

THE BRITISH SCHOOL KATHMANDU

Inspection report

**Inspected on
18-20 February 2013**

Lead Inspector: Primary: Martin Newell

Lead Inspector: Secondary: Sheila Nolan



Type of school:	All-through British International School
Phase	Primary and secondary
Number of pupils/students:	Primary - 205 Secondary - 146
Age range:	3–18
Gender:	Mixed
Appropriate authority:	Board of Governors
Chair of Governors:	Bas van Doesburg
Principal:	Sandj Wilderspin
School address:	Kathmandu, Nepal
Telephone number:	5521794/5544291
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List of Inspectors

Primary Phase	Secondary Phase
Mr Martin Newell (Lead Inspector)	Mrs Sheila Nolan (Lead Inspector)

The purpose of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors from Tribal Education as part of the accreditation process by the Department for Education (DfE) for British schools overseas. The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, prospective parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's owners on the overall effectiveness of the school and the standard of education it provides.

The accreditation for British schools overseas requires inspection against the standards in the following areas:

1. the quality the curriculum - graded
2. the quality of teaching and assessment - graded
3. the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils - graded
4. the welfare, health and safety of pupils - graded
5. the suitability of proprietor and staff - not graded
6. the school's premises and accommodation - graded
7. the provision of information for parents, carers and others - not graded
8. the procedures for handling complaints - not graded
9. provision for boarding (where applicable) - graded
10. leadership and management - graded
11. Early Years (where applicable) - not graded

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Excellent
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

A guide to proportions used in the report

Proportion	Description
97–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
80–96%	Very large majority, most
65–79%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost no/very few

Description of the school

The British School, Kathmandu, is an independent non-profit making school. It was founded in 1966 by a group of British and Commonwealth expatriates who wanted a British-style education for their children. The school moved to its present location near Sanepa in 1997. Nursery accommodation was added in 2002 and sixth form provision in 2004. The primary and secondary phases are housed in separate buildings but often share purpose-built rooms such as the library, music room, hall and design and technology room. Each phase has its own computer suite.

The school's philosophy and aim is to recognise that, whatever their academic ability, every child is unique and has a valuable contribution to make to the school, the community and society.

The principal, appointed in April 1994, has overall responsibility for the running of The British School. She is supported by a head of secondary, director of studies, head of sixth form and leaders of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1.

The school caters for the needs of pupils from both the local and international communities. Over 40 different nationalities are represented at the school with approximately half the student body of British or Commonwealth heritage. There is a small percentage of pupils who have special educational needs, which are mostly concerned with specific learning difficulties. All pupils undertake an assessment before admission to the school. Pupils under the age of seven, for whom English is an additional language, sit a verbal language test and older pupils are expected to demonstrate high-level English literacy and oracy skills. There are a small number of bursaries offered each year.

The school follows the English National Curriculum at Key Stages 1-3 and uses National Curriculum tests to assess the progress of pupils. In Key Stage 4, students study for the University of Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations. On successful completion of the IGCSE, students enter the sixth form to study Advanced level and vocational diploma programmes. On leaving school, students gain successful entry to the universities of their choice.

Information about the inspection

This three-day inspection was carried out by two inspectors; one for the primary phase and one for the secondary. A range of strategies was used to collect evidence including:

- meetings with teaching staff, support staff, pupils, students members of the governing body and other representatives of the school community
- a detailed scrutiny of school documentation, policies, planning and test and assessment information and samples of pupil and student work
- observations of 33 lessons or parts of lessons.

Daily up-date meetings were held with the inspection team, the principal and other members of the school's senior management team.

Executive Summary**Overall Grade: 2**

- The British School, Kathmandu, fully meets the accreditation standards for a British International School, as set out by the Department for Education (DfE) for England.
- The principal has played a significant and pivotal role in the development and improvement of the school during her tenure. Over a period of 19 years, the principal has guided and developed the school from a small beginning so that it now provides successfully for learners across the 3-18 age range. She provides excellent leadership and is unwavering in her commitment and determination to move the school forward despite the challenges posed from high staff and pupil turnover and the demands of local circumstances.
- The principal's vision is shared by all who work and learn at the school. She is ably supported by the leaders of the primary and secondary phases. Their roles are not yet as sharply focused on improving teaching and achievement from good to excellent as they could be but are improving all the time. Governors also play a proactive and effective role in managing the school and have played an important role in overseeing the successful expansion of the school.
- The school carries out all the necessary checks to ensure that all staff who work at the school are suitable to work with young people. This is indicative of the school's high level of commitment to safeguarding children of all ages.
- The progress made by all that learn at the school is good overall and where teaching is of the highest quality pupils and students make excellent progress. Standards by the end of Year 6 are securely above average when compared to schools in England. This is built on as pupils move through the secondary phase and by the time students are 16 and 18 standards are high when compared to schools in England.
- This good progress owes much to the consistently good and at times excellent teaching. However, not enough teaching is consistently of the highest quality and it is this that prevents teaching and achievement from being excellent.
- Good procedures are in place for assessing learners' attainment and progress as they move through the school. Senior leaders have rightly identified the need to ensure that the best practice of using data to accelerate learners' progress is applied consistently throughout the school.
- The curriculum enables pupils of all ages to thrive and succeed academically, personally and socially. The formal curriculum is supplemented very well by a range of extra-curricular activities both within and outside the school. These experiences are at times memorable and add greatly to pupils' broader learning. The curriculum consistently provides a good balance between promoting an international perspective whilst fully acknowledging the British context.
- Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is of high quality. Excellent teaching and assessment within an array of fun but challenging learning experiences enable children to get off to a flying start at the school.

