



Department  
for Education

# **British schools overseas: standards for schools**

**Departmental advice for British schools  
overseas, school staff, parents and  
prospective parents**

**February 2014**

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# Summary

## About this departmental advice

This is departmental advice from the Department for Education. This advice is non-statutory, and has been produced to help British schools overseas to understand the Department standards required to meet under the British Government's voluntary inspection scheme.

## Expiry or review date

This advice will be updated when any changes are implemented to the standards and regulations relating to independent schools in the United Kingdom.

## Who is this advice for?

This advice is for:

- Schools overseas and school staff interested in undergoing inspection under the British Government's inspection scheme.
- Parents and prospective parents.

## Key points

This advice outlines the standards for accreditation of British schools overseas which approved inspectorates will use as a benchmark. The standards measure up against the standards that apply to independent schools in the United Kingdom.

## Background and Context

Overseas schools describing themselves as “British” are not currently subject to any system of recognition by the British government. The Department for Education (DfE), together with the devolved administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, are putting in place arrangements for inspection against a common set of standards that British Schools Overseas can choose to adopt.

The intention is to inform parents of pupils in British Schools Overseas how standards measure up against the standards that apply to independent schools in the United Kingdom. Inspectorates approved by the DfE and monitored by Ofsted will be available to inspect British schools overseas and produce inspection reports which will be made available to parents and prospective parents. This will inform parents and prospective 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. By achieving UK inspection based approval, participating schools will be able to demonstrate that they provide a British education that has similar characteristics to an education in an independent school in the UK.

## Standards for inspection of British schools overseas – Intpretation of standards

- We recognise that schools in different countries may have to produce and implement policies, or take action, in accordance with local regulations. It is not the purpose of these standards to ensure compliance with local regulation. However, the expectation is that the standards implemented by schools will ensure policies and procedures of a quality at least as high as those required in independent schools in the UK.
- Schools must provide evidence to their inspectorate body that each standard has been met, and confirm to the inspectorate that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the school complies with all local regulatory requirements, and that there is no information available to them that indicate that the school would have to close in the foreseeable future. Where there is a conflict between these standards and local requirements, the requirements of the host country take precedence. Any departures from the standards due to host country requirements should be notified to inspectors so that they can be noted in inspection reports. We would expect inspectors to be sensitive to the local context, particularly where there are substantial cultural differences between the host country and the UK.
- Where the standards require a school to make available information or a document the requirement is satisfied by placing a copy on the school's website (if a website exists), or placing a copy in the school for examination and informing parents of the availability of the information or document, or supplying an electronic (email) or paper copy to parents on request.
- The numbers in italics in the first column of the following tables refer to the paragraph numbers (where appropriate) in the current English regulations:

# 1.The quality of education provided by the school

## 1.2 The Curriculum

<b>The quality of the curriculum, its breadth and balance and suitability for all the pupils in school taking into account the regulatory and legal requirements of the host country.</b>		
1(2)	1.1	Does the school have a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and does it implement it effectively?
1(2)(a)(i)	1.2	Is there full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age?
1(2)(a)(ii)	1.3	Does the curriculum give pupils of compulsory school age experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education?
<i>additional</i>	1.4	Does the curriculum take account of curricula and external examination accreditation commonly used in schools within the UK, in a manner that enables pupils to enter, or re-enter the UK educational system at an appropriate level?
1(2)(b)	1.5	Is the subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?
1(2)(c)	1.6	Does the policy enable pupils to acquire skills in speaking/listening/literacy/numeracy?
1(2)(d)	1.7	Is the principal language of instruction either English (or Welsh)?
1(2)(e)	1.8	Where pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, does the curriculum provided meet their needs?
1(2)(f)	1.9	Does the school provide personal, social and health education which reflects its aims and ethos?
1(2)(g)	1.10	Does the school provide appropriate careers guidance for secondary age pupils?
1(2)(h)(i)	1.11	If there are pupils <b>above</b> British compulsory school age (ie over age 16), does the school provide a programme of activities appropriate to

		their needs?
1(2)(h)(ii)	1.12	If there are pupils <b>below</b> British compulsory school age (ie in the term after they attain age 5), does the school provide a programme of activities appropriate to their needs?
1(2)(i)	1.13	Does the curriculum provide the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress?
1(2)(j)	1.14	Is there adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life?

