



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Multinational School

Bahrain

Date **19th – 21st March 2023**
Inspection number **20230319**

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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 report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); 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 pupils and pupils' 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, more than 50 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Alistair Downs. The team members were Jose Diez and Tammy Naidoo.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British schools overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Multinational School Bahrain is a happy school where each student is known as an individual. The positive relationships between staff, students and parents create a strong sense of community which aids the personal development of each student. All stakeholders are extremely supportive of the school.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including:

- students' enthusiasm and attitude towards learning;
- the rapport between teachers and students;
- the personalised care, both academic and pastoral, provided to students;
- the strong, positive relationships between all stakeholders and the friendly, community feel;
- continuity provided by the principal and key senior leaders who have been at the school for many years;
- the ongoing strategy to build staff capacity and empower teachers;
- positive views of parents and students towards the school;
- the committed parent and teacher community and active PTA;
- outstanding home-school relationships;
- the inclusive nature of the school and established procedures for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school, so that it is consistently good or better, for example by:
 - ensuring teaching is up-to-date and in line with UK best practice;
 - ensuring learning is tailored to meet the needs of all students;
 - ensuring the best classroom practitioners are used to support colleagues in order to raise the quality of teaching.
2. Review the current system used for tracking students' attainment and progress, including moderation and monitoring procedures;
3. Developing a more robust system of staff appraisal to identify areas for staff development.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Multinational School Bahrain				
Address	Building 850, Road 3828 Adliya, Rd No 3831, Manama				
Telephone Number/s	+973 1771 1444				
Website Address	https://mns-bahrain.com/				
Key Email Address	info@mns-bahrain.com				
Headteacher/ Principal	Ola Abu Zaroor				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Sheikh Khalifa bin Hassan al Khalifa				
Age Range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	450	Boys	238	Girls	212
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	0	<i>12-16 years</i>	203	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	50	<i>17-18 years</i>	45	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	152	<i>18+ years</i>	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

4.1 British nature of the school

Multinational School Bahrain (MNS) offers a UK based curriculum tailored to the needs of its students and its location in Bahrain.

As in many UK schools a three-term academic calendar is followed and a uniform policy is in place. A house system has recently been introduced and a senior head boy and head girl, together with deputies are selected annually. There are opportunities for student voice through school councils, with members being democratically elected at the start of the school year. Extra curricular activities (ECAs) are available for students to extend their learning outside the classroom.

CAT4 assessments are used upon entry to the school and further UK assessments such as InCAS, CEM Aspects and the Cambridge Checkpoints are used at different points across the school. In Key Stage 4 and 5, students work towards IGCSE and A level qualifications. 30% of the students who completed A-Levels in 2022 went to UK universities. The school is in the process of becoming a UCAS centre to support students further with the application process for UK universities.

A number of policies and procedures, both administrative and academic, are in place which align to UK practice. Professional development opportunities are provided through various UK based platforms.

English is the language of instruction throughout the school, apart from in language lessons. Parents receive letters and reports in English and the school website is also in English.

The school is a member of British Schools of the Middle East (BSME) which has provided students and teachers the opportunity to take part in a range of events, competitions and professional development opportunities. Regular assemblies take place and significant UK events, including Remembrance Sunday and the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, are recognised.

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

The quality of education provided by MNS fully meets the BSO standards.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and fully compliant with all local statutory requirements.

For students under 5 years of age, the school offers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. Teachers deliver regular phonics lessons based on the UK DfE Letters and Sounds programme and all seven areas of learning are regularly planned for. Personal, social, health and emotional development is carefully integrated into the curriculum throughout each school day. Students have access to a dedicated EYFS outdoor play area the curriculum is well supported by trips and visits off campus.

Transition from EYFS to Key Stage 1 is well planned for and there is a dedicated day for transition where all students get a taster of their new year group. Reception students also participate in events with Year 1 students, such as Splash Day.

The school delivers the Cambridge International Curriculum in Key Stage 1 and 2, continuing with this in Key Stage 3 for core subjects, whilst introducing the English National Curriculum for history and geography.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, curriculum maps are in place which highlight the progress of skills and knowledge across each subject. The curriculum is broad and core subjects run alongside specialist PE, language, art, and music lessons. Teaching of phonics is well embedded in Year 1 and has been introduced more recently into Year 2 due to identified gaps. A range of extracurricular activities, educational visits and guest speakers extends the primary school curriculum, for example.