- Provision in the sixth form is good because good teaching and excellent personal development enable all students to make strides forward in their learning and to develop as extremely well-rounded young global citizens.
- Pupils of all ages are cared for exceptionally well. All staff go the extra-mile to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school is afforded the highest importance. As a result, pupils feel very secure and valued, and strong, lasting friendships flourish.
- Behaviour across the school is exemplary. Pupils show a tremendously positive attitude to learning and all that the school offers. They make an excellent contribution to helping the school function as a living community. Relationships are a significant strength as are the high levels of respect between adults and pupils. The excellent provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in how diversity and differences are celebrated and individuality admired.
- Premises and accommodation are good and the school is well resourced. The school is always committed to, and is successful in providing an attractive learning environment given the confines of the buildings. Leaders are continually imaginative in the use of all available space to make learning more enjoyable for all. Information for parents is of good quality and easily accessible. Procedures for handling complaints are all in place.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to excellent,
 - in the primary phase by:
 - eradicating the occasional instances where the level of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils, is not high enough
 - making sure that questioning always encourages pupils to provide extended answers using appropriate and explanatory language
 - in the secondary phase by:
 - ensuring that, where necessary, teachers make regular checks on students' learning in lessons and provide additional support to consolidate or extend their learning
 - ensuring teachers deploy support staff so they have the greatest impact on student learning
 - in both phases by:
 - ensuring that all teachers emulate that of the majority in making clear to students and pupils exactly what they are to learn in lessons and how they will achieve the intended learning outcomes
 - making sure all marking of pupil and student work consistently matches that of the best practice in making clear what learners need to do to improve and, where appropriate, to respond to the teacher comments.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all leaders in the primary and secondary phases are provided with additional training to hone their monitoring, evaluating and data analysing skills so that they can make an even bigger impact on improving teaching and achievement and endeavour to move both to excellent

- managing the arrangements when teachers change over the period of an examination course, so that staff can quickly settle into their work and there is no impact on the rate of students' progress.

- Ensure the best use is made of test and assessment data to improve teaching and achievement,

in the primary phase by:

- ensuring that teachers use assessment information to closely match work to pupils' individual ability

in the secondary phase by:

- setting challenging targets for students that are indicative of excellent rather than good or expected progress.

Primary Phase**Overall grade: 2****Main findings**

- The British School, Kathmandu's primary provision meets all the requirements for British Schools Overseas.
- The principal provides excellent leadership and has been the driving force behind the school's success for many years. Her commitment to ensuring a continuous upward trajectory of improvement is unwavering and she has rightly identified further development of the role of primary leaders so that this vision becomes a reality.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and applied consistently by all staff. Staff are carefully checked for their suitability to work with children and all is done to ensure that all local agreements and where appropriate British protocols are fully met.
- Pupils benefit from a good quality of education that provides a wide, varied and often exciting range of learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. The many after school clubs, trips and visits bring an added dimension to pupils' learning as well as adding much to their personal and social development.
- The good progress that all pupils make owes much to the quality of teaching which is good and at times excellent. At its best, teaching makes sure pupils know exactly what it is they are learning, it excites and challenges them in equal measure, and incisive, demanding questioning keeps them focused from the start of the lesson to the end. Not enough teaching is of this calibre to ensure all pupils make consistently excellent progress.
- The provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Exciting, vibrant learning opportunities ensure that children make rapid progress. Children delight in learning because staff make it a journey packed full with inquisitive, enquiring activities alongside adult-led tasks that ensure all children learn early key communication and other skills at a fast rate.
- Assessment arrangements across the primary phase are good and pupils' progress is carefully tracked. At times, the best use of assessment information is not made to better match work to the ability of individual pupils and the quality of marking is not at a consistently high level.
- Pupils are cared for extremely well in a highly supportive and nurturing environment and are treated and valued as individuals. Mutual respect between adults and pupils abounds and as a result, pupils thrive both socially and academically, feel safe and secure and know that there is always an adult to give a helping hand if they have any concerns.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they have an infectious enthusiasm for learning. This is underpinned by the excellent provision the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, the ethos of the school is one of a happy, harmonious community where tolerance, empathy, and respect for all permeate its work.
- The school makes best use of all its available resources and accommodation to provide an attractive and stimulating environment for pupils to learn in. Displays often act as an important learning resource as well as being aesthetically pleasing. Facilities such as sporting areas, the library and music and art rooms are shared well between the primary and secondary phases.
- Parents and carers are provided with regular, informative and detailed information about school events. Parents and carers are kept fully up-to-date with their child's

progress. Procedures for dealing with complaints, both formal and informal, are well established and documented although there have been no recent complaints.

The quality of education – the curriculum**Grade: 2**

The British School provides a good curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. This is because it is well matched to the English National Curriculum but is adaptable to take on board local requirements and experiences that add to the quality of pupils' learning.