### 1.3 The quality of teaching and assessment

<b>The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment.</b>		
1(3)(a)	1.15	Does the teaching enable pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught?
1(3)(b)	1.16	Does the teaching encourage pupils to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves?
1(3)(c)	1.17	Are lessons well planned, are effective teaching methods and suitable activities used and is class time managed wisely?
1(3)(d)	1.18	Do teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, cultural background, needs (including the needs of EAL learners) and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons?
1(3)(e)	1.19	Do teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught?
1(3)(f)	1.20	Are classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and are they used effectively?
1(3)(g)	1.21	Is there a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and is information from such assessment utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress?

<i>1(3)(h)</i>	<b>1.22</b>	Does the teaching encourage pupils to behave responsibly?
<i>1(4)</i>	<b>1.23</b>	Does the school have in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or by norms derived from externally accredited examinations?
<i>additional</i>	<b>1.24</b>	Do the styles of teaching, learning and assessment equip pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter, or re-enter the UK educational system at an appropriate level?

## 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

<b><i>The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils taking account of the needs of a diverse student body.</i></b>		
2(a)	<b>2.1</b>	Does the school enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence?
2(b)	<b>2.2</b>	Does it enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the law?
2(c)	<b>2.3</b>	Is it effective in ensuring that pupils behave responsibly, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life?
2(d)	<b>2.4</b>	Does it provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship in the host country, the UK and internationally?
2(e)	<b>2.5</b>	Does the school assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions?
New	<b>2.6</b>	Does the school promote a general knowledge and understanding of modern British life including UK attitudes towards tolerance, democracy, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights?

### 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

<b>The measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including child protection, taking into account the regulatory and cultural requirements of the host country.</b>		
3(2)(a)	<b>3.1</b>	Has the school prepared and implemented an effective written policy to prevent bullying?
3(2)(b)	<b>3.2</b>	Has the school prepared and implemented effective written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school?
3(2)(c)	<b>3.3</b>	Has the school prepared and implemented an effective written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school?
3(2)(d)	<b>3.4</b>	Has the school prepared and implemented a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving?
3(4)	<b>3.5</b>	Can the school demonstrate that it has proper regard for health and safety issues which at least conforms to local regulatory requirements?
3(5)	<b>3.6</b>	Can the school demonstrate that it has a satisfactory level of fire safety which conforms to local regulatory requirements?
3(6)	<b>3.7</b>	Does the school have a satisfactory written policy on first aid and does it implement this?
3(7)	<b>3.8</b>	Are school staff deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils?
3(8)	<b>3.9</b>	Does the school keep written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences?
3(9)	<b>3.10</b>	Can the school demonstrate that it maintains an admission register and an attendance register which conform to local regulatory requirements?

## 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

Please note that this section will need to be updated to take account of the new vetting and barring scheme that will come into force when the Independent Safeguarding Authority starts work.

4(2)(a)	4.1	Prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), have appropriate checks been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the host country, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and has such information been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed?
4(2)(b)	4.2	Have appropriate checks on suitability to work with children, including a British enhanced criminal record check <u>where applicable</u> been made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school before, or as soon as was practicable after, his/her appointment (including checks in the host country and any overseas countries where the person may have lived such as obtaining certificates of good conduct from the relevant embassies or police forces)?
4(2)(d)	4.3	Does any member of staff or volunteer carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of any local, overseas or British disqualification, prohibition or restriction?
<b>The suitability of supply staff at the school</b>		
4A (1-8)	4.4	Has the school taken all reasonable steps, within the context of local requirements, to ensure that no person supplied by an employment business to the school should begin work at the school unless the proprietor has received written confirmation that checks have been carried out in respect of the person's identity, right to work in the host country, qualifications, and suitability to work with children.
<b>The suitability of proprietors. It is recognised that in many countries it may be impracticable or inappropriate to obtain the following information on proprietors. However, the school should take all reasonable steps to assure itself of the suitability of each individual who is responsible for the governance and leadership of the school.</b>		

4B	<b>4.5</b>	Can each individual proprietor of the school, or where appropriate the chairperson of the proprietorial body, demonstrate that he/she has met all local requirements (if there are any), and in addition been subject to checks confirming his/her identity, right to work in the host country, suitability to work with children, (including an enhanced criminal record check where applicable). Where appropriate, have certificates of good conduct been obtained, wherever practicable, from the relevant embassies or police forces of all countries in which the proprietor has resided?
4B(4) and (5)	<b>4.6</b>	Has the chairperson checked the other members of the proprietorial body (where these exist) to confirm they meet all local requirements, their identity, right to work in the host country, and suitability to work with children, (including an enhanced criminal record check where applicable). Where appropriate, have certificates of good conduct been obtained, wherever practicable, from the relevant embassies or police forces of all countries in which they have resided?
<i>additional</i>	<b>4.7</b>	The school shall keep and make available to inspectors a comprehensive list of all staff and volunteers who currently work in the school, or who have worked in the school since the time of the last inspection, showing the dates when they commenced and ceased working in the school.
<i>additional</i>	<b>4.8</b>	The school shall keep and make available for inspectors on demand records of all checks completed in respect of staff and volunteers who currently work at the school or who have worked at the school since the date of the last inspection.

