



Inspection report

The British School Caracas

Venezuela

Date **19th – 21st February 2024**
Inspection number **20240219**

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and the report cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding, where applicable); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for students and students' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, the whole of the first day and much of the second day were spent in classrooms with the students and teachers. All teachers were observed and many learning walks took place during the visit. School documentation and policies were analysed and academic data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the head, the senior staff, teachers, other school staff, representatives of the school council, parents and groups of students. Interviews with key members of the board of The British School Caracas and administration team took place before and during the visit. The team was in school on three days.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Gayle Lane and David Williams.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The British School Caracas (TBSC) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The British School of Caracas (TBSC) provides a high quality of education and care in a safe, beautiful and peaceful environment. From a strong foundation at the time of the last inspection, the school has made excellent progress, being now on a stronger financial footing and well placed to develop even more. The school is highly ambitious and the capacity for further improvement is excellent. There is a strong board of governors and highly competent school leaders in place who focus on ensuring the success of all students.

3.1 What the school does well

TBSC has many strengths:

- The atmosphere of the school is one of respect, kindness and calm, where behaviour is a strength and students look forward to learning;
- The drive and wisdom offered by the headteacher and his team are excellent;
- The school campus ‘wraps around’ the students providing them with a safe, productive and unique environment in which to learn;
- The student council continues its journey into becoming a real force within the school. Their drive, passion, thoughtfulness and recognition of their privileged place in society drives them forward in enhancing the school experience of their fellow students, and also supporting local communities and beyond;
- The support provided for students with special education needs is excellent;
- Students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are immersed in the English language through small class sizes, 1 to 1 support and the respect and support of their peers. The EAL team is pivotal in ensuring that students quickly become fluent English speakers;
- The expertise and commitment of the teachers and the teaching assistants is invaluable. They strongly support and enhance the education of the students throughout the school;
- The parents are passionate about the school and the PTA facilitates many activities that support the school and the wider communities;
- The social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of the students is impressive, evident through their relationships with each other, the staff, and the development of their cultural capital;
- The impressively extensive choice of IGCSE and IB subjects offered to secondary students regardless of small class sizes.

3.2 Points for improvement

Whilst not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

1. Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment further so that all lessons are as good as the best, including by:
 - i. providing students with more student-led opportunities and embedding further student voice throughout the school
 - ii. ensuring consistent use of high-end questioning to stimulate critical thinking and further facilitate the development of independent learners
 - iii. further capitalise on the small class sizes by providing students with more personalised learning and experiences to extend their own learning styles and techniques
 - iv. develop students' abilities as reflective thinkers
 - v. develop more extensive challenge for all students across the curriculum
2. Agree and embed understanding of what outstanding learning and teaching looks like at TBSC, for example by extend the sharing of outstanding practice in teaching and learning, to ensure greater consistency throughout the school.
3. Enhance the use and understanding of attainment and progress data across the whole school, for example by:
 - i. in Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), ensuring there is solid benchmarking attainment data available to underpin the focus on progress throughout the stage and later throughout the school;
 - ii. in primary, further develop the collection and especially the use of meaningful attainment and progress data;
 - iii. in secondary, ensure there are sufficient opportunities for teachers to share the good and outstanding practice across all subjects;
 - iv. making sure the best practice in the recording and monitoring of attainment and progress in Key Stage (KS) 5 is more widely shared, to ensure a consistent approach to assessment, whole school;
 - v. ensuring leaders at all levels are confident in the analysis of the available data.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	The British School Caracas				
Address	Transversal 9 Este Av. Luis Roche, Quinta DAMI Urbanización Altamira Caracas, Venezuela				
Telephone number	+58 (212) 267-4505				
Fax number	None				
Website	www.tbscaracas.com				
Email address	info@tbscaracas.com				
Head	Mr George Palmer				
Chairman of Board of Governors	Ms Veronica Guruceaga				
Age range	3 to 18 years				
Total number of pupils	333	Boys	180	Girls	153
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	11-16 years	87	
	3-5 years	44	17-18 years	34	
	5-11 years	168	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	n/a				

Approximately 60% of staff are expatriate teachers (variously British, Irish, New Zealand and American passport holders) and 40% are 'local' Venezuelan. 90% of the student body is Venezuelan (although many hold dual nationality with Italy, Spain, USA and Portugal being represented as the 'second passport').

Founded in 1950 for 37 primary-aged students, TBSC moved to its present location in 1954. Despite recent and current difficulties in Venezuela, TBSC has been able to increase further the number of students on its roll.