From an early age there is a strong emphasis given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This includes the acquisition of phonic (the sounds that letter makes) skills to enable pupils to build a strong base for early reading and writing. The emphasis given to literacy and numeracy is not at the expense of other subjects. Pupils benefit from opportunities to learn investigative science, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), French, Nepali, art, music, design and technology, and humanities. The personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum fully supports the school's aims and ethos and is highly effective in promoting equality, recognising and celebrating diversity and giving pupils a deep and balanced awareness of the world both locally, nationally and globally. All subjects are supported by planning and schemes of work that ensure previous learning is built on in a progressive and systematic manner. All these factors, together with good and at times better teaching, ensure that all pupils make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school caters well for the small number of pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified at an early stage and targeted support ensures that they quickly make up any lost ground. The school caters equally well for the larger number of pupils who start at the school with limited English. Opportunities to develop their English language are consistently capitalised on in both formal and informal activities which make learning fun and which often lead to rapid and sustained progress. The best practice sees the more able pupils in the school consistently challenged in their learning, but this practice is not yet totally consistent across the primary phase. However, pupils who are specifically talented in subjects such as mathematics receive specialist teaching from members of the secondary staff.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities outside of normal lessons that add greatly to their learning and a love of all that the school offers. The after-school clubs are numerous and varied and designed to cater for the needs and interests of all. They vary from creative writing to yoga and gymnastics to chess. These are supplemented by visits in the locality, to museums, places of historical and religious significance and residential visits where pupils participate in a number of exciting activities such as trekking, canoeing and climbing. The wide experiences on offer, both academically and socially, enables pupils to develop into well-rounded young global citizens who would be more than ready to enter or re-enter the British educational system if or when family circumstances dictate.

Quality of teaching and assessment**Grade: 2**

There is little doubt that the quality of teaching is the most important factor in the good progress that pupils make as they move through the primary phase. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards in English and mathematics that are above those found in many English schools. Importantly, pupils of all abilities and those who start at the school with limited English make good and at times excellent progress. Test and assessment data shows that the pupils who have spend most of their educational lives at the school consistently make better than expected progress.

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this to motivate and enthuse pupils. Good use is made of specialist teaching in subjects such as music and physical education. Planning or learning is detailed and takes good account of the fact that different pupils learn in different ways. The best teaching is characterised by pupils being absolutely clear as to what they are to learn, questioning that demands thoughtful and extended answers and a level of challenge, particularly for the more able, that keeps pupils on their toes from the start to the end of the lesson. A Year 4 mathematics lesson had many of these qualities and as a result learning was rapid and pupils were under no illusion as to what was expected of them. Teaching overall is not yet consistently excellent because these strong features are not evident in all classrooms. Senior leaders have a very good awareness of where teaching is strongest and where teaching is in need of further development to take pupil learning to the next level.

Reading, writing and number skills are taught well across the primary school. Younger pupils are given a good foundation in these skills, which are then systematically built on as pupils move through the school. Learning is strongest when pupils are expected to put these skills to good use across different subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are also encouraged to be inquisitive and independent learners and to work together in problem solving and investigative activities. Across the primary school, relationships in classes are excellent. This includes support staff who are deployed effectively to help accelerate individual pupil's learning. These factors help create an environment where the mutual respect between adults and pupils is tangible.

There are good procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Test and day-to-day assessment data is collated well and the principal is rigorous in holding teachers to account for the progress of the pupils they teach. The principal and primary leaders are effective at comparing the performance of different groups of pupils. Any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and additional support strategies put in place with class teachers responsible for ensuring there is a positive impact on pupil achievement. Assessment is good rather than excellent because not all teachers are effective enough at using assessment information to ensure that work is accurately matched to pupils' different ability levels. There are excellent examples of marking of pupils' work that clearly identify what pupils need to do to improve and an expectation that pupils will respond to comments made. However, not all teachers currently match the practice of the best.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal and social development is outstanding, due in no small part to the excellent provision that is made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At The British School, the uniqueness of the individual is recognised and celebrated and a sense of family envelops the whole school community. In such an environment pupils thrive academically and socially. Diversity is embraced and pupils show a high level of tolerance and respect for their own and the wide range of other cultures. As a result, racial harmony is a key feature of the school.

Pupils' attitudes to school and all it offers are excellent and they thoroughly enjoy school. This is reflected in their high attendance rates. Pupils are keen and motivated learners who show a thirst for new knowledge and skills. They are extremely polite and courteous to staff, visitors and one another and their behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary.

There are high levels of trust between pupils and adults and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility not only for their own learning but to contribute to the life of the school as a community and beyond. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. They have an excellent understanding of justice and fair play, know the difference between right and wrong and readily take responsibility for their own actions and the impact they have on others. Another significant strength is the manner in which the school promotes an awareness of the local and national community in which the school is situated. Pupils show a genuine concern for those less fortunate than themselves and the school is committed to supporting charitable organisations. As a result, for example, pupils and primary staff have supported and raised money for local hospitals, developed a partnership with a disabled centre and bought books for local schools.

Pupils are given a genuine voice in the life of the school and are very proud of the school council on which they serve. The school council makes a difference. They have been instrumental in formulating school rules, improving facilities and resources and in being a voice for the classmates they represent. Pupils helped instigate a friendship bench where anyone who is lonely can go and sit, confident that that someone will come and sit beside them. However, as one pupil pointed out, 'It is hardly ever needed!'

The school helps the pupils gain an excellent understanding of different faiths, traditions and cultures. Pupils learn about Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism as well as Christianity and other faiths. Visits are made to temples, monasteries and other places of religious significance. Equally strong is the manner in which the school develops pupils' awareness of modern British life. Pupils learn about British public services and institutions and the principles that underpin them. This is set in a context that encourages the pupils to grow as local, national, international and global citizens. For example, helping pupils realise that promoting eco-awareness in the excellent manner in which they do has an impact that goes far beyond the gates of the school.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Grade: 1

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. This is because all staff go the extra-mile to ensure that the welfare of pupils is given the highest priority. This is certainly recognised by the pupils and parents. Discussions with pupils indicate The British School is a very safe place to learn. Pupils say that adults are always there to help them both academically and personally. Pupils are adamant that bullying is rarely an issue and on the odd occasion it occurs 'it is dealt with very quickly so that it does not happen again.' Pupils reinforce a feeling of safety and security by stating that if 'we have any worries or concerns whatsoever, there is always someone to go to for help.'