## 5. The premises and accommodation

<b>The adequacy of the premises and the educational accommodation for securing the health and safety of all pupils.</b>		
5(a)	<b>5.1</b>	Is there any reason to believe that the water supply does not meet local regulatory requirements or is otherwise not fit for purpose in relation to the premises of an educational establishment?
5(b)	<b>5.2</b>	Is there any reason to believe that the drainage system is inadequate for hygienic purposes and for the disposal of waste water and surface water?
5(c)	<b>5.3</b>	Is there any reason to believe that any load bearing structure does not have regard to local regulatory requirements (including, where applicable, earthquake measures and other measures to militate against natural disasters)?
5(d)	<b>5.4</b>	Does the school have adequate security arrangements for the grounds and buildings?
5(e)	<b>5.6</b>	If the premises which are used by the school are also used for another purpose, other than conducting the school, are they organised in such a way that the health, safety and welfare of pupils is safeguarded and their education is not interrupted by other users?
5(f)	<b>5.7</b>	Do the school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind, sand and dust, and moisture from the ground and have regard to temperature control, heating and cooling?
5(g)	<b>5.8</b>	Is there sufficient access so that emergency evacuations can be accomplished safely for all pupils, including those with special needs?
5(h)	<b>5.9</b>	Is access to the school such that it allows all pupils, including those with special needs, to enter and leave the school in safety and comfort?
5(i)	<b>5.10</b>	Can the school give reasonable assurances that the premises have not been condemned by relevant local agencies?

<b>The suitability of the accommodation for effective teaching and learning for all pupils.</b>		
5(j)	<b>5.11</b>	Having regard to the number, age and needs (including any special needs) of pupils, are the school buildings fit for purpose and maintained with regard to the health and safety of the pupils?
5(k)	<b>5.12</b>	Are there sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs?
5(l)	<b>5.13</b>	Are there appropriate facilities for pupils who are, or become, ill?
5(m)	<b>5.14</b>	Where food is served, are there adequate facilities for its hygienic preparation, serving and consumption?
5(n)	<b>5.15</b>	Are classrooms and other parts of the school maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state?
5(o)	<b>5.16</b>	Do the sound insulation and acoustics allow effective teaching and communication?
5(p)	<b>5.17</b>	Are the lighting, heating and ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school satisfactory?
5(q)	<b>5.18</b>	Is there a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration?
5(r)	<b>5.19</b>	Are the furniture and fittings appropriately designed for the age and needs (including any special needs) of all pupils registered at the school?
5(s)	<b>5.20</b>	Is there appropriate flooring and is this in good condition?
5(t)	<b>5.21</b>	Are there appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely?

## 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

<b>The quality of information provided by the school for parents, prospective parents, and other interested parties.</b>		
<b>Does the school provide to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils the following information?</b>		
6(2)(a)	<b>6.1</b>	The school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher.
6(2)(b)	<b>6.2</b>	Where the proprietor is an individual, his/her full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he or she may be contacted at all times, or, where the proprietor is a corporation, organisation or other body corporate, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office.
6(2)(c)	<b>6.3</b>	Where there is a board of governors, the name and address for correspondence of its Chair (not necessarily the private address).
6(2)(d)	<b>6.4</b>	A statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims.

