

BSME
Accreditation visit report
on
The British School
at
Al Khobar, KSA

19th & 20th January 2010



1. Context	page
1.1 Key contextual factors	2
1.2 British nature of the school	3
2. Quality of learning	
2.1 How effective are learning and teaching?	4
2.2 How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?	6
2.3 How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?	8
2.4 How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?	9
2.5 How well does the school prepare pupils for future learning?	10
3. Standards achieved by pupils	
3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?	11
3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?	12
4. Leadership and management of the school	
4.1 How well is the school led and managed?	14
5. Quality of provision	
5.1 How good are the accommodation, the staffing levels and the resources?	16
6. Overall effectiveness of the school	
6.1 How successful is the school?	18
6.2 What the school does well	19
6.3 What should the school do to improve further?	19
6.4 Does the school meet the standards for being an accredited BSME school?	20



1. Context

1.1 What are the key contextual factors?

BISAK is an international school for children aged 2+ to 15+ years. It was founded in 1977 by a small group of parents, and inaugurated on its present site in October 1998. The site is safe and secure, being part of a highly-organised gated community. The school's expectation is that when students leave, they will have developed positive feelings of tolerance and understanding of others' cultures and beliefs, as well as having acquired a solid academic education. It has a range of ties to the United Kingdom, particularly through curriculum developments and examinations, which support effectively the education of its students.

The school has two pre-reception classes, and then offers three-form entry from reception to Year 9. The maximum number in each class has recently been increased from 20 to 22 in reception to Year 4. Currently, there are 113 children (60 boys and 53 girls) in pre-reception and reception, and 124 students (61 boys and 63 girls) in Years 1 and 2. In addition, there are 9 students (6 boys and 3 girls) supported in the English as an additional language (EAL) unit, which includes a programme for attending some mainstream lessons prior to joining classes full-time. There are 233 students (115 boys and 118 girls) in Years 3 to 6 and 114 students (62 boys and 52 girls) in Years 7 to 9.

The school has recently embarked on an expansion programme to provide further secondary school education in Years 10 and 11. Currently, there are 34 students, 14 boys and 20 girls, in Years 10 and 11. In September 2010, the school intends to provide post-16 education in a wide range of subjects, eventually extending to Year 13.

The school roll is currently 60 % bilingual, students speaking English plus another language. Over a quarter of students are British passport holders. Other nationalities are relatively small in numbers. English is the prevailing language of the playground. The school is over subscribed with waiting lists in most year groups. Turnover is high with, for example, only approximately a quarter of students remaining throughout Years 7 to 9 during the last school year. A number also start their education at the school at different times during the school year, some only staying for a short period.

The principal has been in post for three years and most of the senior leadership are recent appointments. This team consists of five members, all of whom have discrete whole-school responsibilities; the heads of primary and secondary sections (the latter acting), the deputy head of primary and the bursar. Staff turnover is increasing and the school is finding it



increasingly difficult to maintain high levels of staff retention. The school provides a crèche for staff children.

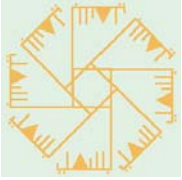
1.1 British nature of the school

The school's name establishes its fundamental identity. In common with practice in many schools in the United Kingdom, there is an international dimension to the education it provides. The full National Curriculum of England is followed throughout. In common with most United Kingdom independent schools, the school has a house system to support students and involve them in a range of activities, including competitive events. The majority of teachers are British and school policy requires teaching qualifications recognised in the United Kingdom. The school is registered with the United Kingdom Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. In addition, membership of the British Schools of the Middle East enables the school to keep up with educational developments within the United Kingdom. A representative of the British Embassy is a member of the governing board of the school.

Though there are no direct links or exchange arrangements with individual schools in the United Kingdom (visa requirements precluding the latter), the school mirrors developments there: staff focus on both curriculum and pastoral areas, in order to ensure that the 'Britishness' of the school is maintained. The school is aware that new technologies could be used to develop direct links with schools in the United Kingdom to the benefit of both students and staff. The bulk of resources to support the delivery of the curriculum are British in origin. The school is an accredited member of the Saudi Arabian Foreign Schools section of the Ministry of Education.

Older students perceive the 'Britishness' of the school to be its major strength. Parents too are supportive of the school: there is a waiting list for places, parents represent each year group and elected representatives serve on the governing board.

