

## BRITISH SCHOOL OF CÓRDOBA

**School's regional authorisation number:**

**BOE 14000173 The British School of Córdoba – C/ Mexico 4,  
14012 Córdoba**

**BOE 14012746 The British School of Córdoba – Foundation –  
C/ Jurista Otbi 1, 14012 Córdoba**

**Date of Inspection:**

24<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Inspection Team:**

Joan Gemmell - Lead Inspector

Steve Needham - Team Inspector

**Reason for the Inspection:**

For authorisation to provide a British education from Pre-nursery to Year 13.

**Overall Recommendation:**

The British School of Córdoba – Foundation (from 2 years old) is recommended for authorisation for 120 pupils and The British School of Córdoba (to Year 13) is recommended for authorisation for 600 pupils.

The next inspection is due in March 2027.

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

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

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

## 1. History and Context of the School

The British School of Córdoba was founded in 1998 and the school moved to the present purpose-built site in 2003. An additional site was acquired in 2007 to house the Early Years Foundation Stage (E.Y.F.S.). There are currently 457 pupils on roll. 90 per cent of whom are Spanish, 4 per cent are British and the rest is made up of a range of other nationalities.

The school was last inspected in 2019 and was granted authorisation to teach pupils from Nursery to Year 13. The purpose of this inspection is to consider the re-authorisation of the educational provision for Pre-nursery to Year 13.

## 2. Accommodation and Resources

The school provides very good accommodation and resources for the delivery of the British curriculum.

The school has two sites. The smaller site, which is 500 metres from the main site, is used by the Early Years Foundation Stage (E.Y.F.S.) and has four classrooms, a dining room and kitchen, appropriate sized toilets and a large outdoor learning space which is divided into sections where pupils can work and play. Appropriate sized toilets and changing facilities are available to help develop pupils' independent toileting.

The main school site has undergone a major building programme in 2018, to create a three-storey building for secondary pupils. This was added to the other building, which has two levels. All classes are spacious, bright, well ventilated.

Excellent use is made of displays in all the classrooms and corridors which supports pupils' learning as well as promote the school's eight values. Many of the displays reflect some on the **enrichment activities** which the school carries out throughout the year. These include charity fun runs, a canoeing trip to clean up a river and geography field work, among others. In a secondary school English classroom, the displays were all very impressive and included a life-sized lady MacBeth, to help pupils live out the play.

Twenty-six new, digital smartboards have recently been introduced to the school helping teaching staff to deliver lessons in a creative way. Resources are good and effectively used.

The three computer suites are spacious and very well equipped with over fifty computers available between them. The school also has three trolleys of Chromebooks for the use of all classes when required. Pupils in Year 13 bring their own computing devices.

The two well-stocked libraries are run by the International Baccalaureate (I.B.) librarian and all pupils visit the library once a week.

The music room is spacious with a tremendous amount of musical instruments, which include keyboards, complete sets of drums, guitars and ukuleles among many others. There are four fully soundproofed rooms to let pupils practise their music in excellent conditions.

An extremely large playground gives pupils lots of space to carry out different activities and sports for physical education (P.E.) at break times. A new awning to create shade in warmer months is being installed in April 2023.

A large auditorium, with a stage, is used for assemblies as well as for examinations and teachers' meetings.

A well-equipped, spacious gymnasium has several changing rooms for pupils. The school also uses a local sports centre where pupils can use a racing track and sports fields to ensure the P.E. curriculum is fully carried out.

There are sufficient toilets throughout the school for staff and pupils as well as a toilet for the disabled. There are lifts to all floors in both buildings.

The school has four, very well equipped, spacious laboratories, preparation rooms, fume cupboards and chemical showers, which are used in the event of an accident.

There are two art rooms, one of which is used for photography, which is a recently introduced subject in secondary school for Advanced level pupils.

Every corridor in the school is named after an inspirational public figure such as Malala Youssefai, Roald Dahl and Frida Kahlo among others, and their lives are discussed at length, to help pupils develop social and emotional skills, empathy and self-awareness.

Food is cooked on site for pupils and staff in a large dining room and pupils eat at staggered lunch times.

There are several spacious teachers' rooms and Year 13 pupils have five different areas throughout the school to study in.

### **3. Health, Safety and Welfare**

The school provides a **safe environment for staff and pupils.**

The premises are clean and very well maintained and access into both buildings is carefully controlled and monitored. All visitors are required to sign in and out and wear an identification badge.