<b>Does the school make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils the following information?</b>		
6(2A)(a)	<b>6.5</b>	Particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions.
6(2A)(b)	<b>6.6</b>	Particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for pupils for whom English is an additional language.
6(2A)(c)	<b>6.7</b>	Particulars of the curriculum offered by the school.
6(2A)(d)	<b>6.8</b>	Particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving.
6(2A)(e)	<b>6.9</b>	Particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations, taking

		account of the need to protect the identity of children.
6(2A)(f)	<b>6.10</b>	Details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school.
6(2A)(g)	<b>6.11</b>	The number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications wherever practicable.
6(3)	<b>6.12</b>	Following this inspection, has the school made arrangements to make available and send (in paper format or electronically) a copy of the full report to the parents of every registered pupil?
<b>The quality of reports on pupils' progress</b>		
6(5)	<b>6.13</b>	Does the school provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught (unless otherwise agreed with any parent)?
<b>The quality of information provided to outside bodies</b>		
6(6)(a)	<b>6.14</b>	Did the school comply with reasonable requests for information in connection with the inspection?
6(6)(b)	<b>6.15</b>	Did the school confirm that it had declared to inspectors all instances of disciplinary action, suspension or departure of any individual (staff, volunteer or other) because of concerns about their suitability to work with children?

## 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

7(a)	<b>7.1</b>	Has the school drawn up and implemented a complaints procedure that is transparent, open and effective having regard to local regulatory requirements and circumstances?
7(b)	<b>7.2</b>	Is the complaints procedure made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils?
7(c)	<b>7.3</b>	Does the complaints procedure set out clear timescales for the management of the complaint?
7(d)	<b>7.4</b>	Does the complaints procedure allow for complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis?
7(e)	<b>7.5</b>	Does the complaints procedure provide for a formal complaint to be made in writing if parents are not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint?
7(f)	<b>7.6</b>	If the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint is there provision for the establishment of a hearing before the governors of the school or a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint?
7(g)	<b>7.7</b>	Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, and where practicable, is there provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school?
7(h)	<b>7.8</b>	Does the procedure allow for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied?
7(i)	<b>7.9</b>	Does the complaints procedure provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations and does the procedure stipulate that a copy of these findings and recommendations are given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, the proprietor and headteacher?
7(j)	<b>7.10</b>	Does the procedure provide for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (including a hearing before the board of governors)?
7(k)	<b>7.11</b>	Does the procedure provide that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential, except in cases where local legal requirements permit access or enable restriction by local authorities?

## 8. The quality of provision for boarding

The effectiveness of the school's provision for boarders		
new	8.1	Does the school have policies, implemented effectively, that take full account of pupils who are boarding in respect of bullying, child protection, complaints, security, safeguarding, behaviour, discipline, sanctions, rewards and restraint, health education and boarders health records.
new	8.2	Does the school have appropriate procedures in place for crisis management, how boarding houses are organised, activities and free time for boarders, the needs of EAL students, the securing of boarders' views, for prefects or student leaders, and for staff and outside support to boarders?
new	8.3	Does the school provide adequate welfare support to boarders, including medical treatment and first aid, care of ill boarders, management of health and personal problems, discrimination and equal opportunities, parental contact and telephones, pocket money and care of possessions, and the induction of new

		boarders? The school should also have effective policies for educational guardians (where applicable), the monitoring of records, catering, fire precautions and drills, the accommodation of children other than pupils (where applicable), high risk activities and risk assessment, and access to information and local facilities.
new	<b>8.4</b>	Does the school provide adequate supervision of boarders, including when boarders leave the school site, night supervision of boarding houses and does the school provide staff job descriptions, induction, supervision and training, and guidance on boarding practice? It should also be able to show effective implementation of policies on staff/boarder relationships, privacy, staff recruitment and checks on other adults that may come into contact with boarders or have access to boarding accommodation.
new	<b>8.5</b>	Are there adequate arrangements for access to, and security of, the accommodation used by boarders including off-site accommodation and short term exchanges.

## 9. Leadership and management of the school

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management by the proprietor, headteacher, senior managers and others with delegated responsibilities.</b>		
<i>New</i>	<b>9.1</b>	Does the leadership of the school provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of education, the care of pupils, and the fulfilment of the school's aims and ethos, and is there a positive relationship between the headteacher/senior staff and the school's governing body (where one exists) or board of management?
<i>New</i>	<b>9.2</b>	Is the proprietor/governing body successful in securing, supporting and developing sufficient high quality staff and ensuring their suitability to work with children?
<i>New</i>	<b>9.3</b>	Does the proprietor/governing body provide appropriate policies and procedures, review them for effectiveness, and ensure sufficiency of resources through robust financial management?
<i>New</i>	<b>9.4</b>	Is management at all levels successful in identifying priorities for improvement, planning to meet those priorities, and implementing decisions effectively?
<i>New</i>	<b>9.5</b>	Does the management of the school provide opportunities for regular staff appraisal or professional development reviews?



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