Whilst there is a high turnover of students and a high proportion of those with EAL, the school perceives the motivation and enthusiasm of students as a significant aid to learning. Those EAL students who arrive with weak English quickly improve their skills and are able to access the full curriculum.



2. Quality of learning

2.1 How effective is learning?

Although there is some effective practice, there are inconsistencies because effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not yet fully embedded. Leadership is aware of the need to identify and celebrate existing good practice throughout the school in order to improve learning and teaching, and thus provide more consistent good quality practice.

There is a purposeful learning atmosphere in most classrooms; students respond particularly well to teaching that offers challenge and interesting activities. Students are conscientious and enjoy learning. There are good trusting relationships between students, teachers and learning assistants. This results in students feeling confident in asking questions and deepening their knowledge and understanding. In the secure and caring environment in pre-school classes, children enjoy a range of well-planned activities. They receive good quality support from teachers and learning assistants, who also observe and record children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Specialist subject teaching across all phases offers good challenge and is underpinned by teachers' sound subject knowledge. In a reception physical education lesson, the teacher's high expectations drew good responses from the class. Learning was, as a result, an enjoyable experience for all. In a Year 9 drama lesson, successfully deploying 'freeze' techniques to create transition points to the next elements in the lesson, students were challenged to develop their knowledge and understanding of both dramatic technique and specialist vocabulary. Effective planning, high expectations for all students and focused questioning underpinned the good quality learning taking place. Good planning, pace and progression in a Year 10 chemistry lesson enabled students to improve and deepen their knowledge and understanding of chemical reactions using word equations, chemical equations and ionic equations.

However, in a Year 11 ICT lesson, the teacher's lack of preparedness and some confusion over the software being used, impeded students' progress and learning. Students were aware of what was expected of them in terms of the course requirements, but received insufficient praise, guidance and constructive assessment of their work. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, expected learning outcomes were unclear: the whole class was kept together at the same stage, and on the same task. This proved frustrating for those who were clearly capable of coping with more challenge and working independently.



Differentiated activities underpinned a well-paced Year 3 mathematics lesson focussing on food, money and multiplication. Students benefitted from individual support and the involvement of the school nurse in the activity, which enhanced their understanding of healthy living. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, students were able to consolidate previous learning at the start, prior to having the expected learning outcomes made clear to them by the teacher. A range of engaging and differentiated activities then enabled good progress to be made in counting skills. A small group of less able students also made good progress as a result of the learning assistant being deployed effectively to provide specific support for them.

In other lessons, teachers' planning, preparation and delivery did not always cater for the full range of ability in the groups. Consequently, the more able pupils finished their tasks quickly whilst others struggled to keep up. There was often no effective extension work for the more able – merely 'more of the same'. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used ICT effectively to support both teaching and learning. Applying their previous learning and ICT skills, students showed a good level of skill in designing a page using a specific graphic design program. In other lessons, however, teachers' use of ICT was less effective, sometimes because of limited access to hardware in the classroom and, in other instances, because of a lack of training and confidence. The use of an interactive whiteboard in Year 1 has enabled the teacher to plan and deliver lessons more creatively.

The start of lessons and plenaries are inconsistent. Expected learning outcomes are not always made clear: for example, they are seldom written up on the white board for students to see. Some lessons ended abruptly. Thus there was insufficient time for students to recap what they had learned or consider what they would need to do to make further progress. The school knows that assessment for learning is not one of its strengths and has recently organised training to address this issue. Students' work is usually, if somewhat inconsistently, marked but is not always linked to curriculum targets or learning objectives. In many instances, though students report that oral feedback is good, written comments do not inform students as to what they need to do to improve the quality of their work, or to move on to the next stage of learning.

Regular year group meetings in the primary school result in collaborative planning, both medium- and long-term, ensuring consistent curriculum coverage for all and equality of opportunity in learning.

Displays in classrooms and around the school include fine examples of students' work, which celebrates achievement, contributes to learning and is often illustrative of high standards and expectations. The deployment of learning assistants is effective in lessons and in small group withdrawal sessions. In whole class teaching sessions, they quietly intervene and help students to understand and concentrate. In group work, they help students gain confidence through gentle guidance and prompting. In a Year 7 French lesson, the learning assistant worked effectively with a small group, ensuring they made good progress in relation to their capabilities.



