

## **British School of Valencia**

Calle Filipinas 37, 46006 Valencia

**School's regional authorisation number:** 46021381

### **Date of Inspection:**

6th February 2023

### **Inspection Team:**

Janice Short (Lead Inspector)

Ken Williams (Team Inspector)

### **Reason for the Inspection:**

The reason of this visit is to inspect the whole school, from Pre-nursery to Year 13, for authorisation as offering a British education.

### **Overall Recommendation:**

The school is recommended for authorisation from Pre-nursery (2 years) to Year 13 (18 years) for a period of 4 years for 1100 pupils. The next inspection is due in February 2027.

*Schools are **authorised** by regional authorities after **inspection** by NABSS (or another recognised inspection service) and **certification** by the British Council.*

*Schools should not refer to themselves as being authorised by the British Council, NABSS nor any other inspection service. Schools must not use the logos of any of these organisations in their publicity. NABSS member schools may use the NABSS logo.*

*N.B. A NABSS inspection does not infer membership of the Association. Authorised schools may apply for NABSS membership*

## History and Context of the School:

The British School of Valencia, was originally known as the British School Children's Garden, and opened in 1992 as a co-educational British school. It became part of the Cognita Schools group in 2018. It aims to provide a British education for its students. The school is situated in the centre of Valencia and its students are mainly from the city and immediate locality.

The school has expanded and offers British education to pupils from Pre-Nursery to Year 13. There are currently 932 students on roll, with the majority being Spanish, though students from another 40 nationalities are represented.

## Accommodation and Resources:

The school has spacious accommodation based on the ground floor of a city block. Although the school is in the centre of the city, all entry and exit areas are safe and appropriately supervised.

Most classrooms are at least adequate in size, suitably lit and suitably furnished for each age group. They have interactive screens which aid teaching and learning.

Toilet facilities are ample in quantity and size and are situated in appropriate positions around the school. Staff use the staff dining room, staff rooms and offices well and the rooms suit the school's needs. There is an accessible First Aid room and a receptionist is a trained nursing assistant.

The specialist facilities include a multi-purpose area which can be used as an outside sports area or an auditorium. There is a well-resourced gymnasium, which is also used for assemblies. There are three science laboratories, one well-equipped music room, three rehearsal rooms for music, a library/ study room, a safe space and a dedicated art room. A wide range of good quality general and specialist resources is available in all classrooms and specialist rooms. The one-to-one device policy ensures all students from year 3 upwards use iPads in primary and touch-screen laptops in the secondary classes. The specialist facilities for years 12 and 13 are excellent, including individual study areas which are well used and appreciated by the students.

Displays in both primary and secondary areas of the school show a combination of information in teaching aids and a celebration of student work. Examples of excellent displays were seen, for example in a year 6 classroom.

Many students go home for lunch but there are two dining rooms used for different age groups. An outside catering company provides meals and a range of healthy eating options and dietary requests are available.

The grounds are enclosed within the interior of the school and they provide safe play and recreation areas for all students. The early years students have a separate playground with appropriate equipment immediately outside their classrooms.

## **Health, Safety and Welfare:**

The school has regular health and safety inspections undertaken as part of its membership of the Cognita group, so school facilities are well maintained and have a good level of cleanliness to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the students. The school perimeter is safe and the school is kept very secure.

Fire hydrants are sufficient and fire and emergency evacuation procedures are in place. Fire routes are clearly displayed in corridors and on classroom doors. Fire drills and lockdown procedures are undertaken termly.

The school follows its detailed safeguarding and child protection policy with the lead adults taking an active role in highlighting safeguarding in the school through their presence, training and school information. An online program is used by all staff to monitor any safeguarding or wellbeing issues. Staff receive annual training on safeguarding and it is part of the robust induction programme for any new staff.

The anti-bullying policy is implemented well. Students feel supported and know who to speak to if they have a problem. Students report there is very little bullying and if there are any cases, the issue is addressed immediately. There is a positive ethos and atmosphere in the school

All staff have recent police checks and safe recruitment procedures are followed. The school has annual safeguarding checks and inspections as part of the Cognita group. Many staff have received recent First Aid and mental health First Aid training.

Students are supervised well throughout the day including before and after school. All students have a very good understanding of school routines and show responsibility.

## **The Curriculum:**

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and meets the requirements of the English National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a suitable balance between English and Spanish subjects. A good range of subjects is available for GCSE and 'A' level qualifications, meeting the needs and expectations of the students who are able to enter universities across the world, including Spain, Canada, USA, Germany, Britain and the Netherlands.

Schemes of work are implemented effectively. Lesson planning is adapted to meet the needs of most students.

Although the principal language of instruction is English, when they are working together many students often speak in Spanish. This sometimes has a detrimental effect on the overall standard of spoken English.

The school is currently re-building its enrichment opportunities after the pandemic. An extra-curricular programme includes robotics, basketball, football, theatre, art, multisport and skating. Educational visits, including residential stays, and theme days such as World Book Day, complement the curriculum. Secondary students recently visited the theatre as part of the enrichment program.

### **Staffing:**

Teachers have appropriate qualifications and the school has a positive combination of experienced staff and staff who are recently qualified. Staff retention is excellent with many being at the school for many years. The students know the staff well and feel supported by them.

