

The ABC International School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: Monday 13th January to Thursday 16th January 2020

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Age Group: 2-18
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. This inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on Edubase.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

A policy update was issued by the DfE in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment)
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff
5. The premises and accommodation
6. The provision of information
7. The manner in which complaints are handled
8. The leadership and management of the school
9. The quality of provision for boarding

The purposes of the inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Information about the school

The Anglophone British Curriculum International School (ABCIS) was established in 1995 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It is a medium-sized, multinational, mixed, non-denominational day school for both first and additional-language English speaking pupils from two to 18 years of age. Most pupils speak very little or no English when they enter the school in the early years and Year 1. Situated on three sites, the school offers a UK curriculum adapted to local needs and requirements and delivered in English. This begins with the early years foundation stage, followed by the English national curriculum in key stages 1 to 3 leading to International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and A-level examinations.

There are 818 pupils on roll and over 30 nationalities are represented, but Asian pupils form by far the largest group.

The school currently has full membership of a number of educational organisations. These include The Federation of British International Schools in South and East Asia (FOBISIA) and the Council of British International Schools (COBIS). When they leave school, almost all students go on to study at universities in a number of countries. The most common destinations include the UK, USA, Australia and Korea.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

The dates of the inspection were agreed with the school 10 weeks before the start date. The school's leaders made documents, policies and assessment information available to the Education Development Trust inspectors four weeks before the inspection. Inspectors also met with school leaders and toured the school on the day before the inspection started. The team examined the school's self-review document, the BSO compliance checklist and a range of other information before the inspection. Inspectors visited 59 lessons across the school covering a wide range of subjects. They held 20 meetings with the directors, senior leaders, staff, parents and carers, and pupils. Inspectors observed arrival and departure from the school, registration periods, assemblies and breaktimes. They also reviewed samples of pupils' work including displays and artwork. They reviewed school documents containing safeguarding and other policies, development plans, assessment information, attendance records, behaviour, rewards and sanctions. The inspectors also scrutinised surveys of the views of parents and staff. They observed all phases of the school at work and followed up any issues with school leaders.

Evaluation of the school

ABC International School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from two to 18 years. The school prepares pupils exceptionally well to enter or re-enter the UK system.

The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

In **English**, pupils across the school make outstanding progress and almost all reach standards that are above those expected for their age in England.

An overwhelming majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. Children arrive in the early years with skills in English language and communication that are usually well below those typical for their age. They make outstanding progress from their starting points and a large majority are well prepared for the demands of the curriculum in Year 1. As a result of excellently planned activities, children's listening skills improve rapidly in relation to their starting points, so that they are able to respond accurately to requests and follow instructions. The many and varied opportunities provided for children to speak and the well-designed language-rich learning environment ensure that their vocabulary rapidly expands. During the inspection, children confidently explained the story behind the Vietnamese New Year celebrations.

By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in reading and writing is above the average in England, as is the proportion who reach greater depth in their learning. Teachers are skilled at using pupils' own interests to develop their understanding of, for example, writing a non-chronological report on starfish, healthy living or planets.

In the primary classes, pupils continue to make outstanding progress and by the time they leave key stage 2, they reach standards in reading and writing that are above those typically found in England. By Year 6, pupils write in a wide range of genres with increasing confidence and sophistication. Their reading skills are also well developed and refined. They are able, for

example, to contrast Charlotte's Web with Street Child and discuss the different styles of different authors.

In secondary classes, pupils continue to make outstanding progress and reach standards in IGCSE examinations which far exceed English national averages in language and literature. Pupils in Year 11 communicate imaginatively and effectively when, for example, exploring how Hansberry conveys the difference between George and Walter in a scene from her play entitled A Raisin in the Sun.

Rapid and sustained progress is made by students in the sixth form and consequently they attain outstanding levels that exceed world average outcomes. Impressively, students explore in depth the differences between Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.