Writing has been identified as an area of focus in Key Stage 1 and *Big Write* was introduced last year to improve students' writing. Key Stage 2 students convey good written and spoken English due to the opportunities provided to them in the curriculum. Where needed, booster lessons and support from the learning enrichment department are used alongside the formal curriculum to provide programmes tailored to the students' needs. For example, the school runs a phonics booster class for identified Year 3 and Year 4 students. A dedicated handwriting scheme, *Learning without Tears*, has supported the development of handwriting skills.

In Key Stage 4, the school follows the iGCSE pathway, and in Key Stage 5, they undertake AS and A levels. These are accessed through the Cambridge and Edexcel examination bodies. Guidance through orientation sessions is provided to Year 9 and Year 11 parents and students regarding their subject choices for iGCSE and AS levels. Currently the school offers three A level subjects, although plans are in place to expand this to seven.

Secondary school students receive appropriate careers guidance and support for university applications from the school university counsellor. Students also have access to the *Unifrog* platform to explore universities around the world. The parent representative group shared that events such as Business Day helped their children for life after school.

The school's dedicated learning enrichment department supports the needs of identified students across the whole school. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are created with specific targets and these are regularly reviewed by teachers and parents. Learning enrichment assistants work alongside class teachers to support students with SEND or English as an Additional Language (EAL) to access the curriculum.

The leadership team has identified the need for further transition arrangements between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and more opportunities are being planned.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory with some good elements, particularly in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.

Teacher and student interactions are consistently positive and demonstrate a strong sense of pastoral care. Relationships in all lessons are excellent.

In EYFS, lessons observed were teacher-led and structured. Opportunities for continuous provision were limited. Where free choice was provided students were engaged and eager to participate in activities. Imaginative play was also seen, for example, nursery students talking on their mobile phones made from *Lego* blocks. Assessment is ongoing and teachers plan activities that are theme based and engage student's interest. The use of teaching assistants to teach focus groups is well embedded.

In primary and secondary the best lessons moved away from presenting information on a slideshow at the front of the class and showed a range of strategies that led to more active participation and peer discussion, developing the student's knowledge and enabling skill application. For example, in a Year 10 ICT lesson where students had to match definitions located around the classroom to the names of different servers, and a science lesson in Year 6 about the relative position and movement of planets where group work was effectively used to allow students define key vocabulary.

In many lessons teachers showed enthusiasm for their subject and were passionate about the unit of work. An example of this was seen in a Year 9 English lesson on the book 'The Outsiders', where the teacher immersed the students in the plot of the book through debate, discussion and analysis.

In some lessons tasks were well matched to student abilities, for example in a year 6 maths lesson on mixed fractions where a teacher very effectively supported students working through tasks at their own pace and with different levels of challenge. However, across the school planning for differentiation was often inconsistent and usually by outcome.

Teaching in the secondary school is often dynamic and engaging. In the best lessons teachers extended learning through questioning, for example when students were asked to analyse the impact of monetary policy on the French economy. Students are regularly provided with opportunities to collaborate with others and support their peers, for example when discussing abstract art in a Year 8 art lesson, creating extended metaphors in a Year 10 English lesson, working in teams to take on different roles of a private limited company in business studies or in a Year 12 biology lesson focused on the role of education for sustainability.

New students from Year 2 upwards complete entry CAT4 assessments. This provides teachers with a profile of a student's developed abilities across quantitative, verbal non-verbal and spatial competencies.

There is a school generated phonics screening assessment based on UK expectations for EYFS and Key Stage 1. This provides teachers with an understanding of their students phonics development. Students who are identified as low attainers receive in class interventions and those in lower Key Stage 2 with gaps in their phonics understanding also receive booster sessions. Attempts are being made to address the negative impact of COVID-19 by building a solid phonics foundation in the current Year 1 and Year 2 students.

Assessment of students work in primary is inconsistent. There is a marking policy, but this has not yet been implemented across all classes. Teachers identify what went well and points to improve, however there was little evidence in books of students responding to feedback.

