



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**British Council School Madrid / El Colegio Británico**

**November 2021**

## Contents

<b>School's Details</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Background Information</b>	<b>4</b>
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
<b>2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas</b>	<b>5</b>
Preface	5
Key findings	6
Part 1 – Quality of education provided	6
Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	6
Part 6 – Provision of information	7
Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
<b>3. Inspection of Educational Quality</b>	<b>8</b>
Preface	8
Key findings	9
Recommendations	9
The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement	9
The quality of the pupils' personal development	12
<b>4. Inspection Evidence</b>	<b>15</b>

## School's Details

<b>School</b>	British Council School / El Colegio Británico			
<b>Address</b>	Calle Solano, 5-7 28223 Pozuelo de Alarcón Spain			
<b>Telephone number</b>	+34 913 373 612			
<b>Email address</b>	School@britishcouncil.es			
<b>Head</b>	Mercedes Hernandez Estrada			
<b>Proprietor</b>	British Council			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1903			
	<b>Early years</b>	350	<b>Primary</b>	646
	<b>Secondary</b>	907		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23 to 26 November 2021			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 British Council School, Madrid, was founded in 1940 and moved to its present buildings between 1990 and 2004. The main school comprises early years, primary and secondary sections, with a second site in the city centre, El Viso, for a small number of early years pupils. The school follows both the Spanish curriculum in all year groups and the English early years and National Curriculum 2014 in Years 1 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, pupils take IGCSEs and international GCSEs. The school has about 200 sixth-form pupils who follow the British Council's BiBac curriculum. This section was not inspected as part of the visit. The school is authorised by the Spanish Ministry of Education to offer a British education to children of all nationalities and has been approved by the Department for Education (DfE) for educating pupils from ages 2 to 16. The previous inspection of the school's compliance with the British Standards Overseas was in November 2018. Since then, there have been changes in the school's leadership structure and curriculum.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aspires to provide the best in British and Spanish education in a bilingual and bicultural setting where pupils can reach their full potential and develop into well-rounded, highly motivated global citizens who are confident in their ability to succeed.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 The large majority of pupils are of Spanish heritage, with a small minority of British and east Asian backgrounds. Spanish is the first language of the large majority of pupils. Nearly all pupils join the school in the early years section, and hence speak little or no English. As a result, assessments of pupils on entry cannot be validly compared with any national or international benchmarks. The school has identified 68 pupils with special educational needs (SEND), mainly attention deficit disorder, all of whom receive specialised support.

## 2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

**This is a COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas.** The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

**Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.**

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in November 2018.

## Key findings

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

### Part 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**
- 2.3 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

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

- 2.4 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**
- 2.5 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

### Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.6 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.**
- 2.7 Suitable arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and such arrangements are in line with Spanish law and have regard to latest statutory and non-statutory guidance in the UK. The structures ensure that pupils are listened to and provided with early help. The particular vulnerability of those with SEND is recognised. Staff are aware of the code of conduct and whistleblowing policies. Safeguarding is managed effectively, and communication between the school and the authorities promotes the well-being of pupils at risk or in danger of harm. Pupils have a secure awareness of how to keep safe on-line.
- 2.8 Good behaviour is promoted. The system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood and effective, and bullying is prevented as far as is reasonably practical. The school complies with the relevant health and safety laws and fire safety standards. Documentation is thorough and shows an effective overview of procedures. Pupils are properly supervised, and attendance and admissions procedures ensure that the school can find the whereabouts of a pupil. The risks to pupils of all activities are appropriately assessed and recorded. First aid is administered in a timely manner.

### Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.10 The suitability of persons appointed as members of staff is checked in line with both national requirements and guidance issued to schools in the UK. Appropriate checks are made on staff supplied to the school by agencies, on those working as contractors and on volunteers. Proprietors (governors) are checked to an appropriate level. A comprehensive and accurate register is maintained of the recruitment checks undertaken on all those above.

### Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.12 Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided, including those for disabled pupils. The medical rooms provide accommodation to cater for the medical and therapy needs of all pupils. Premises and

accommodation are maintained to a standard so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. The acoustic conditions and lighting are suitable. External lighting ensures that pupils can safely enter and leave the school premises. The provision of water for drinking and washing is suitable. Outdoor space, both on and off the school site, is provided for physical education and play.