The pupils' and parental perception of the level of safety and welfare is very accurate. Policies are in place to promote good behaviour, tackle any form of bullying, ensure high levels of supervision and to make clear what sanctions will be imposed if pupils transgress. More importantly, these policies are assiduously implemented by all staff so that there is a high level of consistency across the primary school. Just as important, pupils are well aware of the sanctions for misbehaviour and know exactly what to do if they feel unsafe or worried.

The safeguarding of pupils is afforded a high priority. Procedures follow local and national guidance and ensure that the protection of children is paramount. Designated personnel have received higher-level training and all other staff trained to an appropriate level.

Procedures are in place to follow in case of earthquakes, local unrest or other events and are known by pupils and staff. Risk assessments of the premises are carried out on a regular basis and any concerns tackled swiftly. Equally good risk assessments are carried out for trips off the school site to ensure that pupil and staff safety is the main consideration. Fire and first aid policies and procedures are in place, consistently applied and designated staff undertake appropriate and regular training. The principal is cognisant of the potential dangers associated with modern technology and has ensured that pupils benefit from teaching on e-safety.

The school places a very strong emphasis on the importance of living healthy lifestyles. Pupils learn about diet and nutrition, and the impact of exercise in science PSHE and put this into practice through eating healthily and partaking vigorously in both physical education lessons and the host of sporting after school activities. A nurse is on site to deal with any minor medical concerns that arise and established links are in place with other medical services for any more serious concerns.

There is little doubt that this is an inclusive school community where all pupils are valued and their safety and welfare is given the highest priority by all staff.

The suitability of proprietor and staff

All the necessary checks are made on the backgrounds of staff and adults to confirm their suitability and fitness to work with children. These checks take account of the international nature of the school as well as of its local and British context. Safe recruitment procedures are effective. These procedures are consistently applied and are equally effective in both the primary and secondary phases of the school.

The premises and accommodation

Grade: 2

The premises and accommodation are good overall, because they provide a safe and attractive learning environment in which pupils learn. The primary accommodation is not ideal because it has not been purpose built. However, the principal, governors and staff have been creative and innovative in making the best possible use of space and facilities. Over the years accommodation has improved significantly so that there are now shared primary/secondary physical education (PE) areas, library, design and technology and music rooms, pottery facilities and a designated primary ICT suite. Classrooms are often spacious and attractive displays provide a valuable learning resource. Some classrooms are not structurally ideal because of dividing walls but staff make best use of this by pupils working in small groups when appropriate. The outside grounds are attractive and are consistently in use both for recreation and as a learning resource. This is particularly the case for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The buildings are well maintained and pupils take a real pride in their surroundings. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and prompt action taken to address any issues of concern. Security arrangements are good and access to the school is strictly controlled.

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides good quality information to parents and carers through the school's website, newsletters and other forms of documentation. This helps parents and carers keep fully informed about events and happenings at the school and beyond. Parents and carers can access the school's policies through the website or by direct contact with the school. Equally good quality information is available to keep parents and carers informed of their child's progress. Each term class teachers hold a presentation where parents and carers are invited to hear about the work planned. Parents and carers are also invited each term for a more formal meeting where they can discuss, on an individual basis, the progress of their child. Detailed and well-written annual progress reports are provided at the end of the school year for each pupil. Parents and carers are given the opportunity to make comments on the report. Should any concerns whatsoever arise during the course of the year, parents and carers are encouraged to either telephone or meet with the class teacher.

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school fully meets the requirements for handling complaints in a fair and timely manner. These procedures are available to parents and carers through the school website or through direct contact with the school. The procedures apply to both the primary and secondary phases of the school. There have been no formal complaints about any phases of the school over the last 12 months.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the leadership of the principal, the school has gone from strength to strength. She is well supported by an effective leadership team and a strong governing body who share her determination to take the school to the next level. Together they recognise that there is still work to be done to further improve the quality of teaching and pupil progress to a consistently excellent level.

Effective procedures are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation, sampling pupils' work and evaluating teachers' planning. The primary key stage leaders are developing well in their roles in this process and have played their part in bringing about improvements. However, they recognise that further training is needed to further hone their skills so that they have an even bigger impact on bring about sustained improvements in teaching and pupil achievement.

Good procedures are in place to assess and monitor pupils' progress. The principal leads this process and primary leaders have a good awareness of the performance of different groups of pupils across the school. They regularly discuss the progress of pupils with class teachers and have rightly identified the need to use pupil progress data and sampling of pupils' work more astutely to provide them with a better picture of the quality of teaching over time.

The principal, primary leaders and the governing body have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They all make a telling contribution to school development planning and ensure that professional development opportunities are well matched to the needs of individual teachers and to the needs of the school. Teachers often

lead in-house training sessions so that skills in particular areas can be cascaded across the school. The manner in which local staff have been trained to support in pupils' learning is excellent and is testimony to the equality of opportunity that the principal espouses to ensure that all staff feel valued and in turn impact positively on pupil outcomes.

The policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous, known and followed by staff. Policies covering all aspects of school life are reviewed on a regular basis. The governors and the principal work together extremely well to ensure that all available finances are used to best effect to provide a safe and secure environment where pupils are successful both academically, socially and personally. Negotiations have already begun to explore the possibilities of new school build on a different site in the future. The many strengths of the school are reflected in pupils' readiness and confidence to take on the new challenges that await them when they leave the primary school.

Early Years

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Children start at the school with a range of different abilities and some children speak little or no English. From the very beginning, nursery staff are very adept at assessing children's needs and providing an array of learning activities that stimulate and enthuse the children. Children learn in a vibrant setting where on almost every occasion opportunities are seized upon to develop children's early communication skills and to promote excellent progress across all areas of learning. This flying start is built on extremely well in the Reception class where teaching continues to be excellent. Early reading, writing, and mathematical skills continue to be developed at a rapid rate but not at the expense of other aspects of learning. Children revel in the opportunities to partake in creative and investigative activities and are as happy and focused in child-initiated activities as they are in teacher led ones. Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage work very well together. All share the same commitment, enthusiasm and determination to give children the best start they can. Their efforts are very successful. The continuous assessment that takes place is a pivotal factor in children's progress because all the information gleaned is put to highly effective use to plan the next steps in individual children's learning. Excellent use is made of the attractive and well resourced outside play areas so that outdoors simply becomes an extension of indoor learning. Children respond very positively to the learning opportunities on offer. Their behaviour is excellent and they show high levels of concentration and perseverance when working on tasks but are always ready to share resources and lend a helping hand. Leadership and management are of a high standard and ensure that children's welfare is given the same high priority as their academic, personal and social development.

Letter for Pupils

21 February 2013

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The British School, Kathmandu, Nepal

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school and to making the visit one that we will remember for a long time. The purpose of this letter is to let you know how well your school is doing and what it can do to become an even better school.

- The school provides you with a good quality of education that ensures that you are well prepared for future challenges when you leave the primary phase of the school.
- Teachers and support staff work together very well to provide a wide range of learning experiences both in the classroom, after school and on trips and excursions that help make learning come to life. You told us how much you enjoyed the different activities that are on offer!
- Teachers and support staff help you to make good and at times excellent progress as you move through the school. Much of this is as a result of the teaching that is provided.
- Teaching is good and at times excellent and this helps you to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The school takes extremely good care of you and makes sure that your safety and welfare is of great importance.
- Having spoken to many of you, we know that you feel very safe and secure at school, that bullying is not an issue, and that there is always someone to turn to if you have any concerns whatsoever.
- All staff at the school work extremely hard to provide an attractive environment in which you can learn and make the best use of every metre of space so that all the outside play areas are a fun and relaxing place to be.
- The school makes sure that your parents are always kept well-informed, particularly when it comes to letting them know how well you are doing.
- Your principal is an excellent leader of the school and has played such an important role in improving the school during her time there. But all the teachers, support staff and governors play their part in making the school what it is.
- There is a very important strength of the school that we have not mentioned yet and that is YOU... the children of The British School. You play a very important part in making the school the success that it is. Your excellent behaviour, extremely positive attitudes to learning and your readiness to help each other and those less fortunate than you shine like a beacon! You should be very proud.

Even good schools like yours can improve and so we have asked your principal, staff and governors to work on some areas that will help make the school even better.

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes excellent.
- Make sure that teachers always use information about how well you are doing to set tasks and activities that are not too easy or too difficult and to make sure that when they mark your work they always tell you what you need to do to improve.

We know that you will want to continue to play your part in making the school an even better place to learn and you can by continuing to do exactly as you do now. It was a privilege to meet you all and we wish you every success in the future.

Martin Newell
Lead Inspector

Summary of inspection judgements – primary phase**Inspection Judgement Recording Form**

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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Overall effectiveness		√		
The quality of the curriculum		√		
The quality of teaching and assessment		√		
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
Welfare, health and safety of pupils	√			
The premises and accommodation		√		
Leadership and management of the school		√		

Secondary Phase**Overall grade: 2****Main findings**

- The British School, Kathmandu's secondary provision meets all the requirements for British Schools Overseas.
- The secondary phase of the British School, Kathmandu, aims to provide its students with an effective education that will prepare them for their international futures in a fast changing world. This, the school does successfully.
- Inspirational and resolute leadership by the principal over many years has made for real improvement in all areas of the school. Other senior leaders and managers support the principal well but there is the recognition that their roles could be further defined to help move the school to the next level.
- The school is a very inclusive community where each student is valued and staff strive to give of their best for the benefit of the students. The school has been especially successful in the development of its locally employed staff.
- The safeguarding of the students is a very high priority. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with young people are rigorous and thorough. The school's strong partnerships with external agencies and robust arrangements for challenging local conditions mean the students feel secure and happy.
- Students attain highly in their academic work compared to schools in England and make good progress over their time in the school. This is the result of mainly good teaching, the students' diligence and willingness to cooperate with staff, and the many additional positive experiences offered by the school.
- The sixth form provision is good. Students make good progress and relationships between students and adults are excellent. Post-16 numbers are growing and students are very successful in obtaining university places of their choice.
- Within the limits of a small school, the curriculum offers a good range of academic opportunities. The school strives to provide each individual student's choices at Key Stage 4 and at post-16. Enrichment activities are excellent, both on the school site and through visits and international events.
- Although teaching is good overall and some is of the highest quality there are not exemplary aspects consistently in evidence to enable teaching to be judged excellent overall.
- The monitoring of teaching is regular and has been effective in bringing about improvements. However, not all middle leaders are empowered to evaluate fully the work of their areas in order to have an even greater impact on improving teaching and student achievement. Procedures for managing staff change-over in teaching examination subjects requires further refinement, so there is no impact on students' progress.
- Systems for checking students' academic performance are well established but only recently has information from the students' Key Stage 2 achievement begun to fully inform target setting. The good and at times excellent dialogue in marking common within some areas of the school community is not routinely shared across all departments.
- Provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is excellent and as a result, students feel secure, are happy and content with their school experience, and have total confidence in the adults around them.
- A major strength of the school is the excellent provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are at ease with the many differing

