



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **British School Muscat**

## **Oman**

Date **12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> February 2023**  
Inspection number **20230212**

| Contents |                                                                                      | page |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1        | Purpose and scope on the inspection                                                  | 2    |
| 2        | Compliance with regulatory requirements                                              | 2    |
| 3        | Overall effectiveness of the school                                                  | 3    |
|          | 3.1 What the school does well                                                        | 4    |
|          | 3.2 Points for improvement                                                           | 5    |
| 4        | The context of the school                                                            | 6    |
|          | 4.1 The British nature of the school                                                 | 7    |
| 5        | Standard 1<br><b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>                 | 9    |
|          | 5.1 Curriculum                                                                       | 9    |
|          | 5.2 Teaching and assessment                                                          | 12   |
|          | 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils                                                     | 14   |
| 6        | Standard 2<br><b>The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils</b> | 16   |
| 7        | Standard 3<br><b>The welfare, health and safety of pupils</b>                        | 19   |
| 8        | Standard 4<br><b>The suitability of the proprietor and staff</b>                     | 22   |
| 9        | Standard 5<br><b>The premises and accommodation</b>                                  | 22   |
| 10       | Standard 6<br><b>The provision of information for parents, carers and others</b>     | 24   |
| 11       | Standard 7<br><b>The school's procedures for handling complaints</b>                 | 26   |
| 12       | Standard 8<br><b>Leadership and management of the school</b>                         | 29   |

## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

During the inspection visit, nearly 30 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and both formally and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Richard Charlesworth, Mary Rose Connolly, Caz Jude and Jillian Reilly.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, British School Muscat (BSM) has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

British School Muscat (BSM) is characterised by its culture, promoting a sense of wellbeing and academic purpose across the campus. It provides the highest quality of education and care for students. Standards and attainment across the school are exemplary. Results across the school and, in particular, at A Level and GCSE are amongst the best in the British international sector. For example, the 2022 GCSE student outcomes confirm the school's position as one of the 5 highest performing British international schools in the Gulf Region and places it within the top 3% of UK state and top 10% of UK independent schools. ('The Times Parent Power 2023').

The *#EveryoneCan* approach, inspired by the High Performance Learning (HPL) philosophy, permeates throughout the school and underpins all learning. It is apparent that the school ensures that every student achieves high standards irrespective of their starting points, abilities and cultural backgrounds. A strong culture of wellbeing and belonging for all staff and students permeates the school, driven and supported by the excellent leadership. The emphasis on academic excellence and extra curricular enrichment opportunities nurture students' talents and interests. The school lives its mission 'growing learners who are the best for the world'. There is an all-pervading sense of confidence amongst students, staff and parents, built on the belief that *#EveryoneCan*.

## 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including:

- BSM takes an unique approach to ensuring the highest academic standards and wellbeing for students and staff;
- The principal and leadership team clearly articulate an imaginative and forward-thinking vision for the school;
- Staff go about their work with determination, and with the highest expectation of what students can achieve;
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is excellent, with many outstanding lessons observed - teachers are highly skilled at tailoring their teaching to students' individual needs.
- Students' achievements academically and out of the classroom (for example in music) are outstanding;
- The innovative and highly successful approach places happiness and confidence firmly at the centre of school life;
- Staff and student relationships are respectful, productive and authentic;
- Students' behaviour is exemplary – they develop strong friendships, show empathy for others and actively ensure that no-one gets left out;
- There is an exceptional sense of pride and happiness evident in the students and staff;
- BSM is at the heart of the Muscat community and every member of staff believes that children's happiness is key to academic success at school.
- The school development plan which guides students and staff in supporting everyone's learning journey: they pride themselves on the belief that everyone has talents;
- The high staff morale and low turnover, contribute significantly to the positivity of the school community and the high quality of education provided;
- The manner in which educational research and well known strategies have been adapted and adopted to fit the specific context of the school;
- Upgrades to the facilities to continue to provide world class education, e.g. the Astro pitch, 3 swimming pools and theatre;
- Investment in resources to supplement the curriculum, e.g. in musical instruments;
- Breadth of the curriculum and enrichment supporting students in discovering their interests and passions.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Further improve learning, teaching and assessment, so that all match the standards of the best, for example by:
  - a. establishing even more opportunities for students to work collaboratively through active learning strategies that promote group work
  - b. creating even more opportunities for teachers to share strategies and techniques with one another, sharing best practice
  - c. build in further time and support to enable all staff to use the data consistently and systematically to provide personalised support and interventions to students
  - d. establishing more links with schools of a similar context to develop further the systems for assessment and moderation, as well as to share best practice within teaching and learning
2. To further develop the use of data to inform teaching and learning and further triangulate the information to support the *#WellbeingFirst* initiative at the school;
3. Further implement a digital strategy across the school, linked to the school vision, establishing a more systematic approach to the use of IT to support the curriculum.