4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of the TBSC is evident throughout the school.

- The name of the school refers to 'British' and the vision maintains a strong element of Britishness. TBSC aims to be in line with the latest British practices with an international touch, whenever possible.
- The school provides the English Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum from years 1 to 9.
- In primary, the school broadens learning with the *International Primary Curriculum (IPC)*.
- In years 10 and 11, the school offers the *IGCSE* programme: in years 12 and 13, the *IB Diploma Programme* is provided.
- The language of instruction is English; signage and most communication amongst students, is also in English.
- Expat teachers are from native English-speaking countries: mainly the UK, but also Canada, America, Ireland, New Zealand and France.
- Since 2015, the school has been recognised as a *British School Overseas*, by the UK government.
- Students tend to go to American universities, but some do go to the UK.
- In line with their commitment to provide an outstanding all-round education, provision of trips and extra-curricular activities enrich learning opportunities outside of the classroom, as one would find in UK private schools.
- Whilst the school is relatively small, a wide range of activities are delivered art, music, drama, dance, sport, robotics, and debate.
- Students enjoy taking part in school productions, inter-school sports tournaments, and debate competitions.
- Debate and Model United Nations (MUN) are particularly successful, with students participating/attending conferences in Rome and at Harvard University.

5. *Standard 1* The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided at TBSC is good, with some outstanding features: it easily meets the standard required for BSO accreditation.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at TBSC is outstanding.

The ‘redesigning and rebooting’ of the school’s curriculum has ensured that it is reflective of the needs of students and the ever-evolving education system. The school uses the EYFS framework, the National Curriculum for England, which is intertwined with the International Primary Curriculum and the IGCSE and IB Diploma Programmes. These curricula are blended and adapted to incorporate the local context. The curriculum is personalised to the school and its vision and mission. British values are threaded throughout, including rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. The development of skills in reading, writing, numeracy and communications are evident throughout. Cross curricular links are made to enhance learning and promote transferrable knowledge. Flexibility in the curriculum allows teachers to personalise teaching and learning to support the individual needs of students.

The curriculum spills out past the school gates and supports local communities through acts of kindness and respect. The school’s intent is clear and well-planned. At its best, implementation is highly successful and as a result, its impact ensures that children are provided with the knowledge and understanding needed for the next step in their educational journey.

All subject disciplines are covered and there is a particular focus on the performing arts. The specialist subjects taught in primary are music, PE and Spanish. The instructional language of the school is English. The Spanish curriculum is differentiated to be inclusive of all abilities. It is based on the Venezuelan National Curriculum and is reflective of local culture, history and geography.

Regular review of the curriculum by the senior leadership team and middle management, ensures that the curriculum is ever evolving. For example, the school previously identified further development in reading, handwriting, spelling and more active learning opportunities in primary, which have clearly been addressed.

The curriculum maps, schemes of work and class timetables, demonstrate the breadth of the curriculum and supports the school ethos that ‘each child is unique’. The curriculum encourages and develops abstract and critical thinking skills. It also ensures that students form strong relationships with their teachers.

At its best, the curriculum enhances student led learning and ensures that student voice is a central part of school life. Some students shared that in the future, they would like to be more involved in the designing of the curriculum. This curriculum empowers students through legacy projects, group projects and business initiatives. Personalised learning and challenge is evident in most lessons. The director of studies and IB coordinator has a strong impact, with her knowledge, passion and vision.

The extensive range of subjects offered at IGCSE and IB level is a strength of the school. A student shared, 'Even though there was only one student taking that IB subject, the school still ran it. It shows how much they want us to succeed, and that they support our goals.' The students speak passionately about the curriculum and learning opportunities afforded to them. Another student commented, 'The school knew more about me than I did, how I preferred to learn, and they encouraged me to come out of my comfort zone and try new things.'

Transition throughout the key stages is carefully planned and supported by the appropriate policy. Detailed student passports are used to share important information and cross-key stage staff liaise with each another to ensure that all children needs are known and supported.

The EAL and special needs and disabilities (SEND) support in the school has evolved even further and is both personalised and effective. 'Pull-out' and 'push-in' sessions work very well. Students' that speak English as their second language quickly develop fluency through the support of the EAL team and the one-to-one contact with their teachers and teaching assistants, due to small class sizes. In primary, reading books in Spanish and English are sent home to support this development further. The support for children with SEND is personalised, well-organised and effective. Both the EAL and SEND teams work closely with the class teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral care and the school councillor, to ensure development of student's skills and progress. The support of an outside psychologist is also valued. This unified approach enables students to overcome barriers to learning. Realistic and reflective Individual Educational Plans guarantee that all parties, including parents, work closely together to facilitate student success.

