



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF TUNIS

NOVEMBER 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	The British International School of Tunis			
Address	49 rue du Parc 2036 La Soukra Tunisia			
Telephone number	+216 71 865 682			
Email address	info@bistunis.com			
Headteacher	Mr Martin Nugent			
Chair of governors	Mr Ramzi El Fekih			
Age range	3 to 15			
Number of pupils on roll	239			
	Boys	132	Girls	107
	EYFS	44	Juniors	150
	Seniors	45		
Inspection dates	7 to 10 November 2017			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The British International School of Tunis (BIST) is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from 3 to 15 years. It was founded as a primary school by a group of investors, most of whom now have children in the school. The secondary school opened in 2016, admitting pupils in Years 7 and 8. The aim is for the school to cater for Years 7 to 13 by 2021.
- 1.2 The school is owned by the Fondation pour l'Enseignement Britannique en Tunisie which has appointed a board of governors to oversee, in conjunction with the school leadership, the educational programme and to determine long-term strategy.
- 1.3 The primary school is situated in La Soukra, and the secondary school is 10 km away in Le Kram.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to create life-long learners who have a passion for knowledge and adventure and are fully equipped to meet the challenges of a dynamic world. The school encourages pupils to develop an understanding of both the Arabic and French languages and cultures and the country's cultural heritage.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Most pupils come from local Tunisian families; others come from the expatriate diplomatic and business communities. Standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is broadly average; however, the range of ability is wide. The school has identified 43 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 35 of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 158 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers; 13 of them receive additional help from an EAL specialist. The school has identified 13 pupils as being the most able in the school's population; the curriculum is modified for them, and enrichment opportunities are provided for them and for 18 other pupils because of their special talents in sport, music and art.

2. INSPECTION OF STANDARDS FOR BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas. It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO) indicate that the Standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. This is the school's first inspection.

Key Findings

- 2.1 The school meets most of the Standards for British Schools Overseas. In order to meet all the Standards, the school should take immediate action to remedy the deficiency as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

2.2 The Standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required areas of learning to give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education and to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is guided by recently revised schemes of work that clearly detail how pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop as they progress through the school. It provides effective personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education (PSHCEE). Schemes of work for English and mathematics follow the English National Curriculum, and are now supported by the necessary resources. The language of instruction is English, with appropriate support given to EAL pupils and to those with SEND. In addition, pupils study Arabic and French. Careers education is well embedded in the secondary school curriculum. Children in Nursery and Reception follow a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills. In the questionnaires, most parents agreed that their children are offered an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience.
- 2.4 The teaching is well planned and enables pupils to learn and make progress. It fosters self-motivation, application and interest. It uses effective strategies to manage behaviour and is supported by suitable resources. Secondary pupils are taught by specialists in all subjects and primary pupils are taught by subject specialists in art, music, physical education (PE), information and communication technology (ICT), French and Arabic. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance has recently

been established and is being developed further in order to evaluate their ability, attainment and thus progress with reference to the standard for pupils in England.

- 2.5 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

2.6 The Standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted in an atmosphere of mutual respect, ensuring tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. Pupils develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence, distinguish right from wrong, accept responsibility for their behaviour and contribute to the lives of others. They gain knowledge and respect for public institutions in England, for responsibilities of citizenship in Tunisia and for the cultural heritage of the country. Broad coverage of relevant issues in PSHCEE facilitates the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

- 2.8 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.9 The Standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 6, 9-16 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding] are not met.

- 2.10 In most respects, the school has thorough arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Good behaviour is promoted through a well-embedded system of rewards and consequences; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable and any unkindness is appropriately dealt with by staff. Health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety. A large proportion of staff are trained in first aid and suitable provision is made for pupils who fall unwell at school. Pupils are properly supervised. Admission and attendance registers are maintained as required. There is a strategic approach to risk assessment which identifies and implements appropriate action points.
- 2.11 Although the school has carried out all of the required checks on new staff to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children, the checks to ensure that those who have lived or worked in the UK are not barred from working with children or prohibited from teaching have not always been carried out before a new member of staff commences employment.

Action point 1

- **the school must ensure that all recruitment checks for those who have lived or worked in the U.K., including checks against the lists of those barred from working with children and prohibited from teaching, are completed before staff commence employment at the school [paragraph 7].**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

2.12 The Standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

- 2.13 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors. The register to record these was correctly completed by the end of the inspection. The school does not currently employ supply staff.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.14 The Standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

2.15 Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for all pupils and there are changing and showering facilities for pupils in the secondary school. Appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a high standard and conform to health and safety requirements. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate. Water provision is adequate for washing, and bottled drinking water is provided. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.16 The Standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

2.17 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents and inspectors. This includes details about the governors, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, including the provision for those with SEND or English as an additional language. Information is also provided on the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety and first aid. Details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year are also available. Parents receive a report at least annually of their own child's progress.