Teachers test students regularly using assessments for mathematics, science and reading. This data is then analysed which helps to identify students who require more support. Assessments are moderated in phase groups and outcomes are used to facilitate planning and interventions, if necessary. Senior leaders moderate the assessment questions.

Year 6 check point assessments are being introduced this year and this will help Key Stage 3 teachers identify and plan for those students that struggle to adapt to secondary expectations. Currently, checkpoint assessments are used throughout the secondary school.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students are satisfactory.

In lessons students participate well, follow the teacher's instructions and listen attentively. They have a good standard of spoken English, although for most students English is their second language.

Across EYFS and primary judging progress and attainment is difficult as there has been no consistent assessment or tracking of progress and attainment over time, nor moderation. CEMS ASPECTS and BASE are used for assessment in Nursery and Reception respectively, however this data has not been used for tracking purposes. In Key Stage 1, CEM InCAS is used for summative assessments.

The school's internal assessment systems are not yet consistently reliable. Tracking of student progress is not done systematically and adaptations to planning to match the needs of all the students is not yet consistent.

In Key Stages 2 and 3, summative assessments are developed by individual year groups/teachers and then checked by the senior leadership team. The school is currently receiving training on a new piece of tracking software, with a view to improving further moderation of students' outcomes.

Teachers are aware that students in Key Stage 1 are not currently performing in line with UK standards in phonics, however the school's data shows that the majority of students are working at age related expectations across the core subjects.

In secondary, student achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 has continued to improve as systems and processes at the school become more embedded. In 2017 43% of students attained 5Cs or higher. This increased to 82% by 2022.

Students enjoy school and this is evident in good attendance. The school actively follows up on any absences, however due to a proactive approach in recognising and rewarding individual students and classes for their attendance, absence is rare.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

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

Across the school, there is a focus on inclusion and understanding of differences. As a result, students are friendly and confident, they are respectful of their peers and the school environment, and interact well. Procedures and routines are well embedded and behaviour is of a high standard. Students are very happy and there is a positive atmosphere throughout the school. Students spoken to agreed that behaviour is good and that teachers are supportive.

Engagement is good in lessons and there is a willingness to participate in a wide range of school activities and events outside the classroom. A large number of theme and topic days take place each year that focus on encouraging awareness of the wider world and specific areas of the curriculum. Events include Arabic Mother's Day, World Book Day, Science Week, Maths Week and Silly Socks day (which was to raise awareness of Down Syndrome). Students show an understanding of environmental awareness by working in the school garden and using recycled bottles as planters. A beach clean-up involving secondary students has also taken place. ECAs include sports, community service, cooking, crafts, journalism and guided art. The school runs numerous fundraising appeals throughout the year to raise awareness of local and international causes. Trips and visits further enhance the learning taking place in classrooms.

In the EYFS social development is taught using the British values of respect and tolerance. Students are regularly reminded about using kind hands and kind words. Further up the school a 'Kindness Pledge' is signed by the teacher and students at the start of the academic year and displayed in each classroom.

The school has a counselling department led by the head of learning enrichment. The two counsellors work with teaching staff to support students' behavioural, social and emotional development. There are defined structures of support in place and regular communication takes place with parents.

Life skills has been introduced to develop students' personal, social and emotional skills. PSHE lessons also take place across the school and developing a growth mindset is encouraged by praising the process in addition to the outcome.

MNS is committed to developing and promoting democracy. Student voice has been developed recently through the democratically elected Student Council. Student leadership has been extended this year with the introduction of house captains and vice captains. Prefect roles further foster student leadership in the secondary school.

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

The welfare, health and safety of students is satisfactory with some good aspects.

The school creates a friendly and welcoming environment for students. Members of staff greet students during arrival and throughout the day, and the school counsellor has a strong presence in the school and is accessible. Students stated that the best thing about their school is, 'kind teachers, nice friends and being happy'. Parents reported that they feel their children are safe at school.

Arrival and dismissal procedures are appropriately supervised and safe. Security Guards monitor the main entrance and check that every person that enters the school has an identification badge. Visitors are asked to provide ID and are given a visitors' badge. Students travelling by bus enter/exit through a separate entrance which is monitored by a security guard. The school has recently changed bus companies to be compliant with safety regulations. All students are required to use their seat belt when taking the bus. Buses have CCTV cameras and the bus monitor ensures all students are safe and accounted for during arrival and dismissal.

