



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

British Junior Academy of Brussels

May 2022

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School's Details

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|---------------------------------|--|-----|--------------------|----|
| School | British Junior Academy of Brussels | | | |
| Address | British Junior Academy of Brussels Lower School 83 Boulevard Saint Michel 1040 Etterbeek Brussels | | | |
| | British Junior Academy of Brussels Prep School 101 Boulevard Louis Schmidt 1040 Etterbeek Brussels | | | |
| Telephone number | +32 2 732 53 76 | | | |
| Email address | info@bjab.org | | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sarah White | | | |
| Proprietor | Mme Patricia de Maertelaere | | | |
| Age range | 3 to 14 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 214 | | | |
| | Lower school | 152 | Prep school | 62 |
| Inspection dates | 17 to 18 May 2022 | | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The British Junior Academy of Brussels (BJAB) is an independent co-educational day school situated in the heart of the European quarter of Brussels. The school opened in 1992, primarily for children from the British expatriate community. Under the current proprietor, since 1999, it has served a broader spectrum of the community and a wide range of nationalities. It is registered as a not-for-profit organisation under Belgian law. The school is housed in two buildings in close proximity. One building houses the lower school for pupils from the age of three up to the age of nine and the other, the prep school, for pupils between the ages of nine and fourteen. The latter opened in September 2020.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school is characteristically British in its ethos and style with an emphasis on traditional values. The school's aim is to deliver a broad and balanced education, which enables the individual child to develop to his or her maximum potential, in a dynamic and caring environment that promotes the essential qualities of integrity, loyalty, self-discipline, independence, self-confidence, kindness, mutual respect and consideration.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Most pupils are the children of expatriate families, with 34 different nationalities represented in the school. Seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom four receive additional support for learning, cognitive, emotional, physical and other needs. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is 123, and 15 of these receive additional support for their English. For more able pupils identified by the school, the curriculum is modified as appropriate.

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 ONLY inspection and as such 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 May 2019.

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 The school offers a broad curriculum which enables a wide range of educational opportunities. Pupils participate in a programme that provides a linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. Much of the curriculum reflects the National Curriculum in the United Kingdom (UK) with an additional focused approach on the teaching of French. Children in the nursery and reception classes broadly follow the early years' curriculum. The programmes of study throughout the school are planned effectively and scrutiny of long, medium and short term planning shows how the school meets the needs of all pupils. For those pupils for whom English is not their native language, careful planning and appropriate support ensures they develop a good understanding of the language.
- 2.4 The school operates a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) scheme of work which not only supports the pupils in being valuable members of a cohesive school community but also prepares them well for life after they leave. The PSHE scheme focuses on the school values and they are intrinsic in ensuring that every pupil is valued and can attend without fear of discrimination. For pupils of senior school age in the prep school, there is a suitable programme of careers guidance. In the questionnaires, a few parents felt that there was not a good choice of extra-curricular activities. For the size of the school there is a suitable range of after school activities which caters for the artistic, physical and cerebral needs of pupils. The school curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared to be responsible citizens in the next stages of lives, whether that be in Brussels or elsewhere in the world.
- 2.5 Teaching at the school is well planned to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of their abilities or whether English is their first language. When required, there is an effective system of support which focuses on the educational needs of the individual. Pupils benefit from relatively small classes where they can receive maximum input from teachers and their assistants. Staff know the pupils well and ensure that their individual needs are met. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress across the curriculum. In general, effective teaching strategies are in place to engage the pupils and stimulate their interest. In the questionnaires, a very small minority of pupils stated that they did not find some lessons interesting or challenging. Inspection evidence shows that there a few occasions when teaching is not as engaging as the vast majority observed. A range of resources are well used by teachers, whether they be technological or more traditional classroom apparatus. Classroom environments are orderly, with teachers managing pupil behaviour extremely well. Staff at the school ensure that every pupil is treated with respect and the school actively upholds the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 2.6 The school has an effective system in place to assess pupil progress. This includes baseline testing to indicate pupils' potential followed by progress and attainment testing as they move through the year groups. The school's assessment programme includes verbal and non-verbal reasoning and cognitive ability tests.

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

2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

- 2.8 The school successfully provides a value based education that is referenced to British values and allows the pupils, with age appropriateness, to have the knowledge and understanding to know how to live by the sentiments of these. Any political or unbalanced views against the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation are immediately challenged. Pupils state that they live in a harmonious community where individuality is openly celebrated. They understand that making the right decisions in their work and friendships impacts not only on their lives, but on the lives of others. They have strong moral values and this is reflected in the high standards of behaviour observed during the inspection visits. They take their responsibility as global citizens seriously. Pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence in a learning environment that constantly praises and recognises their individual achievements. Pupils relish the opportunities to work and support the wider community, especially those who may be less fortunate than themselves. The school embraces the rich cultural diversity of the city in which it is located.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

