



# **British Schools Overseas School inspection report**

British Council School of Madrid

14th to 16th November 2018



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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

Schools in Spain, describing themselves as “British”, are required by the Spanish authorities to be inspected by an approved inspectorate in order to have their Spanish licence approved.

This was a British Schools overseas (BSO) inspection. It provides the school with confirmation that this school has been approved by the Department for Education (DfE) for educating pupils from ages 2 to 16. The sixth form provision was not part of this inspection.

The purpose of this inspection was to inform the DfE, Spanish authorities and parents of pupils how the school measures up against the BSO standards that apply to independent schools in the United Kingdom. Following the inspection, the lead inspector prepared an inspection report that will be made available to parents and prospective parents, via the DfE and British Council’s website. This will enable parents to be informed about the quality of education in the inspected school and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

An essential element of the inspection was considering the extent to which the British character of the school was evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils’ achievements. By achieving UK inspection-based accreditation, participating schools demonstrate that they provide a British education that has similar characteristics to an education in an independent school in the UK. The inspection also identified what the school does well and what needs to improve. Inspectors will report with integrity the extent to which the school achieves its aims and meets the requirements for registration.

## Information about the school

British Council School, Madrid, was founded in 1940 and moved to its present buildings between 1990 and 2004. It is an all through school from the beginning of the Early Years Foundation stage up to Year 13. The academy has 1952 pupils on roll, aged 2 to 18 years. 313 children are in the early years section, 786 in the primary section, 640 in the secondary section and 213 in the sixth form. The school has a second site in the city centre, El Viso, that caters for 60 children, aged 2 to 5 years.

The school follows both the Spanish authorities core curriculum in all year groups and the English early years and National Curriculum 2014 in key stages 1 to 3. In key stage 4, they follow an international GCSE curriculum in a broad range of subjects. At post 16, they follow the British Council’s BiBac curriculum.

The school is authorised by the Spanish Ministry of Education to offer a British education to children of all nationalities and is a member of the National Association of British Schools in Spain. The school was last inspected in April 2015 by and was judged to be outstanding in all areas.

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors; Jeremy Bird, Lisa Gorman and Adrian Massam and led by Simon Webb. Inspectors considered evidence from the following sources.

- Lesson observations in 83 classes across all year groups and subjects, including the early years and the sixth form. Many of these were jointly observed with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed assemblies for early years, secondary and primary pupils.
- Inspectors looked at arrangements at break-times, lunchtime, and the beginning and end of the day, visited after school clubs and the school's supra curricular activities.
- Pupils' work books were looked at in and outside the classrooms.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, key stage leaders, family leaders, teaching and learning leaders, support staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- A range of documentation and policies were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, assessment information, risk assessments and school newsletters.
- Inspectors analysed records relating to the quality of teaching, the school's website, including information about extra-curricular activities, trips and visits.
- Inspectors reviewed records, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, health and safety and child protection.

## Overall effectiveness

### **The overall effectiveness of British Council School, Madrid is outstanding.**

- All the BSO standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage) are met. Governors and leaders have ensured the British Council's values drive decision making at the school. As a result, safeguarding is effective, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) highly effectively and it comprehensively supports the ethos and values of a British school overseas. Pupils' progress and attainment exceeds UK averages in a wide range of subjects and across all year groups. Leaders ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding**

- Governors have a compelling vision for the school which is deeply seated in the mission and values of the British Council. They have successfully communicated this vision to all the stakeholders of the school. Governors have recently appointed a new headteacher whose vision of bi-lingual and bi-cultural education closely supports the mission of the school.
- Governors regularly self-evaluate their skills and abilities. They recently identified the need for the board to include more members with an understanding of the current educational context. As a result, they have successfully strengthened their capacity to challenge and support the school. The succession planning for a new headteacher was particularly successful because governors took an active role in meeting senior leaders one to one to ensure a smooth transfer of leadership.
- Governors recognised the need to induct their new headteacher which included a clear plan to provide a high-quality introduction to the British Council. Governors' performance management processes are robust.
- The school's new headteacher has quickly and accurately evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has taken rapid and effective steps to build the capacity of all leaders by improving their self-evaluation work in each section of the school. Inspectors found that all leaders were accurate in their self-evaluation of the school's provision.
- Leaders have a deliberate and measured approach to managing change. They are committed to consulting with parents and pupils when appropriate and pilot initiatives effectively. This has led to the smooth launch of several initiatives across the school, such as a new uniform, healthy menus and a new IT platform.
- Leadership in early years is highly effective. The leaders of the two separate sites have a clear vision of effective practice in early years. Leaders have successfully used effective communication and modelling skills to improve the standards of teaching since the previous inspection. The recent investment by governors in outdoor areas has led to an improvement in pupil's outcomes, especially in their physical and social development.
- Leaders in the primary section have encouraged innovation and experimentation in teaching and learning and assessment. They have successfully captured and shared this practice to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning since the previous inspection.