## 4. The context of the school

|                                        |                                                                                 |                    |                   |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Full name of school                    | British School Muscat                                                           |                    |                   |
| Address                                | PO Box 1907, PC 112, Ruwi , Sultanate of Oman                                   |                    |                   |
| Telephone number                       | +968 2460 0842                                                                  |                    |                   |
| Website address                        | <a href="https://britishschoolmuscat.com/">https://britishschoolmuscat.com/</a> |                    |                   |
| Main email address                     | admissions@britishschoolmuscat.com                                              |                    |                   |
| Headteacher/principal                  | Kai Vacher                                                                      |                    |                   |
| Chair of board of governors/proprietor | Thomas Wigley                                                                   |                    |                   |
| Age range                              | 3-18 years                                                                      |                    |                   |
| Number of students                     | <i>Total</i>                                                                    | <i>Boys</i>        | <i>Girls</i>      |
|                                        | <b>937</b>                                                                      | <b>489</b>         | <b>448</b>        |
| Student numbers by age                 | <i>0-2 Years</i>                                                                | <i>3-5 Years</i>   | <i>6-11 Years</i> |
|                                        | 0                                                                               | 107                | 382               |
|                                        | <i>12-16 Years</i>                                                              | <i>17-18 Years</i> | <i>18+ Years</i>  |
|                                        | 378                                                                             | 51                 | 19                |
| Total number of part-time students     | 0                                                                               |                    |                   |

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of BSM is evident. The school's ethos and approach to education is recognisably British and the school's values and practices are clearly aligned with British values.

It is a not-for-profit, co-educational, British international day school, where the language of instruction is English. The current student roll has 937 English speaking students aged 3-18, representing 65 nationalities: about 30% are British.

The school is organised according to the structures used in English schools. The curriculum used is based on the National Curriculum (NC) of England and the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance. Key Stage (KS) 3 provision leads to GCSE, IGCSE, BTEC Level 2 examinations in KS4, with A Level, International A Levels and BTEC Level 3 qualifications in KS5.

The appearance of the school includes uniforms and classrooms that mirror those found in schools in the UK. The majority of students go on to British curriculum schools, either in the UK or internationally. Communications from the school to families and students are provided in English, as are all school publications, reports, letters and the website. Every year, universities from the UK and other countries visit the school and meet with students.

BSM is an accredited member of the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME), the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), High Performance Learning (HPL) and the Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS). It is also a member of the international division of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC). It is an accredited Cambridge Assessment International Examinations (CAIE) Centre and an accredited BTEC Centre. The school holds the UK Careers Mark accreditation. The British Ambassador serves as the school's president.

Last academic year, 83% of students gained places at their first choice university; 39% went on to attend Russell Group universities and 4% went on to attend Ivy League Universities. Of the students attending their first choice of university, 48% were in the UK.

Almost all BSM teachers are recruited from and trained in the UK, or have UK teaching experience. Performance management processes, staff target setting and annual review meetings are based on best British practice and on DfE model policies. Most externally sourced professional development for staff is provided through membership of UK-based providers.

Policies, including the safeguarding policy, are developed, based on and comply with best UK practice. Those policies linked to safeguarding are also audited by *The Safeguarding Alliance*. UK organisations have been used for staff training, and internally developed training for staff whose first language is not English and who



need to be safeguarding trained, for example the security guards and maintenance teams. Governance, including board and committee structures, roles and responsibilities and policies, is based on best practice in UK state and independent schools.

Extra curricular enrichment including clubs and school trips are very important in the life of the school, in line with British best practice. Assemblies cover a variety of UK themes, ranging from British values to aspects of British culture. The school marks Remembrance Day and sells poppies. Students are invited to play every year for the British community in Oman, on that day. Cultural festivals in line with British values, such as Christmas, Easter and New Year, are celebrated in school, as well as also educating students about Diwali, Chinese New Year and Eid celebrations. In 2022, the 2nd Band of the Royal Guard of Oman Pipes and Drums together with the BSM Big Band provided music at the Queen's Jubilee celebrations attended by the British Ambassador. Authors from the UK and elsewhere are invited to inspire students on World Book Day.

BSM is an active member of the BSME community and has attended BSME games as well. This year BSM will host the BSME Under 11 Games.

## 5. Standard 1 The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is outstanding, with many exemplary features.

### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at BSM is exemplary. The school offers a broad, ambitious, innovative and inclusive curriculum; it is designed to match precisely the needs and interests of students. The school offers an impressive enrichment programme that adds considerable value to student experience. Students are exposed to a wide range of subjects and topics in well resourced classrooms. Curriculum leaders are passionate about the school and their work and were able to clearly articulate the breadth of provision within the school. The curriculum ensures that students have the opportunity to learn and make progress, encouraging them to live up to their full potential.

Teachers jointly plan in the primary school to ensure consistency within and across the year groups. In the senior school, subject leaders have responsibility for schemes of work and teacher planning. Schedules are planned so that subject level teams have planning periods at the same time. Schemes of work are well considered and specifically adapted to mirror the ethos of the school. The British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance are actively promoted through numerous initiatives across the school. Planning takes into account the needs of students and it was evident that teachers had an awareness of the special educational needs of some of the students in their classes.

The school was re-accredited as a *High Performance Learning* (HPL) school which has helped ensure a philosophy of high expectations supported by research backed language to support students learning and progress. It was evident in lessons that HPL is embedded into class teaching.

The primary school follows the EYFS and National Curriculum in England. The 'Discovery Learning' philosophy is being reimplemented across the school, encouraging students to learn through inquiries and individual interests. Students are able to practise key concepts as well as following their own interests. For example in year 2 children had learnt about the explorer Mark Evans and in role play they were exploring the North Pole. They knew that it was very cold there and they needed to keep warm and safe from polar bears. Children were also able to choose design technology and learn how to hammer in nails and use a saw safely. The student passport and learning journals ensure that children participate in a variety of learning experiences and a record is kept of the children's learning.