2.18 The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.19 The Standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] are met.

2.20 Parental complaints and concerns are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant and, when appropriate, to the person complained about. Confidential records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.21 The Standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

2.22 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the BSO standards are met consistently and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.23 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the pupils' learning, achievement and personal development.

3. INSPECTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British schools overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development;

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

The report refers to year groups in accordance with the system most commonly used in England.

Key Findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is good.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Improve the evaluation of pupils' ability and overall achievement through a broader programme of formal assessments across the whole school.
- Broaden pupils' competence in ICT by extending their opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum at all ages.
- Offer pupils further opportunities to contribute positively to the lives of others by establishing additional formal positions of responsibility.

The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is good.

3.5 Children in the Nursery and Reception make excellent progress. As they learn to work and play with others, they rapidly develop language and social skills. By the end of Reception, most pupils achieve all the Early Learning Goals and some exceed them. Pupils, including the more able pupils and those with SEND, make good progress in the primary school and excellent progress in the secondary school. At all ages, the many pupils with EAL make rapid progress in acquiring English language skills. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from work scrutiny, pupil and staff interviews, examination of standardised test data and lesson observations shows attainment to be similar to age-related expectations for pupils in England which represents good

progress given the number of pupils that join the school with little or no English. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all pupils said they are pleased with the progress they are making in their work and with their command of English, and most parents agree.

- 3.6 Pupils' overall achievement is supported by good teaching that is well planned and delivered using a range of methods, with a focus on learning through practical tasks when appropriate. Pupils with SEND and EAL are very well supported by well-qualified teaching assistants in all lessons and through individual support when required from experienced specialist teachers. More able pupils benefit from appropriate challenges in some lessons in the primary school and from a curriculum that regularly includes suitable extension work in the secondary school. Pupils benefit from work that is clearly marked, and an increased focus on helpful comments about how they could improve and their own self-assessment, although this is not embedded across all subjects. Pupils also receive verbal feedback and are very positive about the help that they get from their teachers. Teachers' planning is starting to be informed by a recently introduced programme of standardised assessment that has yet to be fully established, in order to give improved insight on pupils' ability and thus their overall progress.
- 3.7 From the EYFS, pupils rapidly develop listening and speaking skills as their confidence increases. Although new pupils may join the school at any age, the wide range of pupils' levels of English is recognised and teaching is particularly well adapted to the needs of individuals. Primary pupils confidently read independently, assisted by guided reading sessions in small groups with texts well matched to their varying levels of competence. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the books they have read and their love of reading. In the primary school, pupils make good progress in writing in a range of genres with a focus on descriptive writing, as seen in some insightful written portrayals of characters from the books they have been reading. Secondary pupils make excellent progress in their writing through an imaginative literary curriculum that inspires interest and thus endeavour despite pupils' wide range of experience. They enjoy reading a suitably wide range of both traditional and contemporary texts, can discuss the features of each and apply these to their own writing, such as in a chilling start to a gothic novel. In each subject, pupils read and correctly spell key vocabulary identified through a co-curricular literacy policy. Staff resources are extremely well deployed with well-qualified teaching assistants supporting language acquisition in every class.
- 3.8 Pupils develop competence in numeracy as they progress up the school. Firm foundations are formed in the primary school where a new curriculum and supporting resources focus on the acquisition of core numeracy skills. Pupils' learning is reinforced by practical tasks that engage and can be accessed by all regardless of language. Secondary pupils make good progress in their mathematics through the careful matching of appropriate mathematical tasks to the range of ability and experience, with suitable extension work for the most able. At all ages, pupils accurately apply their numerical skills with confidence across the curriculum such as studying chronology in history, using graphs and scales in science and geography and counting out rhythms in music. For example, primary pupils use their understanding of division to share out their lunch, recognising that this is harder with odd numbers of pupils. Secondary pupils recognise that statistics can be imprecise as they draw pie charts of their own personality in English to show their good and bad characteristics as they explored the nature of villainy.
- 3.9 In the EYFS and early primary, pupils are confident users of ICT and have regular access to technology in all subjects. They use appropriate games and activities, such as programming roving bugs to move across the classroom, to further their understanding of concepts. The progress of older pupils in the primary school and their ability to apply their ICT skills to other areas of learning have been limited by a lack of resources. Through their monitoring, governors have acknowledged this and have recently improved the range of available resources. Accordingly, a revised curriculum is being introduced but is not yet fully embedded. Pupils have made a secure start in their introduction to coding and successfully demonstrated their ability to animate a rocket to launch, fly and then land. Pupils in the primary school are confident in working with interactive resources in mathematics, both at school and at home. For example, pupils accurately used a virtual protractor on the white board to measure

