

**Inspection of British
Schools Overseas**



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St Andrews International Primary School

Sunnyside, Blantyre, Malawi

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The purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has established a voluntary scheme to inspect British schools overseas (BSO) against a common set of standards that apply to independent schools in the United Kingdom. The intention is to tell parents how well the BSO standards are met by the school and to report on:

- the quality of education
- the quality of pupils' personal development
- safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety
- the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance
- the effectiveness of the early years provision.

The inspection report informs parents about the quality of provision within the inspected school and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom. An essential element of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements. The inspection will also identify what the school is doing well and what needs to improve.

By achieving UK inspection-based accreditation, participating schools will demonstrate that they provide a British education that is of a similar standard to an education in an independent school in the UK.

Information about the school

Name	St Andrews International Primary School
Address	Sunnyside Blantyre Malawi
Telephone	+265 (0) 1833 428
Email	saips@africa-online.net
Website	www.saips.mw
Type of school	Independent primary
Number of boarders	16 (weekdays only)
Age range	3–11
Gender	Mixed
Number on role	438
Headteacher	David Marriott
Chair of Governing Board	Chaupi Chihana

The school has a strong British flavour. The ethos, appearance and organisation of St Andrews are typical of a successful British school. The new National Curriculum for England has been implemented and the school follows English assessment practices to monitor pupils' progress and attainment. Typically British practice is seen in the way the school carries out such things as

performance management and evaluation of teaching. Teachers often visit the UK for training and to visit British schools.

Almost all teachers have been trained in Britain and their teaching styles reflect this. All teaching and communication is in English and British practice is evident in the organisation of the school day. Pastoral support is organised in a similar way to schools in the UK and fundamental British values are actively promoted and can be seen in the school's vision of a 'St Andrews pupil'.

Evaluation of the school

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
The quality of pupils' personal development	Good
Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good
The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	Good
The effectiveness of the early years provision	Good

Summary of main findings

The inspection team recommends that the school meets the standard for a British School Overseas. All of the required standards are met.

St Andrews International Primary is a good and improving school that embodies its values of collaboration, respect, equality, creativity and integrity. It is extremely well led and managed and has the capacity to improve even further. School leaders have established an ethos in which staff work well together, they take seriously their accountability for pupils' achievements and feel valued. Governance is a strength: the Board includes members with a good range of expertise and has been instrumental in the success of the school.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are given a high priority in the school. Safeguarding procedures are effective both in the main school and in the boarding provision.

Pupils behave well and are polite and respectful. Their keenness to learn and good response in lessons contribute to the good, and sometimes outstanding, progress that they make. They enjoy their lessons and the wide range of enrichment activities that they experience through the school's broad and balanced curriculum.

Teaching is good and improving as a result of school leaders' relentless focus on raising expectations and establishing greater consistency of practice through regular monitoring, feedback and professional development. Recruitment of high calibre staff is made a priority by leaders and governors. The process of managing teachers' performance has been improved this year and contributes to the good teaching, learning and assessment.

Children are given a good start in the early years. The stimulating environment, effective teaching, and excellent care for children's welfare are helping children to make at least good progress.

In order to improve further the school needs to:

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further by:

- ensuring that the most able pupils are given suitably demanding work and that, where appropriate, they are moved on quickly to activities that are challenging and involve using and applying their knowledge
- providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their English skills to writing extended pieces, in literacy and in topic work
- providing more opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning orally for answers to problems in mathematics.
- Improve some of the systems for recording information, including outcomes for children in the early years.
- Ensure that sufficient time is given to science in all year groups, when leaders review the timetable for next year.

The quality of education

The quality of education provided by the school is good. All of the standards relating to the quality of education are met.



Pupils are provided with a curriculum that, whilst emphasising English and mathematics, includes a broad and appropriate range of subjects. Pupils benefit from specialist teachers for some subjects such as music, information technology and physical education, which contributes to good progress in these areas. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide selection of activities in the afternoons, including sports and cultural clubs. Pupils learn about how to look after animals in the school's own small farm, which includes a camel, goats, geese and chicken. Pupils engage in a range of educational trips and visits, such as to a waterfall, national parks, rural village schools and residential trips.