Assessment for learning is used effectively in most classes and is a particular strength in Secondary. 'Backward planning' ensures that the curriculum goes beyond what will be assessed and that the development of skills and progress is ongoing. Teachers are aware of student's starting points and ensure that any learning 'gaps' are addressed.

The curriculum is further enhanced by an array of school trips, guest speakers, extra-curricular activities (ECAs) and the outstanding and praiseworthy charity work of the school.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are good: some aspects are excellent.

Lessons are well planned with sensible commentary on any special requirements. Teaching methods are adapted well for each class in most cases and therefore are effective. Teachers ensure students acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability: they increase students' understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. There are some opportunities missed to provide more student-led opportunities and improve further student voice throughout the school. Some teachers are excellent in ensuring consistent use of high-end questioning to stimulate critical thinking and further facilitate the development of independent learners; not all teachers are as tuned in to this, however. Opportunities to further capitalise on the small class sizes by providing students with more personalised learning and experiences to extend their own learning styles and techniques, are sometimes missed.

In the best lessons, the learning is engaging and students have fun. For example in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, students built upon their prior learning and participated in differentiated tasks which encompassed many different learning styles. They were focussed on developing their own learning and supported the learning of others. In many KS2 lessons, relationships between students and teachers are strong and contribute to the successful learning environments. Students communicate their learning and are confident in doing so. Teaching assistants across the school support learning well and contribute significantly to the outcomes of the lesson.

Teaching fosters the skills and attitudes of self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work, resilience and the ability to think and learn for themselves. In one lesson in EYFS, small groups of students were encouraged and supported by their teacher and teacher assistants, and respectfully interacted with their peers. They worked in small groups, in a language rich environment, which stimulated imaginative response. In many lessons across the school, teachers develop students' abilities as reflective thinkers.

In the less successful lessons, mildly disruptive behaviour was allowed to escalate due to a lack of consistent intervention and the lack of effective behavioural strategies. This resulted in a loss of learning for almost all students. Questioning is not always sufficiently challenging and there is little opportunity for student voice. Differentiation was not always evident and not all students therefore made the expected progress.

Teachers generally have excellent subject knowledge. For example, in a Year 10 geography lesson, the students were challenged effectively by increasingly deep questions about the different types of volcanoes. Similarly in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on geometry, the teacher made excellent use of computer software to promote and deepen learning.

Relationships between adults and students are outstanding. Teaching promotes those fundamental values which can be characterised as 'British', including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

There is no discrimination against students because of their individual differences and/or specific needs.

In the classes where there is a teaching assistant working alongside the main teacher, there is excellent impact on the quality of learning. For example in a year 8 lesson on the Holderness coastal erosion which provoked lively discussion, the supporting assistant was highly skilled: her guidance added another significant dimension to the teaching and therefore to the learning.

In the vast majority of lessons, teachers use classroom resources very effectively; these are of a good quality, quantity and range.

In some classes, students are challenged well and they are highly involved. For example, a Year 7 English lesson highlighted the engagement of students. They were well supported by the teacher who promoted strong story telling skills on the topic of the First World War. This was stimulated by the book *'Private Peaceful'* by Michael Morpurgo. The teacher had high expectations of the students and they were actively involved in their learning: their reading skills were excellent.

There is a good understanding amongst the senior leaders of how to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment even more. There is a good framework in place to assess students' work. It is used regularly and thoroughly, though it is weaker in EYFS. In some subjects, for example secondary music, a bespoke assessment system is highly impressive. Information from that assessment is used to plan teaching, so that students make progress. Use of a detailed tracking sheet triangulates various pieces of data and evidence to ensure students are progressing, identify underachieving students and challenge the more able students; however not all staff are as confident in the analysis of this data.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

Standards in students' behaviour are outstanding. Students are courteous, polite, and respectful of each other and the school's equipment. They interact appropriately at all times and understand that they may each have different needs. At the start of the day, students enter school calmly and are excited to learn. Children show excellent behaviour during break times, and the space available is used well to play respectfully of each other's space. They interact socially at a high level and show care and understanding for any student who may require it.

The school's attendance is satisfactory and currently sits at 93%. The senior leadership team knows that this is a priority for the school and is working with students, parents, and the board of directors to put more emphasis on the importance of good attendance and are putting in place systems to ensure that this is monitored effectively.

