



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

British International School of Tunis

December 2022

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School's Details

School	The British International School of Tunis			
Address	The British International School of Tunis 49 rue du Parc La Soukra Tunis 2036 Tunisia			
Telephone number	(216) 70 240 880			
Email address	info@bistunis.com			
Headteacher	Ms Karyn Walton			
Proprietor	Britus Education			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	200			
	EYFS	9	Primary	86
	Secondary	89	Sixth Form	16
Inspection dates	7 to 8 December 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The British International School of Tunis is a co-educational day school. Since 2021, it has been owned and governed by Britus Education who have a close operational role in the school. The governing board is made up of members of the proprietorial body, parent body and local governors. The school was established in 2012 by an investor group of parents who were keen to offer the British style of teaching and curriculum. The secondary school opened in 2016.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has become an all-through school, changed ownership and has undertaken significant operational and staffing changes to meet the growing needs of the school. The primary school is situated in La Soukra, and the secondary school is 10 km away in Le Kram. They have separate leadership teams but work closely together at all levels of the school.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to bring a unique blend of strong values and innovative approaches to education. Its mission is to support all pupils, regardless of starting points, to gain the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed to understand who they are and what they are capable of. The school motto is 'Work hard, dream big', and it seeks to embed the values of bravery, imagination, self-discipline and tolerance.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The pupil body reflects the international nature of the local community with over 27 nationalities represented in the school. At the time of the inspection, the largest groups of pupils were from Tunisia, Libya, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany. The ability profile of the pupils is broadly average for similar international schools. The school has identified 31 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 23 of whom receive additional specialist help. Most pupils are bilingual, and English is an additional language (EAL) for 55 pupils, 25 of whom require additional support. Data used by the school have identified 31 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

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 (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

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.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas. The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

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

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in May 2019.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified.**

Part 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education in paragraphs 3 (teaching) and 4 (pupil progress) are fully met. One of the requirements relating to paragraph 2 (curriculum) is not met because it is precluded by the country's legislation.**
- 2.3 The school provides a suitable curriculum which follows that of the English National Curriculum and reflects the aims of the school. It is appropriately planned at all levels and is backed up by schemes of work that take into account the aptitudes and needs of the pupils. In the primary school, each class has a dedicated teacher educated up to the British standard, who teaches all the core curriculum. Pupils move to the secondary school in Year 7 and in Years 10 and 11 they can choose from a range of subjects to study at IGCSE level. In the sixth form, the curriculum follows the Cambridge Assessment International Education curriculum, where pupils choose AS and A levels. Through these curricula, the school provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. They are able to acquire effective speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- 2.4 An appropriate programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is incorporated into both the primary and secondary curriculum. This covers a wide variety of elements in an age-appropriate way within lessons, assemblies and in cross-curricular links. Within the PSHE standard, the school is able to meet parts of the Equality Act that relates to age, disability, marriage, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sex. The school is not able to meet the parts of the Equalities Act related to gender reassignment, civil partnership and sexual orientation as these are precluded by law in Tunisia.
- 2.5 The school offers an enrichment programme at all levels of the school which provides opportunities for pupils to gain additional skills. Pupils and parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire commented that they would like an increased number of enrichment and trip opportunities. The inspection team agrees that the opportunities are not yet at pre-pandemic levels and has seen the schedule for enhanced future provision. The school underpins the curriculum by an understanding of fundamental British values, which also reflects the value systems of many other countries and prepares pupils for the opportunities and experiences of life beyond school. For example, connections have recently been made with the British embassy, a recent trip to the Remembrance Day service and also a visit to a British naval warship which was in the area have provided good exposure to British values. A minority of both pupils and parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire commented that the high level of staff turnover, particularly in the secondary school, was having a negative effect on the quality of educational provision. This view was confirmed by pupils spoken to during the inspection. The inspectors noted that staff turnover was higher than would normally be expected. The school is aware of this situation.
- 2.6 The teaching throughout the school is undertaken through the medium of English. It enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress. There is support for pupils who have English as an additional language and also those with SEND. The teaching is well planned, employs effective teaching methods and demonstrates good subject knowledge. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that behaviour is managed well. The teaching does not discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics.
- 2.7 The school uses a range of standardised tests throughout the age ranges to assess pupils' progress and attainment. These indicate that pupils' attainment is broadly average for those taking the same

tests internationally and that pupils make good progress. The cohort in the top of the secondary school is small, and public examinations do not yet have viable year-on-year comparisons.