angles. In the secondary school, pupils are confident users of ICT and make rapid progress in developing their skills further with many opportunities using a variety of devices both in discrete lessons and across the curriculum. They learn about the use of resistors and apply these well as they design their own robots, they imaginatively use word processing and publishing software to produce news reports in history, and demonstrate their proficiency with spreadsheets when exploring graphs and tables in science and geography.

- 3.10 As the pupils mature, they successfully apply their basic skills in numeracy, literacy and technology to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in science and humanities. All study French and Arabic, either as a new language or following a national programme in their home language and make good progress. All pupils develop their physical skills well through a comprehensive PE curriculum. They also benefit from the inclusion of art and music in the curriculum but the overall development of their creative and aesthetical skills is restricted by the few additional opportunities available such as participation in local or national sporting or other competitions. Pupils' experience is broadened by the range of extra-curricular activities on offer in both the primary and secondary schools that includes sport, science, gardening and the performing arts and allows them to successfully apply their various skills to their chosen areas of interest. In their questionnaires and at interview, most pupils expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities available, which are commensurate with a small school. Primary school pupils enjoy the various opportunities to sing and perform in a variety of shows throughout the year as well as singing together in assembly. Opportunities for curriculum enhancement through trips, themed days and visiting speakers are being expanded, as these are becoming increasingly available in the local context.
- 3.11 Pupils' study skills are well developed across the curriculum by the setting of tasks that promote decision making, analysing and problem solving. For example, younger primary pupils analysed a selection of coins and then accurately solved problems on purchasing items of differing values; older pupils correctly applied their knowledge of shapes to make and test hypotheses about the longest and shortest perimeters of pentominoes; secondary pupils successfully designed their own experiments to test the friction and drag of various items of footwear. Such opportunities are offered across the curriculum in most subjects, with tasks carefully set to match pupils' varying ability and experience. However, more examples were observed in secondary where there is a greater focus on using a variety of skills across all curriculum areas which contributes most effectively to pupils' overall progress. Pupils who are new to the school settle quickly as teaching staff work hard to develop their learning skills to the level of their peers through individual sessions and in class support.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. From the EYFS, they settle well to their lessons, listen carefully and respond well to questions set. The written work in their books is very well presented; pupils take care when setting out their work and when drawing diagrams, charts and tables. In class, pupils of all ages are enthusiastic, keen to do well, and highly motivated in all aspects of their education. They are supported by highly motivated and supportive teachers and teaching assistants. In the questionnaires, all pupils agree that teachers help them to learn and almost all agreed that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently. These high standards are clearly set by highly committed leaders and then fostered through their careful monitoring in order to realise the aspirations and vision of the founders and governing body.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils in the primary school have excellent levels of self-esteem and self-confidence and are happy to express themselves in a wide range of situations. They are self-reflective and can identify their strengths and areas for development. As pupils transition to the secondary school, they are well supported and manage the change in environment very successfully. They meet the higher expectations of them to be more involved in developing and improving their own learning and

performance with great maturity for their age, enjoying the new challenges and persevering when meeting difficulties. They are assisted by the support of the teaching staff who encourage pupils to constantly revisit and improve their work. The oldest secondary pupils are actively discussing their future aspirations and are very well prepared for the new challenges of the GCSE curriculum in Year 10. They are very self-assured and confident, welcoming and empathetic to others.