## **Part 6 – Provision of information**

### **2.13 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

- 2.14 The contact details for the school, the head and the chair of the governing body, and a statement of the school's ethos are provided for parents of current and prospective pupils on the school website.
- 2.15 Policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for SEND and EAL; the school's academic performance; complaints procedure; curriculum policy; arrangements for promoting good behaviour and preventing bullying, and for health and safety and first aid are made available to parents of current and prospective pupils on the school website.
- 2.16 The school's policy on safeguarding pupils is published on the school website. The school provides an annual written report of each pupil's progress and attainment.

## **Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

- 2.17 The school's complaints procedure is available on the school website. It provides for concerns and complaints to be considered on an informal basis; the establishment of a formal procedure for a complaint to be made in writing; provision for a hearing before a panel which includes an independent member and allows for parent to be accompanied; provision for the panel to make findings and recommendations and for a confidential record to be kept of findings.

## **Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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

- 2.19 The leadership and management of the school (including the members of the governing board) demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities so that the BSO standards are met consistently. In both the school's day-to-day leadership and in the oversight of, and decisions made by, the governing board, the well-being of pupils is actively promoted.
- 2.20 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the pupils' learning, achievement and personal development.

### 3. Inspection of Educational Quality

#### Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development;

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

The report refers to year groups in accordance with the system most commonly used in England. Where the school's own names differ from those used in England, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>	<i>Spanish equivalent</i>
Pre-Nursery	Kindergarten	
Nursery	Nursery	1º curso educación infantil
Reception	Reception	2º curso educación infantil
Year 1	Year 1	3º curso educación infantil
Year 2	Year 2	1º curso educación primaria
Year 3	Year 3	2º curso educación primaria
Year 4	Year 4	3º curso educación primaria
Year 5	Year 5	4º curso educación primaria
Year 6	Year 6	5º curso educación primaria
Year 7	Year 7	6º curso educación primaria
Year 8	Year 8	1º curso educación secundaria obligatoria
Year 9	Year 9	2º curso educación secundaria obligatoria
Year 10	Year 10	3º curso educación secundaria obligatoria
Year 11	Year 11	4º curso educación secundaria obligatoria



## Key findings

**3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.**

**3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

## Recommendations

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes the school may want to consider:

- further encouraging and allowing pupils to take more initiative and be more enquiring in lessons;
- developing pupils' creativity to the same high level as their other learning skills;
- accelerating areas of pupils' physical development that have been adversely affected by the pandemic.

## The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

**3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.**

3.5 When children first enter the Nursery, their communication and language are at the initial stages of development, and when assessed they score in the lower ranges. The school's courageous approach does not seek to over-accelerate progress in every area in these early years. As a result, as they finish Reception and move into Year 1, most children are achieving overall in line with pupils of the same age in the UK ('UK norms'), except for physical development and expressive arts and design which are above. Communication, language and literacy are below UK norms because nearly all pupils are still developing their English language skills.

3.6 During the subsequent year, the vast majority of children make rapid progress and have attained the foundations for learning which enable them to succeed at a high level as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils are achieving at or above UK norms with a large majority of pupils well above in mathematics. During the next four years, progress continues so that, as they enter secondary school, about two-thirds of pupils are achieving at or higher than expected levels compared to UK pupils taking the same standardised tests in both English and mathematics. From this strong base, secondary pupils maintain good progress. By the end of Year 9, about two-thirds are at or higher than UK norms. Data provided by the school show that progress in mathematics has been less rapid, and the school's leadership has addressed a new emphasis on problem-solving and accessibility of concepts. In contrast, the large majority of pupils make more than expected progress during these three years in English and science. Very few pupils in the school have SEND which have been identified, but data show they achieve in line with other pupils. In both 2018 and 2019, pupils' achievement in IGCSEs and international GCSEs was well above international levels, with three-quarters of examinations graded 9 to 7 (equivalent to A\* or A) and in line with this for the last two years when grades were internally assessed. Achievement has been particularly high in English, the individual sciences, history and modern foreign languages. In recent years, several pupils have gained awards for top marks in IGCSE examinations worldwide. As a result, pupils are well prepared to study the British Council's *Bilingual Baccalaureate* or other courses at schools in Spain and overseas.