In **mathematics**, pupils across the school make outstanding progress and almost all reach standards that are above those expected for their age in England.

In the early years, there is a strong focus on developing a sound understanding of number, especially one-to-one correspondence, allowing children to move from simple counting to matching objects. Most children also develop a good understanding of shape and measures.

In primary, almost all pupils achieve very high standards, well above the average in England, especially in their understanding of number and calculations. The daily focus on practice and consolidation, as well as the accurate use of mathematical vocabulary, enables almost all pupils to achieve high levels of conceptual understanding and confidently apply their knowledge to real-life problems.

In the secondary phase, pupils build on this successful start and make outstanding progress. In IGCSE examinations, pupils achieve well above averages in England. In almost all lessons, pupils acquire a wide range of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. This is reinforced and extended through solving increasingly complex problems and providing opportunities for investigation.

In the sixth form, students make outstanding progress and achieve high standards. They are well prepared for examinations, particularly through the identifying and correcting of common mistakes. Increasingly pupils take greater responsibility for planning their learning and know exactly what they need to do to achieve their targets.

In **science**, pupils across the school make outstanding progress and reach standards that are higher than those expected in England.

Pupils make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points across the school and attain high standards in lessons and homework. This is reflected by excellent results in public examinations, which in all cases exceed world-wide averages at IGCSE, AS Level and A Level. In 2019, five of the highest science examination scores in the country were by members of the school. Pupils also achieve notable success beyond the classroom, winning medals in the UK physics Olympiad, coming first in the COBIS filmed-experiment competition and excelling in other local events.

In the early years, children learn to handle different materials confidently and develop excellent manual dexterity. They are well equipped to move on to the primary school curriculum, which is

carefully matched to UK requirements and enables pupils to think scientifically. They learn, for example, the importance of accurate measuring and recording, and what constitutes a fair test. Almost all pupils have very well-developed practical skills and are familiar with scientific apparatus. Their vocabulary has grown so that language is no barrier to progress. When they elect to continue science subjects to IGCSE, they are able to apply their knowledge and understanding successfully. They have confident mathematical skills, identifying appropriate equations and calculating accurately. They draw accurate and relevant diagrams and graphs.

Many pursue science at AS and A Level, attaining outstanding examination results. They show advanced levels of knowledge and question thoughtfully the status of evidence presented to them. In recent years almost half of the leavers have gone on to study science, technology, engineering or mathematical subjects at university.

As well as achieving outstandingly well in reading, writing, mathematics and science, pupils achieve equally well in other subjects across the wider curriculum. The school has developed a very well-considered curriculum which is designed to help pupils understand links between subjects as well as developing key learning and critical-thinking skills as they progress through the school. The new secondary building is exceptionally well resourced to provide a wide and rich curriculum.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Standard 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Standard 8 below). Senior leaders have correctly identified that children in the early years need more opportunities to take the initiative to design their own learning activities.

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2020, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas (2017 updated) except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. Those precluded are marriage and civil partnership; gender reassignment; sex and sexual orientation. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

Most of the standards relating to the quality of education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the provisions of the UK Equality Act 2010.

The **curriculum** is outstanding. The school follows a British curriculum which is exceptionally well planned and sequenced. Schemes of work are successfully structured to ensure the sustained development of knowledge and skills at each stage. Pupils are extremely well prepared for each phase of their education.

In the early years the programme of learning ensures that almost all children achieve outstanding success related to the Early Learning Goals. Good communication and effective planning at each transitional stage ensure uninterrupted progress. The curriculum is adapted appropriately to suit the local context, so that all pupils study Chinese, for example. In the primary school the sequence of modules builds pupils' knowledge and skills in a systematic and balanced way, hence thinking and acting scientifically are as important as remembering information. The flexible curriculum for IGCSE enables all pupils to choose subjects which match their needs and interests. Where appropriate for an individual, a reduced timetable is available. The school ensures that all entrants are assessed. Where particular learning needs or limited knowledge of English prevent pupils from having full access to the curriculum, early intervention equips them with the skills and strategies they need.