The school is implementing the new English National Curriculum well for most subjects. Leaders of the key stages have worked together to prepare topics that meet the requirements of the new curriculum and ensure that there is coherence and progression across year groups. Currently, not a great deal of time is given to science, particularly in a few year groups, as it is taught as part of the topics. Leaders have introduced a popular science week to compensate for this. Leaders accept that despite this, science is not given enough time, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, to meet the demands of the new curriculum. They are considering how to organise more time for science as part of their review of the timetable and curriculum for next year.

The school has emphasised the importance of reading and invested in an upgrade to the library, which provides pupils with an attractive and well-resourced area for pupils. Pupils enjoy reading and happily talk about their favourite authors, including a local author who visited the school and made a strong impression on pupils. Reading is taught well from the early years. Sessions where teachers spend time with small groups to assess their reading understanding and skills are organised very effectively. Pupils who are working independently during these sessions are given interesting activities that engage and enthuse them. They use their initiative, for example, to look up words in the dictionary and take the lead sensibly when working in small groups.

Pupils' standards in reading have been above those in writing and mathematics in recent years. Leaders have introduced a number of strategies to raise attainment in writing and mathematics and these are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, a UK-based reading and writing scheme for Key Stage 1 pupils, which is taught consistently well, has had a strong impact on raising standards in writing. The school has invested in practical equipment to help improve mathematics and plans to introduce a commercial resource to raise standards further.

Pupils are taught in ability sets in mathematics and English in order to ensure a better match of work to pupils' abilities and prior attainment. In some cases, the most-able pupils are taught separately so that they are given suitably challenging work; this was seen to good effect in a Year 4 class, where able pupils worked with enthusiasm and determination to find patterns in numbers leading to 'happy numbers'; they used their good recall of times-tables to undertake this task.

Standards in mathematics are rising and pupils say that they enjoy the subject. They are given an appropriate range of different mathematics topics, including numbers, shape and space and measures. Their recall of number facts such as tables is improving, particularly in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Some teachers are usefully asking pupils to explain mathematical ideas in words in their exercise books, but this does not happen enough in class. Pupils are not often asked to explain how they worked something out.

Writing has been a focus for improvement. Successful teaching approaches developed in the Key Stage 1 literacy course are used across the school. For example, pupils have regular opportunities to develop comprehension skills and to talk and plan in preparation for writing. Pupils are making good progress in most areas of composition. They practise a good range of writing styles and most develop a secure grasp of punctuation and grammar. Spelling is a weaker area, which the school is addressing. Although the teaching of writing has improved, pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length in literacy and in topic work.

Teachers produce individual and detailed support plans each term for pupils who have special educational needs or a disability, based on accurate assessments of pupils' progress. Support, through in-class help or in small groups or one-to-one teaching, is well managed and effective. As a consequence, these pupils are making good progress.

Teaching is good across the school. Teachers are enthusiastic and have developed very positive and purposeful relationships with pupils. They manage behaviour well and pupils respond promptly and without fuss to instructions and to transitions between activities.

Teachers know their subjects well and how to engage pupils' interest and attention. They use technical language accurately and encourage pupils to do the same. For example, in Year 2, a teacher spoke about 'rhyming couplets' and pupils devised their own humorous ones about pirates.

Teachers model the use of English language well for pupils and encourage them to use a wide range of vocabulary. This contributes to pupils' increasingly good progress in English and skills in speaking. Pupils are articulate and confident when using spoken English, despite the fact that for most of them English is not their first language. For example, Year 4 pupils explained what 'character' means and Year 2 pupils spoke about using the 'zoom' on a digital camera.

Teachers use questioning effectively to make pupils think carefully. For example, Year 5 pupils were asked to describe changes in the tempo and rhythm in a piece of music and to suggest reasons for them. Teachers often target questions at individuals and encourage pupils to help each other and discuss ideas. Pupils engage well in paired discussions and mainly listen politely to each other. Their

interest in learning is exemplified by the way that they often ask questions. For example, a Year 3 pupil asked ‘how do they measure the height of mountains?’

Teachers know their pupils well and are assessing their attainment and progress carefully. Teachers often provide different activities for pupils to reflect their different starting points or skills, based on their assessments. However, this is not always effective enough in ensuring a real challenge for the most-able pupils. These pupils are sometimes not moved on quickly enough to tasks that draw on a range of skills and knowledge to really stretch them. Also, sometimes the most able pupils have to sit through whole class presentations and discussions which are too easy for them; this slows their progress.