- In the secondary section, leaders have significantly improved outcomes at key stage 4, since the previous inspection, through effective CPD on the reformed iGCSE qualifications. This has led to medium-term plans for teaching being more closely aligned to the reformed iGCSE requirements.
- The curriculum is an outstanding feature of the school. It is broad and balanced with a highly effective extended curriculum (supra-activities) that helps pupils to become global citizens with a deeply embedded respect and tolerance for all of the protected characteristics in the 2010 Equalities Act. The academic curriculum leads to outstanding outcomes, with most pupils graduating the school as bi-lingual while also exceeding UK averages for iGCSE outcomes. At post-16, the British Council's Bi-Bac curriculum leads to 100% of pupils progressing to university destinations in some of the world's top universities. Leaders regularly undertake forensic reviews of the curriculum that have a clear impact on outcomes for pupils. For example, a history review has ensured coherence across the Spanish and British history curriculum, benefitting pupils' understanding and leading to improved outcomes. Leaders' review of the reading curriculum has led to rapidly improved pupils' outcomes and they now have a genuine love for reading.
- The supra-curriculum makes excellent provision for the development of sporting and creative skills, solidarity, an understanding of the outside world, communication skills, self-esteem and resilience. It is fully inclusive and all pupils are participating in at least one area. Older pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in voluntary work, work experience, competitions and events outside of the school campus. The school has close links with local and international charity organisations. Previous alumni also make positive contributions to this programme which benefits current pupils.
- Leaders have improved the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities since the previous inspection. Teachers are well informed of pupils needs and support them effectively in classrooms in order to make progress at least in line with their peers.
- Leaders have correctly identified the need for the school to develop a seamless whole school data system. This is because the current system does not monitor groups of pupils closely enough or adequately identify underachievement against target grades. Leaders have clear plans to evaluate a range of options and understand the need for the system to monitor sub-groups of pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders at all levels have established a highly pervasive culture of safeguarding through an exceptionally rigorous system of monitoring whether pupils are safe and happy at school. Leaders have ensured that the appropriate checks on employees and owners have been undertaken and that staff have had up to date training in safeguarding, first aid and e-safety. The premises are secure and health and safety procedures ensure the building is safe for pupils of all ages. Staff, especially through the family system, know pupils and families extremely well and work intimately with families to ensure pupils are kept safe. Pupils in both the primary and secondary sections said, they were happy, felt safe and were compelling when asked to express their commitment to inclusion and tolerance. School records show bullying is extremely rare and pupils could describe a variety of ways to stay safe on-line.

