal happenings from her own first few weeks at the school. She asked students think about how they would feel if no one said 'hello' to them in school: this prompted many thoughtful answers. Lessons at all levels are presented in an appropriately impartial way. Parents were quick to explain how students feel happy to discuss political views at TBSC, because it is a safe environment.

Spiritual development is very good. TBSC uses a commercial scheme which has songs and stories to illustrate and prompt development, but there is personalised support given by adults throughout the day. Students are encouraged to develop their self-knowledge and self-esteem: they gain in confidence during class lessons and through day-to-day interaction with the adults in school. Some, for example, applied to be a school librarian or other positions of responsibility. Through these processes, they gain confidence in their own self-worth, as well as developing their vocabulary and how to take on responsibility.

Moral development of students is excellent. TBSC is very successful in enabling students to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their behaviour. Students are well aware of the privileged position they are in at TBSC: it is common to donate food and clothing items to less fortunate students in school or from other schools. The school itself and some parents sponsor certain students. This ensures that students know how to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality, as well to Venezuelan society more widely.

Social development is outstanding. The creative action and service programme of the IB diploma enables students in secondary to develop interactional skills as well as self-confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent: but when things do go wrong, teachers and assistants work hard to make sure that students think about their behaviour before or after they make a wrong choices. Students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, and therefore of each other. They eat their food together, talking to the teachers and each other. In one example, the topic was dolls they had brought to school that day. Students were seen co-operating with each other in many classes. One excellent example was in a music lesson, where they all stood up to dance, making sure they did not bump into each other. In an art lesson, students were working on a large piece of paper, sticking on tissue paper and cutting wool to different lengths: they were careful not to impede each other's work.

Cultural development is excellent. Respect for each other and celebrations of different cultures was identified as needing improvement some time ago, and the school has been success in this. Staff suggest it has improved a lot over the last two terms. Students are enabled whenever appropriate to acquire a knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England and as well as the responsibilities of citizenship in Venezuela. Teachers are enthusiastic in furthering tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures

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

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. The school easily meets the standard required for BSO.

The governing body are well aware that they have ultimate responsibility for the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff, parents and visitors: they have a range of appropriate policies covering a variety of potential issues.

The school has made highly effective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at TBSC, especially important in the local context. There is a suitable written behaviour policy that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of student misbehaviour. In secondary, for example, small and major misdemeanours are covered clearly: minor breaches of discipline are dealt with on the spot by the teacher/admin who is there; major breaches are taken to the head of secondary in the first instance, and then possibly depending on the severity, to the head of school. The most serious sanctions can include suspension or eventually expulsion. Both parents and students spoken to reported being content with this transparency. The policy is implemented effectively and a record is kept of the sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour.

Bullying is very rare, and dealt with quickly and effectively. The anti-bullying strategy is appropriate and as successful as it can be. The school has a suitable written health and safety policy which it implemented effectively. It complies with the health and safety laws of Venezuela, and the fire standards.

The school has given talks to the students on cyber bullying. They report feeling confident about this. They are also properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.

When required, first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner and there is a written policy to support practice. The welfare of students at the school is safeguarded and promoted by written risk assessment policy: appropriate action is taken to reduce any risks that are identified.

TBSC has an appropriate admission and attendance register. This is maintained to conform to local Venezuelan requirements.

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

TBSC has a long history, having been set up in 1950. It is a high-profile school in Venezuela. Legally, it is registered as a civil association, owned by the parents.

There are more than sufficient qualified teachers and support staff to enable good learning. Similarly, there is sound provision of UK qualified teachers to enable a British-style education. The total number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff are a very good match for the flexible curriculum provided. There is a strong sense of team work, and a good understanding of roles. Teachers are trained and/or experienced in the provision of age-appropriate education and support.

The board demonstrate appropriate concern for the school's students and takes all due steps to assure itself of the suitability of each individual who works or volunteers there. All local requirements are met.

It has a rigorous recruitment policy with various steps, including local and/or UK police checks as appropriate. The school has used the UK's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) until recently, when it was no longer possible. It now uses the British Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO) system based on the International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC). This is in addition to previous job references (including safeguarding questions). Also the checks done as part of the visa process to work in Venezuela, are rigorous. Local police checks are instigated for all staff hired and a social media search is carried.

Safeguarding training is given to the board, staff and to students. There are clear statements of child protection on the school's website and job adverts. The senior leadership team is trained in safeguarding and there is a useful new 'Ethic of Care' policy, which further supports the suitability of staff and promotes students' safety.

Parents have high expectations of the teachers and are seeking a world class education for their children. The difficulties inherent in bringing in consultants for training purposes or to hold conferences at TBSC, are somewhat ameliorated by spending on professional development: staff can use up to \$3,000 personally, as long as they feed back to school after the course. This is in addition to the school's strategic and more traditional professional development budget.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are good with many outstanding features. Clearly a lot of investment has taken place in order to provide the best facilities possible, for the students and staff.

The school has two entrances (primary and secondary), but the campus is spread over one site. These are well guarded by a team of external security staff. However this does not have an impact on a welcoming feel to the school.

The entrance to the secondary school is particularly engaging with inspirational educational and 'meaning of life' quotes painted professionally onto the walls of the foyer. Plans are in place for similar work to be completed at the primary school entrance. The campus and buildings are very well maintained, ensuring an environment that is conducive to learning. Classrooms and activity areas offer lively and stimulating learning spaces. In the secondary school, there is a university campus feel to the facilities, with shared spaces for teachers and pupils. They use these to work in during both lessons and at break times.