The school uses external English tests to assess pupils and benchmark standards against the English national averages. Teachers regularly discuss the standard of pupils’ work in and across year groups to try to ensure consistency. Leaders have planned to introduce more regular commercial tests next year to help ensure the accuracy and reliability of teachers’ own assessments. They have established productive links with other schools, including one in England, which provides the opportunity for school-to-school moderation of assessments via the Internet.

The quality of pupils’ personal development

The quality of pupils’ personal development is good.

In the secure and friendly setting of St Andrews, pupils develop their self-confidence quickly. They show self-assurance within their play and work groups, expressing their ideas and opinions forthrightly, but respecting the views of others. They become articulate and develop their vocabularies well as they move up through the school.

Pupils are developing some strong characteristics of effective learners. For example, they settle to work quickly and persevere when working independently. When in teams, they cooperate well, such as when sharing ideas with a partner or, within a group, acting out a story line in preparation for a writing task.

Pupils like their teachers and think most lessons are fun. They are happy at school and like coming to school to meet and work with their classmates. They attend regularly and most arrive at school on time.

Older pupils relish taking on extra responsibilities, showing initiative and helping their school and the wider community. They eagerly take on roles as library captains, prefects, school council representatives and eco-warriors. Pupils organise events to support charities and some Year 6 pupils help younger children with their reading.

The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through lessons, assemblies and a wide range of activities, such as exhibitions, theatrical productions and trips to local places of worship and rural schools in Malawi. Pupils appreciate the wide range of backgrounds that exist in the school community. They say that they get along with each other very well.

The principles of fairness, respect, honesty and caring for and valuing one another and the environment permeate the school and are encompassed in the school’s rules and values. Pupils interact with one another, staff and visitors in a positive and considerate manner. They are polite and well-mannered, for example, holding doors or stepping aside for others and offering pleasant

greetings. During an athletics activity, Year 5 pupils cheered on all of their classmates in the sprinting races. Those who came in a long way behind received similarly loud encouragement.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about fundamental 'British values' and good opportunities to put them into practice. For example, pupils experience democracy in action when they campaign for election and vote for positions on the school council.

The behaviour of pupils is good: a view shared by pupils, parents and staff. Pupils are very familiar with the school's values and rules. They know the way they are expected to behave and understand that they are responsible for their behaviour. They know that their behaviour influences their performance at school. They work hard and are productive and are proud of their achievements. They respond to instructions and readily engage with the tasks set for them. Occasionally, when activities are not challenging enough, a few pupils become restless. School records show there have been few instances of more serious misbehaviour and that these were dealt with effectively.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school's strategies to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety are good.

Pupils are kept safe at school and their attendance is monitored closely. They say they feel very valued and secure there and have a trusted adult they can turn to if they were ever upset. They are learning how to stay safe in a variety of situations and can speak authoritatively about what to do. For example, they know about the different forms of bullying, what to do if they experience or see any bullying and speak with good understanding about how to stay safe when using the internet. They report that bullying is rare and they are confident that their teachers would quickly resolve any problems if they did arise. The few incidents of bullying that have occurred have been clearly recorded by school leaders and quickly and satisfactorily resolved.

The school's behaviour policy is clear and concise and concentrates on actively promoting positive behaviour. Pupils' expected behaviour is closely linked to the school's values, including respect integrity and collaboration. Pupils know and strive to adhere to those values. Staff are consistent in the way they manage the behaviour of their classes.

Safeguarding has a very high priority at school. The child protection policy is clear, highlighting possible signs of abuse and appropriate procedures to follow in the event of any child protection concerns. All staff are well trained in safeguarding issues and are very familiar with the relevant procedures. Staff participate in detailed DFE-approved online training, refresher training and regular updates in staff meetings through discussions of hypothetical scenarios they might encounter. Staff and parents know that the assistant headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead (child protection officer). Records of child protection concerns are suitably organised and stored securely.

Rigorous background checks are carried out on all staff. The vast majority of teachers are from the UK and have to provide the same evidence of their suitability to work with children as they would in the UK. Other staff and members of the board of governors require police criminal checks and both written and verbal confirmation of their suitability. A comprehensive single central record of all staff is maintained.

All other health and safety issues are covered by appropriate policies and suitably managed. For example, regular fire drills have been carried out, resulting in improved evacuation times, and all trips out of school must be supported by risk assessments. There are a suitable number of trained first aid staff, clear records of accidents and treatments and an appropriately resourced first aid room. The headteacher and site manager tour the site weekly to check on the quality of grounds and

buildings and plan appropriate maintenance work. The site is physically secure and a good number of security guards monitor people entering the site. Visitors are vetted and provided with identification badges as appropriate.