## Quality of teaching learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers are unrelentingly ambitious for their pupils. They have high expectations and do not put ceilings on their achievements. As a result, all groups of pupils attain well and made better progress when compared with UK achievement data in all subjects.
- Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge across the school. They have a clear understanding of how learning is assessed for the appropriate key stages. In the most effective lessons, this knowledge is translated for pupils in the form of success criteria so that pupils are able to accurately describe their own learning and progress. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the pupils were asked to create success criteria for a piece of descriptive writing which led to higher quality writing.
- Teachers have very high standards for behaviour. They reinforce expectations by applying the school policy consistently and praising pupils' efforts through learning awards for exceptional work.
- Literacy across the curriculum and year groups is a strong focus. For example, the majority of lessons contain an element of oracy which improves pupils' writing skills. Grammar and spelling errors are routinely picked up when teachers assess work. The library is well resourced and is integral to the recently introduced reading lessons in key stage 3 which has encouraged pupils' love of reading. Teachers of all subjects regularly plan lessons for pupils to practise their public speaking skills. For example, in a Year 9 PSHE lesson, pupils gave presentations on effective study techniques. As a result, pupils are confident speaking in lessons and taking risks when they may not know the answer.
- Teachers routinely set homework and this is used as an effective tool to consolidate learning. It often leads to assessment activities which enable pupils to achieve outstanding outcomes in key stage 4.
- The best teachers plan learning which is enjoyable. Such learning challenges all pupils and develops their resilience. For example, in a Year 6 maths lesson, problem solving skills were being developed independently by trial and error. Pupils' positive 'can do' attitude to learning means they never give up trying to improve their work.
- Teachers know their pupils well. In the most effective lessons, teachers use this knowledge, information and achievement information to set personalised targets for all pupils. For example, all Year 6 pupils sampled could share their writing targets with inspectors.
- The supra-curriculum and extra-curricular provision is extensive. Activities range from gardening and horticulture classes in Years 1 and 2, to an all-inclusive basketball league run as an inter-family competition. These opportunities are valued by pupils and levels of participation are high.
- Parents feel that the information they receive is clear and they value the access they have to teachers to talk about progress.
- Teachers use assessment regularly in all year groups across the school. Teachers often use lesson time to provide effective oral feedback to pupils which is acted upon promptly to improve progress. Pupils are also providing feedback to subject leaders so that the curriculum can be improved further to provide greater challenge

for the most able. The consistency with which teachers give written feedback is not always in line with the most effective practice in the school.

- In the best lessons, pupils are provided with opportunities to think critically. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, pupils were revising Macbeth in the form of a trial where pupils worked in teams to present convincing arguments and challenge each other to justify their positions. However, this is inconsistent across year groups because teachers are not always using pupil performance data to inform their planning.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding**

- Pupils are confident self-assured learners who are capable of working independently and show maturity and resilience when given challenging tasks. This is evident when pupils seek assistance for their learning from peers or other sources and are capable of formulating questions of teachers that results in a deepening of their knowledge.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently excellent throughout the school. Pupils are focussed and engaged in lessons because of the high expectations of teachers. There is a clear emphasis on personalised welfare throughout the school's family system.
- Leaders have embedded an effective behaviour policy that is well understood by pupils in all sections, with rewards that are used frequently. This is particularly apparent through the very effective behaviour chart that is used consistently in all primary classrooms. Family leaders monitor behaviour closely and their records show that serious misbehaviour is very rare. Pupils feel extremely confident that their family leaders will deal sensitively with any behaviour or welfare problems quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are confident, polite and display impeccable manners when communicating with adults. They are respectful towards each other. They show exemplary behaviour around the school, at breaktime, arrival and departure times and in the dining room. There is no litter.
- The family system contributes significantly to creating a safe and supportive environment where bullying is not tolerated. This stance is supported by the robust implementation of the anti-bullying policy. Parents and pupils are unanimous in their belief that the school prevents bullying well and solves any issues involving bullying rapidly and effectively. Records show no incidents of bullying in the last year.
- The school has clearly defined sets of values (Loyalty, Flexibility, Caring, Resilience, Challenge) which helps to reinforce their expectations of pupils. Leaders promote these values across all areas of the curriculum, ensuring that all pupils demonstrate these values in their daily lives at school. For example, pupils show loyalty to, and caring of, each other through their attitudes to learning, charitable work and their respect for people's differences.
- The school's personal and social education programme is highly effective in teaching pupils about spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects. Pupils clearly reject all forms of discrimination. Pupils have access to good careers guidance to help them with option choices at the end of Year 11. This includes orientation

questionnaires, advice from family leaders, older pupils and visitors related to different careers.

- Pupils are given many opportunities to take on responsibility in school, such as class representatives or as digital leaders. Older pupils provide effective guidance at Year 7 transition events by giving orientation sessions for Year 6 or through reading to younger pupils.
- The school provides a safe environment and teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in school and on line. For example, e-safety guidance is included in pupils' school diaries and parents are also given the opportunity to receive e-safety guidance. The school nursing team has effective sets of procedures for dealing with illness and accidents. They also participate in health education throughout the school and liaise with the lunch service in relation to healthy diet and allergy considerations.
- Pupils' overall attendance and persistent absence rates are better than UK averages as pupils rarely miss school. Leaders' robust procedures for following up on individual attendance cases has improved attendance statistics since the previous inspection.