The school counsellor and the safeguarding leads work very closely and provide effective support for behavioural and emotional issues through an open-door policy. They are very proactive within the school community and there are clear safeguarding posters throughout the school identifying staff members that students can approach should they have a concern. All administrative and academic staff receive yearly training in safeguarding; however maintenance staff are not currently briefed on safeguarding protocols. Teachers know who to contact should they have concerns and safeguarding reporting procedures are in place. The school has a single central register that is up to date. A number of classrooms have no visibility from the corridors. This concern has been identified by the senior leadership team and a plan is in place to replace these doors over Summer 2023.

Student behaviour across the school is of a high standard. The school keeps a behaviour log and parents are contacted when incidents occur. Minor incidents are dealt with quickly and inline with the school policy, however major behaviour infractions are extremely rare. Parents and students confirmed that bullying is rare and behaviour is good.

Supervision of students at break times and around the school is appropriate and effective. Students have access to multiple areas where they socialise, eat and play. Students in EYFS benefit from a separate play area which contains several items of play equipment and a sandpit. The sandpit is covered every evening and regularly cleaned. The sand is changed each holiday. The school has expanded its CCTV system recently and increased the number of cameras from 45 to 132 to ensure all the areas of the playground are monitored.

There are fire extinguishers throughout the school with a clear record of maintenance on each unit. The school recently invested in a major upgrade of the fire alarm system and linked it to the gas leak alarm. Fire evacuation drills take place regularly and evacuation and exit points are clearly labelled throughout the school. The school reports that the building has been evacuated quickly and fire drill records support this. The school completes lock down drills when required by government officials. The school produces risk assessments for trips and some school-based activities.

The school's site maintenance team are effective in maintaining a site that is safe and fit for purpose. Regular reviews take place by the health and safety officer and scheduled maintenance is carried out weekly. Cleaners are assigned areas in the school to maintain before, during and after the school day. They report any issues they observe to the maintenance team. Toilets and other areas are well maintained and are clean.

There is a small canteen in the school which provides food and drinks to staff and students. The school encourages healthy choices through organising events such healthy eating month and a healthy lunchbox competition: the canteen provides salads, hot meals, and lots of fresh vegetables and proteins.

The school's nurse is situated in a well-equipped clinic in a centralized location. The nurse is fully qualified and maintains clear records of any accident or illness. Medication is administered in line with the school's policy. First aid boxes are placed strategically around the school and accompany all off-site trips. The nurse ensures these are regularly restocked. Students with severe allergies have *EpiPens* available in school. A selection of staff across all phases are first aid trained.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

The school is led by a principal who reports to the owner and Board regularly. She, together with the vice principal (primary) have worked at the school for many years and have overseen the transition from the Australian to British curriculum. They work alongside a newly appointed vice principal (secondary) and a team of dedicated senior leaders and teachers.

All teachers hold a degree and teaching qualifications, with some having higher degrees. Currently approximately 20% of the teachers have UK recognised teaching qualifications or have UK experience.

The school has introduced a new recruitment policy which includes detailed safer recruitment practices. This is being followed by the HR Manager. As part of this all newly appointed staff are subject to two reference checks, one of which is verified by telephone. The school recruits staff from a range of nationalities, however all staff have police checks from the previous country they have worked in, together with a local Bahraini 'good conduct' check. 'Quadrabay', the Bahrain MoE's approved verification service, checks police clearances from teacher's home countries and the validity of educational qualifications. A single central register is in place.

All newly appointed staff members undertake both online and face to face safeguarding training and this is renewed annually by all staff.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory with some good aspects.

The school site is safe and secure with students and parents entering through a main gate. There is a separate dedicated entrance for students traveling by school bus. Parents must wear their Parent ID and all visitors are required to register upon arrival at the school.

Both indoor and outdoor areas are exceptionally clean and well maintained by a team of full-time staff. High priority is given to ensuring displays in corridors and classrooms are of a high standard and updated regularly. These displays support learning, provide information and celebrate achievement.