The school offers an outstanding range of opportunities for creative work, for example in drama, art, design and music. This is also true of athletic development, for which the excellent sports hall and swimming pools are used. For this reason, individuals achieve exceptionally high standards in these fields and all are encouraged to take part at suitable levels. The range of subjects available at A Level is wide, which ensures that almost all can find a combination which suits them and opens a path to a fulfilling university career.

The excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme provides for age-appropriate discussion of a range of topics and makes a significant contribution to the fostering of values such as liberty, the rule of law and democracy. School-council representatives are elected by their year groups, for example, and pupils are given a significant measure of choice over subjects and activities. An annual cultural appreciation week celebrates the diversity which is an essential element of the school's life and values, with national dress and food on display, and even Scottish dancing.

The PSHE programme also includes careers advice and guidance at appropriate stages. All pupils do work experience in Year 11. The school hosts careers and university events several times each year. Students receive personalised advice about the opportunities available when they leave school and are supported effectively during the application process. Most achieve entry to their first-choice university, including to those with the most demanding entry requirements, chiefly in the UK and the USA, but also in Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Korea and elsewhere.

In addition to the rich and varied academic programme, the school offers a strong selection of excellent extra-curricular activities which are taken up by almost all pupils, who have also helped develop the programme. In addition to academic, creative, athletic and cultural activities, knitting

and robotics, for example, are especially popular. The wider curriculum is further enriched by regular trips. Year 7 enjoy and benefit from an outdoor activity week at Cat Tien, for example, and Year 9 explore the caves, among other landmarks, at Phong Nha.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** across the school is outstanding. Highly effective teaching enables all pupils to make strong progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.

In the early years, progress towards the Early Learning Goals is rapid and secure because teaching nurtures children and enables them to develop confidence in a safe environment. The school supports and challenges them appropriately and encourages them to think adventurously and question what they are told. Most of the activities are planned and initiated by adults. Leaders recognise that there could now be more opportunities for children to initiate their own learning activities.

The school prepares pupils in key stages 3 and 4 meticulously for the IGCSE examinations. It also encourages them to think deeply about their learning as they acquire it. In Years 12 and 13 teaching takes on a different tone, with students often leading the learning while teachers facilitating their progress rather than driving it. This level of independence and mature motivation is the fruit of consistent guidance throughout the earlier phases of their education.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a detailed understanding of the English primary curriculum and the requirements of secondary public examinations. They know their pupils well and they know how they learn most effectively. They use a wide range of styles and strategies to motivate them and meet their needs consistently. They have high expectations in lessons but also ensure that all pupils are able to make progress through tasks which have been specifically designed to match their learning styles. Teachers manage their time imaginatively to support pupils' learning and use a range of resources from mini-whiteboards and flashcards to sophisticated digital technology. They plan lessons with clear objectives and advertise success criteria in advance. In these ways the school's ambitious curriculum remains accessible to all pupils. Almost all teaching takes account of pupils' need for reinforcement in English language skills and knowledge. Teachers revisit technical and subject-specific vocabulary frequently and publish and display useful glossaries. Relationships at all levels in the school are excellent. They make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the teaching. Pupils say that teachers are always available to offer additional support outside lessons as required.

Pupils are highly motivated and ambitious to achieve well and to turn themselves into self-sufficient learners when they enter higher education. Their collaboration in lessons is highly successful since they listen respectfully to one another and build on others' suggestions. They take a confident pride in the quality and presentation of their work and take advantage of the written and oral feedback they get from teachers on their assignments to improve their work. They display higher-order thinking skills when drawing together evidence from different sources, hypothesising, or making links with prior learning. They also derive great enjoyment from their work and are serious about their education but rarely solemn, developing a love of life.

