



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

Oporto British School

October 2021

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School's Details

School	Oporto British School			
Address	Oporto British School Rua da Cerca, 338 4150-21 Porto Portugal			
Telephone number	00 351 226 166 660			
Email address	school@obs.edu.pt			
Headmaster	Mr Nick Sellers			
Chair of governors	Mr Nick Heath			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	534			
	EYFS	78	Juniors	189
	Seniors	195	Sixth Form	72
Inspection dates	19 to 20 October 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Oporto British School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 18 years. It is situated in the coastal suburb of Foz do Douro in Porto. The school was founded in 1894, originally as a preparatory school. It is a not-for-profit trust administered by a board of governors. The school comprises a primary department for pupils aged 3 to 11 years, and a secondary department for pupils aged 11 to 18 years, each of which has its own head.
- 1.2 The current headmaster took up his position in September 2021, as did the current head of primary, whilst the business manager took up her appointment in September 2020. Five governors joined the board in 2020, and the current chair and vice chair of governors took up their responsibilities after the previous inspection.
- 1.3 During lockdown periods, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to promote excellence from all pupils and develop them into compassionate, responsible leaders of the future. It seeks to motivate all pupils and ensure that they do the best they possibly can in their academic work and other areas of their lives. The school endeavours to develop creative, compassionate and inquiring life-long learners and leaders.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional families in the local Foz community. A large majority of pupils are Portuguese, a few are British and some come from other areas of the world, notably Brazil and the Far East. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is in line with those taking the same standardised tests in England. The school has identified 75 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include cognition, communication, social and other difficulties, all of whom receive additional help. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 18 receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified 26 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 March 2018.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets all the Standards for British Schools Overseas and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

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 planned effectively to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities and enable them to acquire English. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) receive a curriculum based on the most recent British Statutory Framework for the EYFS, whilst older pupils receive a curriculum based on the English National Curriculum, with the addition of Portuguese and Portuguese History, designed to prepare them for IGCSE and IB examinations. Pupils study an appropriately broad range of subjects, and those of secondary age receive suitable and impartial careers guidance. Curriculum schemes of work are planned coherently across both the primary and secondary departments of the school. The curriculum is tailored effectively to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Sixth-form pupils receive a programme of activities appropriate to their needs, including through the Community Action Service (CAS) programme provided as part of the IB curriculum. The school offers an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities for all other pupils.
- 2.4 Teaching across the curriculum enables pupils to make good progress and extend their learning. Lessons observed during the inspection featured effective teaching methods, a suitably high level of challenge, and an efficient use of resources to develop learning and sustain pupils' interest. The teaching seen demonstrated understanding of individual pupils' needs and included and treated all pupils fairly and with respect. Most parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress and develop skills for the future. The school makes effective use of assessment to evaluate pupils' learning and set expectations for their subsequent progress.