In the senior school, the curriculum offers a breadth of choices for the students and includes art, design and technology, English, maths, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, history, drama, business studies, computing, art, film and media studies, German, French, Arabic, Spanish, music, PE, PSHE, dance and library. From September, economics will be reintroduced in the A Level curriculum. All lessons are delivered in English except for language lessons. All students learn an additional language and in some cases students learn two languages from Spanish, French, German and Arabic.

In KS4, aside from the core subjects of maths, English and science, students choose 4 additional GCSE subjects from a selection of 15. In KS5 students choose 4 courses from a selection of 21 and have the option to mix both BTEC and A Level. Supporting both academic and vocational qualifications, BSM is the only accredited BTEC school in the Sultanate of Oman and is exploring ways to educate and support government schools in the area on the qualifications.

The classrooms are very well resourced in the primary and senior school and the corridors and rooms have engaging displays and decorations. Many of the displays show examples of students' work and, on some of the walls, students have been allowed to directly paint and draw on. A good example of this is in the corridor leading to the English department and within the English department itself. There is a real sense of student ownership and presence as they made their mark on their surroundings. Many of the buildings and classrooms are inviting and provide a warm and purposeful environment to learn in.

Science labs are well equipped and contain the necessary resources for students to engage in meaningful practical work. The design and technology department covers a large space and is well equipped with tools, machinery and resources. The classrooms are well designed and aesthetically pleasing creating a practical and inviting working environment for students. The music provision was exemplary with many students owning and being taught to play their own instruments.

The curriculum is further enriched by a wide variety of school trips, competitions, events, leadership opportunities and extra curricular activities (ECA). In primary, examples of trips include year 5 and year 6 residential camping excursions, visits to the Muscat Royal Opera House and a trip to the Natural History Museum.

The ECA programme covers a wide breadth and includes academic support, sports, music, leisure and drama. Some ECAs are led by students to further enhance their leadership skills.

The school has a number of student led committees that help steer decision making and the direction of the school. Examples of these are the Student Charity Committee, Student Teaching and Learning Committee, the Student Voice

Ambassadors and the Student Impact Team. Students have the opportunity to enter international competitions, such as the World Scholars Cup, the UKMT maths challenge and the Ritangle Challenge.

Career guidance and support is excellent. Guidance starts early in KS3. Students are impartially informed about different career pathways and the corresponding subject options that are available. Teachers work with both students and parents to help them make informed decisions about their options based on their preferred career. From year 10 onwards, all students have access to the *Unifrog* platform further supporting their careers guidance through GCSEs and A Level options. Displays in the school support students in making their subject option choices. An example of this is in the English department where posters of well known people in British culture explain how their degree in English benefitted them and supported them in their roles. The school hosts careers fairs and numerous university visits throughout the year.

The school has been investigating new ways to involve and engage parents in the hopes of creating a shared language and understanding of what and how the school teaches. Senior leaders have engaged in action research projects on how this partnership can be enhanced. One element of this has involved demonstrating to parents how the school teaches their children so that they can support them at home in a way consistent with the school.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is excellent, with many outstanding lessons observed.

Teaching is well planned and enables students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability. This allows them to increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. Skilled techniques foster self-motivation in students. Students demonstrate application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, usually great engagement and interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves.

A key feature of many of the very best lessons was challenge. For example in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, students had to justify their answers and explain their working to confirm their reasoning. The teacher prompted and challenged ideas and insisted on strong examples and alternative methods to explain working: this required deep thinking, which the students really enjoyed. They contributed confidently in the classroom and with their peers.

Well planned lessons lead to effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. For example, in an excellent year 5 reading lesson, the teacher was skilled in asking questions to students that allowed them to explain their thinking through reasoning, not just go straight to the answer. New, high level vocabulary was introduced and the teacher was adept in ensuring understanding was firmly embedded. The teacher's subject knowledge meant that she was expertly able to hold the attention of the children and guide them through their guided reading session to elicit key information and make strong inferences. Spoken language was strong and students responded in full sentences.

Teachers show an excellent understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning and delivery of lessons. They also demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. In the best lessons, teachers use assessment for learning very effectively to ensure that activities meet the needs of all students. For example, in an FS1 lesson, the teacher encouraged the class during discovery learning, by reinforcing the language of tall/er short/er and the language of shape. When the students were making cakes and cookies out of playdough, she discussed the shape of the cookie, the fact that it was a circle and then offered to make a square cookie. In FS2, the teacher used the language of comparison that was taught during whole class teaching and encouraged the children to write their own sentences. She was very clear about the words that the children had learnt to spell and the children to use their knowledge of phonics to phonetically spell other words. During discovery learning the children are talking to each other about

rhyming words. It is evident that children are taught to form their letters correctly as they write their names on their work.

Similarly, in a year 8 geography lesson on plant adaptations, students worked in teams to complete a task on plant adaptations that required memory, recall, peer teaching and critical thinking. The lesson had a great pace and ensured that students were active whilst making good use of the space. The teacher used formative assessments to check for understanding.