traditions they encounter among themselves, behave exceptionally well and have a strong sense of their duty to others, especially those less fortunate than themselves.

- The school campus provides the best accommodation it can within what is available to the school locally. Students take pride in their environment and the sixth form have helped in making their own common room. The external area of the school is used well by staff and students both for lessons and recreation. All enjoy the gardens and respect the many plants and flowers around. The school is well resourced given its small size and care is taken to avoid waste in any form.
- Information for families and for students is readily available in a range of forms. Communications are good throughout the school and with families. No formal complaints have surfaced in recent times and any concerns are dealt with effectively and sensitively.

The quality of education – the curriculum**Grade: 2**

The British School provides an overall good curriculum that matches well the English National Curriculum. It is also very well adapted to local requirements and conditions, and also serves effectively the needs and interests of its international students. As a result, students make at least good progress in their studies and excellent progress in their personal development.

Schemes of work and subject plans cater well for the students' needs at all ages. This is particularly so, however, in relation to the specifications for IGCSE and advanced level examinations as well as other forms of accreditation. There is clear progression through year groups with work building solidly on earlier learning to allow the students to sustain their higher than average attainment on entry. Options programmes at Key Stages 4 and 5 offer students a wide variety of programmes from which to choose. The school does its very best to cater for personal needs and interests even when this places a strain on staffing because of small numbers in a cohort. Those with special needs or who are particularly gifted in an area are supported to extend their expertise both within the curriculum and outside of it. At Key Stage 3, there is a strong emphasis on creative experiences with students relishing opportunities for such as art and drama. Music makes a strong contribution to assemblies and other public events as well as providing a way into different cultures as in the Year 7 session where the idea of a *raga* influenced the work with percussion instruments. Those students who need assistance with English, study issues, careers choices or who are underachieving for any reason are supported very well so that they have every possibility to achieve as they should.

Excellent enrichment activities outside of lessons help make students' experiences of learning both enjoyable and stimulating. The structured 'parenting' programme whereby post-16 students work closely with students in Years 7 to 9 on a number of projects, not only develops a sense of family throughout the school but also encourages imaginative responses to competitive and house-based tasks. Local and international visits, including sports events running across many south-east Asian international British schools, widens the students' awareness of even further of traditions other than their own. The curriculum also takes full account of the external accreditation common in English schools so that students can readily enter or re-enter the British system. At the same time, the needs of those students who may need to attend university in another English-speaking country are also catered for well. The school's aim of providing efficient and imaginative routes to examination success is well fulfilled by its current curricular policy and practice.

Quality of teaching and assessment**Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and assessment is overall good and at times excellent. Students' performance, above average when they join the secondary school, is built on across their time in the school so that they achieve well and reach high standards across different subjects. English and French do exceptionally well by their students at IGCSE, and physics, geography and economics at post-16. This is reflected in the quality of the students' classroom experiences. Common strengths across subject areas lie in the high expectations of the students for both their academic and personal development. Working relationships between staff and students and among students are excellent. Subject teaching is knowledgeable and well-informed on the requirements of public examinations as well as of entrance requirements for universities in the United Kingdom and in other English speaking

institutions worldwide. Such expertise has led to much academic success with some subjects receiving the examination board's highest accolade for A-level performance by students across the globe. Particularly successful, for example, has been geography, which has won this accolade for five years in a row. Other successful subjects for the award this year included art, economics, literature, psychology and biology.

At its most successful, teaching strives to deepen students' understanding as well as enhancing their factual knowledge. This was very clear in a Year 9 biology lesson where perceptive and systematic questioning challenged students to communicate their understanding extremely well. In a Year 7 English session, students worked very productively in groups on re-writing a letter so that it was suitable for its audience. This worked well because lesson planning had thoughtfully pre-prepared student leaders to guide the groups so that students were very clear about their tasks. They made excellent progress in their understanding of how to write a formal letter as well as developing their vocabulary through discussion with their peers. In such lessons, students' use of the English language across the curriculum is much enhanced so that they thrive in expressing their ideas and understanding. This was exemplified well in a Year 7 history lesson on the Romans. The students were sympathetically but firmly led to write successfully a piece of argumentative prose.