3.7 Pupils develop excellent knowledge, understanding and the skills to apply them as they move through the school. In the youngest age groups, teaching is effective in progressively strengthening and consolidating children's linguistic and communicative skills using a wide variety of well-resourced learning spaces. Pupils were observed switching confidently between their native language and English, discovering vocabulary and meaning. More able pupils wrote short accurate sentences relating to identified pictures and quickly mastered parts of speech. The ability of secondary pupils to switch between idiomatic use of their native language and English is a strength of the school, and

successfully reflects the British Council's emphasis on the bilingual and bicultural nature of the education.

- 3.8 Children in the early years learn about trial and error as result of a curriculum that encourages them to experiment, for example making cakes in the Nursery. Primary school pupils start to predict, for example estimating the sizes of shadows as a torch was moved nearer an object. Older pupils accurately identified the three kinds of variable in practical investigations and used exact technical language in explaining the biochemistry of aerobic and anaerobic respiration. Pupils of this age were passionate about the contribution of science to limiting climate change and other moral conundrums, for example, in a knowledgeable presentation on the ethical challenges associated with harvesting embryonic stem cells. Pupils have a good understanding of European and world history, and of geography through the Spanish *sociales* lessons. Pupils respond positively to teaching that challenges, for example at IGCSE expertly demonstrating their knowledge of mediaeval Spanish history in contextualising medieval Spanish literature, the influence of Catholicism and the concept of the paths to celestial enlightenment.
- 3.9 From joining the school, pupils are successfully encouraged to appreciate art. The youngest children independently add shape and colour to painting-walls, and primary school pupils successfully created self-portraits by experimenting using a wide range of media. IGCSE pupils' art shows careful study of the neo-expressionist works of Jean-Michel Basquiat and the African American Romare Bearden, but artwork on show and in portfolios does not evidence the experimentation seen in other areas of the curriculum. The youngest children showed a good level of musicality when selecting and playing percussion instruments, listening carefully to each other, the teacher and the sounds made. All understood loud and soft, fast and slow and enthusiastically joined in the songs. Older pupils were highly successful in producing rhythmic pattern when writing a piece of music to accompany a rap, confidently using and applying terms such as 'dynamics', 'pitch', 'range', 'tempo' and 'texture'. Many pupils pursue their own individual musical studies, achieving distinctions in external classical and rock music examinations.
- 3.10 By the end of the Reception, children have developed high levels in both their gross-motor and fine-motor physical skills. They have excellent spatial awareness, balance and co-ordination enabling them to read, write and access all aspects of the curriculum. For example, in dance children engaged in floor movement on their backs and fronts developing all aspects of their co-ordination and spatial awareness. In the outdoor play area, all children use a wide variety of resources to build constructions requiring strength, co-ordination, manipulation and the use of positional language. Primary school pupils continue this development, showing competence in throwing and catching during physical education (PE) lessons, but the skills of senior pupils are below those expected for pupils of that age. This had already been identified by relevant leaders.
- 3.11 In the youngest years, the engagement with children through play re-enforces key vocabulary and, as a result, they converse easily in both Spanish and English. They quickly develop good phonic skills using correct sounds for initial sounds and blending to make short words. When writing, they have good letter formation and understanding of letter, word and sentence. Written work through the school is of an excellent standard. IGCSE essays in both history and English show a sophisticated use of vocabulary, and a keen awareness in the content of linguistic and structural devices, for example the interplay of rhyming couplet and free verse to reflect chaos in Carol Ann Duffy's *War Photographer*. Pupils' default approach is to draft and redraft written work and, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils agreed that teachers' feedback and marking helps their work to improve. IGCSE pupils demonstrated fluent and animated reading skills in enacting a scene from a Fernando Rojas play. Younger pupils talked with passion about their experience of reading in the school and identified the library as key in this, referencing that their views are regularly sought on which books should be stocked.
- 3.12 Primary school pupils speak confident and accurate English. In art, for example, they talked and listened with care for detail when recollecting the story of Frida Khalo, developing ideas thoughtfully,

describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. They listen attentively in discussions, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views. In discussion, older pupils showed a very high level of speaking skills, constructing solid argument, whether in Spanish or English. Some pupils are at least tri-lingual, and languages are treated as alternatives: pupils do not default to their native tongue out of the hearing of adults. This bilingual approach is encouraged by the relaxed attitude of both native and overseas teachers to the choice pupils make.