Teachers are also skilled in utilising classroom resources and school facilities effectively. In a Year 7 drama lesson on melodramas, students developed and practised their dramatic skills of stage position and stage combat while rehearsing in small groups a piece on the theme of a melodrama. The students collaborated with purpose and enthusiasm whilst acting out the archetypes of the genre. All students were engaged at all times and made full use of the drama studio.

BSM has a clear and effective framework in place to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that students can progress. This framework allows for student performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents and to national and international norms.

Teaching does not at any time undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Whilst adhering carefully to the law of Oman, teaching does not discriminate against students because of their individual characteristics.

In the less successful lessons, which were still good, there was some inconsistency with the shared planning, for example not making the most of opportunities to extend and embed learning through questioning. Opportunities were occasionally missed to extend and reinforce the students' language and understanding. In a few lessons, students were unclear on how to achieve the outcomes. They made good observations and used scientific language to respond to the question but sometimes the activity requested by the teacher hindered their progress.

The school has strong systems in place in both the primary and senior school to assess students' abilities on entry to the school. The school tracks their progress as they move up through the school. The school cultivates a research-based approach supported by a coaching model to develop practice and pedagogy to enhance teaching and learning.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Standards and attainment across the school are exemplary. The *#EveryoneCan* approach, inspired by the HPL philosophy, permeates the school and underpins all learning. It is apparent the school endeavours to ensure that every student achieves high standards irrespective of their starting points. At the end of each Key Stage attainment is above age related expectations and the majority of students make at least good progress in lessons and over time.

Overall attainment and progress in English and mathematics are excellent. Many students enter EYFS with skills in language and communication typical for their age. By the end of EYFS, the proportion of students reaching and exceeding the early learning goals in literacy and maths is above average. As a result, children are confident to talk with adults, both familiar and new, and most respond fluently to questions. The students in EYFS are consistently achieving above UK national average shown by 80% at or above expected attainment in Literacy and 93% in Maths at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Standards achieved throughout the primary school reflect strong student attainment. Summative data demonstrates most students are at or above age-related expectations in literacy and maths. Data collection is analysed to identify student attainment, curriculum gaps, student attitudes towards self and school (PASS), for further development and improvement. Learning ladders begin in EYFS and follow students throughout the primary school to encourage a personalised approach to learning and target setting. Moderation in the primary school ensures a consistent approach to making assessment judgements.

At GCSE, students achieve excellent outcomes, sustaining 99% grades 4 and above. 70% were grades 7 and above, which represents a significant increase year on year. In Summer 2022, BSM students achieved highly compared to national grades in England.

At A Level, 2022 results are similarly outstanding. Students achieved an exceptional 52% of grades A\*-A which also represents a significant increase from previous years and is significantly above the UK national average (UK 35.9%). The percentage of A\*-B grades gained is significantly above the UK national average (BSM 74%; UK 62%). As a result of such high achievement, 83% of BSM students gained places at their first choice university including 39% going on to attend Russell Group universities and 4% attending Ivy League universities.

In Summer 2022, students were recognised by examining boards in the following categories:

- 1 student was awarded Highest Mark in the World for GCSE Biology (Pearsons)
- 1 student was awarded Highest Mark in the World for GCSE Computer Science (Pearsons)
- 1 student was awarded Highest Mark in the World for GCSE Mathematics (Pearsons)
- 1 student ranked Top in Oman for IGCSE First Language English (CAIE)
- 1 student ranked Top in Oman for IGCSE English Literature (CAIE)
- 1 student ranked Top in Oman for IGCSE Geography (CAIE)
- 1 student was awarded Highest Mark in Oman for GCSE Physics (Pearsons)
- 1 student was awarded Highest Mark in Oman for GCSE Business Studies (Pearsons)
- 1 student was awarded highest mark in Oman for GCSE Chemistry (Pearsons)
- 1 student was awarded highest mark in Oman for GCSE History (Pearsons)
- 1 student was awarded High Achiever AS Level Geography (CAIE)
- 1 student was awarded High Achiever AS Level Media (CAIE)
- 1 student was awarded High Achiever A Level Geography (CAIE)

The attainment and progress of students is amplified by the exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning, embedded through HPL. Students clearly love learning and high expectations are set from the staff.

Throughout the school there is a strong sense of community and belonging to the school and is enhanced by outstanding student artwork which is prominently displayed and celebrated. Display boards in classrooms and other key areas also celebrate the high standard of student work and expectations. Reading is celebrated in every area of the school: for example in primary, there is a Harry Potter Room to encourage children to read and feel confident as readers. Physical displays with artefacts promoting the topics being taught in each phase or area, offer inspiring environments for students to develop their own sense of enquiry.



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

The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school: students' overall personal development is exemplary in many respects. Their attitude to school is exceptionally positive as shown in their high levels of attendance and their willingness to participate in lessons and the broader range of school activities. They are courteous to others and proud of the contribution they make to school and to the wider community. A keen focus on the school's core values and attitudes is evident in lessons and during break times. Students act responsibly and respectfully around the school, demonstrating a strong sense of care for others.

A well-balanced curriculum which fosters the development of students as globally aware citizens who are empathic, compassionate and respectful balanced within an academic environment with high levels of depth and challenge can be seen throughout BSM and is a notable aspect of the school's character and fundamental Britishness.