### **Outcomes for pupils are outstanding**

- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding because, at key stages 1, 2 and IGCSE, attainment exceeds English national averages in a wide range of subjects.
- In the secondary section, overall outcomes at IGCSE have increased significantly since the previous inspection. All subjects now exceed the UK average for A\*/A and A\* to C for IGCSE examinations.
- In secondary mathematics, English, science and modern languages, pupils' progress is well above UK averages for both expected and above expected progress. Progress of both males and females in the secondary section is strong and sustained. This is the case over time (as seen in pupils' books) and in lessons observed. The small gap in the achievement between males and females is narrowing and is smaller than that seen in the UK.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. Inspection evidence showed that this group make strong and sustained progress from their starting points. This progress is in line with other pupils with the same starting points. They also attain well in a broad range of subjects and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Primary school pupils' attainment in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure has been above UK averages for the last three years. In reading, pupils progress has improved markedly and is now above UK average in Years 4, 5 and 6 for both expected standard and greater depth. The school's own measure of progress from key stage 1 to 2, shows pupils have made above expected progress for the last three years. In mathematics, pupils exceed the UK average for attaining the expected standard but are below for greater depth. Progress and attainment in writing is improving in key stage 1, towards UK averages.

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills in English are developed rapidly throughout the curriculum. This starts in the early years. Later, declamation skills are developed consistently in all year groups through a wide variety of debating groups. For example, economics club, model UN as well as classroom debating.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress and attainment in reading has increased significantly in the early years, primary and secondary sections. Attainment now exceeds UK averages for the expected standard and greater depth. As a result, pupils' love for reading has deepened and the new libraries provide a rich range of reading materials for pupils of all abilities and interests.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education because of their outstanding attainment, extensive careers education and the individual advice, support and welfare they receive from the school's family system.
- The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth is increasing, but is currently below UK averages in writing and mathematics in the primary section.

### **Early Years foundation stage is outstanding**

- Leaders, who have responsibility for the early years, articulate a clear drive for further improvement. They demonstrate their ambition through continually refining their curriculum provision to meet the needs of different cohorts.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching is consistently strong through effective monitoring which accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses. Leaders' incisive actions improve standards of teaching and learning. High quality professional development has improved teaching because it is carefully targeted. For example, high quality support for the teaching of phonics has led to improved teaching of this key skill and wider reading.
- Teaching is consistently effective as it leads to children showing high levels of motivation and focus during all the different activities planned for them. Teachers' plans for learning take advantage of all opportunities to reinforce language. For example, at change over times, teachers sing, count and ask questions to continually engage children in English language acquisition.
- Teachers' planning of independent and collaborative learning, enables children to consistently demonstrate curiosity, imagination and concentration. They respond well to adults' well phrased initial and supplementary questions. Children are expected to respond and talk in complete sentences which helps to consolidate and develop their language.
- Effective parental engagement is a key feature of the excellent provision seen during the inspection. For example, in the pre-nursery/baby provision, staff worked hand in hand with parents when observing play. Staff skilfully advised parents how they can develop learning in the home, often by following the child's lead. Teachers share children's academic and pastoral development with parents frequently.
- Leaders' curriculum innovations have been well thought through prior to implementation. The indoor and outdoor environments reflect the wide and enriched curriculum. Staff are skilled at enabling children to pursue their own interests and curiosities. For example, children learnt about creating structures from natural resources and then explored how they can create their own versions. Leaders have

rightly built the curriculum to emphasise early English language acquisition and this leads to strong progress in children's speaking and literacy.

