ISI British Schools Overseas

part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas (BSO) inspection report

8 to 10 December 2025

British Embassy School Ankara

Sehit Ersan Caddesi 46/a

Çankaya

06680

Ankara

Turkey

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect British Schools Overseas (BSO). Our inspections report on the extent to which the BSO Standards are met, referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

Provision at the school meets the requirements of the BSO Standards with minor issues identified for improvement and/or the principle of proportionality has been applied.

1. Leaders create a positive ethos in the school and put in place appropriate policies and procedures to promote the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders carefully evaluate the effectiveness of their provision and have a clear vision for the school's future development, and its relationship with the British Embassy. Leaders have planned effectively for the recent increase in age range and the introduction of IGCSE courses for secondary pupils. Governors have a well-informed oversight of the work of leaders and have provided support and challenge to leaders in the implementation of these changes, and the recent transition in leadership.

2. Procedures to evaluate and manage risk are effective. Pupils are treated with equality. Parental complaints are dealt with in line with the published policy. Leaders in the early years oversee the delivery of a well-planned curriculum and ensure that staff have suitable support and training to carry out their roles.

3. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils. It has developed to meet the requirements of pupils who are undertaking IGCSE examination courses. Pupils typically make good progress because teaching builds on their prior learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points because teachers understand their needs and take these into account in their planning.

4. Teaching in the primary and early years sections is typically well planned and engages pupils in their learning. However, in the secondary section, teaching does not always ensure that all pupils understand the tasks set, this means that some pupils do not engage in their learning as well as they could. In addition, teachers' feedback does not always ensure that pupils in the secondary section understand how to improve their work.

5. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress because teachers adapt their strategies to support their language acquisition. The communication and language skills of children in the early years develop well because of the focus on this area of learning.

6. Leaders create a welcoming environment and have clear behavioural expectations, and pupils behave well. Leaders address any instances of bullying promptly. Many pupils join the school for a relatively short period of time, sometimes at intermediate points during the school year, and leaders ensure they are supported in their transition. A well-planned personal social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme supports pupils' personal development. Children in the early years learn to co-operate and manage their emotions. Teachers model good behaviour and provide a supportive environment for children in the setting.

7. The school site is generally well maintained and effective procedures are in place to reduce the risk from fire. Inspectors identified a few issues around the school site which were addressed during the inspection. Suitable first aid provision, supervision arrangements and procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are in place.

8. Leaders actively promote the values inherent to British and Turkish society such as respect and tolerance. Pupils understand the importance of protected characteristics and know that these

should be respected. They learn about the laws and public institutions of both countries. However, pupils' understanding of the major world faiths and religions is not as well developed.

9. There is a suitable careers programme for older pupils, which helps to inform their choices for their next stage in education as well as for later life. Pupils learn to contribute to both their school and locality. They have an increasing financial awareness and recognise the moral and ethical choices related to some economic decisions. Children in the early years learn to co-operate and share with others and are keen to help adults in tasks around the setting.

10. There are effective arrangements to safeguard pupils. Staff are suitably trained to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues. Leaders take prompt action when required. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online, and their activity on the internet is monitored with care. All required checks on staff are undertaken and suitably recorded.

The extent to which the school meets the BSO Standards

The school meets all the BSO Standards.

- BSO Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- BSO Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- BSO Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- BSO Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- BSO Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teachers check secondary pupils' engagement with and understanding of learning activities to enable them to make the best progress in lessons
- ensure that feedback to secondary pupils enables them to know how to improve their work to help them to make consistently good progress
- ensure that all areas of the school site are maintained to an appropriately high standard
- strengthen pupils' understanding of major world faiths and religions.

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Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders prioritise pupils' wellbeing in the decisions they make. They are responsive to pupils' pastoral needs and concerns and have established a positive ethos that is recognised and understood by the school community. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support pupils' wellbeing, and these are implemented effectively. Leaders demonstrate appropriate knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to meet the BSO Standards.

12. Leaders have effective processes to evaluate the school's provision and reflect carefully on their findings. They use this evaluation to identify priorities for improvement, such as the recent implementation of a new leadership structure. Leaders planned effectively for the changes to the school's age range, and the first group of Year 11 pupils is now approaching their IGCSE examinations. A suitable curriculum has been developed for secondary pupils, and additional staff and training are in place to support this development.