Staff are deployed effectively, and Spanish and British personnel work very well together. Staff-to-pupil ratios are sufficient to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum. Classroom assistants work effectively across early years and primary classrooms and a laboratory technician teaches and supports the secondary school during some science lessons. An educational psychologist leads the support for students with special needs assisted by a specialist teacher.

Staff have access to a variety of professional development opportunities, including online and in-school training courses. Training has had a positive impact on the appraisal system as staff are now confident in coaching, observation and feedback. Staff have welcomed the opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other within the school and across the Cognita group. The professional development programme is used well by the leadership to identify any training needs.

### **Teaching and Learning:**

The standard of teaching and learning varies from outstanding to satisfactory. Overall, it is very good. In outstanding lessons, higher level questioning skills are used to challenge students, as in year 11 English where students' prior knowledge was extended by effective questions to develop a holistic analysis of poems. Teachers' enthusiasm is reflected in students' eager responses to tasks. In a year 7 art lesson, specific praise was given so students knew what they had done well and how to improve. Such outstanding lessons also have good pace. In a year 1 English lesson the class learnt the first few lines of a poem by heart using actions to help, demonstrating the teacher's brisk teaching, quick pace using timed deadlines and children's concentration.

In good lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge, use a range of teaching strategies and most students are actively engaged, interested and self-motivated. Lessons are of a good pace and can link to previous learning. Questions are used to draw information from students, reinforcing their learning.

Students are proud of their work and are keen to talk about their learning. Teachers know the students well and use this knowledge to create positive relationships. In some lessons, some students participate well, answering questions and showing interest in their learning. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and set interesting work.

In a minority of lessons not all students are sufficiently challenged with a slower pace of lessons causing some low level disruption.

### **Assessment:**

The school's comprehensive marking policy is not reflected in the actual marking of work. Written feedback is limited although verbal feedback in classes is good.

Assessments throughout the year are used by teachers to identify any gaps in learning. Written assessments are taken at the end of units of work and are used to evaluate progress and performance. Early years students' progress is assessed during lessons and the teachers record their observations to share with parents and to set targets.

A new tracking system has been implemented to make target setting more systematic. Information is collected from internal and external assessments and triangulated with other forms of data; staff have received training in data analysis to enable them to set more effective targets for their students.

Students make good progress at all stages. Results in external standardised tests from Key Stage 1 upwards support school internal assessments. Results in GCSE and 'A' level examinations across the whole subject range confirm the above average attainment.

Communication with parents is very good. Reports are written every term and are followed by parents' meetings. A monthly newsletter informs parents about school life and is supported by a message system and personal meetings, including coffee mornings with the headteacher.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:**

The school's provision for the development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural progress of the students is strong. The school is proud of its family atmosphere and the students are proud to belong to the school. Students show responsibility around the school. House systems are used to reward students and to give a sense of belonging to a team.

Relationships between staff and student are positive. Students respond well to staff and feel they have someone to talk to if they have a problem. This has a positive impact on relationships within the school. Care for well-being is a strong feature of the school and students' wellbeing is tracked using an online whole school programme to ensure any necessary support is given. Pastoral care is very good and an emphasis is placed on the values of responsibility, curiosity, respect and motivation.

Careers guidance is given by various members of staff. The school holds a university fair to help students. Past pupils and parents attend this to give advice to current students. Work experience with Key Stage 4 students is now being re-introduced after the pandemic.

A personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is also used to develop and maintain the positive attitudes of the students.

Students contribute to charity work such as collecting books for disadvantaged children and students recently organised a fund-raising event themselves.

### **Leadership and Management:**

Standard group policy documents are individualised for the school by management and implemented by all staff. All staff understand expectations and work together, using the majority of policies and staff handbook to ensure consistency.

There has been a change in management structure since the last inspection due to a change in school ownership. The current senior management structure is clear and the senior leadership team works well together, sharing common aims for the school. The school is well led and the leadership team provides clear educational direction.

Middle management structure is still being fully embedded across the school due to the introduction of the new system. The school development plan has clear goals for the school's future. Pastoral coordinators' work in upper and lower school is reflected in the high quality care received by the students.

The school and its management are supported by the staff. All members of the leadership team are responsible for the staff appraisal system for monitoring performance and organising professional development. Lesson observations and coaching use goals set for the whole school.

### **Response to the previous inspection reports:**

The school has made an effort to address all the issues raised in the previous report, and, in reference to its recommendations, has:

- Introduced a library/study room which is available for reading and study.
- Obtained a portable fume cupboard and ensured all chemicals are kept locked in cabinets.
- Employed more British-trained staff in all areas of the school so that a British style of teaching and learning is ensured.
- Rectified the inconsistencies in time allocation across subjects, especially in Key Stage 3
- Updated the marking policy

The school is still working towards the recommendations to:

- Reinforce pupils' achievements by exhibiting more pupils' work in the secondary school- this has been achieved in specialist rooms, but is difficult in others as the classrooms are not subject specific rooms.

- Ensure the marking policy is followed by all classes throughout the school to make it more effective.
- Insist upon the use of English in all lessons.

### **Recommendations:**

- Improve the practice of marking across subjects and classes to match the demands of the marking policy so that students know more clearly what they have done well and what they need to do next
- Improve the few satisfactory lessons to the level of the good / outstanding ones by helping teachers to employ more effective teaching strategies, especially by increasing the pace of lessons.