2.2 How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?

The school has a clear focus on meeting students' needs, and provides effective arrangements for their pastoral care through well-embedded class teacher and tutor practice.

During the visit, staff ensured students were well supervised and safe. Throughout the school day, students in the primary school are supervised and escorted at lesson change-over times; secondary school students move between lessons carefully and sensibly. That they do so in the compact corridor areas is a credit to their personal awareness and appreciation of others' needs. Well rehearsed routines ensure safe and sensible arrival and departure of students. On the days of the visit, dismissal at the end of the lessons was well organised, with good safety checks that ensure students board the correct bus and that others are safely collected by adults or led to the appropriate gate for collection by a nominated person. The school nurse is diligent in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the procedures. In the three discussion groups, students' comments were very positive; confirming that they felt the school was a very safe and caring institution.

The school has a high regard for security and ensures all safety requirements are met. The school has significant extra responsibilities due to its location, to ensure student safety is a high priority. It meets these needs with due diligence. The high walls, full metal gates and security cameras ensure the school acquits its responsibilities well. Effective procedures for the registration of all students and the strict signing in and monitoring of visitors allows the school to know exactly who is entering the site at all times. Notwithstanding the need to provide demonstrable security, the school manages to provide a calm, caring and welcoming environment.

Students have a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy by taking regular exercise and eating healthily. These aspects are supported by teaching and learning opportunities, as well as through the direct input of the school nurse. She is also involved in supporting students' wellbeing by planned support teaching, as well as being the key contact person for parents over health issues. Detailed health records are maintained on all students. These are accessible to all teaching staff should they need to be aware of issues affecting learning. The school also uses a part-time student counsellor to provide one to one confidential discussion opportunities and support, when requested.

Student wellbeing is supported by a clear health and safety policy. This is reviewed and amended, when appropriate, to take account of any changes in circumstances. Fire drills take place regularly. Display throughout the school supports the school's aim to develop the



personal development of individual students. This includes materials on how to control tempers and how to deal with challenging situations. In the primary school, focused displays highlighted positive attitudes and working styles.

Throughout, there is a strong international ethos and a range of opportunities for students to develop their sensibilities in this respect. The school's work in this area has been recognised by the International Award. In addition, displays in many classrooms and corridors reflect the key values of the school. There is strong evidence of good relationships, co-operation and respect between both students themselves, and between students and staff. A splendid example as to how the school enables students to appreciate the work of others is the use of a notice board in a prominent central area to display photographs and biographical details of the 'custodians'. It also demonstrates the school's appreciation of all who help to make it a safe and welcoming place.

Although the school has a range of systems for collecting assessment data on students, it is recognized that the evaluation and effective use of this to inform future strategies is not yet embedded. The systems include data to target gifted and talented children; entry assessment data is used to identify and cater for EAL and target literacy needs. However, information on students' progress and achievement is not always tracked and used as consistently as it could be.



2.3 How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?

The National Curriculum of England provides the framework for teaching and learning, and supports students' personal progress, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All subjects have schemes of work which are effective in establishing what is to be taught and when.

In the pre-school and reception, children are taught the Early Years Foundation Stage of the English National Curriculum and assessed against the early learning goals. In the Key Stage 1 curriculum, class teachers teach literacy, numeracy, science and humanities and specialist teachers provide teaching in areas such as physical education. The Key Stage 2 curriculum is covered by class teachers teaching literacy, numeracy, science and humanities and specialist teachers teaching, for example, Arabic, art, ICT and physical education.

In the primary school, there is specialist provision for EAL students who join the school with weak skills in the use of English. This provision enables students to receive specialist small group support and helps them to integrate quickly into mainstream lessons, where, if appropriate, extra support is provided by the EAL team. In addition, the recently appointed special education needs coordinator (SENCO) provides a whole school focus on literacy. Supported by her team, she supports students identified as having particular learning needs, including those with dyslexia. These students are timetabled regularly to work with the SENCO or support teachers in designated teaching areas and are provided with individual learning focused activities. Students receiving extra support have an individual education plan to support their learning needs, which is shared with staff and parents. Recently, the school has begun to implement more effective support for students identified as having particular talents.