13. Leaders' recent changes to arrangements for the monitoring of the quality of teaching are effective in the primary section. In the secondary section, these processes are not fully embedded and there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

14. The governors have effective measures in place to check that leaders have the skills and knowledge they require and fulfil their roles effectively. Governors visit the school regularly to meet with leaders and staff and receive regular and detailed reports in their meetings. This allows them to provide informed challenge and support and provides them with assurance that the BSO Standards are met. They have guided and supported the school well through recent major changes.

15. Leaders provide or make available the required information for parents of current and prospective pupils, mostly through the school's website. Regular reports on their child's progress are provided to parents, and these are supplemented by meetings with teaching staff.

16. The school is located in the grounds of the British Embassy and maintains close links. The embassy provides support and guidance as required. Leaders also work with local authorities, such as the Turkish police and other embassies, when necessary.

17. Processes for managing risk are secure. Leaders are knowledgeable about the school's local context and put in place clear procedures to manage any risks. Staff are well trained to assess risk. Risk assessments are suitably detailed and include appropriate measures to mitigate the risks identified. These cover the school site, activities such as science and technology lessons and educational visits, many of which are residential. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly for any lessons learned and are updated, as necessary.

18. Leaders in the early years promote children's wellbeing through a carefully planned curriculum and effective arrangements to support children. Staff receive regular training and are coached and monitored so they can develop their practice. Regular progress meetings ensure that the needs of children are understood, and they make good progress.

19. There is an appropriate complaints policy in place, which leaders follow as required. Leaders keep suitable records of complaints, including the stage reached, any actions taken and their outcomes.

20. Leaders promote equality through their actions and the school's ethos. They make effective adjustments to the provision so that pupils can access the curriculum and co-curricular programme as well as providing appropriate arrangements to enable pupils to access the buildings and facilities.

The extent to which the school meets the BSO Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

21. All the relevant BSO Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders have developed a curriculum which covers a suitably wide range of subjects and develops pupils' mathematical, linguistic and technological skills and knowledge. Pupils learn French and Turkish in the primary school, specialising in one in secondary. Pupils study design and food technology throughout the school with a choice of design and food technology at GCSE. They all have opportunities to study art and to take part in sport and physical education (PE). The curriculum promotes British values, such as democracy, respect and tolerance, particularly through PSHE lessons and assemblies. It is aligned to the age, needs and aptitudes of pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve well and typically make good progress from their starting points during their time at the school.

23. A significant contextual feature of the school is the number of pupils who attend for a limited time, sometimes joining at various points during the school year. Leaders are careful to identify the starting points for these pupils, so that teaching is planned to meet their needs.

24. Pupils generally apply themselves well, act responsibly and are self-motivated, acquiring new knowledge and skills. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects and make effective use of resources.

25. Lessons in the primary section are typically well planned and use effective teaching methods. Teachers create a positive and encouraging atmosphere and provide activities that are well matched to pupils' prior attainment. This means that pupils apply themselves well.

26. In the secondary section, pupils make good progress overall. However, in some areas, teachers do not check that pupils understand the planned activities. When this happens, some pupils do not engage in the learning tasks, and their understanding of the topic and their subsequent progress in lessons are limited.

27. In the primary section, a newly introduced assessment framework allows leaders to monitor pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching. In the secondary section, leaders use a variety of methods to assess pupils' progress. They use this knowledge to track pupils' progress from their starting points, so they can provide support and ensure they are making progress in line with their abilities. In some cases, secondary pupils are not provided with effective feedback to enable them to understand how to improve their work.

28. Pupils who have SEND are supported well. Prompt use of diagnostic screening means that the needs of pupils are quickly identified. These pupils are provided with individual learning plans so that teachers can adapt their strategies to support pupils. In addition, leaders' decision to provide learning support assistants to support individual pupils, where required, helps enable pupils who have SEND to make good progress over time.

29. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress in developing their verbal and written proficiency in English. Many pupils speak EAL, and teachers routinely adapt their teaching to take this into account. For those who require additional support with this aspect of their learning, their individual needs are identified, and additional support is provided.

30. Leaders in the early years are careful to plan a curriculum that supports children's development well. Most children in the Nursery speak EAL, and leaders appropriately focus on the development of their

communication and language skills. Teachers model word sounds and vocabulary carefully. In consequence, children in the setting make good progress. Leaders support teachers' planning and delivery, promoting effective practice. Assessment information informs teaching. Activities are well matched to children's interests, and teachers liaise well with families so that links can be made between their learning at home and at school.