Not all lessons, however, result in such exceptionally positive learning. Lesson planning is always conscientious and considered and usually leads to good challenge for the students. However, there are occasions where the work focuses too much on tasks to complete rather than on ensuring students really understand what they are doing. Checks on students' learning in lessons are not always thorough enough. This is partly because students are so diligent in doing what is asked of them that staff assume they always understand. This can result in some able students making slower progress than they might. Written guidance to students on how to improve their work is not always detailed enough in helping them to move forward and the good practice in some curricular areas of getting students to respond to teachers' comments is not yet universal. Although support staff are used very well in areas such as music and English, they are not always deployed effectively in every subject area.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Grade: 1

Students' personal development is excellent and this is a reflection of the exceptionally high quality of the provision to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students' attitudes to school are very positive. They are articulate, confident young people who feel secure in the care of the adults around them and who appreciate the work of the staff on their behalf. They not only cooperate excellently in lessons and get on well together out of class but also are also willing to participate wholeheartedly in the many projects that the school supports for those less fortunate than themselves. Their work for the wider community brings them in touch with circumstances otherwise unknown to most of them. They respond with genuine generosity not only by raising funds but also through giving of their time. Projects range from laying a water pipe for a school to making briquettes to heat a hospital burns unit. Students have a high regard for their school, perform well academically and thoroughly enjoy one another's company. Attendance generally only dips when occasioned by particularly challenging local circumstances.

Students have a strong sense of being global citizens. The mix of nationalities within the school gives them a good understanding of differing traditions. Festivals from across the world are celebrated gladly by staff and students alike. The 'rainbows', for example were happily making artefacts relating to the year of the snake. The school makes strong provision to support key elements of modern British life. Students experience the democratic process in their elections for head and deputy head boys and girls. Students are taught tolerance, respect for freedom of expression, responsibility for others and other human rights. Often this provision is implicit rather than explicit because this is 'what we do at the British school'. Within the curriculum, students are given many opportunities to develop as responsible citizens accountable for their actions. The Eco project, for which the school has been the first outside of the United Kingdom to be awarded the *Green Flag*, has raised students' understanding of why scarce resources should be used sparingly. Students are excellent ambassadors in the drive to save electricity and water. Parents report being reminded by even the youngest children that lights should be turned off, for example.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Grade: 1

The school makes excellent provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students. The school uses its small size very positively to promote a warm family atmosphere among its students. Every care is taken to provide each student with something at which they can excel. Post-16 students, for example, undertake a 'parenting programme' with students at Key Stage 3 through a range of structured events within the house system. The older students keep an eye on younger ones making sure they are safe and happy.

Provision for safeguarding students is exceptionally robust. Policies and procedures are tried and tested to promote the welfare of the students at all times. There are clear procedures to follow in case of earthquake, local unrest or other challenging circumstances related to the locality. Risk assessments are thorough be it for outward-bound activities or around the school site. School journeys match carefully the ages and maturity of the students to locations. Older students, for example, undertake the equivalent of the *Duke of Edinburgh* award. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and regularly undertake a broad range of training to keep up to date. Very good links with the embassy, British military staff as well as with local officials all help to ensure the safety of the school for both its staff and students.

The school provides excellent guidance to staff, parents and students on how to keep healthy. Students understand and follow the rubrics of the hygiene necessary to keep well on a daily basis. The school ensures that students have opportunities for physical exercise throughout the school day and is making plans to increase the time allocated to physical education for older students. Established links with appropriate medical services ensure staff, students and families have ready access to help as needed. A school nurse works effectively on site to provide immediate attention if required. It has a range of strategies to support students where necessary.

The school's very inclusive ethos allows all students to feel that they belong. Students appear happy and open in their relationships and make strong friendships despite the transient nature of the school population. They receive excellent careers education and guidance and transition arrangements for students to their next place of education are exemplary. The school works closely with families to support students who may find their next destination difficult in terms of their education. Personal and social education is

orchestrated effectively to cater for students' changing needs and to meet the requirements of local students who attend the school.

The suitability of proprietor and staff

All the necessary checks are made on the backgrounds of staff and adults to confirm their suitability and fitness to work with children. These checks take account of the international nature of the school as well as of its local and British context. Safe recruitment procedures are effective. These procedures are consistently applied and are equally effective in both the primary and secondary phases of the school.

The premises and accommodation

Grade: 2

The school site has developed and grown over the years as the number of students has increased. Students have access to a good library, sporting facilities and designated teaching areas for subjects such as science, design and technology, art and music. Classrooms are fit for purpose and are spacious for the number of students in each class. Premises are well maintained and students play their part by respecting property and resources. Very good use is made of all available space. For example, the school has transformed a strip of unused land into cricket nets, much appreciated by students. Outside grounds are attractive and well used for sporting activities, for dining, recreational purposes and for moments of quiet reflection. The school is well resourced and this adds to the quality of students' learning experiences. The safety of students is always afforded a high priority and this is reflected in the regular health and safety checks of the school site and the stringent security arrangements for gaining access to the school.

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good level of information for parents and carers. Parents and carers receive regular newsletters to keep them in touch with happenings at the school. They can also access a great deal of information through the school's website which provides many details about all aspects of school life and provides parents and carers with access to school policies, procedures and useful information relating to practical issues such as lunches, transport and health. Importantly, parents and carers are kept well informed of their child's academic progress. Programmes of study are sent home so that parents and carers know precisely what is being taught over the course of the year. Termly Assessment Sheets provide parents and carers with a regular update on just how well their children are doing and these are supplemented by an annual written progress report. Parents and carers are invited to formal meetings with secondary staff to discuss their child's academic and personal progress and in Year 9 to discuss options for the IGCSE examinations and in Year 11 to discuss the A-level programme. If parents and carers wish to discuss any issues of concerns during the course of the year, they are welcome to telephone the school or to meet with their child's tutor/mentor.