In the secondary school, subjects taught include English language, English literature, Arabic, mathematics, three sciences, art, business studies, design technology, drama, economics, French, geography, history and physical education. The first cohort of Year 11 students will sit their GCSE examinations at the end of the current school year.

A full range of extra-curricular activities are offered at the end of the school day, and these include, for example, opportunities for dance, sport, art and crafts and ICT. There are also annual musical/drama productions in which students take part. Older students in the secondary school say they would appreciate the opportunity to be involved in more competitive sporting events. The student council is a valued initiative within the school and plans and delivers a programme of other events throughout the school year. Currently, it is planning a Valentines dance; International Week took place in term 1.

The school meets local requirements. Arabic is timetabled, and the school also provides extra learning opportunities in Arabic after the normal school day. The school's government relations manager ensures that the school is well advised and compliant with all requirements.



2.4 How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?

The school is regarded highly by parents. It has good relationships with the parent body and the community which it serves. This is underpinned by the school's belief that 'education is enhanced by a partnership between parents and the school'.

Parents feel welcome in school and appreciate the ethos and environment, which they report contributes to their children's enjoyment of school and their learning. A reception class assembly during the accreditation visit celebrated, human senses and differences. Over 35 parents and friends of the school attended to celebrate children's achievements.

In informal discussions with a member of the accreditation team, parents said that their children are happy in school and feel safe. They added that school staff are friendly and helpful. One commented that in the UK her children sometimes used excuses to avoid school, but now they really enjoy it. Another parent, recently arrived, said that she came to the meeting and volunteered as a year group representative to repay the school for the excellent special educational needs support, which was being provided for her child. As a result of this, she felt her child was growing in confidence and self-esteem.

The school has a small but active Association of Parents and Friends (APF), mainly mothers who are active in the school community. The APF supports fund raising events and other activities such as drama productions and festive events. A well attended coffee morning was held last term and further events are planned.

The governing board has two parent governors. The selection process involves submitting curriculum vitae to the board, who then make the appointments. Both of the current parent governors are new, the previous ones having left the country. During the visit, one of the accreditation team joined a meeting of parents led by these governors. The meeting resulted in parents volunteering as year representatives from pre-school to Year 11. This is a new initiative to improve communications between parents and staff on a more formal basis than that afforded by the APF.

The school has a number of ways of communicating with parents. There is an annual general meeting, which is an open forum where parents have an opportunity to meet the governing board and receive a report on finance. Three years ago only three parents attended; last year there were over thirty present. New technologies are also used effectively to enhance the quality of communication between the school and parents. The school website is both attractive and informative, and includes a weekly letter from the principal or the acting-principal in his absence. The 'every opinion counts' section also allows parents to express their views. Although currently not greatly used, the principal aims to respond within 24 hours. In one instance, when several parents raised concerns about teaching and learning styles in Arabic lessons, this resulted in training being implemented on teaching methodology.



2.5 How well does the school prepare pupils for future learning?

Students' transition across the school is smooth. It is supported well by the heads of school and subject coordinators. Detailed information in the school's parent handbook, provided on entry to the school, informs parents of transition arrangements and provides details of the curriculum provided in each year group. In this respect, students are also well supported should they join the school mid-year or mid-key stage, as well as when they leave to return to the United Kingdom or other British schools overseas. A good focus on curriculum continuity, including specialist teaching in the primary classes, supports students well as they move through the school. The special educational needs and EAL teams support identified students in order to ensure smooth transfer between different phases.

Meetings to moderate work and levels between phases have now been implemented, and the information is being used to inform future planning. The school intends to develop its student tracking system to provide further information on the needs and expectations of individual students as they move through the school.

In discussion groups, students interviewed said they were aware of the need to maintain standards of work and their behaviour throughout their time at the school. Year 6 students felt the systems of individual target setting also enabled them to be aware of their individual needs and goals throughout their time in the school. They added that they appreciated the time the school gives supporting them at each stage of the transition. In addition, they felt confident about their forthcoming move to the secondary school as Year 7 students. Some older students in Year 11 felt more information could be provided to help support their move onto a range of higher educational opportunities, at either Al Khobar, the Gulf or universities elsewhere.

A Year 11 student, when asked how the school had helped them prepare for the future commented, "I feel more studious, more social and more international. I am more confident and literate. I feel listened to, part of the whole group."

Currently, there is little information on students who have left the school that can be used to plan for those present now. However, the school has recently set up an alumni section on its website in order to address this.