Observations suggest that students enter the school attaining standards below that expected in EYFS. The leadership team is currently improving the system to ensure rigorous tracking and monitoring of attainment and progress in this phase.

In primary, students' attainment and progress are tracked using the student tracker. This focuses on individual students and the targets set for them. Progress for each is logged and tracked, and interventions are put into place; however, this is not done for *cohorts* of students. The senior leadership team is currently trialling a tracking system that will ensure rigorous tracking and monitoring of attainment and progress in this phase. In the next academic year, assessments will be used by the school in years 3-6 to validate teacher assessment and to assess students against age-related international benchmarks.

Observations in the classroom show that students in the primary phase are working at expected levels. Students are confident and articulate and have a love of learning. Reading is good, and the use of PIRA ensures that students are working at an expected standard in this area. Writing books show students working at or above the expected level and writing for a variety of purposes. There is a large amount of work in books, and students show pride in what they present.

In mathematics, the *White Rose* curriculum is used to ensure coverage and consistency in maths and content taught is age-appropriate. Students work at the expected level in this subject.

In secondary, standards are good. There are rigorous systems and procedures in place to ensure that students' attainment and progress are tracked regularly and responded to in the form of differentiation or intervention if required. The school's director of studies has an excellent understanding of how the school needs to ensure that they maintain where they are achieving well: they are focusing on areas that need to develop.

In KS3, students are tracked and assessed using teacher assessment, and this is validated by the external tests. Assessments from the last academic year show that students are working above the expected standard. In lessons, students are confident to share their learning, and

observations show students working at or above the expected standard in this phase of the school.

In KS4, students are assessed using the IGCSE examinations in line with the British curriculum. The results attained in the last academic year show that the results at TBSC are consistently above the expected standard and are increasing year on year. The majority of students achieved or surpassed their expected grade based on CAT4 predictions. As an average, value-added was evident at TBSC with CAT4 predicted grades being achieved by the 2023 IGCSE cohort. An analysis of results vs. CAT4 predictions also allows for intervention to be put in place for those subjects identified as underperforming. Interventions for these subjects have included additional study sessions for students and staff training. The internal data from termly assessments and mock examinations are tracked and analysed by coordination.

In KS5, The IB diploma programme ensures that students have a variety of pathways available to them. The school is rightly proud of their data in this key stage, with the vast majority of KS5 students going through the diploma programme and attaining above the expected international benchmarks. Data is forensically analysed in this key stage to ensure that all students are on track to meet or exceed their targets. Data is responded to in the form of intervention or support when appropriate to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.

6. *Standard 2*

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding and is clearly a strength of the school.

Students are warm, friendly and kind. They treat each other and adults with respect and are fully aware of their privileged place in society.

The TBSC values and personal learning goals are evident throughout the school. The student profile is well known and rewarded accordingly. The clever use of local animal personas in primary makes these attributes a part of school life. These animal personas have recently become animated and are now voiced by students which has made these characters come alive. The house point system motivates and unites the students. This is done particularly well in primary and has improved in secondary through whole school House competitions and the use of the visual house point ‘tubes’.

There is a strong sense of community at the school where diversity is celebrated, and equality is insisted upon. The diversity, inclusion and equality (DIE) policy provides clear guidelines in supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Inclusion is successfully supported by the EAL and SEND teams.

The work of the student council is excellent. It is a strength of the school. Its impact ripples across the school. It is made up of six communities, art and culture, ecological, charity, sports, events, teaching and learning. These six committees are a force of nature. Their passion, drive and commitment in moving the school forward and improving the lives of not only the children and parents of the school but also the wider community is laudable. The members of the student council who are from Year 3 upwards, speak passionately about the work that they do, what they have achieved and their ambitious plans for the future. They identified that one of their next steps would be to further develop student voice in primary and to unite the primary and secondary schools even more. They highlighted the positive impact that the head teacher of secondary has had in supporting and empowering them to ‘think bigger.’ The council listens to the needs of the students. This was evident when the development of ‘school spirit’ was identified and a plethora of activities were devised to improve and raise this.

The school’s work with communities from impoverished areas is be praised. The students speak passionately and proudly about the projects that they have been involved in, such as, the English language project which involves 40 children from a local secondary school being taught English by the senior students from 6am to 7am every Thursday. Some local children have been attending these classes for many years. The RISE programme provides 130 local children with essential supplies such as food, school equipment and medicine through fund raising activities. The school opens their doors to these local children 4 to 5 times a year where they participate in a variety of activities which are organised by the students. It is clear that public service is prevalent thought at TBSC and a real priority at the school.

