



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

**British School Of
Gran Canaria**

**Las Palmas
Gran Canaria**

Date
Inspection number

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

The inspection and this report follow the schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas as set out in the DfE document, Standards for British Schools Overseas, 2023.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas.

Inspectors carried out this inspection under the DfE's voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas (BSO). The purpose of the inspection is to advise the UK's Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as a BSO school. In addition, it provides information to parents about the school's compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation of the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and, where possible, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about subjects and activities.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the BSO standards.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of information, including policies, the school's self-evaluation, examination results, parent surveys, extra-curricular activities and the school's accommodation and facilities.

The lead inspector was Ruth Dollner. The team inspectors were Glyn Kilsby, Judith Pollock and Justin Blakebrough.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to the British School of Gran Canaria. They receive a broad and ambitious education. Staff are knowledgeable about their subjects and their pupils. As a result, all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils make strong progress in their learning from their different starting points.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development underpins their academic achievements. Pupils thrive because of the wide range of activities they experience within and beyond the school day.

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They behave well and treat everyone with respect, regardless of background or culture. Pupils leave the school fully prepared for the next stage of their education or working lives.

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They set high expectations which pupils rise to in all aspects of their lives at school. Leaders' expertise and skills positively impact the quality of education and pupils' outcomes.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- school's work to promote pupils' personal development and British values;
- quality of leadership at all levels and phases across the school;
- quality and impact of governance over time;
- broad curriculum which is enriched through a wide range of activities and events;
- achievement of pupils, which is typically in line with or better than national averages for schools in the UK.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Leaders should make sure that teaching is consistently good or better across both sites by ensuring that:
 - the strong practice, which is evident in the school, is shared and embedded in all phases and subjects;
 - teachers receive further training and support to help them make effective adaptations to the curriculum to meet the specific needs of all pupils.
- ii. Leaders should review their procedures for analysing attendance and behaviour data to ensure that they have a clear picture of how attendance and behaviour are improving or declining over time.
- iii. Leaders should review the protocols and procedures for record keeping relating to the most vulnerable pupils in this school.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	The British School of Gran Canaria				
Address	Carretera a Marzagán s/n. El Sabinal 35017 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria Las Palmas, Spain				
Telephone number/s	+34 928 35 11 67				
Website address	bs-gc.com				
Key email address	oficina@bs-gc.net				
Headteacher/principal	Julian Martin Clark				
Chair of board/proprietor	Susan Isaobel Cranfield McKay				
Age range	2-18				
Total number of pupils	633	Boys	313	Girls	320
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	10	<i>12-16 years</i>	198	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	119	<i>17-18 years</i>	33	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	270	<i>18+ years</i>	3	
Total number of part-time children	0				

The school was established in 1966. It is based on two sites, which are in Tafira and Maspalomas. The Tafira site school houses the secondary department and a primary and early years department for pupils aged 3 to 5 years. The Maspalomas site, known as the South site, provides education for children aged 2 to 11.

The school has a diverse population; over half the pupils on roll are Spanish.

The school is run as a not-for-profit organisation, and all parents are members of a parents' association. Through the association, they delegate power to an elected board of governors and the school's director.

The school is a member of the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) and the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS), and is part of an association of British schools in the Canary Islands.

The school faces challenges in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff. This is in part due to changing visa requirements.

4.1 British nature of the school

- British values are embedded within the school motto: 'Be kind, be brave, be you'.
- The school delivers the National Curriculum for England.
- The school delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.
- The majority of the teaching staff are qualified in the UK. The majority of lessons are taught in English.
- A UK-approved phonics programme is taught to pupils in EYFS and key stage 1.
- Standardised assessments are benchmarked against standards in British schools.
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision and curriculum.
- The school's board of governors replicates that of a UK school.
- The senior leadership replicates a British school structure.
- Policies reflect those required in British schools in the UK.
- Aspects of school life mirror those of a British school, such as assemblies and reward systems. Special events mirror celebrations and festivals within the UK.
- The school maintains strong links with British schools and organisations.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided meets the standard for BSO and is good.

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. It reflects the National Curriculum for England.

Pupils achieve well academically and thrive personally as a result of the education they receive. British values underpin the work of the school. Pupils are polite, respectful and understand rules and basic principles of democracy.

Pupils gain a good grounding in basic skills, which supports their learning across a range of subjects as they move through the school.

Teaching generally builds well on pupils' starting points and prior learning, but not consistently well across all classes within the school. Teachers have successfully implemented the planned curriculum and do their very best to support all pupils to achieve well. However, further training is needed to ensure consistency of quality across the school.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum across all phases and subjects is broad, well sequenced and carefully thought out.