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

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

- 2.6 All departments of the school consistently promote a set of positive values and principles, including through the focus on the school's 'Values of the Month' in both the primary and secondary departments. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors explained how the school effectively promotes their respect for and appreciation of other people, and their protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The school uses form meetings, assemblies and teaching to develop pupils' positive regard for others with different backgrounds and cultural traditions to their own. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility. They support and represent others democratically by taking on elected roles such as prefects and through the active primary and secondary school councils. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme and the CAS programme develop pupils' understanding of and respect for public institutions, parliament, and the importance of positive citizenship. This programme includes much consideration of fairness and respect, sometimes through engaging pupils with specific Portuguese and British case studies to raise pupils' understanding. Teaching includes impartial consideration of current affairs and issues, often through 'Model United Nations' activities which feature parliamentary-style debates and discussions.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- 2.8 Safeguarding is effective. Staff, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs, are suitably trained and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding records show that concerns, including any related to peer-on-peer abuse, are referred swiftly, including to external agencies when appropriate. The nominated governor works closely with the safeguarding team, and governors maintain suitable oversight of safeguarding, including through an appropriate annual review. The safeguarding team is alert to developments relating to safeguarding that originate in Britain, such as the UK Government's statutory guidance document *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and take these into account effectively when planning and reviewing the school's safeguarding provision, training and procedures. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they felt safe in the school.
- 2.9 Leaders maintain systematic logs of any behavioural or bullying incidents and analyse these to determine whether there are any patterns or trends that need addressing. Scrutiny of these logs confirms that the school implements rewards and sanctions fairly and effectively, and that measures taken have led to improvements in the behaviour of those involved. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that bullying was very rare and communicated confidence that staff would deal with any poor behaviour or bullying swiftly and effectively. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to behave well. A few parents and a small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire expressed some reservations about the school's prevention of and response to bullying. Inspectors found that behavioural and bullying records demonstrate that the school promotes positive behaviour effectively and takes efficient and appropriate steps to prevent and respond to any poor behaviour or bullying, including providing appropriate support for pupils directly involved.
- 2.10 The school takes systematic and effective steps to adhere to health and safety and fire safety requirements. Maintenance logs confirm that appropriate servicing and maintenance are in place. Staff receive appropriate health and safety and fire safety training at least annually. The school ensures that a suitable fire risk assessment is carried out every summer and that fire evacuation drills are conducted every half term. Fire-detection and fire-fighting equipment is checked and serviced regularly.
- 2.11 The school provides suitable first aid to pupils in a timely fashion. The medical room is equipped appropriately and always staffed by sufficient suitably first-aid trained staff. Pupils, including children in the EYFS, are appropriately supervised throughout the school day, as confirmed by observations made during the inspection, scrutiny of supervision duty rotas, and discussion with pupils. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that there were always members of staff present and available should they need any support. Admission and attendance registers are maintained suitably. The school ensures that staff are trained in risk assessment and that risk assessments, including those relating to COVID-19, are implemented effectively.

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 confirm the suitability of staff and governors before they commence working at the school. (The school does not use supply staff.) These checks match those required of schools in the England and meet the requirements of Portuguese law. The school keeps an appropriate register of all the checks undertaken.

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 The school provides suitable toilet, changing and washing facilities for pupils, along with appropriate accommodation to cater for pupils' medical and therapy requirements. The appropriately staffed medical room is provided with a wash basin, and there is a toilet close to hand. The premises and accommodation are maintained effectively and include suitable lighting, acoustics and supply of water. There is suitable and sufficient outdoor space for pupils' play and physical education. Effective measures are in place to ensure the security of the site, including a manned entrance and the requirement for all visitors to sign in and have their identity checked.

Part 6 – Provision of information

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

- 2.17 The school provides and makes available the required information for parents and prospective parents of pupils. This includes a statement of the school's ethos and particulars of: arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for pupils with SEND and EAL; the school's academic performance; the complaints procedure; the curriculum policy; arrangements for promoting good behaviour and preventing bullying; and the health and safety and first aid policies. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website, as are the school's previous inspection report and contact details for the school, the headmaster, the proprietor and the chair of the governing body. Parents receive a report of their own children's achievement at least annually.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

- 2.19 The school makes a suitable complaints procedure available to parents. It implements a three-stage process, informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, of whom one is independent of the school. The process has clear timescales. Parents who escalate any complaint to the third stage of this process may attend the panel hearing and be accompanied as they do so. The panel can make findings and recommendations, which are communicated to the complainant. The school keeps a confidential record of any formal complaints that may be submitted. This record shows that any complaints that have been submitted to the school have been handled in accordance with the school's published complaints procedure.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- 2.21 Governors ensure that school leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the BSO Standards are met consistently. Leaders and managers actively promote the well-being of the pupils. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school was governed, led and managed well.

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 chair of governors and the safeguarding governor, 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

Mr Steven Popper

Reporting inspector

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Team inspector (Principal, SofH school, Luxembourg)