The school newspaper unites the community, with one student explaining, 'It was just an idea and then we made it happen. Now it's an important part of our school'.

The school provides the students with many opportunities to discover and develop their talents with much emphasis being placed upon the performing arts and the creativity of the students. The students thoroughly enjoy putting on productions for the local communities as well as their families. This is visible around the school with a multitude of displays showcasing the artistic talents of the students. Sports are also part of the school with football being an important part of Venezuelan life. The school continues to expand the variety of sporting opportunities available to the students.

Cultural development is a strength of the school. It is woven through the curriculum through topics, assemblies, school trips, special activity days and the relationships that are formed with local communities. These relationships are built upon a foundation of respect, empathy and understanding. International mindfulness is supported by the IB and IPC curriculums with topics such as traditional foods, urban growth, deforestation and integration. The school's cultural development is another strength of the school where children celebrate differences and are united by mutual respect. This was exemplified by the primary students' school trips to the synagogue, the mosque and a Hindu temple. In secondary, for the CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) component of the IB curriculum, students participated in a 3-day trip to Delta to support the public school through donations and emersion. Students expressed their gratitude that they could be part of such a life changing experience. Their successful participation in COBIS debates and the school MUN (Model United Nation) conferences in Rome and at Harvard University is impressive.

Through everyday experiences, students continue to develop the skills and knowledge to make good choices. They are aware of what is right and wrong and encourage their peers to exercise good judgement. Student behaviour is excellent. Nevertheless, behaviour sanctions are not unified across each key stage.

There are clear support systems in place from pastoral care to the school councillor. In primary, the IPC health and wellbeing programme and in secondary, the *Jigsaw* programme is followed. It is evident that this is used more consistently in upper primary and secondary. Lower primary continue to source even more resources in this area to ensure that these valuable sessions are afforded more curriculum time.

7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health, and safety of the students meet the standard and are outstanding. The school complies with all local standards for health and safety set by the Sociedad Civil Escuela Británica.

The school is well organised and prepared for its context. This includes drills for earthquakes, readily available first aid kits throughout the school, and sophisticated and rigorous security systems to ensure the safety of the students. Lockdown and fire drills occur termly and are logged, monitored, and reviewed to ensure high standards are met. CCTV cameras and security staff ensure that the school grounds are monitored 24 hours a day. Policies and procedures for fire safety, including fire drills, are in place. Adequate safety measures, such as fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and clear signage, are in place throughout the premises. Fire safety equipment is regularly serviced, and a dedicated fire marshal team is trained with clearly defined roles in case of an incident.

The school premises are clean and tidy: a team of cleaners working on rotation ensure a safe and hygienic working environment for the students and adults alike.

The school invests to ensure that all staff are trained to an appropriate level in child protection and safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is trained at Level 3 in safeguarding, along with 8 deputies who have various roles across the school ensuring coverage and options for students and adults to talk to if they have a disclosure to make. The safeguarding team meets regularly to discuss actions for students they are concerned about and make a concerted effort to include parents in these discussions where appropriate. For example, a recent incident was correctly and thoroughly investigated by the school, and appropriate steps taken; detailed evidence was shared with inspectors.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at the start of each year, and it is part of the induction for new staff. Staff are aware of the procedures in place and what they should do if a disclosure is made to them. Students are aware of who they can speak to if they have a concern, and the Safeguarding team is displayed throughout the school. Worry boxes are also available around the school for students to post any concerns they may have. These are locked and accessed by the safeguarding team for review. Concerns are logged electronically and can only be seen by the DSL and their team.

The school counsellor has an open-door policy and is available to meet students who feel they need support. Parents and teachers can also make referrals for students to have contact with the counsellor.

The school clinic meets all standards. It is tidy and well-organised with meticulous record-keeping, and there is a system in place to ensure that staff know where students are when visiting the clinic. Parents and staff are informed of any clinic visits that require attention. All medicines and records are safely locked away safely in the clinic.

Beginning and end of day procedures are calm and well-organised. Students are welcomed at the door by a member of the leadership team to ensure that any issues are dealt with before the children enter the school. A *drop and go* system is in place to ensure the safety of the students when entering or leaving the school. Security staff, teaching staff, and the leadership team work together to ensure that this runs smoothly and effectively.