- 3.13 Opportunities to manipulate numbers are seized from the earliest age, for example counting candles on birthday cakes. Pupils quickly gain understanding, reinforced by displays which illustrate a wide variety of mathematical knowledge and skills; counting within 10, understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes, capacity and mass. Mastery of number pervades the primary mathematics curriculum, and pupils' confidence is underpinned by lessons in which practice is the norm. Secondary pupils show excellent knowledge of trigonometry and graphical work and apply this knowledge effectively in other subjects. The understanding of those who have particular difficulties in mathematics is reinforced by specialist lessons focusing on problem solving, an aspect of the subject identified by school leaders as relatively less strong. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively when available, but its presence in lessons is rare and, some pupils suggested, was dissuaded. The school's leadership has already recognised the need to introduce ICT more widely as a method of encouraging pupils to take more initiative in their own learning. Pupils were very supportive of the pilot schemes already introduced, and in computer coding lessons they showed good competence, creating complex and elegant programming solutions to verbal problems.
- 3.14 The beginnings of study skills are strongly evident in children's early learning. Children are independent in choosing a wide range of suitable resources to enhance learning. They reflect with each other on what they achieved, ask questions and amend decisions, sometimes after vigorous negotiations. For example, Reception children planned how to build a tall building with construction blocks, carefully analysing how to connect the pieces. Primary school pupils are quick to recall knowledge, but less frequently ask, or are catalysed to ask, challenging questions in lessons. In their responses to the questionnaire, which were overall strongly positive, a very small minority of pupils disagreed that lessons are interesting and challenging, and this was confirmed by inspectors in a few lessons at this age. Many secondary pupils have excellent and well-embedded study skills, but their application can be constrained by the style of lessons. Independent note-taking is routine and, for example, in English and drama, pupils skilfully synthesised their discussions and verbal answers into coherent written summaries. Analysis of performance in music and analysis of literature in Spanish was sophisticated, but elsewhere some teaching did not promote enquiry and, hence, prevented a fuller development of skills evident in other lessons.
- 3.15 Documentation seen and discussions with pupils are strong evidence for their substantial record of achievement before the constraints of the past two years. Pupils regularly have won debating, music and drama competitions in the region and nationally, perform at a high level in music festivals around the country and enjoy a strong record in individual and team sports. The excellent collaboration is exemplified elsewhere in the school. In the early years, children's attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They are enthusiastic and highly productive in their individual play and in collaboration with others. They are curious, ask questions and independently engage in the challenging tasks provided, using initiative to solve problems and to investigate their own interests. Secondary pupils are highly engaged in their academic work. They are diligent, absorb knowledge, and are enthusiastic learners. They work very well collaboratively reflecting regularly on their own work and undertaking self- and peer-assessment.