3. Standards achieved by pupils

3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?

It is difficult to establish a pattern for standards over time because of the high turnover of students. Nevertheless, the school has a range of assessment data starting from initial assessment on entry, progress towards the early learning goals in pre-school and RECEPTION, PIPS, MIDYIS, YELLIS and optional National Curriculum tests assessed in-house.

Students are assessed on entry to establish their levels of attainment, in particular English. This enables the school to offer extra support for students, where appropriate. School data shows that, initially, attainment in English of EAL students is not as strong as in mathematics and science. However, the longer these students stay at the school, standards in English improve considerably and are generally in line with those found in the United Kingdom.

In pre-school and RECEPTION, children's standards in relation to the early learning goals are good. In a RECEPTION outdoor activities session, children made choices, shared well and engaged in a good level of social conversation, a girl, for example, correcting another child when working on the foundation for the castle. In a specialist physical education lesson, RECEPTION children's physical development was good. They were able to move confidently over and under low hurdles, pick up a racquet and dribble round cones.

By the end of Year 6, the school's most recent data shows that National Curriculum levels in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above those in the United Kingdom. This was for a cohort of 39 students who attained particularly well in relation to the proportion attaining level 5. Similarly, almost a half of a smaller cohort of 14 students in Year 9, attained level 7 in mathematics and science, which is higher than pupils in the UK. Although a lower proportion attained this level in English, the result still exceeded that in the UK.

The head of secondary has identified the current small Year 11 cohort as about average: however, the results of the recent mock GCSE examinations were higher than expected.

Although the school has much assessment data, it is not currently analysed as effectively as it could be, in relation to starting points to establish how well students achieve. The great majority of students undoubtedly make at least good progress as shown by the National Curriculum levels they attain. Similarly, the progress made by EAL students is also good. There was no data available to show if there were any differences between the progress of boys and girls, nor on the progress made by pupils having special educational needs.



3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

Students' behaviour and positive attitudes are strengths of the school. There is a calm, yet purposeful, atmosphere around the site at the start of school, throughout lessons and at the end of the day as students leave. Attendance and punctuality are good. The school has an effective system in place to monitor absences. Attendance during the Holy Month of Ramadan and at the start and beginning of the school years skews the overall figure, with average attendance during the previous school year being 92%.

Pupils are keen to learn and improve their academic standards and their personal and social skills. In nearly all lessons, they are motivated and eager to contribute. Even when not sufficiently challenged, students generally remain focussed and produce work to the best of their abilities. They are happy, friendly, polite and confident: they know and trust teachers and other adults in the school. Students were particularly welcoming to the accreditation team, the smallest offering 'high fives' when they felt appropriate!

When given the opportunity to work independently or in collaboration with a partner or group, students flourish and make good progress. The use of 'circle time' and discussion activities enhances their respect for the feelings, values, views and opinions of others. Behaviour is excellent in classrooms and around the school. Students cooperate well with one another their teachers and other adults in the school. This results in a calm atmosphere around the school and a positive learning atmosphere in lessons.

Students have a good sense of social justice; they understand that there are other children and young people less fortunate than themselves. Each year students take part in focused fund raising for designated charities. In addition, students are also involved in the Children of the Forest Project (a charity in Thailand) and a Global Awareness Project (supporting a school in northern Ghana).

The primary and secondary school councils, elected by the student body, enable students to air their views and opinions, as well as contributing well to the life of the school. The councils help organise social events, the 'student fund' and charity activities. Students told the accreditation team that they felt confident that their views are listened to and acted upon when possible, citing the provision of a canteen as a result of one of their suggestions. Students are also appreciative of the improved learning opportunities that they now benefit from, including trips and sports activities.

Students are enabled to take responsibility through being head boy or head girl, prefects and house captains (the latter elected by students and the former selected). Students participate in the weekly programme of assemblies, some being class-led. Students respond well to



classroom rules, know the school's behaviour policy well and are aware of the consequences enshrined in this. They say that behaviour in the school is good and that on the few occasions that students do misbehave, staff deal with this appropriately. A Year 9 student, new to the school at the start of the academic year, described it as being very welcoming.

