

# British schools overseas annual report 2013/14

A report on the quality of the inspection work carried out by the inspectorates of  
British schools overseas

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## Context

British schools overseas may choose to be inspected against the British schools overseas standards by one of the seven approved overseas inspectorates.<sup>1</sup> The Department for Education (DfE) commissions Ofsted to monitor and report on the quality of these inspections.

During the 2013/14 academic year, four of the seven approved inspectorates completed at least one inspection, similar to that in the past. Her Majesty's Inspectors reviewed three inspection evidence bases and eight inspection reports. There were no on-site monitoring visits. One formal meeting between the DfE, Ofsted and the inspectorates included discussions about the monitoring of overseas inspections and reporting.

## Summary of findings

The quality of the inspectorates' work is the same as that seen in previous years. All of the reports and evidence bases monitored meet the requirements set out by the DfE.

No analysis can be made of the performance of individual overseas inspectorates at this stage, since volumes of inspections for each inspectorate remain low. This report reflects common themes from this year's monitoring of evidence bases and published reports.

## Quality of evidence bases reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectors

Three evidence bases were reviewed. Two met the required standard. Her Majesty's Inspectors were only able to review part of the third evidence base because of the inspectorate's policy on how long inspection evidence is retained. However, the documents seen indicate that a wide range of information and evidence are secured at the time of the inspection.

The evidence bases show that the lead inspectors prepare their inspection teams well. They set out their expectations for the teams and identify clearly the priorities for the inspection. These are based on good analysis of the evidence available before the inspection.

Inspectors seek evidence from a range of sources to substantiate their findings, including the views of pupils, parents or carers and teachers. Evidence is particularly

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<sup>1</sup> The approved inspectorates are: Cambridge Education, CfBT Education Trust, G2G Education Ltd, Independent Schools Inspectorate, Penta International, and Tribal Education Ltd. Additionally, the Department for Education approved a partnership between the Dubai School Inspection Bureau and CfBT to conduct inspections of British schools overseas in Dubai.

clear for judgements about leadership and management, and some aspects of pupils' personal development. Similarly, pupils' progress is given suitable priority.

Not all evidence forms have enough detail to substantiate the grades given by inspectors or to show how the standards are being met. Inspections often note the schools' safeguarding arrangements. However, inspectors do not always check with a range of staff to provide a full picture of how effective arrangements are.

Not all evidence bases contain enough detail to explain the grades given for welfare, health and safety, or the suitability of the premises. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is not always recorded in enough detail for each of the four aspects. Some meetings are not recorded thoroughly and, where issues are raised, it is not clear if concerns had been followed up.

## **Quality of reports reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectors**

Most reports are clearly written and suitably identify the schools' strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors clearly justify why they have not given a higher judgement grade. In some reports they explain the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and achievements for different age groups, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, the most able and those who speak English as an additional language. The views of parents or carers and pupils are usually thoroughly considered. Most reports adequately set out the extent to which the school meets the Department's standards for British schools overseas.

Some reports provide insufficient information about the impact of schools' arrangements for safeguarding children. Other reports give contradictory information and judgements about pupils' welfare, health and safety, their achievement or their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They do not give a clear picture of some aspects of schools' work. Areas for improvement identified by inspectors are not always easily found in the text.

Information about how inspections are carried out varies from one inspectorate to another. In some cases, the reader has to look carefully through the text to ascertain the number of inspectors, how long they spent on site and what activities were carried out.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

Ofsted recommends that all of the inspectorates ensure that they:

- clearly report the impact of schools' safeguarding arrangements
- report on all four aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- ensure that areas for development in reports are clearly linked to schools' weaknesses

- include a section in all reports that explains how the inspection was carried out. This section should set out, as a minimum: how many days the inspection lasted, how many inspectors took part, their names and what activities took place.