## The quality of the pupils' personal development

### 3.16 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- 3.17 Pupils have excellent self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-discipline and resilience, including an understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. In response to the questionnaire, the vast majority of parents replied that they thought the school successfully promotes their children's personal development. In the early years, most children show exceptionally high levels of self-understanding for their age. They are self-confident and resilient when faced with difficulties and challenges. They persevere and find solutions to obstacles until they are satisfied with the result. For example, pupils tried various solutions to the problem of a wooden train getting stuck before changing the shape of the track. Primary school pupils exemplify the school's values of flexibility and resilience. They have strong trusting relationships with their peers. During a robotics day, they showed enormous persistence creating and modifying codes to solve increasingly difficult challenges, and in PE guided each other to improve their performance. The successful impact of teaching on learning is evident in the clear feedback given to secondary school pupils in written work, and in pupils' responses.
- 3.18 Younger pupils develop their abilities to make decisions in many of their lessons. For example, in mathematics whether to attempt beginner, intermediate or challenging decimal place questions. In both the primary and secondary school council meetings, pupils show a mature approach, weighing argument and listening carefully to others' views, for example about when reviewing the school's COVID arrangements. In this context, pupils show good understanding that the decisions they make are important determinants of their own and others' well-being. In discussion, older pupils reported that the decisions they made about subject choice and post-IGCSE study had been well informed, and they had prepared themselves for life beyond school. Senior pupils being prepared for confirmation talked about the importance of their faith, and how they now felt ready to affirm it. They said this was a personal decision and, although the school undeniably supported them, not the least in the provision of confirmation lessons through priests on the staff, that their faith remained a very personal relationship with God, as one person expressed, 'It was time to confirm what I believe and approach my faith in a more mature manner'.
- 3.19 The school promotes a strong loyalty to the community, and this has a significant impact upon the pupils' spiritual understanding, although in discussions most pupils did not define it as that. They have a latent ability to appreciate the non-material, for example expressing their passion for the geography of Spain. The youngest pupils demonstrated a mature understanding of spirituality when they considered ways they may communicate with God and drew from Bible readings the message of being kind to each other. Older pupils' spiritual understanding and appreciation for the non-material aspects of life are excellent. Pupils develop spiritual insights through religious studies lessons and tutorials on mindfulness. In essays on Shelley's *Ozymandias*, IGCSE pupils identified the belief of humanity's insignificance compared to the vastness of nature and the perpetuity of art and literature. They show understanding of the meaning beyond the literal and of the creative choices made by authors and artists. In English and Spanish literature and mathematics, they discussed with sophistication the path from temporal life to spiritual enlightenment, an appreciation of architectural beauty and symmetry. The development of this appreciation is furthered through visits to the art galleries of Madrid and performing in the inspiring environment of venues like the *Auditorio Nacional*, cathedrals and churches.
- 3.20 Pupils show an excellent ability to distinguish right from wrong, understand and respect systems of rules and laws, and accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others. From the start, children develop a strong understanding of appropriate behaviour and want to please their friends and those who care for them. On the occasions, when they struggle to share and take turns, staff support them to work out resolutions for themselves. During discussions with primary pupils, they showed a mature awareness of their need for rules. In these discussions, they had an excellent understanding of self-discipline and of the moral responsibility to do the right thing, and clearly knew

the difference between right and wrong. In lessons, secondary pupils behave well towards each other, exemplifying the school's values of caring, flexibility and resilience. In discussions, they were clear that they would not accept bad behaviour such as bullying and that, if it happened, the school would intervene and take action to support individuals. In response to the questionnaires, almost all the pupils agreed that the school encourages them to behave well, and almost all parents that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Their moral awareness developed in history lessons on the slave trade and a discussion around the moral agency in *Othello*. At IGCSE pupils showed exceptional understanding of ethical frameworks in explaining utilitarian and humanitarian approaches and having confidence to speak and share these thoughts with the class.