Break times are well supervised and students play well together. Younger ones eat their snacks in classrooms whilst older ones eat in specified, shaded areas outside. They sit calmly and chat – nearly always in English - with their friends, and enjoy being in the proximity of siblings from other year groups. Students appreciate the good number of water dispensers around the school and mentioned that they could purchase both healthy (and less healthy!) snacks in the canteen.



4. Leadership and management of the school

4.1 How well is the school led and managed?

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The principal, with the support of the governing board, has embarked on a significant programme of change over a relatively short period of time. In addition, the senior leadership team has changed considerably with all but one, appointed since the start of the current school year. Consequently, the drive for change has emanated mainly from the principal and the governing board. Class numbers have increased, which along with the recently introduced provision for Key Stage 4, and the planned provision for post-16 next year, has resulted in different priorities for allocating resources and, in some instances, teaching loads. The principal has also been leading a drive for the development of middle leaders. In addition, he has introduced refined staff appraisal procedures (including for learning assistants) and has involved all staff in the self-study accreditation for the Council for International Schools. As a result, effective management of change has not been straightforward. Nevertheless, the principal and the governing board remain committed to their vision and programme for change and development in the school.

Action and improvement planning meanwhile, lacks sharpness in underpinning this programme. Although many targets are appropriate, there is little focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning or improving outcomes for students. Most issues identified are focused on provision rather than improving outcomes. The school improvement plan (2009-10) contains 24 disparate targets, none of which has explicit costing nor clear evaluative outcomes desired. The school's action plan (2009-2034) has five appropriate long-term goals, the first of which is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The other goals focus on provision and all five have clear success criteria. However, there is scant reference, if any, to the financial implications. As a result of these two plans it is unclear as to what the actual priorities are in order to underpin and bring to fruition the programme for change.

Although the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development, self-evaluation also lacks sharpness in some instances. Assessment data, for example, is not being evaluated and analysed effectively in order to inform future strategies and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not well embedded. However, having identified assessment for learning as an area for improvement, the school has put in place effective training to improve this aspect of teaching.

The governing board is effective in its role as a supportive and critical friend of the school. Where appropriate, sub-committees are set up. For example, the Infrastructure committee is very proactive. When work has been suggested by the school, it is put out to tender, costs are compared and a final decision on how to proceed is made. Once decisions are made, work can



be completed relatively quickly. The governing board takes its financial responsibilities seriously, for instance in light of the financial constraints as a result of the global recession on capital projects. In an effort to involve the school more closely, the governing body has also set up an education committee that works with staff to clarify its ideas and plans. The impact of this is being established, particularly on staff retention and recruitment.



5. Quality of provision

5.1 How good are the accommodation, the staffing levels and the resources?

Overall, the quality of the accommodation is adequate. The school provides a stimulating learning environment with much celebratory display of students' work in classrooms and public areas. Classroom displays are a good balance between teaching resources and students' independent work. The school is particularly well maintained and spotlessly clean. The work of the 'custodians' in ensuring this is valued highly by the school. Planned provision of new permanent classrooms is currently on hold. However, a number of temporary classrooms, which are fit for purpose, have been provided to cope with the increased numbers in Years 9 to 11.

Although there is a good and improving range of subject specialist accommodation, there are some weaknesses, particularly in the pre-school and RECEPTION areas. Here, small-sized rooms, for twenty-two children, limit the range of activities possible, for example, reading and home corners. The use of outdoor space during the cooler months helps compensate for the lack of indoor space, as does some creative use of some of the classrooms, which helps the school meet fully the requirements of the Early Years and Foundation Stage curriculum in England. Large outdoor toys are provided, but the provision is inconsistent from class to class. Toilet facilities, though impeccably clean, are limited: only three for boys at the correct height and three for girls, which are too high, are available for six classes of twenty two children.

Year 1 classrooms have larger outside areas with adequate shade. However, this is not the case for Years 2 and 3. There are no outside areas to compensate for the cramped classrooms despite the teachers' best efforts to use space creatively. Communal indoor space within the primary teaching areas allows for small group work and other such related activities.

There are a good range of specialist rooms in the secondary section. These include two science laboratories, art and design & technology rooms, two ICT suites and two multipurpose halls, one used for sports and the other multi for assemblies and performing arts. As a result of a suggestion from the senior school council, one of the new temporary classrooms has been transformed into a school canteen.