Leaders ensure that there is clear progression from the early years right through to the point at which sixth-form pupils leave the school.

The early years curriculum effectively reflects the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The curriculum across all phases prioritises the development of spoken language and the foundational skills in literacy and numeracy.

Reading and phonics skills are given the highest priority right from the start in the early years. The reading curriculum and themed approach to learning, often based around high-quality literature, are designed to develop a love of reading and pupils' competence and confidence in reading.

In the secondary phase, there is a strong emphasis on teaching English, as well as modern foreign languages, science, and the humanities.

The sixth form offers a wide range of courses. This prepares pupils very well for their future studies or employment.

The curriculum extends pupils' experiences well. It supports pupils in developing life skills such as cooking and budgeting. All pupils are involved in a range of sporting activities.

Careers guidance is strong. Key stage 4 pupils and sixth form students attend careers and university fairs. Staff also support students' applications to the university. Leaders recognise that careers guidance in key stage 3 could be developed further.

Leaders support teachers to adapt the curriculum to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND or who speak English or Spanish as an additional language, achieve well. Leaders

recognise that further work is needed to ensure all staff are confident and effective in making these adaptations.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, alongside the extensive enrichment curriculum, has an exceptionally positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respect those who come from different places and cultures.

Curriculum leaders are experts in their subjects and carefully monitor the quality of curriculum delivery and its impact on learners. Their reflections inform school improvement priorities. For example, the identification of the need to improve writing led to changes to the curriculum that have had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 2.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Most pupils across the school benefit from effective teaching, which helps them to achieve well. However, leaders recognise pockets of weaker teaching across the school.

Teachers manage behaviour well, and pupils show positive attitudes to learning.

Teachers typically have strong subject knowledge and are confident and consistent in their use of the school's preferred teaching strategies and methodologies. However, some staff need further training and support to ensure that they are consistently effective in delivering the planned curriculum and using methods that reflect school policy.

In the early years and key stage 1, the phonics programme has been consistently implemented, and children generally learn their letters and sounds swiftly. They move on to reading fluently, and their reading skills support their learning across the range of subjects they study.

In the early years, there has been inconsistency in the quality of teaching due to teacher turnover. This has affected children's progress through the planned curriculum. Through recruiting highly trained staff and providing targeted professional development, leaders have addressed the inconsistency. As a result, teaching is improving. There is still further work to do to ensure that all children across both sites are achieving their best.

Where teaching has the greatest impact, staff make careful adaptations to the curriculum to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, make good progress from their starting points.

Quality interactions between teachers and pupils typically underpin teaching.

Lessons across all phases reflect the planned curriculum and most, but not all, exemplify the school's preferred pedagogy, which includes teacher modelling, explanations, and effective questioning.

Leaders support teachers in carefully tracking the progress pupils make, which informs planning. Intervention sessions are generally effective in addressing gaps in learning.

Pupils rise to the high expectations their teachers have of them. They are usually engaged in lessons, and they talk with enthusiasm about their teachers and their learning.

Despite the excellent support and guidance staff receive from leaders, there is a need for further guidance and support for teachers. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are confident and effective in adapting the curriculum to help all pupils, including those with SEND, make the best possible progress.

Teachers appreciate the support they receive from leaders and are generally keen to improve their skills and make sure they do the very best they can for pupils.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Across all phases, school pupils achieve well, generally in line with or above what is expected in British schools in the UK.

Most pupils with SEND or EAL make steady progress from their starting points, but variability in the quality of teaching occasionally affects the progress they make.

In the early years, there is some disparity between the progress that children make from their typically above-average starting points across the two sites. Leaders are addressing this. Progress is now tracked carefully, and most children are making good progress towards the early learning goals for England.

Pupils in key stage 1 achieve very well in mathematics and writing, with outcomes that are well above those expected in British schools in the UK.

Progress through the phonics programme in year 1 is variable because phonics teaching was not consistently strong across both sites when pupils were in the reception classes. Leaders have tackled weaknesses in teaching, but for some pupils, some 'catch-up' is needed to ensure they meet age-related standards. Reading standards at the end of key stage 1 are below the British national average, but they are rising due to the impact of strong curriculum leadership.

In the primary phase, assessment data show that by the end of key stage 2, pupils are attaining in line with, or above, the standards expected in the UK for reading, writing and mathematics.

In secondary, pupils achieve well and make good progress in most subjects and phases. GCSE and A-level attainment is above the UK average in all subjects and has improved over time. Reading, writing and mathematics are strong, and pupils use these skills confidently in different subjects and contexts.

By the time they leave the school, pupils are well-equipped to meet the challenges of further education or employment.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils meets the standard for BSO and is outstanding.