Throughout the school, students display self-knowledge, self-esteem and self confidence. This begins at an early age. Students are taught these behaviours consistently in the Foundation Stage with staff using encouraging language and positive praise. The language of the BSM Learning Ethos continues to be used throughout the school to grow the students' behaviours and thinking skills in line with BSM's 'Best for the world' mission. An example of this in KS3 were the classroom routines which were noted for the critical but caring manner in which peer feedback was shared following student presentations. Opportunities for discussion are encouraged, and all student contributions are valued and respected.

Through its policies, procedures, PSHE, assemblies and lessons, BSM continues to foster and build a culture where everyone feels respected, valued and is inspired to learn. British values are evident throughout the school in displays, behaviour, school systems and events. The school enables students to distinguish right from wrong and encourages them to respect the law. Behaviour is excellent; positive praise, achievement tokens and stars of the week are used effectively to help focus, reward and motivate. Students are enthusiastic learners that are respectful and adhere to the school's Positive Behaviour policy, which promotes the values of hard work, respect and restorative justice. Relationships among staff and students are a highlight of the SMSC development within the school and a testament to the impact of BSM's positive approach to behaviour management. An indisputable impact of these relationships is the calm, efficient and effective climate for learning that permeates the whole school.

Dedicating time to building relationships is a key priority of the pastoral team and they foster a collaborative, non-judgemental environment in all communication with staff, students and parents. The recent family survey showed that 93% of parents feel that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility. It also highlighted that 98% of the

parents confirmed that their child feels safe in school. Student voice is evident through the system of head boy and head girl, SITs and class representatives in primary classes.

DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) is embedded in all parts of the school from learning in lessons, to corridor displays and student impact teams. This year in response to Matthew Savage training, the school enhanced this programme to DEIJB (diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and belonging); this was in recognition of the importance of justice and belonging to the student body at BSM. The DEIJB action plan empowers students to lead student impact teams and helps them to develop the skills to 'speak up' when in difficult situations. The celebration of diversity both implicitly in lessons and explicitly through corridor displays is a strength of the DEIJB programme. In January 2022, BSM commissioned a UK based company to carry out a survey which was completed by staff and Years 5-13 students. The survey was designed to understand performance in 4 key areas: Racial Diversity, Racist Behaviours, Racist Awareness, Racial Inclusion Barriers. BSM have analysed the results and identified key areas for improvement and adapted their action plan accordingly.

As part of the DEIJB initiative Student Impact Teams (SITs) operate across school: these teams are beginning to have a real impact. One example of this is where the Teaching and Learning SIT researched, consulted and presented a proposal for a new multi layered reward system to the head of school and then principal before launching to the whole BSM Community. A direct action from this is the implementation of charity tokens in recognition of academic achievement in seniors. The school body has identified four charities that are important to them; students are given a token as acknowledgement for their academic efforts and the student can give their token to the charity of their choice. At the end of the year an amount of money is divided proportionally and donated to the charities. A notable outcome of this system is the inherent sense of positive citizenship that is being fostered by students.

There is a PSHE curriculum throughout the school and this year the school has reviewed and improved their RSE curriculum. The school strives to ensure that the parent body is on board with all initiatives and shares the resources for RSE lessons with parents prior to their delivery. While there is currently an opt-out option for families the school strives to ensure that the RSE program is impactful but respectful to the degree that families engagement will reach 100%.

Their growing self-confidence is demonstrated in their willingness to use their initiative, to take responsibility and to make decisions about their future. The school's promotion of a general knowledge and understanding of modern British life including UK attitudes towards tolerance, democracy, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights is reflected in students' excellent understanding of this.

Students are considerate, polite, well-mannered and thoughtful young people. They are active and thoroughly reliable members of the school and wider societies, making an excellent contribution to both. They volunteer their help willingly for the benefit of others. They have strong moral values which influence all aspects of their lives. They are tolerant, open-minded

young people who have good knowledge of and show respect for the beliefs, cultures, views and lifestyles of other people. Students are also confident, self-assured learners. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong, positive impact on their progress. They show initiative. They value their education and are proud of their achievements and of their school. Students' conduct in lessons and around the school is impeccable and reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.

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

The welfare, health and safety of the students are excellent. Students have exceptionally good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding in and out of lessons.

The school places a high priority on ensuring *#WellbeingFirst*, where the education and well-being of all students is at the heart of any school policies, strategies and initiatives. Students are well supported and guided in school due to a consistent and caring approach by all members of staff. Students are considerate, respectful and courteous to members of staff, visitors and to each other. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school.

BSM has rigorous processes in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its students; a notable part of this is the high level of accountability which the governors place on the staff body.

The pastoral structure is effective at meeting the needs of all students and academic progress is consistently monitored to allow BSM to provide each student with appropriate and personalised support. There is a strong appreciation of growth mindset and actively listening to stakeholders is a key highlight of this. Surveys are listened to, acted upon and adapted to reflect the responses of those surveyed.

The school has a comprehensive and robust policy centred around positive behaviour which provides clear guidelines on sanctions and recording of any issues. There is a clear emphasis on developing positive relationships based on mutual respect so as to reduce the likelihood of it taking place. Incidents of bullying are rare, but when they do occur are treated very seriously and are logged and monitored on CPOMS. The behaviour of students throughout the school is exemplary. In primary, if students have an issue with their friends, they are taught the skills to negotiate and solve it themselves, with support from staff when necessary.