Fire exits are clearly marked and evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the school. Fire drills are held once a term and fire extinguishers are visible in prominent areas of all sites.

The school has an effective safeguarding policy and a designated safeguarding leader. Processes are well understood by all staff and other policies in relation to health and safety are consistently followed. Accidents and incidents are dealt with by members of staff with relevant first-aid training. A log book is kept of all incidents which occur.

Criminal record checks have been obtained for all staff and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

Movement around the sites is safe due to wide corridors which avoids congestion.

#### 4. The Curriculum

The curriculum meets the needs of the E.Y.F.S. curriculum as well as the National Curriculum and is broad and balanced. Time allowances for each subject are appropriate.

In the E.Y.F.S. each area of learning is implemented through purposeful play, while pupils learn to explore and relate to others. Teachers ensure that each pupil's learning is tailored to meet their individual needs. Direct messaging to parents is carried out through a social platform.

Effective planning ensures the staff share ideas and activities that are adapted to cater for pupils' differing abilities.

**The language of instruction is English** and all teachers challenge pupils if they try to communicate in other languages.

The school has been offering the I. B. Diploma programme since 2022 in line with the school's vision to become a more international school with a global outlook. All Year 13 pupils are currently following the "A" level programme and most Year 12 pupils are already studying the I.B. diploma. The school plans to continue teaching both "A" levels and the I.B. programme.

There is a **rich and diverse range of extracurricular activities** which enables pupils to pursue other interests to a high level. These include many musical activities, drama, art, debating and sports such as football and paddle. Year 13 pupils get the opportunity to attend golf lessons as part of the curriculum.

The school employs a full-time educational psychologist who carries out any evaluations and referrals when a concern is raised. The educational psychologist works closely with the additional learning needs (A.L.N.) co-ordinator and the head of primary school to oversee the provisions made for A.L.N. pupils. The school also makes very good provision for pupils who join the school throughout the year without an adequate level of English. The English as an additional language (E.A.L.) team

give focussed support to individual pupils or work in small groups depending on the priority of need. This support is evaluated termly by support staff and class teachers. Special educational needs (S.E.N.) pupils are offered target clubs such as chess and progressive action coalition (P.A.C.), and an Eco club, among others, as a complement to the academic curriculum.

The school participates in an art competition, run every year by the London National Gallery, where pupils from all over the world submit paintings and the National Gallery choose a selection to exhibit in the gallery. This year two paintings of pupils from Year 2 and Year 5 were chosen to be exhibited, showing the high standard and interest in art, of pupils from the school.

## 5. Staffing

Staff are suitably qualified to deliver the E.Y.F.S. programme and National Curriculum effectively.

E.Y.F.S. and Key Stage 1 classes have teaching assistants. Part-time assistants are shared between the Key Stage 2 classes, allowing for individual teaching or working in small groups. Teaching assistants are organised very efficiently which results in minimum loss of learning time as pupils are quickly engaged in their tasks and lessons.

Deployment of staff is effective and British and Spanish staff work well together and share high expectations of their pupils.

The staff-pupil ratio is good throughout the school. There are two laboratory technicians as well as specialist teachers for all areas of science and the music department is well staffed with teachers who teach choir and band as well as many musical instruments, to increase pupils' knowledge outwith the music curriculum.

There is a well-structured appraisal system to assess the performance of teachers throughout the school. The aim of the performance management cycle is to raise standards in teaching and learning and teachers are observed, unannounced, at least three times throughout the academic year and this is followed up by meetings highlighting good practice and discussing areas where improvement is needed.

## 6. Teaching and Learning

The standard of teaching and learning across the school ranges from good to very good and several lessons observed were of outstanding practice.

In the E.Y.F.S. teaching and learning is very good and teachers have excellent classroom management skills. At all times, pupils show confidence in their learning and often work independently. Lots of appropriate questioning takes place throughout the day. Teachers help to challenge and scaffold pupils to have their own ideas by asking them what they are doing and why, during child-led activities.

Teachers judge the pace of the lesson to ensure that all pupils make progress and are challenged to think through questions, explaining their reasoning.

In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils were asked to write a premonition story following a lesson plan. Pupils shared their ideas for their stories with each other and were constantly reminded of verb tenses, sentence starters and synonyms to make their pieces of work more interesting. **Questioning was well targeted and extended pupils' understanding.**

Teaching and learning is very good in secondary with teachers showing **excellent subject knowledge** and they are able to engage pupils, who for the most part, show a high level of interest. Teachers provide **challenging, yet realistic, activities to enhance learning.** They identify pupils' differing abilities and provide suitably appropriate work adaptations. This was evident in a Year 11 maths lesson where pupils were peer teaching among themselves on a lesson on quadratic equations.

