



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

**St. Christopher's
International School**

**Penang
Malaysia**

Date **4th – 6th June 2024**
Inspection number **20240604**

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education (DfE) 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 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, where appropriate); 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 DfE on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British schools overseas.

During the inspection visit, 60 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' 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 Karen Hanratty. The team members were Caz Jude and Siobhan Brady.

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 relevant standards are:

Part 1 – '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;'

and

Part 2 – '5(b)(vi)- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 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

St. Christopher's International School provides a high-quality education, aimed at developing rounded, enthusiastic learners. The personal, social and emotional development of students is a strength of the school, where children are encouraged to become confident, caring, open-minded individuals. Teaching is excellent, supported by a strong, broad curriculum together with very effective assessment practices. The high standards achieved by pupils reflect the personalised attention which they receive. The strategic leadership provided by the principal and board of governors sets a clear direction and ambitious targets for all aspects of school life.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- students, who are polite, well-behaved, excited learners who love coming to school;
- principal and school leaders, who place students' best interests at the heart of all decision making;
- governing board, who work in collaboration with the principal to provide the school's strategic oversight;
- 'outside play and learning' (OPAL) playtimes, which enrich students play, develop creativity and resilience;
- academic standards achieved by students;
- analysis and application of assessment data, to inform curriculum adaptation;
- focus on creating a positive learning environment, supported by the personal goals which frame school culture;
- strong relationships within the school community, between all stakeholders;
- range of afterschool and co-curricular activities available to students;
- coaching culture, which encourages staff development within supportive, trust-based relationships.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Ensure that all teaching across the school is as good as in the best lessons, for example by:
 - providing adequate challenge and stretch for all from their starting points, but particularly for the most able students, through personalised learning and appropriate differentiation;
 - offering greater opportunities for creativity, collaboration and critical thinking in lessons, leading to active, exciting and inspiring learning in lessons;
 - further developing the early years environment with invitations and provocations to enhance children's learning.
- ii. Ensure facilities and transport management adheres to best practice.
- iii. Consider strategies for succession planning within the board of governors, to ensure that the high-quality guidance provided by the board continues to support the school into the future.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	St. Christopher's International School				
Address	No. 10 Nunn Road, Georgetown, Penang, 10350 Malaysia				
Telephone Number/s	+604 226 3589				
Website Address	www.scips.org.my				
Key Email Address	martin.towse@scips.org.my				
Headteacher/ Principal	Martin Towse				
Chair of board/Proprietor	Kathie Yeoh				
Age Range	3-13 years				
Total number of pupils	625	Boys	332	Girls	293
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	43	
	3-5 years	147	17-18 years	0	
	6-11 years	435	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

St. Christopher's International School, Penang (SCIPS), is a non-denominational, not-for-profit school offering a British-style education to children aged from three to 13. The school hosts 38 different nationalities. The largest proportion are Malaysian (45%), followed by British, Australian, Indian and Chinese, each accounting for 10% of the student body. The school has recently celebrated its 60th anniversary.

The school is located in a delightful, green and easily accessible residential area of Penang. The campus offers a secure, caring, friendly, and nurturing environment. The school has been on the same site since opening, however, campus developments over the years have ensured the facilities remain relevant to the changing nature of the school.

In August 2022, the school expanded to include its first cohort of year 7 students, the following year expanding into year 8. To accommodate this development, significant changes were made to the campus, including an all-weather surface for sports and recreation and the opening of a science laboratory, along with the development of outdoor learning spaces for the younger children. The school has recently leased a neighbouring piece of land and plans to develop this area into a swimming pool, additional sports facilities and a forest school.

A major recent development has been the introduction of the OPAL programme, in response to an awareness of the decline of children's abilities to play, following the pandemic. This initiative is having a profound effect on children's social and emotional development, and on the ethos of the school. SCIPS is only the third school outside the UK to receive Platinum status from OPAL for their achievements in this project.

With its family feel, SCIPS is known as a happy and positive school that promotes the importance of friendship, respect, trust, and values.

The school is a member of the Association of International Malaysian Schools (AIMS). It is proud to have been a founding member of the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA). Currently, the principal serves as the secretary on the FOBISIA executive board. The school also values its membership in the Association of British Schools Overseas (AoBSO).

4.1 British nature of the school

SCIPS has a distinctly British feel, which is evident in many aspects of school life, including:

- English is the language of communication throughout the school and in lessons. From year 1, a level of proficiency in English is a requirement for enrolment;
- The school structure of early years, infants, juniors and prep, which mirror key stages (KS) in the UK;
- The school follows the national curriculum for England 2014 and early years foundation stage (EYFS) guidance from 2021;
- Assessment practices align with standard procedures in England and outcomes are benchmarked against UK, as well as international standards;
- Teaching staff are predominantly British trained and qualified, many recruited directly from the UK;
- Professional development aligns with UK standards, much of which is delivered through UK based platforms and FOBISIA;
- The school places importance on the development of the whole child, academically, socially, physically, and emotionally;
- The school follows a three-term year;
- Timetables and curriculum weighting resemble those found in UK schools;
- Students proudly wear school and PE uniforms;
- The House system is a key part of the school structure, all students and staff are allocated to a house which gives them a sense of belonging;
- High quality classroom resources are sourced from the UK;
- Classroom displays reflect British practice;
- The school celebrates key British events and festivals, such as Christmas;
- The school is a member of FOBISIA and AoBSO.