31. A varied range of co-curricular clubs and activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop physical, creative, performance and technical skills. These include a ukelele group, a cookery club and dance sessions. Effective use is made of the outdoor learning area to enhance classroom-based activities. Through these activities, pupils gain new skills, knowledge and interests.

The extent to which the school meets the BSO Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

32. All the relevant BSO Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

33. In line with the ethos of the school, leaders model welcoming and respectful behaviour in their interactions with pupils and staff. This helps pupils to understand what is expected of them and how they should behave towards other people. Pupils learn that all people should be treated respectfully, whatever their personal characteristics. Pupils develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of a supportive environment which celebrates their achievements and gives them opportunities to learn about themselves.

34. Leaders provide a warm welcome to pupils who join the school at various points, and staff are effective at helping them to settle in to their new environment. In most cases, existing pupils readily empathise with newcomers and will seek to include them in activities.

35. Leaders support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing through a carefully planned pastoral care system. Teachers know pupils well and provide support when required. Pupils can identify many adults whom they can approach for support. Several staff are specifically trained to provide mental health and emotional support when required.

36. Pupils' physical development is supported in PE lessons, sports clubs and games fixtures. These provide numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their physical fitness. Personal, social, health and economic education lessons increase pupils' awareness of healthy eating, the importance of keeping fit and other aspects of physical health. For the older pupils who opt to study IGCSE PE, the curriculum provides extensive opportunities to learn about physiology, nutrition and develops coaching skills, which they can share with their peers.

37. The PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum develop an age-appropriate understanding of the importance of positive relationships, and topics such as consent. Pupils engage positively in lessons because teachers encourage them to discuss topics in a sensitive and respectful manner. Leaders consult parents about the curriculum content.

38. Leaders have developed an effective and consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well. An appropriate anti-bullying strategy is in place and the school acts promptly when incidents arise. Suitable arrangements are made to supervise pupils when they are on site, and on a varied range of school trips, including residential visits to international venues.

39. There are effective systems to monitor pupils' attendance and leaders follow up on any absences promptly, supporting pupils to improve their attendance if required. The attendance policy was amended during the inspection to reflect the most recent guidance for schools in the United Kingdom. The school maintains a suitable admission register and liaises effectively with pupils' previous and future schools when they transfer.

40. Processes for health and safety checks and fire precautions are secure and in line with local requirements. Staff are well trained in the school's procedures. Governors tour the site regularly to assure themselves that the policies are followed in practice. The premises are generally well maintained. However, during the inspection, a few minor issues were identified on the school site. These were addressed promptly by the school before the end of the inspection.

41. Effective arrangements are in place to provide first aid and to meet the medical needs of pupils. The school nurse and many staff are trained in first aid, including suitable training for those working with children in the early years, and those undertaking roles such as leading off-site activities. Additional training is in place to meet the needs of pupils with specific medical conditions. There are suitably private medical facilities to accommodate pupils who are unwell or injured.

42. Children in the early years develop their personal understanding and physical skills well. Leaders plan carefully and provide opportunities so that children can become effective learners and develop skills such as resilience, determination and collaboration as they play and learn together. This continues throughout the junior years.

43. In the early years, effective provision supports children's personal, emotional and physical development. Staff welcome them on arrival and help children to manage their own emotions and cope with disappointments and challenges. Children have a large range of staff they can turn to for encouragement and support, and they are well supervised. They have many opportunities to develop their physical skills in the outdoor learning areas.

The extent to which the school meets the BSO Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

44. All the relevant BSO Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

45. Leaders give a high priority to promoting British values and an understanding of British society. Pupils learn to understand values, such as democracy and the importance of individual liberty, in PSHE, assemblies and other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to experience the democratic process through, for example, voting for the school council and other pupil leadership roles. Hustings take place where candidates present their ideas, and answer questions from their peers.

46. Pupils learn that people have different beliefs and ways of life, and the importance of respecting other people's views and celebrating diversity in society. They develop an understanding of laws and institutions in both Turkey and the United Kingdom, to prepare them for later life. This understanding is enhanced by a range of residential trips which helps them to develop an understanding of aspects of daily life in English society.

47. Religious education is provided in assemblies which focus on a diverse range of celebrations and festivals. However, the scope and content of these sessions is restricted and consequently pupils' understanding of major world faiths and religions remains limited.