Classrooms are attractive and welcoming and appropriately resourced. Students benefit from a range of specialist teaching rooms for IT, science, art, music and languages. The school also has a library and a canteen. Sporting facilities are currently limited to one mid-sized outdoor multipurpose sports court. This was highlighted as an area for development by teachers, parents and students, however the senior leadership team (SLT) are aware of this and the principal has ambitious plans to build a multipurpose hall and rooftop sports field.

There is a playground which is used by the whole school at staggered break times and a school garden. Students in EYFS have their own separate outdoor play area with a range of provision including bicycles, climbing equipment and a sandpit.

The medical room is well equipped and is staffed by a full-time nurse who has established systems in place for treating students. First aid boxes are attached to walls throughout the school.

There are separate toilet facilities for students on each floor, as well as outside for playtime use. Separate adult toilets are located in two buildings and are clearly marked. Water coolers are located on each floor and in outside areas. Lockers are available for secondary students and primary students have pegs on which to hang their bags and coats. Although there are some ramps located around school, it is not possible (because of local building restrictions) for there to be lifts for students, staff and visitors with limited mobility to be able to access the higher floors. The school therefore allocates ground floor classrooms to students with mobility limitations.

The school meets all the requirements of the Bahrain MoE's building regulations

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others meets the standard for BSO.

Information is available on the school website which provides advice and support for prospective parents. This includes the school's mission, contact details of the school, and key curriculum information. The school recognises that the website does require further development and have highlighted this a priority moving forward.

Parents value the school as a warm, welcoming place where their children are very happy. The parent representative group were keen to describe the school as having a very positive influence on the lives of their children. They commended the school as being a second home for their children.

All members of the school staff, including teachers and the senior leadership team, are approachable and willing to discuss any concerns parents might have. The main forms of communication are email, phone, SMS and *Class Dojo*. Parents contact teachers directly for all initial communication regarding their child. Newsletters are sent home weekly sharing news of curriculum learning and events.

Student progress is shared with parents through formal written reports and parent meetings across all sections of the school. Secondary students also receive mini report cards after each half-term. Parent information evenings are also held at the beginning of each academic year to support parents in their understanding of the curriculum and expectations.

Parental involvement in school life is good and the parent teacher association (PTA) contributes to the planning of regular events such as sports days, fundraising and the school production.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

There is a detailed complaints policy in place which is made available to parents upon request. This policy clearly outlines the process parents should follow when wishing to make a complaint and the related timescales they should expect. All records are kept confidential.

Parents are encouraged, both in the policy and in practice, to communicate with the school on any issue. The school has an excellent relationship with its parent body and prides itself on its open-door policy. This ensures that any concerns are usually resolved quickly and effectively in an informal manner, without the need for escalation.

12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The quality of leadership and management meets the standard required and is satisfactory.

MNS Bahrain is owned by Sheikh Khalifa bin Hassan al Khalifa who is joined on the school board by Dr Mahrous Al Hilaly. The Board Consultant, Mr Ismaeel Khesrawi, is responsible for the day to day running of the school alongside the principal and two vice principals. Board meetings are held every half term which cover key areas of academic development, finances, HR and admissions. The SLT meets weekly and involves the principal, vice principals and the heads of the schools. In turn, the heads of the school meet with their staff on a weekly basis.

The heads of school feel very supported and empowered by the principal, vice principals and the board of governors. They are given the capacity and support to try new initiatives, as highlighted by the head of secondary school who recently received the full backing of the board to gain UCAS and BTEC approvals.

The leadership team are highly visible which ensures the school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis. Students, staff and parents all highlighted the approachability and openness of the leadership team as being key strengths of the school. The principal has an open-door policy and is available whenever anyone has a concern or needs support, guidance or advice.

A five-year school strategic plan which links to a five-year school improvement plan is in place and is nearing its 4th year cycle. The principal has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school and is working hard with the rest of the SLT to build on the strengths of the school.

Observations of lessons, learning walks and planning moderation are led by the SLT. An appraisal system is not embedded yet in the school, however teachers who require support are encouraged to conduct peer observations and staff reported that additional professional development training is available upon request. Teachers across year groups work together to plan lessons and this sharing of good practice is enabling teachers who are in the early years of their teaching career to improve their work further.