The school's motto, 'Be kind, be brave, be you', is strongly reflected in all aspects of the school's work. Leaders model these attributes, and pupils emulate them.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff are firm, fair and kind in their approach; pupils rise to the high expectations that staff have of them.

British values are threaded within and beyond the planned curriculum. Pupils are tolerant, polite, and respectful young citizens.

In classrooms, corridors and outside areas on both sites, pupils display exemplary manners and behaviour. Pupils work and play happily together. They are kind and respectful to one another and to adults. All staff consistently promote and support pupils' excellent personal development.

Incidents of bullying are very rare and are quickly sorted out by staff.

The broad curriculum across all phases of the school supports social, moral, spiritual and cultural development extremely well. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, pupils reflected on the social and moral issues relating to Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth.

From the start, in the early years, children learn to distinguish right from wrong. They learn to take turns and get along well together.

The structured PHSE up to key stage 3 includes assemblies and special celebration days. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about and respect individuality and the diversity of cultures, faiths and beliefs. This programme has a clear impact on pupils, who not only show respect but also talk openly about the school culture being caring and respectful towards the

whole community. The key stage 4 PHSE provision draws on the expertise of external agencies.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils. These include the chess club, dance, and other sports. There is high participation in competitions at local and international levels, allowing pupils to represent the school and the island. Pupils enjoy the many performances they take part in at school.

Pupils are helped to discover and pursue their own interests and talents at school. This builds their confidence and self-esteem exceptionally well.

The residential programme on offer helps pupils to develop independence and resilience. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills and play prominent roles within the school. Pupils learn about democratic processes by campaigning and voting for house captains.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are confident, happy and secure in this nurturing community.

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

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils meets the standard for BSO and is good.

Safeguarding is effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders and staff care deeply about pupils' wellbeing and are highly vigilant, reporting even the most minor concerns about the pupils in their care.

Staff and governors receive up-to-date training, and leaders have the appropriate qualifications to undertake their work. All staff receive annual training and updates on safeguarding, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead provides weekly updates to staff to keep them up to date on current concerns.

Safeguarding policies and procedures meet all British statutory requirements and those for British Schools Overseas. Staff are consistent in their implementation of policies relating to safeguarding and behaviour.

Leaders and governors meticulously and carefully check the Single Central Register (SCR).

The school has established positive links with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. This includes local police and social services.

Pupils say that they feel safe, secure and well looked after. They know how to access help and support if needed and show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe outside of school. Pupil 'wellbeing' ambassadors meet regularly to discuss issues and help leaders to reflect on and improve provision.

The nurturing ethos of early years is built across the school. Primary pupils know who to turn to if they have worries or concerns. Secondary pupils develop trusting relationships with their tutors. Strong pastoral care is a strong feature across all phases of the school.

Staff are consistent in using online record-keeping systems to record any concerns. Although concerns and actions taken in response to them are logged, protocols and procedures for the use of this system need to be reviewed to ensure that relevant staff are fully aware of the actions taken in response to the concerns they raise. Leaders need to ensure that records fully reflect actions taken in a timely fashion. There is too much reliance on verbal feedback from leaders, and this leaves room for error.

Pupils talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe in school and online.

First aid policies are detailed and up to date. There is a medical room, and medicines are safely stored in lockable cupboards.

The fire safety policy complies fully with local laws.

Chemicals for use in science lessons are safely stored. Health and safety provisions in laboratories include mains cut-offs, goggles, fume cupboards and eye-washes. The school undertakes carefully thought-out risk assessments.

There is a clear procedure for organising and preparing for school trips. This includes detailed risk assessments.

The school has detailed written policies on behaviour, attendance and bullying. The school is currently refining behaviour procedures to place greater emphasis on calm classrooms, positive behaviour, and restorative justice. Staff have welcomed professional development on behaviour management with an emphasis on pre-emptive strategies. Leaders keep a check on behaviour, but records of behaviour could be further refined and analysed by leaders to ensure they have a clear picture of whether behaviour is improving or declining over time.

Attendance and admission registers meet requirements. Overall attendance across the school is broadly in line with the British national average. However, leaders' procedures for organising and analysing attendance data could be further refined to ensure that they have a clear understanding of how their attendance compares to that of British Schools.

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

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

Leaders ensure that all staff at the school are suitable to work there. The meticulously kept single central record reflects all requirements of local and British laws. Vetting checks reflect those in British schools and comply with Spanish law.

Personnel files are well organised and complete.

Recruitment procedures are thorough. This reflects leaders' strong commitment to keeping pupils safe. Leaders ensure that references are in place before recruitment. Induction processes have a sharp focus on child protection and safeguarding.