Students have easy access to drinking water, and almost all keep their own reusable water containers. Healthy eating choices and lifestyles are promoted in assembly, at registration, and through curricula areas in line with UK standards. Lessons have links to healthy eating and lifestyles, and students talk confidently about the healthy eating policy. Healthy eating and other awareness drives are conducted with the support of the clinic.

Students speak confidently about feeling safe in the school. Anti-bullying policies, posters, annual events, and assemblies promote the anti-bullying message. Cyberbullying and the safe use of the internet are promoted by computer studies teachers through the IT curriculum and through assemblies and core subject lessons. Internet access is highly controlled.

8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

TBSC has a long history, having been set up in 1950. It is a high-profile school in Venezuela. Legally, it is registered as a civil association, owned by the parents. The board demonstrate appropriate concern for the school's students and takes all due steps to assure itself of the suitability of each individual who works or volunteers there, including members of the board. All local requirements are met.

Robust checks are in place to ensure that all staff members have the qualifications and teaching experience for their respective roles. These checks are carried out for all staff members appointed to the school including teachers, administration staff, teaching assistants and support staff. All staff members have a police clearance from the host country, as well as any country from which they have most recently resided.

Following the updated BSO guidance of August 2023, all staff members who have lived or worked in the UK are also now required to submit an ICPC; this has been backdated to ensure the school is compliant. The school does not employ supply staff.

Rigorous safer recruitment procedures are in place throughout the process. Advertisements to recruit staff promote safer recruitment practices, and application forms require prospective candidates to confirm that they are eligible to work with children. A minimum of two references are required, one of which must be from their most recent place of work. All referees are specifically asked about the candidates suitability to work with children. Before a final offer of employment is made, the Head of School also carries out a telephone reference to cross-check that the information provided is accurate.

All interviews are conducted with at least two members of staff present, with all staff involved in the process having undertaken safer recruitment training. All candidates are asked a series of standard safeguarding questions as part of the interview process. Before employment begins, thorough checks are carried out, for example police check from current country working in (and from 2024-2025 onwards, this will include all countries worked in over the last 5 years), prohibition checks, medical evaluation (certified by a doctor) and notarised and apostilled qualifications and birth certificate. A social media check is also undertaken.

The requirements for local staff are slightly different, but include Venezuelan ID and tax ID checks, medical (including a psychological assessment) and a local police check.

Records of all staff are held in individual files and on a password-protected single central record (SCR), held centrally by the head of school, business manager, comptroller and head of HR. Information regarding staff members who have worked at the school during the previous three years are also stored on this record. All information is stored securely and confidentially.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

Premises and accommodation of the school meet the standards for BSO and are outstanding. The premises are clean, tidy, and well-maintained. A team of cleaners and groundsmen are on site throughout the school day to ensure that the students learn in a safe and hygienic environment.

The natural environment that the school is built within allows for natural ventilation and light. Air conditioning units and lights are maintained to a high standard, and regular checks are conducted. There has been significant investment from the Board of Directors over the past few years in developing the school site. This has been done strategically and is still ongoing, with a focus on ensuring capacity for a growing number of students and improving options and educational opportunities for students who attend TBSC. Development of the play areas and specialist rooms such as those for science, drama, and music have enhanced the curriculum, and children speak confidently about the impact these changes have had.

Classrooms and other learning spaces are well-appointed with good space for teaching and learning. Newly refurbished staff rooms for staff have made an impact on staff wellbeing, and this is reflected in recent surveys.

The school has a focus on safety, reflecting the school's context. First aid kits are readily available, and exit plans are available in all rooms. The school gates and perimeter fencing are robust and well-managed and maintained. CCTV cameras and security staff ensure that the school grounds are monitored 24 hours a day.

Displays reflect learning and local and British culture. High standards and exemplars are used in classrooms to support learning, and in corridors, art inspired by both local and international artists enhances the profile of non-core subjects. The school ethos and learning style are represented through displays and murals throughout the school. Interactive whiteboards are provided in classrooms and enhance student learning opportunities. The school's library is well-equipped, well-used, and positively supports reading and general knowledge in both English and Spanish. Outdoor space is utilized to maximum effect and supports students' learning and well-being. The foundation stage classrooms all have access to the outdoors and are used throughout the day as a learning space for the students.

The school's clinic is tidy and well-organized with meticulous record-keeping and a system in place to ensure that staff know where students are at all times when visiting the clinic. Parents and staff are informed of any clinic visits that require attention. All medicines and records are locked safely away in the clinic.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

Overall, the provision of information provided by the school to parents, prospective parents and the wider community is outstanding.