Attendance is taken twice daily - in the morning and during the afternoon. The clinic forms the core part of the absence team and responds to daily absences and tracks lateness. Key members of the pastoral team in both primary and senior school monitor attendance in collaboration with the absence team through weekly meetings in primary and monthly meetings in secondary - a commonality and noteworthy element of both is the individualised manner in which the attendance is analysed alongside other key pieces of information and data.

Safeguarding has high priority at BSM and they use the *Safeguarding Alliance* as consultants on cases that are complex, as well as in the provision of support to the DSLs - should they need it. The DSLs also have a team within school who they can call on to support during difficult and important decisions - shared responsibility around the decision making process

is a key strength of the SLT and a decision making log tracks the actions of the pastoral and DSL team.

CPOMs is used as an effective form of recording safeguarding and pastoral concerns by all staff. Staff are tagged to ensure key people are notified. Training is delivered to new staff on the use of CPOMS and annual refresher training is given to all staff. A 2022 audit by The Safeguarding Alliance recognised the school as a centre of excellence of safeguarding and commended their processes as exemplary. In response to this, the school holds a termly safeguarding forum for schools in Oman which focuses on sharing their best practice to upskill staff from other schools in terms of the policy, practice and governance of safeguarding.

Thanks to its rigorous approach to Safeguarding and Child Protection, BSM has become recognised by the UK based Safeguarding Alliance as a beacon of excellence in the region. Following a thorough audit of our Safeguarding and Child Protection policies, procedures and practice in March 2022, it was recommended that, as BSM's work in Safeguarding and Child Protection was so strong, that the school establish itself as a Safeguarding hub for Oman. In September 2022, BSM held its first Safeguarding Forum for more than 40 participants from across international schools and relevant organisations from the Sultanate of Oman. In January 2023, the school held a second Safeguarding Forum which was also very successful with more than 50 participants and active involvement of the Ministry of Education.

The school fully complies with the local ministry's health and safety requirements. They have external and internal maintenance teams to support the upkeep of the facilities and to ensure that the health and safety is of the highest quality. All staff are first aid trained and there are six defibrillators located on site. The school has an on-site clinic located in the centre of the school and is staffed by two nurses and a health care assistant. The Ministry of Health carries out an annual audit of the clinic. Tracking and follow up of visits to the clinic is both rigorous and well documented and the clinic manager attends pastoral meetings in both junior and senior school. She is a trained DSL and the clinic is informed of all CPOM entries. This year a complex needs committee was introduced to identify and support students whose needs cross two categories or more. The committee meets weekly in primary, bi-weekly in KS3 and monthly in KS4 and Sixth form.

The school counsellor is a well utilised resource to support students across the school body. Students can access her by a formal staff referral, an informal verbal discussion or by self referral in senior school. Her office is located close to one of the main entrances and her timetable is displayed nearby. Students have the opportunity to visit informally during drop-in sessions and formally by requesting an appointment on the school app through the wellbeing check-in.

Healthy eating is promoted across EYFS, primary and senior school; students are encouraged to bring healthy food for lunch. Healthy living is promoted through the ECA programme as well as in PSHE lessons and assemblies. An annual sports day takes place. The school does not

currently have an operational tuck shop and this is something the students would like the school to reopen.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

BSM governors are well established citizens from the wider community in Muscat. They are nominated by the school's founding companies; the parent governors are nominated by the students' parents. For each, the school holds a CV, copy of passport, copy of resident card, certificate of good conduct from Oman and/or a DBS check from the UK. For company nominated governors, the school also holds the nomination letter from the subscribing company.

A key strength of the school is the recruitment, development and retention of highly motivated staff. The values of the school are embedded within the recruitment process and the opportunity for growth at all levels of the staffing structure is impressive. The school has a rigorous process for recruitment and onboarding, or safer recruitment requirements, ensuring that both incoming international and local staff are suitably qualified, have up to date criminal records checks and are able to work in Oman. The school works closely with the Omani Ministry of Education to ensure that all staff have the correct credentials to gain visas and residency. All staff go through a process of onboarding and training to familiarise them with the ethos of the school.

Staff at the school have access to a wide breadth of accredited in-house professional development that allows the school to train staff to become qualified teachers, middle leaders, aspiring heads or HLTAs. A culture of coaching is evident in many aspects of the school body and is used in a number of settings; one-to-one, teams and groups.

A good example of their in-house training is the more than 20 members of teaching staff that started at the school as teaching assistants. Additionally, the school has introduced a four week internship program for Omani citizens to attract them into the teaching profession.

Since the previous inspection the school has adopted a new vision, mission, values and strategic direction. These were developed by governors, senior leaders and staff. These influence teachers' professional growth plans as each teacher must set themselves three goals relating to the whole school, their teams and them as individuals in line with the schools strategic direction. Staff are helped through this process by a coaching culture focused on support.

The school values external validation and in the past 18 months have been accredited by COBIS, The Safeguarding Alliance and by HPL.

Governors rigorously hold SLT to account particularly in terms of progress. Heads of school give termly reports on progress, targets and next steps to governors. School governors are

apportioned either through a nomination from the School's Founding Companies or through a parent ballot vote. Governors have to submit identity documents, residency cards and Police Clearance checks, both from Oman and their home country, to the school to ensure that best safeguarding practices are maintained.

The school maintains a single central record of all staff who work and have previously worked at the school, including the governors of the school.