- 3.15 From the early years, pupils demonstrate a strong sense of their self-awareness as they make decisions that determine their own success and wellbeing. For example, children in the Nursery thoughtfully choose their preferred activities from the wide range on offer. In primary, pupils make sensible decisions when offered a choice of lesson starters and follow their own interests with enthusiasm when making choices about individual topic work. Pupils choose to spend their playtime according to their mood, for example, either playing outside or quietly looking at books in their library with their friends, recognising the occasional need for a time of calm in the busy school day. In the secondary school, pupils maturely make reflective decisions as to the amount of challenge they feel is appropriate in their lessons, the topics they research in subjects such as science and how they present their findings to their peers. They decide for themselves the time and effort that they put into their various projects but appreciate that their degree of application may determine their overall success.
- 3.16 Pupils in the primary school have a well-developed spiritual awareness and a deep appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Pupils in the EYFS respond with awe to the wonders of nature. Primary pupils maturely explore concepts such as the colour of love and express their feelings sincerely. They show sensitivity to their natural surroundings as they play in the orange groves. Secondary pupils develop further spiritual understanding through the curriculum, for example, in English pupils studied images accompanied by music and wrote with deep sensitivity about how this made them think and feel. The whole school showed great compassion as they reflected on the sacrifice of the fallen in a remembrance assembly. The rich mix of pupils from different backgrounds share their experiences and readily accept their common spiritual understanding.
- 3.17 From the earliest years all pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong. They show mature standards of behaviour towards other. Pupils' strong sense of morality is developed through the comprehensive PSHCEE programme and is demonstrated in many ways, for example, through sensible discussion on how laws are made and then applying these to their own experience. Younger pupils explored the meaning of trust and considered wisely whether you should trust a stranger; older pupils thoughtfully considered the role of one's conscience in one's behaviour towards others and how this helps guide you to make correct decisions. Pupils say that they do not need rules, they know how to behave, and they recognise that they have excellent role models in their staff. In the questionnaires and at interview, pupils express a clear understanding of what is fair; they understand that good behaviour deserves rewards and that there are consequences when standards slip. Pupils of all ages are encouraged and supported by their teaching staff and any issues that arise are dealt with through mature dialogue with those involved.
- 3.18 Pupils of all ages are extremely clear about the need to stay safe and readily follow and suggest suitable strategies both in and out of school. They also understand how they should keep themselves healthy. In the Early Years, pupils know when they should wash their hands. Pupils in the primary school understand what makes a balanced diet and select fruit for their snack at breaktime. All appreciate and take advantage of the many opportunities for exercise both in the curriculum and at playtime and benefit from PE lessons that ensure they develop a variety of skills at a pace that improves their physical fitness. Boys and girls readily play football, basketball and table tennis together at every opportunity. Keeping safe and healthy are embedded in a PSHCEE curriculum that covers a particularly diverse wide range of topics. For example, Secondary pupils recognise the dangers of going into debt and understand both the convenience and the temptation offered by credit cards. Pupils are very clear about how they should keep themselves safe online and the dangers of strangers, wherever encountered.

- 3.19 Pupils naturally show responsibility towards each other and are always ready to assist others, although there are few formal positions of responsibility open to them. Pupils, both in the questionnaires and at interview, expressed a desire to be offered more such opportunities. Governors and leaders are aware of this and are exploring various options, with school council elections about to be held. Pupils are already preparing their manifestos as they endeavour to be elected. Responsibility to others extends to the wider community and pupils request and organise many events in the school to support local and international charities. Pupils consider the wider responsibilities of a community through the range of outside speakers to the school that the parent teacher association (PTA) has invited to talk about their various occupations. Primary pupils understand the role of diplomacy, having interrogated the British ambassador with great interest. Secondary pupils were inspired by the academic and physical endeavours of a local Olympic medallist.
- 3.20 Pupils thrive within the inclusive sense of community that is modelled by caring leadership and management and permeates throughout the schools. Once new pupils enter the school, they are warmly welcomed and socially accepted by their peers. Pupils are courteous, friendly and socially adept. They are keen to share their ideas and opinions. They work well together and enjoy the many opportunities do so in their lessons. For example, in primary, pupils worked in small groups in mathematics with enthusiasm but sensibly as they carefully measured volume. In the secondary school, pupils collaborated extremely well together as they designed a board game based on Shakespeare's London, listening to one another and readily sharing ideas. Pupils' strong sense of community is enhanced by whole school activities organised by the PTA, such as international day.
- 3.21 Leadership has been most effective in embedding a core sense of social collaboration with the golden rule 'treat others as you want to be treated'. Pupils value the diverse cultural makeup of the school, they are extremely respectful of others and appreciate the wide range of backgrounds and cultures in their community. Pupils and staff are highly understanding of each other, coming together for a variety of traditional celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Eid, Diwali and Christmas festivities. Excellent pastoral care is embedded in the ethos of the school. Pupils feel safe and thrive in the aura of mutual respect and trust, encouraged by staff who care deeply for the education and wellbeing of every child. The warmth extends to Honey, the neighbourhood cat and, Flash, a visiting tortoise, who have been adopted and are well cared for by the secondary pupils. Pupils of all ages comprehensively fulfil the governors' vision for a community that displays compassion, understanding and whole-hearted support for individuals.

4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Serena Alexander	Reporting inspector
Mr Gareth Evans	Team inspector (Former head, COBIS school, Brussels)
Ms Amanda Lidgard	Team inspector (Deputy head, COBIS school, Dubai)