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

2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is not met in its entirety, as one of the requirements of the standard is precluded by the country's legislation.

2.9 The school promotes values which are fundamental to life in Britain as well as many other countries through topics followed in both the primary and secondary curriculum, in assemblies, in cultural studies, humanities and other special activities which take place throughout the year. The school encourages pupils to have respect for other people. In Tunisian law, 'non-traditional partnerships' are illegal and, therefore, the school is unable to promote respect for all elements of the protected characteristics. It encourages respect for democracy and the democratic process and helps pupils to develop balanced views on political issues. Most parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires confirmed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The school prepares pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship in the UK, Tunisia and the wider world. It provides opportunities for pupils to make meaningful contributions to the lives of others within the school and the local community.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

2.11 The school makes appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and takes into account both local requirements and the guidance for schools in England. Staff are thoroughly trained in the school's procedures, not only when they join the school, but through regular updates. In their response to the questionnaire, all staff said their training equips them to deal effectively with any concerns about pupils which may arise. The safeguarding policy covers all of the areas required of schools in England and is implemented effectively. Safeguarding matters are overseen by two designated safeguarding leads (DSL), one at the primary and one at the secondary school. The DSLs are on the senior leadership team and work closely with the principals. Effective oversight and management of safeguarding are undertaken by a safeguarding governor who is a member of the proprietorial board which monitors the implementation of the policy and ensures that an annual review of policy and procedures is undertaken. The school maintains confidential records of all child protection concerns; these contain sufficient detail and record any discussions, decisions and actions taken. Pupils are made fully aware of issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through assemblies and topics covered in the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme.

2.12 The school has appropriate policies in place to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying. Through its PSHE programme and referencing the school's ethos, pupils are taught the importance of kindness and establishing good relationships. In the primary school, staff help pupils understand the consequences of their actions should they misbehave, and pupils spoken to during the inspection were clear in explaining the system to inspectors and particularly the importance of staying 'in the green' with their behaviour. Throughout the school, pupils are taught about bullying, how to prevent it and what to do should they encounter it. In response to the questionnaire, a minority of pupils disagreed that the school deals effectively with bullying. Inspectors judge that the school does deal appropriately with bullying, when they know about it. Pupils are not permitted to have their mobile phones with them at school. Some issues happen online when out of school so the school does not have access to all the out-of-school incidents. When they are made aware of it, pupils spoken to confirm that it is dealt with appropriately. The school's records, which are appropriately maintained and fit for purpose,

show that bullying is rare and that actions taken by the school are proportionate and give due consideration to all who are involved.

- 2.13 The school's approach to health and safety is thorough; its policies and practice meet the requirements of the Tunisian authorities and are in accordance with expectations for schools in England. Detailed records are kept of all health and safety checks, where necessary undertaken by external specialists. Arrangements to protect pupils in case of fire are thorough. There is a separate lockdown procedure which is also regularly practised. There are regular fire drills. There is a fire risk assessment with associated checks. Hazardous materials, such as those used by cleaners or in the science laboratories, are stored securely with new cupboards in place in the secondary school to ensure the security. The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy and ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated. In response to their questionnaire, the vast majority of parents agree that the school does all it can to ensure their children learn in a healthy and safe environment.
- 2.14 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and related medical matters. It provides good support for pupils who are ill or injured and suitable care for children in the EYFS. There are suitably qualified staff who are on duty whenever pupils are on site. In addition, many staff are trained in first aid. Appropriate records are kept of any medical incidents or consultations. Medicines are stored securely. First-aid kits are available in different locations around both sites and are provided for school sports events and trips.
- 2.15 Rotas provide for members of staff to be on duty at breaks and lunchtimes at various locations around the school, and additional support staff are employed at these times to ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately. Supervision in the EYFS ensures appropriate ratios of staff to children.
- 2.16 Admission and attendance registers meet local and UK requirements, are backed up electronically every day and are maintained for the requisite period of time.