Classrooms are spacious with age-appropriate furniture, sensibly arranged to make resources accessible to all pupils. The tables and chairs are easily moved to facilitate independent learning, as required. There are good displays on classroom walls to stimulate learning, although some of these are bought, rather than pupil produced. This misses the opportunity to celebrate students' work. It is noted, however, that the inspection took place within the first three weeks of the school year. All classrooms have digital projectors. These are used regularly by teachers, along with digital whiteboards, in order to facilitate learning. There are two suitably equipped science laboratories in the school, which promotes pupils learning via experiments, as well as through theoretical classes.

There is sound provision for the arts with purpose-built music and art rooms. The music rooms for example have a shared learning space, as well as small practice rooms for individuals to work in. There is a main auditorium near the main entrance to the school where assemblies take place, as well as drama classes. It is partly outdoor and is a focal point of school life. There is also a purpose-built computer lab with up-to-date computers and software.

Suitable outdoor space ensures physical education is delivered in accordance with the school curriculum and facilitates outdoor play. Plans are in place to purchase land close to the school to expand the sports facilities still further, to enable eleven-a-side football matches to be trained for and played on.

There are ample toilets available for pupils and adults. These are clearly marked accordingly. There are hot and cold running water, soap and drying facilities in each. Instructions on hand washing are on display. They are very clean and well maintained. Water dispensers are dispersed at regular intervals throughout the site.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

Overall, the provision of information provided by the school to parents, prospective parents and the wider community is very good.

Contact details of the school, and details about the board are provided to parents and prospective parents. Information about the British ethos, values, vision and mission is given. This helps to ensure parents make an informed decision about enrolment for their child.

Information about the TBSC policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions are all provided for parents. Parents and prospective parents are made aware of the education and welfare provision for students with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language.

Parents report feeling very much part of the school 'family'. They commented on how the school reinvents itself each year and suggest that TBSC is continually improving, adapting to the changing times, both within the country and in the wider world. They note that teachers are staying longer in post, and that local staff payment been changed so that they are more able to cope with the fluctuating Venezuelan currency.

The many policies created at school are available to parents. They have informal feedback from the teachers each day via their child's note book, in the primary years. The students themselves receive a report card giving their attainment levels at the end of each term, and a parents evening each term. Parents reported that generally they are not so keen on their children doing activities that are not graded: however, they recognise that they choose TBSC not just for the curriculum but for the whole British experience, therefore accepting (even embracing) these differences.

There are regular parents evenings, but all are encouraged to ask in school if they are concerned about anything. They are in contact regularly by email, receive bulletins from school each weekend and recognise the open-door policy. There are learning walks for parents, and 'tea with the head' events, although it is more likely to be coffee!

The web page is changing/has changed, and parents have not had time to assess it yet. The school has talks on the IB program, although parents would like it earlier, so that they could make sure their child's choice for the IGCSEs are compatible. They also have talks on ICT and on how their children are taught mathematics and English.

There is an active PTA with a 2 year turnaround of parents if numbers and applications allow, which keeps it 'fresh'. It organises different events for the school, some of which are for charity, others just for fun. Events are changed if they are not working. The parents at the discussion forum where keen to emphasise how much their children like being at school: this was across all age groups.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

TBSC has a policy that establishes a clear procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints relating to any provision of facilities or services provided. It is open and effective. A statement at the beginning of the policy suggests that the administration, staff and school board listen to parents, students or any other school members who has a concern or complaint about the school. Parents agree with this.

The school seeks to respond to such concerns or complaints in a spirit of openness and willingness to improve. There are four main areas of complaints for parents:

- i. school personnel
- ii. the curriculum or materials
- iii. general complaints
- iv. complaints about the board

Due regard is given to local regulatory requirements and circumstances. Anonymous complaints are not considered. There is a well-defined channel of communication which parents are required to respect. In the first instance, contact is always made with the class teacher informally. Complaints rarely if ever go beyond this stage.

If needed, a complaint may result in a formal meeting. The class teacher can consult their line manager or head of section. Any response to the complainant is provided within five working days.

If parents are not satisfied with the outcome, a formal written complaint can be submitted to the head of school for full investigation. A response is then provided within ten working days.

Finally, if a situation is still not resolved, parents may request a hearing with a panel of three, none of whom were involved in the process before. The panel would consist of two members of the board and at least one member who has no involvement in the management and running of the school. The panel is convened as quickly as possible and parents may attend the hearing, accompanied if they prefer. A response is provided within ten working days.

The findings and recommendations are given to the complainant: where relevant, it is also given to the person complained about, and the head of school.

A clear written record is kept at all stages. To maintain the highest level of confidentiality, this record is only made accessible to relevant people. Records are kept, even if the complaint was dealt at the initial informal stage.

12. *Standard 8*

Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are very good: the energy, vision and direction provided by the head of school and the board are excellent. The resilience, hard work, energy and passion of the head of school add up to have a very significant positive effect.

The school has a clear vision statement, though it has not been reviewed recently, in light of changing circumstances in Venezuela. and is led competently by the leadership team, who follow the strategic plan. That plan has clear goals, and all leadership meeting minutes are open and available for all to see.

TBSC senior leaders are experienced educators with very relevant experience. They receive ongoing training, including in management coaching. This allows them to have good knowledge and employ suitable skills, appropriate to their role: the BSO standards are met consistently.

The senior leadership team are trained in safeguarding and using the new Ethic of Care Policy, ensure that students' well-being is maintained. The provision for the health, welfare and safety of students is a strength. There is a strong and effective focus on pastoral care and on continuous school improvement. All recommendations from the previous BSO report have been acted upon and are now met.

The head of school monitors and evaluates his team regularly, with frequent meetings. He ensures the school is following procedures. The board president monitors and evaluates the head of school. All appropriate policies and procedures are in place. The board works closely with the head of school. There is a positive and productive partnership with the staff, parents and friends of the school.

13. *Standard 9*

The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.