Marking of pupils' work is highly effective, offering comment on what went well and suggestions on how to improve. Ongoing assessment is used effectively to inform lesson planning and to ensure that each individual is appropriately supported and challenged as necessary. In the

secondary school, a regime of testing, which is welcomed by pupils, is used to monitor progress against aspirational target grades and ensure that remedial action is taken as appropriate.

Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Most of the standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the provisions of the UK Equality Act 2010.

The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The immense commitment in the school's ABC vision: '**A**chieving academic excellence, **B**elonging to a diverse community, **C**aring for people and the environment' is evident across all year groups.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around school, reflecting their commitment to their own learning and to supporting others' learning. Across the school, pupils show excellent levels of self-discipline, with little need for adult supervision. In lessons, they demonstrate high levels of commitment to their own learning, setting themselves ambitious targets. Almost all pupils demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong and actively support one another in conflict resolution. They explain, 'This is our learning place and we want everyone to do well – so we help each other!'

Pupils routinely take on leadership responsibility for a wide variety of school projects and initiatives. Most leaders are elected through a highly demanding democratic process. These include prefects, student councillors and house captains. Pupils take these roles seriously and recognise the importance of their role in supporting the smooth running of the school. The most successful initiative has been a student-council led focus on developing recycling. The almost total removal of single-use plastic across the school is impressive. Pupils have led this initiative and have ensured that decision making has been both transparent and communicated with the whole school community.

Pupils enjoy learning and are motivated by the high levels of challenge provided in lessons. This is evident through their very high attendance, which is well above the average in England, and in their punctuality to school and to lessons. Sixth-form students also value the opportunities they get to support other learners through the mentor project, service project or in lessons. They are understandably proud of their role in helping others to achieve better but they are also reflective about how these activities have a positive impact on their own learning. Community links are further encouraged through fundraising events to provide vital medical care to local hospitals as well as through teaching English to local children at weekends.

The school encourages respect for all people, principally through planned PHSE lessons but also in other settings. Discussions are promoted in lessons, tutor groups and assemblies and provide opportunities for pupils to identify and discuss issues in a secure setting. Inspection evidence, including discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work and examination of curriculum plans, confirms that the school encourages respect and tolerance for the different groups described within the Equality Act 2010. It fully meets the requirements set out in the Act in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. However, it is unable to fully meet the requirements in respect of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation due to the laws of the host country.

Pupils speak positively about their commitment to making the most of the collective school-community experience. They are well aware that pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and reflect positively on how this enables them to learn about the wider world. Special events such as cultural-appreciation weeks as well as the Model United Nations (MUN) focus on older children teaching younger ones about different cultures enabled pupils to focus on the similarities between them. In English, a focus on poetry from different parts of the world is encouraging animated discussions about identifying differences while focusing on acceptance.

Across the school, pupils are supported in developing an understanding of and a respect for Vietnamese laws as well as British laws. They have a good knowledge and understanding of human rights and a healthy respect for those who have a role in public life, both in Vietnam and in the UK, to ensure equal access to community resources. Pupils develop an understanding of British institutions, such as the role of the monarch, through the history curriculum. Older pupils are encouraged to assess many sides of all arguments, looking closely at causation and the significance of different perspectives to develop balanced, evidence-based viewpoints.

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

The school meets the requirements of the standard and the regulatory requirements and cultural obligations of the host country.

The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils report feeling safe and secure in school and know that any concerns they have will be dealt with and addressed effectively. They explain that their teachers know them well and have high expectations of them to do 'as well as we can, both in terms of our learning as well as our behaviour'. Consequently, relationships are very positive, mutually respectful and trusting. New pupils report the ease with which they were able to settle into their new environment with the help of a buddy who showed them around in the first few days. New pupils at the school explain that they appreciated the fact that 'my buddy looked out for me from a distance for a long time after I had settled in, like a big sister watching out for me'.