- 2.10 The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that is implemented effectively. The policy reflects current UK statutory guidance, such as *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. All staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibilities, are suitably trained to carry out their roles. In discussions, staff felt that the training that they have received prepared them well to ensure the safety of the pupils in their care. Recent training has focused on peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment between children as well as how to manage, record and report any low-level concerns. The school's proprietor has a clear overview of safeguarding arrangements and works closely with the designated safeguarding lead. Part of this oversight process involves an annual review of procedures. Pupils state that they feel safe in the school and know that there are adults to whom they can talk should they have any worries or concerns. They do so knowing that the staff will respond promptly and supportively. The school has a suitable Prevent policy that pays due attention to the potential dangers of extremism.
- 2.11 The school has a suitable behaviour policy that is delivered effectively to ensure that pupils' conduct is of a high standard. In the questionnaires almost all parents who responded, felt that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Inspection evidence, through observations and discussions, support this view. The school has a system of rewards and sanctions that pupils know and understand. The vast majority of pupils feel that they are applied fairly and consistently. All behavioural incidents are logged on the school's electronic management system which allows pastoral leaders to identify any patterns or trends. Positive behaviour across the school is reinforced through the school values and is celebrated, for example, in reward assemblies and by head's commendations. A record is kept of any serious sanctions, though since the previous inspection there have been none. The school rejects the use of corporal punishment.
- 2.12 There is a suitable anti-bullying policy in place that is implemented effectively. In discussions during the inspection, pupils were adamant that there is no bullying in the school. This was a view also shared by staff and reflects the very few minor incidents recorded on the electronic logs of bullying incidents. Staff are well trained to deal with any occurrence of bullying. The proprietor has effective oversight of all behavioural and bullying matters. Pupils are supported effectively in how to deal with bullying incidents should they occur through PSHE lessons, assemblies and theme days or weeks. They are aware of cyber-bullying and understand how to use technology appropriately. This is supported by a suitable e-safety policy.
- 2.13 The school pays due regard to all matters relating to health and safety and ensures that it complies with all relevant Belgian legislation. Senior leaders, including the proprietor, carry out regular health and safety walks, ensuring that both sites do not present any risks to pupils, staff or visitors. Detailed

records are kept on the regular checks and audits that are undertaken to maintain the school site to a satisfactory standard. This includes all fire equipment and installations. There is a suitable fire risk assessment in place for both sites. Pupils understand what to do in the case of fire or any other emergency, and regular evacuation drills are undertaken. Staff feel that they are well trained should there be any incidents. The school's arrangements demonstrate that its policies and procedures are implemented effectively.

- 2.14 The school has a significant number of staff trained in first aid, most of which are at the paediatric level. Staff feel that they are trained well to deal with any medical emergency. The school is well supplied with first aid resources which are available in numerous locations around the sites. Any medicines in school are securely stored in a locked area. The school maintains appropriate records of medicines administered, first aid provided and any accidents. Appropriate arrangements are made when the pupils are off-site, such as when they visit the local sports centre.
- 2.15 Pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school day, including before and after school, and at break and lunch times. Children in the early years are always within sight of a staff member.
- 2.16 The school ensures that pupils are registered at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions using an electronic pupil management system. Any unexplained absences are followed up promptly by the office staff. There is a suitable register of admission which contains all the required information. The school ensures that all registers are backed up regularly and such backups are retained for at least three years.
- 2.17 The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy that sets out its approach to identifying risk and how any issues identified are mitigated. All staff are trained in completing risk assessments. The school has recently strengthened the content of its risk assessments, ensuring that they pay due regard to every specific aspect of risk rather than being generic in nature. All risk assessments are now signed off by the head.

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

- 2.18 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.19 The school has suitable processes in place to ensure that safer recruitment is given a high priority. All staff and proprietors are properly checked in accordance with the school's safer recruitment policy. The school does not use supply staff from an agency. All suitability checks are properly recorded on the school's single central register of appointments. The register is backed up by electronic staff files which house all relevant paperwork associated with the recruitment process.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.20 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.21 The school provides sufficient toilet and washing facilities. Changing and shower facilities are available, if required, for the use of the pupils. There is suitable accommodation for sick or injured pupils. The rooms allocated have access to clean water and are in close proximity to toilets. The school site is maintained to a good standard ensuring the health and safety of everyone. The acoustic conditions and sound insulation in each room are suitable for the activities taking place therein. There is sufficient lighting in teaching areas to enable the activities planned to take place. Around the school site outdoor lighting is in place to ensure everyone's safety when entering or leaving in the hours of darkness. The school provides suitable drinking water throughout both sites, which are clearly labelled as such. Toilets and washing facilities are appropriately supplied with hot and cold water at all times. The hot water does not pose a risk of scalding to users. The school has well maintained and suitable

play and physical education spaces for the pupils. The size of the spaces are adequate and used intelligently and safely.

Part 6 – Provision of information

2.22 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

2.23 The school provides all the required information to parents and parents of prospective pupils. This includes the names and contact details of the headteacher and the proprietor. The school also publishes a statement of its aims and values on its website. All required policies and documentation including the policies for safeguarding, health and safety, curriculum, behaviour, anti-bullying and the complaints procedure are available on an open area of the website. Arrangements for pupils with SEND and/or EAL are also available. The school ensures that a copy of the previous inspection report is published as well as the academic performance of pupils. Parents receive several reports each year relating to their children's progress and attainment.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.24 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

2.25 The school has an appropriate complaints policy and procedure which is made available on the school website. Arrangements outline a three-stage process, informal, formal and panel hearing. The panel hearing stage includes details of an independent member and allows for parents to be accompanied. It makes provision for the panel to make findings and recommendations and for a confidential record to be kept of findings. A careful record is kept of all school complaints. There have been no formal complaints since the previous inspection.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

2.27 Persons with leadership and management roles in the school are suitably skilled and knowledgeable to ensure that the standards are met consistently. This ensures that they actively promote the well-being of pupils. The proprietor has effective oversight of all arrangements and senior leaders are constantly looking at ways to further develop and strengthen their practice.

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration times. 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 Graham Gorton

Reporting inspector

Mrs Karen McDonald-Tuckwell

Team inspector (Head of lower school, IAPS school, UK)