48. Pupils develop their economic and financial understanding well. Pupils in Year 6 find out how profit is distributed in Fairtrade supply chains. Older pupils debate the benefits and disadvantages of a universal basic income. Such activities also develop their understanding of how moral and economic choices may come into conflict. They consider how the production of palm oil in some countries may have environmental consequences as well as economic benefits.

49. Pupils receive suitable careers guidance, which informs them about their next stage of education or employment choices. Younger pupils in the secondary section consider their future goals and receive guidance on their option choices at IGSCE. Older pupils receive tailored guidance on future schools, university options and possible careers.

50. Pupils are taught about their civic rights and how these are balanced with responsibilities. Pupils accept responsibility for their behaviour and are keen to contribute to their school and support projects in the school's locality. Pupils take part in house events and support each other in competitions. They raise money for local charities and take part in more practical activities such as undertaking a beach clean. These activities help pupils to develop an understanding of the importance of making a positive contribution to society.

51. Leaders in the early years promote children's social development well. Children are encouraged to play with others and to learn to share and co-operate with others. They enjoy helping to hand out equipment and tidy up at the end of sessions. Children in Nursery develop their financial understanding as they exchange money for goods, recognise coins and work out if they have enough money to afford items. As they work together to build dens in their outdoor learning environment, and learn to care for the animals there, they begin to develop a sense of responsibility for others. They are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.

The extent to which the school meets the BSO Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

52. All the relevant BSO Standards are met.

Safeguarding

53. Leaders have created an effective safeguarding culture throughout the school. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and are alert to potential concerns. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and their understanding of this training is assessed. The training covers the most recent guidance for schools in the United Kingdom, including the reporting of low-level concerns about adults, and the dangers of extremism.

54. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are knowledgeable and suitably trained. Leaders take prompt action in response to any safeguarding concerns. They maintain detailed records, which include any actions arising. They liaise with the local police and other authorities where required.

55. Staff are alert to indications of abuse or neglect and are confident to report any concerns about adults. They recognise the additional vulnerabilities of pupils who have SEND. Staff report any concerns promptly using the school's online platform.

56. Leaders follow suitable safer recruitment processes. The required checks, including criminal background checks, are carried out before anyone is allowed to start work at the school. The single central record of appointments (SCR) provides an accurate record of the safeguarding checks.

57. Pupils learn how to remain safe in PSHE lessons, assemblies and other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are taught about online safety in the computing curriculum. They learn about the risks around sharing information with people they do not know and how to seek help if they are concerned, as well as the risks inherent in using artificial intelligence and the dangers of misinformation online. Pupils know how to raise any concerns with adults.

58. The school has a suitable internet filtering and monitoring system in place. Leaders receive alerts to notify them of any potential issues with pupils' internet use. They respond to these promptly and appropriately.

The extent to which the school meets the BSO Standards relating to safeguarding

59. All the relevant BSO Standards are met.

School details

School	British Embassy School Ankara
Department for Education number	000/6124
URN	132290
Address	British Embassy School Ankara Sehit Ersan Caddesi 46/a Çankaya 06680 Ankara Turkey
Phone number	+90 (312) 468 6563
Email address	admin@besaturkey.org
Website	www.besaturkey.org
Proprietor	The British Embassy Ankara
Chair	Mr Arda Yakici
Principal	Mr William Phelps
Age range	3 to 16
Number of pupils	237
Date of previous BSO inspection	4 to 8 April 2022

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Information about the school

60. The British Embassy School Ankara (BESA) is an independent co-educational day school, which operates on a not-for-profit basis. It is in the grounds of the British Embassy, which oversees its operations through a board of governors. The current headteacher and chair of governors took up their positions in September 2025.

61. The school comprises early years, primary and secondary sections. There are 35 children below the age of 5, who are taught in one Reception class and one Nursery class.

62. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. English is an additional language for 137 pupils.

63. The school states its aims are to prepare students for the challenges of an ever-changing world. It seeks to guide each individual in becoming global citizens who actively contribute to creating a positive impact on society. It endeavours to deliver the best of British education, with an international dimension.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	8 to 10 December 2025

64. A team of three inspectors visited the school for three days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

65. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of assemblies and registration periods
- tours of the school site
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the facilities for sport and physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work with pupils and with staff
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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How are British Schools Overseas inspected?

- The Department for Education accredits British international schools which meet the BSO Standards. Accreditation last for three years from the date of inspection.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect BSO schools. ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the school meets the Standards.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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