The long service of many of the staff alongside the SLT ensures that the values and ethos of the school are evident across all parts of the school. There is a strong sense of staff wellbeing in the school along with a sense of pride in their work that they do. Teachers are genuinely happy to be working there.



## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

Premises and accommodation are outstanding and in some parts of the school, the facilities are exemplary.

The school offers a high-quality, stimulating and safe environment with specialist areas for all parts of its broad curriculum, ensuring exciting and challenging teaching and learning for all. The school is located on a hill consisting of several separate buildings, which are used to their maximum potential. All learning spaces are carefully thought out and used effectively to maximise curriculum opportunities for the students. For example, in primary there are areas for 'confident cooks' with kitchens having worktops at the correct height for young students. In the majority of the school, the facilities are exemplary such as the all weather pitch, 2 large sports halls, 3 swimming pools, the sixth form block, the theatre and the well thought out and designed design technology rooms and Media Centre. The EYFS is housed in their own block which is accessed via doors which are kept locked and security coded. This building is the oldest building in the school; staff are creative in their use the space, both inside and out. The next phase of the premises development was put on hold due to Covid. The school is now working with a team of architects on the repurposing of the slope between the Oryx Theatre and Sixth Form Centre.

Classrooms across the school are spacious for the number of students that are taught in them, meeting or exceeding the Building Bulletin 103 guidelines published by the UK government. Staff work hard to create awe and wonder in various spaces throughout the school such as in primary dramatic role play areas, reflection rooms, science investigation areas. Specialist teachers have their own rooms. Every space in school is used effectively and has a purpose to support student learning. For example, the corridors in EYFS and Key Stage 1 are used to support and enhance discovery learning. In primary the Harry Potter Reading Room creates a sense of awe and wonder for the students. Classrooms in senior school are large and aesthetically pleasing. The reading space in the English block encourages students to spend time there. The site is well maintained and there is an extensive maintenance programme. The outside of the school is repainted every year and inside there is a planned rotation of decoration. The school is well maintained by the maintenance team and there is a maintenance help desk who staff contact when necessary so work can effectively be assigned. The building is very clean and toilets are routinely and regularly cleaned.

The school has worked hard to develop the outdoor spaces, throughout the grounds for example there are small stages for performances to take place. The play areas are carefully planned for and well thought out. There are dedicated play areas and quieter areas for students to eat their food and talk to their friends. The play equipment bought for the school is designed specifically for students to be risk takers.

The school has a team of permanent security guards who work on rotation and CCTV in place to cover the perimeter of the building, including entrances and car parks. All staff and visitors to the school have to sign in and wear identification lanyards which are in different colours, so people on campus can be easily identified and challenged if necessary. There is an incident plan in place and this is practised by students, staff and parents. The school receives advice via the British Embassy on perceived threat levels and the appropriate school response.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information to parents meets the BSO required standards and is excellent.

Parents are very passionate and positive about the school. There is a strong sense that they belong to the BSM community that goes beyond the school and into the wider community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, parents really missed the community. The students are very happy with the teachers and their friends as the school creates such a warm and settled environment and the students feel part of the school. Students are very happy to come to school. One parent said her child commented that they 'don't want weekends, I'm happy to be in school'.

Parents stressed that this was very important in such a transient community. All parents feel that the school provides a level of pastoral care and guidance that goes above and beyond. One of the many examples given was a parent who said her child suffered from anxiety. The teacher provided extra care and support for her daughter, for example there was a special lunchtime club run by a teacher to help her daughter make friends and she was also invited to play therapy. Parents commented that the head of primary has a unique relationship with students and they feel a real connection with her. In senior school, a teacher contacted a parent directly when they were concerned about her child's attainment and a plan was put into place to support him. The yearly parent survey shows that 99.29% of students are happy in school.

Parents are extremely happy with the education and support provided for their students and see this as a real strength of the school. They believe that every child is treated as a unique individual and students are challenged by the work and able to move up groups. One child who is a good swimmer in year four is able to access swimming with year six students. Support is also provided for students who find learning difficult to improve.

Parents say that they receive very detailed information from the school. The school works hard to communicate with parents and has a dedicated and efficient communications manager. There are many channels of communication in place such as the website, the weekly newsletter, (written by the heads of school). The weekly newsletter includes all the information that they need. There are links to the school notices Website for primary and the senior school. Parents receive additional communications through WhatsApp groups run by the parent link for each class in primary and managed by school for each year group in senior school. The parent links for the WhatsApp group appreciated the training and guidance they received from the school on the expectations to communicate with parents. Staff communicate with parents via email or a personal call from a teacher. Parents are able to send an email if they have any worries. In primary these are sent via the primary office and the teacher will then contact parents. Parents appreciate that in the senior school, the form tutor and year group tutor move up with the students each year. Parents were very positive that

when they had specific concerns that the school had worked in partnership with them to solve it with them quickly and efficiently. The parents commented on how amazing the head of seniors is and that she is always there and 'takes a personal interest in every child'.

In primary, there are Parent Child Focus meetings which are held weekly, teachers meet with three to four parents each week and when a child is a focus child a form is sent to the parents to complete, and the child is able to contribute to this. The parents then meet with the class teacher to hear about how their child is doing in school. There are termly parents' meetings in senior school and these are five minute appointments online. Parents said the teachers were very apt in these meetings at communicating the necessary information with parents, but it was more challenging if there were technical issues and parents did not receive their allocated time. However, if teachers wanted a longer conversation with a parent, they were proactive in making an additional appointment. Some parents in senior school suggested that they would like the option of having a face to face appointment rather than online.