- Children conduct themselves well. They display positive attitudes to learning and high levels of self-control, co-operation and respect for others. This is because they enjoy their learning.
- Teachers' baseline assessment is accurate. Typically, children enter either site with English language understanding which is below / well below what is typically seen for their age. Children make strong rates of progress in relation to their starting points, most notably in phonics. They are very well prepared for their transition through the early years and beyond. As a result, almost all children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making strong and sustained progress.
- Leaders ensure that intervention work is mapped and monitored. They evaluate to measure how effectively barriers, which prevent children from making the progress required, are overcome. As a result, children get back on track quickly if they fall behind.
- Safeguarding is highly effective.
- Leaders are aware that further improvements are needed to make the assessment system fit to meet the needs of transition into key stage 1 and to monitor the progress of different groups of children.

## What the school could do to improve further

Improve the quality of leadership and management by:

- Leaders and governors to provide a seamless whole school data system that enables middle leaders to monitor the progress of groups of pupils', especially those with special educational needs and the more able.

Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:

- using the information from their updated monitoring systems for teaching and learning to provide incisive coaching for teachers, in order to develop pedagogy that improves pupils' critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning skills.

The school might also like to consider:

- sharing with all year groups the effective practice for teachers written feedback
- A strategy to further embed their successful cross curricular literacy strategy by extending it to writing in a wide range of subjects.

## Standards for inspection of British schools overseas

### Quality of education provided

The quality of education is outstanding. Teachers know their subjects extremely well and use well planned lessons to use high quality resources effectively to inspire pupils. As a result, behaviour for learning is exemplary and pupils make rapid progress. The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs engrained in the school's pastoral system based on families and pupils are strong advocates for inclusion. There is a clear assessment framework to benchmark pupils progress against the British Council's values and international standards. The curriculum is outstanding because the supra-activities programme complements the academic programme and is effective in developing pupils who are tri-lingual global citizens.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is exemplary. Their attitudes to school, and to those within in it, are exceptionally positive. They embrace differences and learn from pupils and adults of all cultures, needs and religions. Pupils' conduct and manners are exemplary and they are proud of their contribution to the school and the wider community.

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Pupils are extremely well cared for through the school's family system. Written policies are monitored to ensure pupils are kept safe and vulnerable pupils have the best possible educational experience appropriate to their age. They are well guided at each transition stage and have effective careers guidance. Staff are well trained to identify concerns early and family leaders holistic tracking ensures the underlying causes of problems are addressed. Fire and safeguarding procedures are highly effective.

### Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Staff are all checked for suitability in line with Spanish requirements to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the pupils. Staff complement these checks with self-declarations and temporary staff receive the same robust checks as permanent staff. Excellent records are kept ensuring recruitment is a rigorous and thorough process than can be monitored for compliance.



## Premises of and accommodation at schools

The premises and accommodation are excellent. The school clearly addressed the previous inspection report's requirement to improve the early years outdoor play spaces which are now improving pupil progress in physical development and social skills. All the buildings are in the best repair because of highly effective maintained monitoring by leaders who identify learning points and take rapid action. Specialist facilities in science, technology, sport and the new libraries are of the highest order.

## Provision of information

Information is of good quality and readily available to all through the website and the very informative annual report to parents. There are also regular letters, parent information evenings in addition to teacher consultation meetings. Through the commitment of leaders and the family system, parents felt they had excellent relationships with the school and could always have access to more personal information about their child whenever they requested it. Recent developments in providing parents with more information on-line through a new IT platform will enhance the provision of information further.

## Manner in which complaints are handled

The complaints procedure is clear, written down, and shared with parents. There are very few complaints, but where applicable the process has followed all appropriate stages and meets requirements in full.

## Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Outstanding leadership and management ensures that the BSO standards are met consistently because leaders have good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. All leaders, but especially those in the family system, actively promote the well-being of pupils so that the quality of provision is excellent.

## Minimum standards for boarding

Not applicable.

## Glossary of terms

### What inspection judgements mean

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	British International		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1940		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Early Years 438	Primary 661	Secondary 640 (up to Year 11) 853 (total up to Year 13)
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	Early Years 8745€	Primary 10785€	Secondary 11800€
<b>Address of school</b>	Calle Solano 5-7, 28223 Pozuelo de Alarcón, Madrid, Spain		
<b>Telephone number</b>	+34913373612		
<b>Fax number</b>	+34913373634		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:school@britishcouncil.es">school@britishcouncil.es</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mercedes Hernández Estrada		