Robust procedures ensure the safety and health of both pupils and adults across the school. Regular premises and equipment checks ensure that all three sites are safe places for learning. Identified concerns or repairs are dealt with in a timely manner by specialist staff. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and are reviewed regularly to reflect and respond to changes in local or international requirements for school safety. These are shared with parents and members of the wider community as necessary. The school's transport arrangements are complex due to the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Leaders ensure that arrangements for safe transport are well established with clear record keeping and monitoring of any incidents.

Procedures for fire evacuation and lockdowns meet the expectations of the host country and are just as stringent as in the UK. They are well rehearsed, monitored, recorded and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments are rigorous and include all school activities, including excursions. Security systems are well managed with swipe cards provided for all members of the school community. A large team of courteous security staff, well supported by leaders, ensures a sense of safety for all on all sites.

The school's systems for handling medication and the recording of medical incidents are thorough and well monitored by senior staff. Medical staff liaise across the three sites to monitor trends in medical needs so that they can be proactive in supporting pupils' health needs. The availability of healthy food in the canteen encourages pupils to make positive dietary choices.

The school's safeguarding systems are comprehensive and conform to best practice in the UK. Adults in the school are trained to ensure pupils' safety at all times and the policy is applied rigorously. The rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly, effectively and sensitively. Leaders ensure that all parties feel that their voice has been heard. Cyber safety has been given high priority and safety training has been incorporated into the curriculum. Pupils are confident in the actions they can take to keep themselves safe online. Older pupils report that they know they can take screenshots to protect themselves and others in their pursuit of online safety.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements for this standard.

Arrangements to check the suitability of the proprietor are robust. The directors have high expectations of senior leaders, who are rigorous in carrying out all required checks on current and new staff members. These ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. All aspects of staff recruitment and vetting are led by the highly effective senior leadership team within school and are subject to quality-assurance checks by senior staff and audits conducted by one of the company's deputy directors.

Staff-appraisal procedures are well established and work effectively. Leaders invest time and energy in ensuring that strong appointments are made. This has made a positive contribution to strengthening the already highly effective team. Leaders make sure that appropriate and well-established performance-management procedures are in place to support and challenge staff. They provide a wide range of training opportunities for staff to fine tune their skills and practice.

Teachers are really positive about their school and say, for example, 'I am consistently amazed and delighted by the high expectations, sensible attitudes and commitment to a realistic work-life balance. It is a privilege to work at such a well-organised school.'

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The requirements of this standard are met.

Spread over three sites, the school premises are exceptionally well maintained and well looked after by pupils and staff. They provide spacious and well-resourced, stimulating learning spaces for all learners. The new purpose-built secondary premises provide an inspiring learning environment for an impressive range of specialist activities and include music suites, design facilities, sports and performance spaces.

Across all sites, there is a wide range of facilities to support an outstanding and broad curriculum, including a wide range of learning support and administrative spaces. Classrooms are spacious, as are corridors, with large display spaces that celebrate pupils' achievements and provide inspiration for further learning. Wide access to an extensive range of interactive IT resources has led to learners routinely using their devices to support their learning.

School libraries are very well resourced, with a wealth of both fiction and research materials as well as examination support materials. Pupils' reading and research skills are well supported through class sessions using library resources and facilities.

The current sixth-form accommodation provides facilities for them to work and socialise. The newly planned sixth form block will provide separate study and social spaces for independent research and opportunities for pupils to manage their own learning, enabling them to prepare themselves for lives beyond school.

The superb indoor and outdoor sports facilities enhance pupils' participation in an exciting range of sports and physical education activities and include three swimming pools, gymnasiums for use by pupils and staff and outdoor play areas for younger children. Great care is taken to ensure appropriate surfacing and maintenance of all areas. The safety of pupils is seen as paramount.

Toilet facilities are plentiful and hygienic. There are adequate water fountains around the buildings, as well as reminders about the importance of keeping hydrated. A large team of staff ensures that the buildings, toilets, grounds and classrooms are cleaned and maintained to a high standard, keeping pupils' safety in mind at all times. Pupils take great pride in the school environment and treat their surroundings with respect. This leads to an immaculate learning environment.

Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the requirements of the standard.

A range of communication systems keeps parents fully informed about their child's education and all that is happening in the school. These include newsletters, emails and parent-and-carer information meetings. The school's website provides a range of easily accessible information concerning all aspects of school life. This includes basic information, contact details, admissions processes, selected policies, examination results, events calendar and news.

Parents receive regular and detailed reports as well as formal and informal updates about their child's academic and personal progress. Written reports are sent to parents through the year and there are regular parent-teacher-pupil consultations across the school year. Pupils' learning targets and predicted grades are shared to allow parents, teachers and pupils to work together and enable further improvement. Parents have readily available access to teachers and can email or arrange additional meetings to discuss their child as needed.

The school regularly runs workshops or holds coffee mornings on aspects of the curriculum and specialist topics. Recent workshops have focused on the use of an electronic 'virtual classroom' which parents can have access to at home, so they know how to support their children's learning. Workshops are welcomed by parents. Parents greatly value the English curriculum that promotes British standards and expectations.

The school actively seeks the views of parents through regular surveys and discussion groups and acts on suggestions when appropriate. The school's Parent Advisory Group (PAG) meets

regularly to listen to parents' views and share them with the school's senior leadership team. This, coupled with continual informal dialogue with parents, helps the school to improve what it does and enables prompt intervention where necessary.

The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school. They value the fact that school staff balance care and guidance with high expectations for academic excellence. One parent explained, 'My daughter loves going to school. She is supported by caring and highly skilled teachers who understand and cater for her individual needs.'

The vast majority of parents say that they are well informed about all that is happening in the school and the progress their children are making. Indeed, regular written reports from teachers are very informative.

Parents say that the school and staff are open and very accessible and that the school responds effectively to all reasonable requests for information and to any concerns they may have. They feel that they are listened to and that their views are valued. Parents say, 'The principal's door is always open to us. We can go to him about anything and be confident he will act quickly.'

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of this standard.

A well-considered and detailed policy gives parents clear guidance about how to raise any concern. This supplements the guidance they receive as their children are admitted to school. School leaders are keen to listen to any concerns and resolve any questions before they escalate into formal complaints. As a result, while all complaints are exceptionally well documented, they are few in number. The policy allows for an external panel to review the most serious complaints. Parents and pupils are exceptionally positive about leaders' responsiveness to any concerns.

Standard 8. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Leadership and management across the school are outstanding and ensure that the BSO standards are consistently met.

The inspirational leadership of the principal, ably supported by the highly effective senior leadership team, ensures that the school's vision, ambition and ethos are understood by all. Together, senior leaders have established a very positive, warm and friendly environment, which is coupled with a relentless drive to ensure that the highest standards of academic excellence are achieved.

Governance provided by the board of directors is highly effective, providing strong support and focused challenge. Directors ensure that the school has clear financial policies and provides excellent value for money. The school's owners have established a well-defined system of delegated responsibility. As a result, leaders at all levels are clear about their roles and what is expected of them and are held robustly to account for the school's performance. This scheme of delegation also ensures that the school is run in accordance with local and national law. Highly knowledgeable, visionary directors use their breadth of experience well to understand how

effectively the school operates and performs. They use their first-hand knowledge of the school's performance during their annual appraisal of the principal.

The school's owners work very closely with senior leaders to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are of the highest standard, up to date, shared and followed, keeping pupils safe and happy in school.

Leaders have made sure that children in the early years get off to a flying start and have a clear understanding of what could further improve provision.

Leaders have established a culture of exceptionally high expectations for staff and pupils alike. A calm pursuit of excellence permeates all phases of the school, from early years to sixth form. As a result, pupils of all ages thrive and make exceptionally strong progress.