In senior school, students are taught to self-manage. Parents have the choice of receiving a weekly or daily summary of their child's class work and homework. Parents are kept informed through the Google Classroom of the learning. The primary school uses *Learning Ladders* and in EYFS Learning Journals are updated on *Ladders at Home*. Parents receive a grade card twice a year which gives information about attainment and engagement in all curriculum areas. In term 3 the final report card also contains narrative comments from the class teacher and subject specialists. Parents also receive and communicate with the primary teachers through personal organisers to communicate individual messages with parents. Parents appreciate the 'Star of the Week' and even more so 'The Golden Ticket' for children in primary which is awarded to children who are always motivated and follow the ethos of the school. Parent surveys show that 94.13% of parents believe their child makes good progress in school.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the standard required.

The policy in place is appropriate and easily available on the school's website. It has clear flow charts showing who to contact and how concerns should be escalated. The majority of concerns can be raised informally with a student's teacher or tutor (depending on the nature of the issue) and are dealt with promptly. Members of the senior leadership team have an open door policy. Complaints to the principal are very rare, but when a formal complaint is made, it is dealt with in line with the complaints procedure. In 2022, 94% of parents agreed that they 'understand how to contact the school with questions, suggestions or a problem'; 89% stated that they 'feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem'.

The school aims to respond to informal concerns as quickly as possible. A resolution (or action taken as part of seeking a resolution) is expected to take only a few days. Formal complaints are responded to within 5 working days. Clear timescales are prescribed for the appeals procedure.

Stage 2 of the procedure provides for a formal complaint to be made in writing if not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint. Stage 3 provides parents with the opportunity to write to the chairman of the board of governors if they are not happy with the response from the school to a written complaint. There is provision for the establishment of a hearing before an appeals panel. If needed, the panel would consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint: one member of the panel would be independent of the governance or management of the school. Parents may attend the panel hearing.

If possible, the panel resolves the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. If further investigation is required, the panel decides how it should be carried out. After consideration, the panel reaches a decision and makes recommendations, if appropriate, within five working days of the meeting. The panel then writes to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The findings and any recommendations are sent in writing to the parents, the principal, and the board of governors and, where relevant, the person complained about.

All formal complaints are logged on a confidential record in the principal's office and the nature of the complaint is reported at the following meeting of the school development committee, though not the names of the complainant or employees involved.

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

Leadership and management are outstanding: the vision and direction provided by the governors, the principal and the two heads of school are exemplary. The school provides an exceptional educational experience that encourages the whole school community to strive for excellence.

The school is well led by a committed, innovative and dedicated principal who has a clear direction for the school's vision and mission. He invests heavily in CPD for the staff, to equip them with the skills they need to be successful. In line with the school mission, 'growing learners who are the best in the world', investment in staff development is seen as a strength. As a result of CPD, succession planning is in place to continue to drive high standards throughout the school.

The clear vision and the importance placed on it, along with recently developed mission and values statements, drive the school improvement plan forward. The school development plan is set to guide students and staff in supporting everyone's learning journey and they pride themselves on the ethos *#EveryoneCan*.

Self evaluation is a strength. The leadership team knows and understands the school deeply and as a result systems and processes are consistent and clear across primary and senior schools. Thorough evidence collection shows the pastoral care and commitment to the school's strategic direction.

The leadership team is committed to developing student outcomes, driven by both internal and external data analysis. Timely and swift interventions are actioned for students at risk of underperforming and much work has gone into the understanding and use of PASS to support the pastoral element of student wellbeing and belonging.

Leaders at all levels are accountable for the quality of teaching, learning and achievement outcomes within their areas. A growing number of staff have had coaching training and this is beginning to permeate through to the coaching of students, to continue to foster the culture of independent learning skills and learner self regard.

Governors are very supportive and they make a significant contribution to the school's success: genuine, sharply focussed critical friends. The governing body provides regular support and challenge to the principal at a strategic level. Through regular review meetings, the board holds the principal to account for delivering on agreed targets and responding to developmental feedback from previous inspections. They have agreed the direction of the school for the next three years, with ambitious but appropriate priorities. As a school, they are collectively accountable for achieving the school vision.

The governing body is also fully committed to and actively responsible for ensuring the school is effectively resourced and managed. The board considers all stakeholder perspectives, including the recommendations from the previous inspection report and feedback from surveys of parents, students and staff. Governors are assigned to school committees based on their expertise, and each committee feeds recommendations to the board through a rigorous process of evaluation and stakeholder voice.

Staff morale is a strength throughout the school. The school makes a commitment to place wellbeing first and this is fostered by the supportive SLT and board of governors. There is a strong ethos of collective responsibility. The school is very well organised and resourced, with a strong emphasis on developing the whole child, academically through high standards and pastorally through engagement in the arts. Staff at all levels work together to the benefit of the students.

As a result of the excellent leadership, management and governance, BSM is well established as a leading British international school; following recognition as *British International School of the Year* (2018) and *International School of the Year* (2019), in 2022, BSM was re-accredited as an HPL World Class School for the period 2022-2025. For the second year running, in 2022, BSM was recognised by the Spear's Schools magazine index as being in the top 100 schools worldwide and in the top ten schools in the Middle East.