Staff involved in recruitment have relevant, up-to-date safer recruitment training.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation of the school meet the standard for BSO.

Both sites are well-maintained, attractive and provide a safe and effective learning environment, both inside and out.

Daily health and safety checks at the start of each day ensure the school is safe for pupils. There are annual external safety checks on fire extinguishers, fire alarms and water systems. Drinking water filters are changed every three months. There are more frequent checks of the air conditioning, the electrical generator and the school lift. Whole-school fire drills are conducted three times a year. Gas, electrical and water systems all meet local safety standards and are regularly inspected.

An external provider inspects food and hygiene each month and provides training for catering staff. There are suitable changing rooms and toilets for boys, girls and adults. There are full-time maintenance and cleaning staff at the school, and standards of cleanliness and maintenance are high.

Both school sites have medical areas. All staff are first-aid trained, and careful records are kept of the use of the medical areas.

Access to the school site is securely managed by staff. Drop-off and pick-up arrangements are safe and well-staffed. Visitors are required to sign in, show identification and are shown the school's 'safeguarding for visitors' document.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The information provided by the school to parents, carers and others meets the BSO standard.

Leaders provided all information and documentation required for the inspection.

The school website is comprehensive and provides relevant information for parents and prospective parents. This includes contact details, inspection reports, behaviour and safeguarding policies and procedures.

Parents receive a written report several times a year on their child's progress and attainment.

There are at least two parents' evenings per year, with more in some year groups. For example, the school has recently introduced additional parents' evenings for year 7 at the start and towards the end of the autumn term. This is to ensure a smooth transition to secondary and that any issues are resolved.

Reports for primary pupils are available in both English and Spanish. Secondary reports are published in Spanish or English, depending on the family's nationality.

There are regular 'open-door' meetings for parents, and an annual parental survey. In addition to letters and emails, the school has an online App to communicate important information to parents. Leaders provide a range of information talks for parents and opportunities for parents to come into the school to see it in action, including 'stay and play' sessions in the early years.

School surveys and inspection evidence show that most parents are very happy with the quality of communication provided by the school.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

The complaints policy is implemented consistently and effectively. It is clearly communicated to parents and is accessible on the school website. Complaints are typically managed informally; issues are addressed promptly and appropriately. The complaints process consists of three incremental stages. Confidential, detailed records are maintained and show clear evidence of investigation and action. No complaints have reached the final stage over the past five years.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school meet the standard for BSO and are good.

The senior leadership team consists of strong, highly effective leaders who collaborate exceptionally well to ensure continual improvement across all aspects of the school's work. They are reflective, highly professional, and excellent role models for staff and leaders at all levels.

Staff are proud and happy to work at the school and feel well supported by leaders. Parents speak highly of the school.

Leaders are rigorous in their approach to self-evaluation; they identify the right priorities for improvement. Development plans have clear targets, comprehensive and well-planned actions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Recent actions to support behaviour management, writing development and 'calm classrooms' are having a significant impact. The introduction of new extra-curricular activities and overseas trips has had a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Leadership's focus on wellbeing and mental health has promoted a caring and supportive culture and ethos across the school.

Leaders rigorously evaluate the impact of their actions and swiftly and effectively tackle weaknesses in provision.

Governors are highly committed and bring a great deal of experience and skills to bear when supporting and challenging the work of the school. Some have been part of the school for many years. As a result, they know the school and the challenges the community faces very well indeed. They add strong capacity to the leadership team and fulfil all their duties rigorously. They maintain careful oversight of safeguarding and compliance and are exceptionally well-equipped to support leaders with financial management.

Subject leaders make a strong contribution to the quality of education across the school. In the early years and primary phases, leaders provide exceptional support for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. They are excellent role models and exemplify the best teaching in their subjects. Similarly, in the secondary phase, subject leaders are experts in their field and ensure that the curriculum is carefully planned and delivered well. There is a strong commitment to continuous professional development. Training is well-targeted to align with improvement priorities. Teachers value the training they receive and reflect positively on its impact on their practice.

Leaders responsible for monitoring the impact of the provision for pupils with SEND are highly effective. They carefully analyse progress data and the quality of teaching. Leaders accurately identify areas for improvement. Their work to ensure the curriculum and teaching methods

are adapted effectively is having a clear impact. However, leaders recognise that there needs to be further work to support teachers to be increasingly effective in this aspect of their work, so that all pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points.

Data and record-keeping systems relating to key aspects of the school's work, such as monitoring attendance or logging the impact of actions taken to support vulnerable pupils, need to be reviewed and revised. They do not fully reflect the good work the school does to support all pupils in attending regularly and keeping them safe and well.