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

- 2.17 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.18 The school's procedures for carrying out the required checks on staff and proprietors to ensure their suitability to work with children are clear, detailed and appropriate. The school records all pre-appointment checks on a single central register of appointments (SCR) which shows that each person's identity and previous employment history have been checked and that at least two references are received for each new member of staff. For each new employee, the school carries out various checks and includes, where possible, a disclosure and barring service check, an international child protection certificate and a police check of countries where they have lived for the last ten years. It checks each person's right to work in Tunisia which is a complex process requiring a special permit only available once the staff are in the country. Prior to obtaining this, passports are used for right to work information. Medical self-declarations are made for new staff to say that they are medically fit to carry out the work for which they have been appointed. Checks ensure that no staff appointed from the UK have been prohibited from teaching or from managing a school. All checks are carried out before a person starts working in the school. Supply staff have had their appropriate checks undertaken. Members of the governing body, including those representatives of the proprietorial body based in Bahrain who form part of the governing body, have all had appropriate checks undertaken. Staff files are organised and contain copies of relevant documentation used to carry out suitability checks and indicate that the information recorded on the SCR is accurate.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.19 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

2.20 The school's accommodation is split over two sites. It is fit for purpose and well maintained. The secondary school has fewer outside facilities, but pupils have access to small additional facilities off site for physical education (PE) and games. Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for pupils in different locations around the school, and separate, clearly labelled facilities are available for staff and visitors. Changing facilities and showers are available for senior pupils when they have PE lessons at an off-site location. Accommodation and facilities for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils meet the minimum requirements although mostly pupils are taken home if they become ill at school. The buildings are maintained in good condition and are checked regularly for any issues that might compromise the health, safety and welfare of pupils. The lighting and acoustics in teaching rooms are suitable, and there is adequate external lighting. Suitable drinking water facilities are provided and clearly marked.

Part 6 – Provision of information

2.21 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

2.22 In their response to the questionnaire, a large majority of parents said that information about the school's routines and policies is readily available. Some parents, particularly those of younger pupils, commented that they would like more regular information about their children's progress, although inspectors found that the level was sufficient. A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and relevant local authorities. This information includes details about the proprietor, the aims of the school and the curriculum offered. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. Arrangements and policies for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, complaints, health and safety, first aid, provision for pupils with SEND and those with EAL are available on the school's website as well as copies of the school's most recent inspection reports. The school provides a full written report at least annually on each child's attainment and progress, as well as holding parent-teacher meetings and providing progress reports at various times during the year.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.23 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

2.24 The school's complaints policy sets out arrangements for parents to raise concerns or complaints with the school using a three-stage process. It sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint. The process seeks to resolve any complaint informally in the first instance. If concerns are not resolved in this way, parents may proceed to lodge a formal complaint in writing. If the complaint remains unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. This consists of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The complainant may attend this hearing, accompanied if they wish. The panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

2.25 A confidential record is kept of all complaints and findings, including action taken by the school whether or not the complaint is upheld. The school's records show that complaints are handled promptly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the complaints policy. A large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said that they receive timely and helpful responses to their questions, concerns or complaints. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- 2.27 The proprietors ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards for British Schools Overseas are met consistently, and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted.

3. Inspection Evidence

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

Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff

Reporting inspector

Mr Robert Youlten

Team inspector (Deputy head pastoral, HMC school, UK)