The school benefits from high-quality resources, which are used very effectively by adults and pupils. The importance of reading books is reflected in the extensive stock in each of the school's libraries. This encourages pupils not only to learn to read, but to be active readers. Leaders ensure that the accommodation is very well maintained. They provide a safe and stimulating environment which inspires pupils to achieve.

Leaders make sure that well-qualified staff are recruited and deployed effectively. Teachers benefit from a wide range of professional-development opportunities. Staff speak positively about the support and encouragement they receive, saying 'We are very proud to work in such a successful school.'

The highly effective leadership team has established well-considered and robust systems to monitor the school's performance. Together, they have an excellent capacity to identify, plan and implement sustainable improvements. As a result, the ABC International School has continued to build upon its already well-established and high-quality provision.

Early Years provision

The early years provision caters for children from two to five years. When children start school, the overwhelming majority speak little or no English. They are helped to settle very quickly and soon make strong progress, maturing their skills across all areas of development. As a result, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is above the national average in England.

Staffing is generous. The high adult-to-child ratio results in adults being well aware of children's individual interests and needs and using this information for planning. Children in the early years are very well behaved and are able to concentrate on tasks for long periods of time. Significant emphasis is placed on developing personal relationships, both with other children and with adults in the early years and around the school. Whole-class activities help children develop an understanding of the world around them as well as promoting their communication skills.

Well-resourced teacher-led activities provide children with opportunities to make decisions, develop conceptual understanding and practise fine motor skills. The focus on problem solving encourages children to take risks and develop independent and critical-thinking skills. However, there are too few opportunities for child-initiated learning in most lessons.

Planning is rigorous and identifies children's achievements as well as next steps in learning. Teachers employ a range of assessment opportunities to plan individual and group challenges. By the time that they leave the early years, almost all children are ready for the challenges of the curriculum in Year 1.

Sixth-form provision

The sixth-form provision is outstanding. Students are provided with a wealth of opportunities to develop their academic and social skills. They are offered excellent support and guidance regarding university placements and employment. The majority of students go on to attend leading universities in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and Korea.

A-Level courses are delivered to a very high standard. Lessons are characterised by teachers' outstanding subject knowledge and high expectations of what students can achieve. The use of excellent questions causes students to think deeply about their work.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are exceptionally high and students' very positive attitudes are a significant factor in the outstanding progress they make across a broad range of subjects.

Older students are excellent role models for others in the school and speak exceptionally highly of their time at ABC International School.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

ABC International School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws.

It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010.

2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;

5(b)(vi) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

What the school could do to improve further

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

increase opportunities for children in the early years to take the initiative to design their own learning activities.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	X			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	X			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	X			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	X			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	X			
The behaviour of pupils	X			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	X			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	X			
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The quality of provision for boarding

	n/a			
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School details

Name of school	The ABC International School
Type of school	International School
Date school opened	March 1995
Age range of pupils	2-18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	818
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	Early years: VND 239,500,000 (Nursery) Early years: VND 285,700,00 (Reception) Primary: VND 369,000,000 (Yr3) to 438,000,000 (Yr6) Secondary: VND 498,600,000 (Yr7) to 545,300,000 (Yr11) Sixth Form: VND 569,200,00
Annual fees (boarders)	n/a
Address of school	Khu Dan Cu Tan An Huy, AP 5, Phuoc Kien, Nha Be, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 700 000
Telephone number	(+84.28) 543 1833
Email address	office@abcis.com
Headteacher	Mr Steve Shaw
Proprietor	Le Bong Ha

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

Accreditation – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

Accreditation Board – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

Assessment – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

Attainment – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO) – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

Education Development Trust – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

Central Support Team – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

Combined or Joint Visit – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

Cycle of Inspection – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

Curriculum – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work

effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils’ gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Management – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school’s work in an efficient and useful way.

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

Progress – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

School self-evaluation – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school’s work on the outcomes for pupils.

Standards –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

Teaching – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils’ learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high-quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high-quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world-class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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