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school fully meets the requirements for handling complaints in a fair and timely manner. These procedures are available to parents and carers through the school website or through direct contact with the school. The procedures apply to both the primary and secondary phases of the school. There have been no formal complaints about any phases of the school over the last 12 months.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Grade: 2

The distinctive family ethos at The British School, Kathmandu, emanates from the inspirational leadership of the principal. Distinct challenges face the leadership of the school ranging from sometimes very difficult local circumstances to often high turnover of staff, mainly a function of conditions outside of the school.

The principal, working closely with the board of governors and the senior managers, has a clear grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leadership and management at all levels of the school are good. Two senior leaders support the principal increasingly well. There are very good partnerships with external agencies and smooth day-to-day running so that students' experience of school is very positive. The school is a cohesive community with all adults, both teaching and support staff, working together for the good of the students.

There is an on-going staff development programme, much of which draws on expertise within the school. Staff who have a particular skill share this across the school in planned sessions. There is a programme of monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice, with coaching to support staff in what is expected of them at The British School and some notable improvements have been secured. However, this programme has not yet been fully effective in helping move teaching to an excellent level. There is further work to do also in fine-tuning arrangements when staff change between the end and start of examination courses, so that there is no let-up in the students' progress as new staff settle into their work. The middle-leader faculty group is very aware of its responsibilities for sustaining the school's good performance. However, not all middle managers are yet fully empowered to manage the performance of staff, as for example, across the sixth form.

The monitoring of students' performance is established and is developing well. Recent innovations are enabling the school to track secondary students from the end of Key Stage 2. However, the setting of targets for students does not always take enough account of the expectations current within the Department for Education of what constitutes excellent progress. This, together with greater consistency in assessment strategies across subjects, is a main area for development.

Procedures for safeguarding students and the site are robust. The school goes the extra mile when students or their families need support. Monies are well spent on procuring good academic and excellent personal development for the students. As well as ensuring that the present accommodation is as fit for purpose as local circumstances permit, the school's leadership has a strategic view of its future needs. On-going negotiations are in place to ensure the sustainability of the school for the future on a different site.

Sixth Form

Students choose to stay into the sixth form at The British School because of their positive experiences in earlier years. Although numbers are small, they are increasing and the school does very well in providing the advanced level courses students require. From above average starting points at the beginning of Year 12, students sustain high standards and make good progress in their academic studies. For most students, this opens doors into the universities of their choice, mainly in the United Kingdom but also in other English speaking countries. Very few students fail to finish the courses that they start on unless they move from the area or gain access to prestigious boarding schools abroad. Although students make good progress in their studies, it is not excellent because the quality of teaching is not always at a high enough level to ensure rapid progress.

Small post-16 numbers are a very positive feature of the school in that there is a genuine family atmosphere and very good attention to individual needs. Students' personal development is a high priority for the school. Not only do they work within their own school community but they also volunteer to work in the many charity projects in which the school is involved. For many students, the school provides a window into the lives of those much less fortunate than themselves and gives them an understanding of their responsibilities in the wider society around them.

Students are looked after very well within the school and on the various school expeditions and charity projects. Careers education and guidance is thorough and supports very well their preparation for the next stage of education and training. Students are adept at making excellent use of new technologies to access the various texts and materials they need for their courses, an essential skill in the relatively isolated location of the school. Relationships are excellent between staff and students who think 'the best thing about our school is the staff and the trouble they take to help us'.

Letter for Students

21 February 2013

Dear Students

Inspection of The British School, Kathmandu, Nepal

We feel very privileged to have been able to share time with you in your happy and inclusive school. Thank you for your friendly welcome, for the time you gave to talk to us and for the help you provided when we were unsure of where to go.

You will find below the main judgements about your school.

- You are provided with a good British education that prepares you successfully for your future education. Your school meets all the requirements for British Schools Overseas.
- Inspirational leadership by the principal over many years has made for sustained improvements in your school. The principal is supported well by an effective leadership team, governors and staff. There is scope for improving how well some leaders help monitor the quality of teaching and achievement to help you reach even higher standards.
- You are a very harmonious community and get on extremely well with each other. The school takes great care of you and ensures you are well looked after and safe.
- You attain highly in your academic work and make good progress throughout your time in the school. This is because of mainly good teaching and your very positive attitudes to learning. The growing sixth form provides well for your future university careers. You are very successful in obtaining the university places of your choice.
- The good curriculum offers you many opportunities to grow and mature in your academic work. There is excellent provision for enrichment activities, ranging from sporting activities and school projects to musical events, school visits and overseas journeys.
- Most teaching is good and some excellent. The school is working hard to share the excellent practice that exists in some areas of the school but recognises that more work needs to be done to ensure that teaching reaches an excellent level overall.
- Your progress is carefully tracked so that any of you that need help to keep up with your work are given every chance to do so. However, targets that are set for you are not always at a high enough level to help ensure that you make excellent progress.
- You tell us that you are happy with all aspects of school life, that you feel safe and have total confidence in the adults around you. We judged that your attitudes to your work are excellent and that you behave extremely well. We are delighted at how well you work within the community and do your best to help those less fortunate than yourselves.
- You have good resources for your work in spite of the fact that you are a small school.

We wish you the very best for your futures and look forward to hearing about your success. We hope you will keep up the many excellent features of what you have learned personally and academically when you move on to the next stage of your education.

Sheila Nolan
Lead Inspector

Summary of inspection judgements – secondary phase

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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Overall effectiveness		✓		
The quality of the curriculum		✓		
The quality of teaching and assessment		✓		
Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
Welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
The premises and accommodation		✓		
Leadership and management of the school		✓		