Outside space is at a premium: the largest playground has also to be used at the end of the day as a temporary bus park. Some shading is provided and the extension of this has been identified by the school as a priority. The school benefits from the use of the community's swimming pool, a short walking distance away. Planning for the future sixth form provision includes further use of community sports facilities. The current library is to be moved and redeveloped as a learning resource centre, better able to serve the needs of senior school



students and with a planned space to accommodate visiting primary classes. The current space is to become a large specialist art and design & technology area.

Teachers, learning assistants, other teaching support staff and administrative staff all make an effective contribution to the school's provision. Recently, however, the retention and recruitment of teachers has become more difficult for the school. There is a large proportion of specialist staff as some specialist teaching starts in pre-school classes, resulting in generous non-contact periods for the primary teachers. However, all are required to give three of these non-contact periods back to support provision for EAL students, those with special educational needs or in specialist subjects where they have particular expertise. This enriches the curriculum provision, helping broaden students' learning experience across the school.

Overall, learning resources meet the needs of students across the school, though there are some limited resources in pre-school and RECEPTION classes. Specialist teaching rooms are resourced well. The provision of ICT resources has been identified by the school as in need of improvement. Resources, such as data projectors, have now increased and a rolling introduction of interactive whiteboards, and training for the use of these, is planned. There are four ICT staff who all work from a central base, dealing with whole school issues and providing staff training. New technologies are being used in an increasingly effective way to support administration as well as teaching and learning.



6. Overall effectiveness of the school

6.1 How successful is the school?

The school is effective in its main aim, expecting that when a student leaves, s/he will have developed positive feeling of tolerance and understanding of others' cultures and beliefs, as well as having acquired a solid academic education. It is a harmonious community that provides a safe secure environment for all members of the school. The school has strong links and working relationships with parents and reflects a strong British ethos in all its actions. The school is oversubscribed in most classes and there is considerable demand for places.

The curriculum is exclusively British and delivered effectively. As a result, despite high student turnover, standards in relation to those in the United Kingdom are good. A good proportion of students attain higher grades than their peers in the United Kingdom at the end of Years 6 and 9. Students are articulate and confident learners. Their attitudes, values, behaviour and aspirations are excellent. Students are happy at the school, and say one of its major strengths is its 'Britishness', as well as the opportunities it provides for different nationalities to socialise and learn together.

The leadership, management and governance of the school's programme for change are effective.

The school has effective procedures for handling complaints with clear lines of communication depending on the nature of the complaint.

This is the school's first BSME accreditation visit



6.2 What the school does well

The school has strength in many important areas:

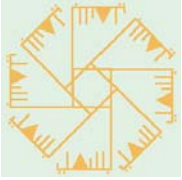
- The British nature of the school;
- The international focus, which broadens students' learning and understanding of different cultures;
- The range of specialist teaching across the school has an effective impact on the quality and range of learning experiences;
- The ethos of care, guidance and support for students which ensures their safety and well-being;
- The exclusive British curriculum across the school enables ease of transition across the school, as well as transition to schools in the UK;
- The effectiveness of the school's work in partnership with parents. Supports effectively the work of the school;
- Overall standards achieved by students;
- The quality of students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities.

6.3 What should the school do to improve further?

Among the school's strengths, the following are matters for further development:

- The school and the governing board should work together closely to ensure the recruitment and retention of good quality teachers, and to enable planned developments of the school to come to successful fruition;
- Improve the analysis and evaluation of whole school assessment data, in order to plan future strategies;
- Use new technologies to establish links with schools in the UK.

Although changes and expansion of the school have been somewhat rapid and demanding on staff, there is satisfactory capacity to make these improvements. Most of the issues have already been identified in the school improvement plan and action plans.



6.4 Does the school meet the standards for being an accredited BSME school?

The Accreditation Team is recommending to the BSME Executive Committee that the school does meet the accreditation requirements.

Evidence source/s

During the accreditation visit, 32 lessons were visited, school documentation and policies were analysed, as were samples of students' work from Years 2, 6, 9 and 11. Formal discussions were held with the principal, the senior leadership team, other staff with posts of responsibility, a member of the governing board and groups of students from Years 6, 9 and 11. Other teachers, staff, students and parents were consulted informally. Break times and a range of after school activities were seen. Members of the accreditation team were also present for the arrival of children and students and departure at the end of the day. Two whole school days were monitored.