**Very good behaviour** means that class time in general is used productively. The **relationship and rapport between teachers and pupils is very positive** and pupils feel supported in their learning. Secondary students' council pupils describe the school as **"impressive", a "community"** and believe that the profile of the school has improved tremendously since the introduction of the I.B. programme. Primary student council pupils spoke highly of their school and said they loved coming to school and had never seen any cases of bullying in the school, although they know who to turn to if the case arose.

## 7. Assessment

In E.Y.F.S. pupils' progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and teachers observe pupils to understand their level of achievements and interests. Each child has their own learning journal and profiles are dated with comments and photographs to follow each pupil's progress and development.

In primary, targets are set against N.C. objectives in core subjects and the head of primary meets regularly with key stage co-ordinators to analyse data to assess each pupil's individual progress over time.

The assessment policy for secondary outlines that pupils' progress is ongoing, through teachers identifying positive work and targets to improve. Mock exam results analyse data to intervene where necessary to ensure every pupil has the best chance of reaching their full potential and Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) scores in Year 7 and 10 are shared to be used alongside internal assessment to help subject specific target setting. Although regular testing does take place in secondary school, as yet, standardised testing is not systematic, to be able to compare against national levels. Annual testing would help to compare with external results.

Good examination results in Key Stages 4 and 5 indicate that pupils perform well.

A relevant marking and feedback policy is strictly adhered to throughout the school, which helps pupils improve their work and move forward. This has improved greatly since the last inspection.

## **8. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

The school effectively supports the development of pupils' attitudes and values, every key stage has a weekly assembly which runs alongside the personal, social, health and economic education (P.S.H.E.) lessons which have been designed to incorporate both personal and global issues. Pupils recently organised activities for the Holocaust Memorial Day.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in charity and community activities such as a run for cancer and raising money for several local charities. Pupils also compete in local debating competitions. The school has an active student voice with both primary and secondary student councils as well as a digital newspaper which pupils bring out once a month where pupils can express their ideas and share comments.

The school has an effective careers policy and is implemented through P.S.H.E. from Years 8-13. This career's guidance give pupils opportunities to develop the skills they need to plan and manage their own personal development and career progression through relevant information given as well as work experience opportunities.

## **9. Leadership and Management**

The quality of Leadership and management is very good and the positive relationship between members of staff and pupils is nurtured well by the Senior Leadership Team (S.L.T.). The school principal and vice principal, as well as heads of E.Y.F.S. and primary, effectively monitor the curriculum and teachers' planning. Meetings are held regularly in each department to discuss pupils' academic progress. The S.L.T. share an ethos and vision for the school for how they expect the school to develop as it moves forward and they have a realistic understanding of the priorities for school improvement which can be seen in the school development plan. They have planned for increased time to be spent in lessons by S.L.T which will be followed up by reflection meetings with teachers. This will result in a report being made each term to inform training needs. The development plans also include a programme of continuous I.B. staff training to ensure that all members of staff are fully up to date with the implementation of the I.B. Creativity, Activity, Service (C.A.S.) project. All teachers are already participating in this project by offering a club at lunch times and break times. These clubs, which include, sewing, skateboarding, choir, Sevillana dancing and bands, among others, are very popular with students and members of the students' council stated that they felt this was a real strength of the school.

Members of the S.L.T. are invited to an annual appraisal meeting to discuss and reflect on their personal development and to set targets for the forthcoming year. A new lesson observation system was implemented in September 2022. The S.L.T. meet weekly and set out their main priorities which they feed into relevant

development plans. Staff, pupils and parents are consulted before taking final decisions.

## 10. Response to the previous inspection report

- Progress has been made to develop initiatives related to marking and target setting and they are now more consistent in use and more helpful to pupils in improving their work.
- There has been a lot of investment in practical resources in all subjects and technological resources are much better utilised.
- Differentiation throughout the school ensures that the more able are suitably challenged and the less able are sufficiently supported.

## 11. Recommendations

- Maintain the excellent attitudes to learning and the high academic standards already achieved as well as the friendly, caring environment of the school.
- Ensure that a more rigorous system of standardised testing is used to measure progress against national levels in secondary school.