This is a warm, welcoming and supportive school that works closely with parents to ensure that students receive a unified approach to their education. The school operates an open-door policy where there is a well-organised chain of communication. Class teachers and senior leadership are available and visible throughout the school. Questions and concerns are answered promptly and professionally at every level of the school. Parents trust the school to be transparent and speak highly of their triangular approach to their child's learning. Throughout, the school's openness and kindness are evident. The small class sizes ensure that parents form close bonds with each other both inside and outside of school.

The induction of new families is supported by the admissions officer. The families are quickly made to feel part of the 'school family' through consistent communication. The families are supported through emails, telephone conversations, face to face meetings and the use of the detailed and comprehensive parental handbook. The clear and concise communication policy acts as a valuable aid. Parents expressed their gratitude for the school's induction process and explained that even the smallest question is valued. One parent suggested that 'Because we (my husband and I) felt well-supported and confident, our child felt the same way about starting at the school'.

The comprehensive and well-organised website gives parents access to the school's mission, vision, contact details and a variety of schools policies. The policies are detailed with all the necessary and required information and are also 'reader friendly.' The website also gives a clear overview of the school.

The communications coordinator ensures that social media, the weekly bulletins, flyers etc, provide parents with a detailed insight into school life. This allows parents to celebrate their child's achievements and the achievements of others, from a whole school pancake race to the weekly teaching of English to local children from impoverished areas by senior students. The school office team strengthen communication further with parents by monitoring attendance, students' appointments out with school and parental support with students' homework.

Class teachers provide the parents with weekly emails to summarise teaching and learning and inform them of the learning for the upcoming week. Parents are encouraged to become thoroughly involved in their child's education by sharing their own personal experiences linked to class topics and/or providing personal items that will enhance a learning topic further. Parents expressed their gratitude for the information and support that they received, with one parent explaining, 'It's not just the detailed correspondence about my son from the class teacher that I love, it's the fact that I know what's going on in the rest of the school too'.

Parental workshops and coffee mornings provide parents with valuable training from information about cyber safety to nutrition. These sessions are led by staff and specialists. Parents are also fully informed about their child's transitions to new Key Stages. Parent partnership meetings provide parents with informed ways to support their children at home.

Another strength of the school is the PTA, their passion and dedication is commendable. They play an important role in sharing information with parents about the school. Their unwavering support for the student council and their charitable work with local communities is admirable.

The class representatives provide another important link to school life providing parents with important information and further strengthening their relationship with the class teacher and wider school community.

The use of ISAMS provides the parents with clear and concise information about their child's schooling. Report cards are both detailed and informative.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school meets the standard.

The school has a detailed, written policy which outlines the importance placed at TBSC on addressing complaints fully, and on ensuring a timely, equitable, and suitable resolution. This policy is available to all parents on the school's website, and it takes into account regulatory requirements. The school has a dedicated complaints coordinator within the administration team, whose role is to ensure that complaints are recorded and managed professionally.

The policy outlines the steps taken to resolve complaints. All are acknowledged within 24-hours and the initial response sets out how the school intends to proceed. Throughout the complaint resolution process, the school attempt to keep parents informed of any updates and the expected timescale to reach a resolution or outcome.

The policy highlights the difference between a concern and a complaint, and it is hoped that most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally through open conversation. There are four clear stages in which a complaint can be addressed to seek a satisfactory resolution.

Stage 1 requires that contact is made with the class teacher/ form tutor. This may result in a meeting. The class teacher may need to consult their line manager or the head of section or, indeed, have them present in the meeting. Any responses are provided within three working days.

Should the matter not be resolved, parents would be advised to proceed with their complaint to Stage 2. This requires the parent/s to put the complaint in writing and address this to the head of section. That person investigates the claim and a response is provided within three working days.

If parents are still not satisfied with the outcome, they can proceed to Stage 3. Parents then put the complaint in writing and address this to the head of school. The head of school investigates the complaint further and give a formal response, again within three working days.

The last stage, if a situation is still not resolved, parents may request a hearing with a panel of three persons, none of whom should have been involved in the process so far. The panel would consist of two members of the board and at least one individual who has no involvement in the management and running of the school. If needed, the panel is convened as quickly as possible. Parents can attend the hearing and also be accompanied if they choose to be. A response will be provided by the panel within ten working days.

Complaints are centrally logged, with all records held by the complaints coordinator. The highest level of confidentiality is preserved at all times, except where Venezuelan laws permit or require access. If parents wish to make a complaint to an outside organisation, they can contact the local authority (LOPNA).