- 3.21 Pupils' social awareness is a major strength of the school. They work extremely effectively with others, solving problems and achieving common goals. Almost all pupils start at the school at an early age, and hence the bond between peers is secure. There is a clear process for helping to integrate newcomers, and this was reflected on positively by pupils who had arrived more recently. Many pupils cite the pastoral arrangements, the 'families', as providing a crucial structure. The foundation for their strong collaboration starts at this stage. For example, during a free-flow part of the lesson in Reception, pupils coloured a life-sized silhouette of a classmate, and allowed each other time to work on a small section before the next person coloured their bit. The conversation was lively but respectful of one another, allowing each to speak. In another lesson defining the term 'king' in a lesson about King Ethelred, pupils built on an initial 'someone very special who lives in a castle' by adding '...and a ruler of the country'. There was a sense of collaboration in this agreed definition. These specific examples anticipate the higher-level collaboration in the primary and secondary age groups. In wide-ranging discussions with pupils, they highlighted the collaborative and inclusive nature of the school and, in particular, the way boys and girls are treated equally and feel included. In class, pupils comfortably contribute in discussion and group activities, and it is clear that classrooms are secure and safe spaces for pupils to discuss, interact and share any concerns or worries. They are unafraid of making mistakes and are supported by strong relationships with their teachers. In peer assessment, which is widely used, pupils give and receive criticism with honesty and openness.
- 3.22 Pupils contribute positively to the lives of others through extensive charitable work at the school and in Madrid. There is a clear focus on looking after each other and supporting each other. The formalisation of election to the school's charity groups reflects the importance placed on these activities by both pupils and staff. Since the previous BSO inspection, pupils have visited homes for the elderly, playing music and speaking to patients. Pre-COVID, pupils have supported British Council ventures in Nepal and Romania, and documentation seen is evidence of the positive impact these had on individual pupils. Pupils welcome such opportunities and show no sense of entitlement or privilege in school. They show respect for others in an atmosphere which engenders support for significant achievement in performance.
- 3.23 Pupils show extremely high levels of respect and value diversity within society, show respect for and appreciation of their own and other cultures and, when opportunities arise, demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. This includes an awareness and respect for the protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The approach of pupils ensures very effectively that the school more than meets its aim to develop well-rounded, highly motivated global citizens aware of their responsibilities to others. They demonstrate an openness to a worldview that extends beyond the school's successful bi-cultural record. A few pupils have native languages other than Spanish or English. All have an often-understated respect for those of different backgrounds, race or gender. Boys and girls work seamlessly together, and their interactions assist and support their academic and social development. A piece of IGCSE artwork declares that 'beauty sees no gender', and another that 'boys do cry', but otherwise in discussions it was clear that understanding of differences and commonality between groups was unquestioned. In response to the questionnaires, the vast majority of pupils said that the school encourages them to respect other people and to be tolerant of people with different faiths and beliefs, and almost all

parents agreed the school promotes the same values. In lessons, pupils were engaged in learning the history of blues music and were able to see and be respectful of the social context in which the blues began. They demonstrated a sensible and mature attitude to a discussion on the topic of slavery and an appreciation of the musical traditions that grew out of it. Others spoke passionately and emotionally about the importance of welcoming refugees to Spain, demonstrating a clear and sensitive understanding of the role that religion and culture play in the lives of others. Younger pupils developed an excellent understanding of diversity when gardening with volunteers with SEND, engaging positively with them, and listening respectfully and collaborating successfully on their garden project. Older pupils displayed excellent understanding of and support for autistic pupils through their reading and performing of the *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*.

- 3.24 The youngest children show a mature understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They move around the setting and assess risk, particularly when engaged in a range of physical activities. Staff allow their development through an approach which expertly promotes exploration and safety. Pupils develop their understanding of healthy food and hygiene procedures such as hand-washing and cleaning their teeth through established routines. During discussions with primary pupils, they confidently expressed their feeling of being safe at school and highlighted numerous examples of the safe measures the school has put in place when using technology at the school. Secondary pupils have an excellent awareness of the lifestyles that support physical and mental well-being, and said they value the school's guidance on mindfulness. Pupils enjoy sport and exercise, although opportunities for these have been constrained in recent years, and the school has already recognised that in some areas their development has not progressed. Pupils recognise the constituents of a healthy diet. Although the vast majority of pupils in their response to the questionnaire agreed that the school provides them with a safe and healthy environment, in discussion and written responses concerns were raised about the suitability of food provided, and the time to eat it. Inspectors looked closely at this and agree with the school that the tight COVID arrangements have indirectly negatively affected choices.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole	Reporting inspector
Dr Patricia Preedy	Accompanying reporting inspector
Mr Jonathan Coward	Team inspector (Schools improvement partner, Spain)
Mr Andrew Gillespie	Team inspector (Vice Principal, Society of Heads school, UK)
Mr Dean Moore	Team inspector (Head, BSO school, Spain)
Mr Umeshchandra Raja	Team inspector (Head, ISA school, UK)
Mr Robin Silk	Team inspector (Head, ISA school, UK)
Ms Louise Simpson	Team inspector (Head, HMC school, UK)
Mrs Sarah White	Team inspector (Head, BSO school, Belgium)