In lessons and other activities, pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. They understand the benefits of a balanced diet and regular physical exercise. They enjoy the regular and increasing numbers of sporting activities available. A group of Year 2 pupils were seen completing their early morning cross-country run as the school day was beginning and several other pupils were keen to explain the high number of competitions they were involved in. The swimming pool is well used and all pupils are expected to be able to swim by the time they leave school.

The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance

The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance is good. All the standards relating to the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance are met.

Leadership and management are good and in some respects, outstanding. Leaders, including the governors, are ambitious for the school and have established a clear set of values and principles which are reflected in its practice. Leaders have identified accurately what needs to improve further. Staff who have responsibility for year groups or subjects have devised individual plans for improvement. There is a clear commitment to further improvement and capacity to do so is very evident. Pupils, staff and parents are proud of the school.

The new headteacher has successfully introduced a rigorous programme of monitoring teaching and learning, whilst maintaining a very collegiate and harmonious staff ethos. Teachers say that they are held to account for pupils' standards and progress. Information about pupils' achievements and progress is captured regularly and analysed carefully. It is used to inform discussion in the termly meetings with teachers about pupils' progress. These meetings are documented systematically and result in decisions about which pupils need more help because they are not making enough progress. Some teachers are also using the meetings to identify the most-able pupils and what further support they might need.

The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning is checked regularly through lesson observations, trawls of exercise books and learning walks around each classroom. Leaders draw well on the strengths of staff and deploy them to best effect. A recent programme of self-assessment by teachers from observing videos of their own lessons has been well received by staff and impacted positively on the quality of teaching.

The performance management (appraisal) of staff has been made more systematic this year and this has been appreciated by staff. Appropriate targets are set and include a link to pupils' progress. The process is overseen effectively by governors and linked to professional development. Staff spoke positively about the training they had received, mainly on-line but also as part of every staff meeting, where good practice is shared. Leaders also attend international conferences to help to keep up-to-date.

Governance is a strength. Governors include members with a range of appropriate skills and expertise. They demonstrate a clear commitment to the school and its continued improvement. They manage the finances extremely prudently and ensure that high quality staff are recruited. They take all of their responsibilities, including for safeguarding, very seriously. They know the school well and are aware of its strengths and what needs to improve.

The new headteacher has established a good team spirit and is supported by a strong team of senior and middle leaders. Policies and systems are reviewed regularly. In a few cases, the systems are not as robust as they could be. For example, whilst a great deal of information is gathered about the attainment and progress of children in the early years, it is not summarised in a simple, easily accessible format. Some of the logs, for example, for behaviour, are not kept in a format that makes it easy to identify patterns and trends.

Boarding Provision

Boarding provision is good. The standard for provision of boarding is met.

Boarding is provided at the school from Sunday evenings to Friday afternoons during term time. Currently, sixteen boarders are housed in appropriately furnished and equipped hostels, one for boys and one for girls. The hostels are kept in an organized, clean and tidy condition. They provide a homely, warm and welcoming environment and cater well for both individual privacy and communal life.

There are two full-time live-in, appropriately qualified and experienced house matrons, one for each hostel, and two appointed house 'parents' who each live in apartments adjoining the hostels and who oversee boarding provision and the care of the students. The house 'parents' are both full time teachers at the school during the day and undertake evening and night supervision duties in the hostels as well as liaising closely with the house matrons to organize activities and generally care for the welfare of the boarders. All necessary safeguarding checks have been conducted on those people who are associated with the boarding provision. The school maintains up-to-date records on all personnel. Regular fire drills and emergency evacuations are carried out and records of these are kept dated and filed. All electrical and safety equipment in the hostels are checked on a regular basis, as is the general state and repair of the facilities.

Pupils are provided with nutritious and varied meals, prepared from fresh ingredients. The kitchen and dining room are kept clean and in a hygienic condition.

There is a clear boarding policy outlining all necessary procedures to be followed. Job descriptions for the boarding 'parents' and matrons clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities. Health records on each of the pupils are regularly updated and filed securely by the matrons, who are responsible for the day to day health and welfare of the pupils during the week. The boarders are well cared for by the staff. Specific Boarding Policies and procedures have been developed and are followed, but they are not all documented in a consistent or systematic way.