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are good: many elements are already outstanding.

The board of governors is strongly committed to the school, and provide both excellent support and rigorous challenge. The school has recently appointed new heads in both primary and secondary, and they are very well supported by the principal who has been in post since 2020. The new senior leadership team has developed a 5-year plan which aims to focus on areas of school improvement. This plan is driving school development forward at a leadership level and is beginning to be disseminated to staff, parents, and the greater school community. The school's leaders and managers are developing systems that will allow them to have a greater understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This understanding is articulated through strategic plans, action plans, and the professional development opportunities offered to staff.

Recruitment is understandably challenging for TBSC, due to the difficulty of attracting candidates to work in Caracas. The school has refined its processes to widen its pool of high quality candidates. Rigorous recruitment processes ensure the suitability of staff, and safeguarding checks are in place. Currently, the school is working with 2 early career teachers (ECTs) who feel well supported by the school's leadership team: the success of this approach also provides the school with more opportunities to recruit newly qualified teachers in the future. The school has recently implemented a new recruitment policy based on the standards outlined in BSO guidance.

The leadership team is determined to position TBSC within the global educational community. The head of school provides excellent leadership and he and his team have been involved in numerous networking opportunities to strengthen ties with other international schools. In 2022-2023, the head of school became part of the Executive Latin American Heads Committee, and in the Autumn of 2023, TBSC became a member of the Association of British Schools Overseas (AoBSO), with the head of school and the head of primary attending its annual conference last November. Staff members have also attended conferences and training courses in South America, including the IB Global Conference. The school recognises the importance of being an 'outward facing' institution, and this level of engagement demonstrates TBSC's commitment to maintaining a robust leadership team that is evaluating itself against international best practices.

The school leadership team is dedicated to the development of all staff members. Staff speak confidently about the professional development opportunities available to them, including Masters degrees, National Professional Qualifications (NPGs) and the opportunity to attend a variety of relevant training courses. The leadership team works closely with the board of directors to allocate a budget for each member of staff which they can avail. Professional development opportunities are generous and comprehensive, and include an allowance of \$1,000 per staff member. This is in addition to any directed training at the request of the school, for example, IGCSE and IB workshops for staff who are new to the programme. Staff are aware of these professional development opportunities, which were recognised by staff as a strength of the school in a recent survey.

All staff members take part in a performance review as part of the annual appraisal process. The development of middle and senior leaders is also encouraged, with the school offering a suite of NPQs. The school also provides accredited Level 3 safeguarding training for pastoral staff who hold positions of responsibility. Professional development is in line with the school strategic plan, as well as self-identified development needs. This is a huge strength of the school and it enables staff to grow professionally, whilst supporting the strategic development of the school.

Staff well-being is promoted enthusiastically. Staff have a very positive view of the senior leadership team, as evidenced by the recent *Pulse* survey. Currently, there is around a 50% participation rate in staff surveys, and the leadership team is working to enhance the importance of these surveys and respond to any areas that emerge as issues. An example of this is the refinement of communication practices for staff, as this was identified as an area of concern in the last survey. Systems were put in place to refine the communication after this feedback and staff recognise the impact this has made.

A strong, close working relationship between the proprietors and the school's principal ensures that support is in place and decisions made are shared. The school's proprietors act as critical friends and are fully committed to providing a high-quality education for all students. They are actively involved and have a comprehensive understanding of this school and its overall performance. The school's vision and values are demonstrated by the students and staff in the school and is reflected in displays, lessons and assemblies.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum planning is comprehensive and reflects British and local contexts. Planning is collaborative and the leadership team is working to ensure that there is consistency across year groups. Planning is reviewed and monitored by the middle leadership team and moderated by the heads of school. The school leadership team are focused on increasing opportunities to review, evaluate and modify plans to ensure planned tasks are creative, and collaborative where relevant.

The senior leadership team is currently working closely with the middle leaders to ensure that they work effectively with their teams to achieve targets set in the strategic plan. The next step for middle leaders is to have a clear and consistent vision of good learning and teaching aligned to best practise and to implement rigorous systems to assess and evaluate student attainment and progress. The good practise in the use of data and creative approaches that exists in upper primary needs to be shared across the rest of the school.

The day-to-day management of the school is very effective. Systems and staff ensure that students learn in a safe and caring learning environment. The leadership team are clearly highly committed to ensuring the school's success, and improving students' outcomes and well-being even more.