Boarding pupils are appropriately supervised and supported at all times and their safety and well-being is a high priority. A wide range of afternoon and evening activities are organized by the matrons and house 'parents'. Pupils say that they are given the opportunity to contribute to decisions about the activities.

Pupils are positive about the boarding provision. They spoke about 'a family atmosphere' and of the close ties they have built with each other. They said that they enjoy the activities provided for them and that they feel well supported, safe and secure. It was clear that they flourish in each other's company and within the care given them by the matrons and their house 'parents'.

The effectiveness of Early Years provision

The effectiveness of Early Years provision is good.

The Early Years department is well led and managed. Significant improvements have been made in the provision since the recent appointment of the Early Years Phase Leader. For example, a UK-based commercial scheme for literacy has been introduced, there is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and better resources for teaching mathematics have been developed. As a result, children's acquisition of vocabulary and comprehension skills has been strengthened and there is a more effective and practical hands-on approach towards developing basic mathematical concepts.

Teaching is good and children make good progress in their learning. The Early Years team work well together to plan activities that build on children's prior attainment. There has been a successful drive to develop a practical approach to learning to engage children effectively. Children are involved in a range of lively, play-based activities that encourage conversation, curiosity and exploration.

Classroom displays are bright and stimulating. They provide good visual stimuli and cues for learning, are print-rich in the English language and relate well to the areas of learning. The learning themes are extended into the outside play areas which support free and imaginative play and the development of gross motor skills. For example, children were observed practising the vocabulary learned in the classroom whilst eagerly role playing in 'space stations' and 'space ships' that had been set up outside.

Class sizes are appropriate and teachers make suitable plans to meet the needs of the wide range of children's abilities and previous school experience. Teachers make good use of their support and teaching assistants and plan collaboratively with them to ensure they support the children effectively and are able to assess their progress. Assistants are fully included in the school's programme of ongoing training.

Children quickly settle into school routines and learn how to get along with others. Children behave well and develop self-confidence and learn how to do things for themselves. Most children are attentive, actively engaged, responsive and motivated to learn. Occasionally, a few children become restless when the activity is not challenging enough and sometimes planned activities do not stretch more able children sufficiently.

Children start school with skills and abilities below those typical in the UK, particularly in speech and communication. They make good progress in the early years and the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is increasing. Teachers have a very clear picture of the strengths and areas for improvement of children. They regularly collect and store key samples of student work. Children's achievements in the areas of learning are assessed regularly and evidence is kept, particularly of literacy progress. However, the evidence is not always organised very systematically or consistently, which makes it more difficult for staff to summarise key strengths and weaknesses and to plan next steps.

Parents are effectively encouraged to support their children's learning. There are termly workshops for parents on aspects of literacy and numeracy and how children learn. Parents have regular opportunities to come into school and observe children learning through play, as well as celebrating their achievements in assemblies and performances. Parents' participation and attendance at these

events is continuing to increase. Parents spoken to commented on how happy their children were and how well the school supports them to help their children at home.

Details of the inspection

Inspection team

Helena McVeigh	Lead inspector
Christine Bayliss	Team inspector
Jim McVeigh	Team inspector

The inspection took place over two days.

- Inspectors, accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher on occasions, observed pupils in all year groups engaged in a range of activities in different subjects. They looked at pupils' written work in all years and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Board and five other governors.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and, informally, with other pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Several school documents were examined. These included the school's evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, notes of meetings of the governing board, information about pupils' progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed informally by parents as they arrived at school.

Appendix: Standards for British schools overseas

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

Standard 3: The welfare, health and safety of students

Standard 4: The suitability of the proprietor and staff

Standard 5: The premises and accommodation

Standard 6: The provision of information for parents, carers and others

Standard 7: The school's procedures for handling complaints

Standard 8: The quality of provision for boarding

Standard 9: Leadership and management of the school

Standards considered when evaluating each of the four key areas

Area of inspection	Standards considered
The quality of education	1.1 – 1.8; 1.11 – 1.13; 1.15 – 1.24
The quality of pupils' personal development	1.9; 1.10; 1.14; 2.1 – 2.6
Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety	3 and 4
The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	5, 6, 7, 8 and 9

(Further information about BSO standards can be found at the DFE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-schools-overseas-standards-for-schools>)