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

The quality of education provided is outstanding. A broad and balanced curriculum, including enrichment through an extensive programme of after-school activities (ASAs), visits, special events and the impressive OPAL programme, engages all students. Strong planning and the use of data to identify learning needs, match lessons to the abilities of most students. As a result, students' attainment and progress far exceeds UK expectations. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum fully meets the standard for BSO and is outstanding. The curriculum creates a sense of awe and wonder and consequently promotes a love of learning.

The national curriculum for England 2014 is implemented for core subjects in years 1 to 8, together with the EYFS curriculum in nursery and reception. Students' learning encompasses linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative aspects. A curriculum policy is in place. Detailed schemes of work and medium-term plans, which show progression over time, lead into individual lesson planning. Basic skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy are well embedded. The school has recently implemented White Rose Maths and Monster Phonics to ensure greater consistency across year groups and higher standards. The impact of these schemes is being monitored and reviewed.

The international primary curriculum (IPC) is well embedded for cross-curricular teaching of humanities and art. It has been adapted to make it relevant for students living in Penang. For example, students in year 1 study a beach project and learn about the animals and the different types of sand found on beaches in Penang compared to other countries. Exit points at the end of units consolidate and involve parents in their child's learning. In a year 5 exit point for 'Earth as an Island', students shared and refined their design for a new object made by repurposing used materials, before working collaboratively with their parent to build the product.

Specialist teachers deliver modern foreign languages (MFL), PE and music. German, Mandarin and Bahasa Malaysia are taught; aspects of language, moral education and Malaysian history meet local requirements.

Students with additional needs are well supported by class teachers who provide targeted support in lessons, and the learning support team. In collaboration between teachers, parents and the students themselves, SMART targets are set, in a cycle of assess, plan, and review. Students who are learning English as an additional language

(EAL) receive support while their peers learn a foreign language. As a result, students rapidly learn English and are integrated back into class.

Curriculum leaders monitor their own subjects and complete an annual curriculum audit. They undertake book scrutinises, collect student voice, analyse data, as well as carrying out class walk throughs to gather evidence. This enables them to clearly identify specific areas for improvement and drive standards further.

A programme of over 80 ASAs are offered from reception onwards. The breadth of ASAs is a real strength of the school and meet the needs of all the students. There is something for everyone, from sporting activities, to art, drama, wellbeing and STEM options. Activities are run by school staff and specialist external providers. Students are invited to join selective sports clubs in preparation for competitions.

Residential visits are a major annual event with over 98% of students participating. The cost of residential is included in the school fees. The residential programme is clearly structured and developed progressively year on year. Starting in year 2, students enjoy a sleepover in school, culminating in years 7 and 8 when students travel to the Perhentian Islands for hiking, kayaking and coral planting. There is also a programme of local educational visits which support IPC units.

Playtimes are an essential part of every day, providing students with opportunities for physical activity and socialisation, together with developing skills of cooperation, resilience and risk management. The importance of play is highly valued throughout the school and play is specifically planned for; engagement levels are high. The school has recently implemented the OPAL programme which is unique in the region. A dedicated member of staff has overall responsibility for organising play opportunities; student play leaders help to enhance the provision during play times. The opportunities available are impressive, including role play in a range of settings, den building, a mud kitchen, treehouse, creative sand and water play, marble mazes, skateboarding and bikes, among many others. Through play, students learn risk-benefit analysis. For example, an EYFS child was climbing up onto the playhouse roof. She removed her shoes and socks, and as she climbed, she stopped and thought about the best way to climb. Students have excellent routines for tidying up at the end of playtimes. The school has been awarded Platinum status by OPAL for having excellent play at the school.

Home learning is seen as a key link between home and school and develops from early reading and spelling practice to more involved projects. In year 6 and above, students undertake a 'Passion Project'. Each student identifies their own focus and over an extended period of time, develops knowledge and skills in this area, through study at home and school support. At the end of the project, the students create an exhibition where they proudly showcase their learning.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment meet the requirements for BSO and is good, with many outstanding features. 90% of lessons observed were good or better.

The school has a positive, relaxed, friendly, and learning-focused atmosphere. Students are engaged and excited to learn in lessons. The school's Personal Goals underpin the learning taking place in the classrooms. Teachers have a detailed understanding of most student's aptitudes, needs, and prior attainment. Students work well independently, in pairs or in groups, and cooperate well together.

Behaviour management in lessons is a strength, based on positive relationships within the classroom; as a result, students are able to focus on learning. Students who may find it difficult to remain calm are taught mindfulness strategies to self-regulate, for example to take deep, slow breaths and count.

The newly appointed year leaders work with teachers in their team, planning closely together to ensure that students have similar learning experiences across the year group. Planning is derived from curriculum overviews and medium-term planning. Learning is broken down into small steps and lessons are sequenced towards year group expectations. The curriculum leaders oversee planning for their subject to ensure clear progression across the school, collaborating with teachers to establish, enhance, and ensure high-quality learning experiences and outcomes for all learners.

Students with additional learning needs are well supported through 'school action' or 'class action' interventions. Targets are set and reviewed regularly. Interventions are timely and effective. More able students are given opportunities to participate in competitions and are invited to specific ASAs aimed at their area of strength. However, in some lessons, there is room for more challenge and stretch, especially for the most able students, particularly in mathematics.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well paced, with a varied range of activities that engage students and stimulate learning. Occasionally, learning is too teacher led, with fewer opportunities for students to collaborate, be creative or direct their own learning. Teachers consciously plan support for students who are learning English as an additional language. Through clear explanations, examples and targeted questioning teachers develop students' understanding. For example, in year 7, students were guided towards the correct use of a protractor for accurately measuring angles. The use of talk partners is well embedded, students participate enthusiastically. In the best lessons, teachers raise awareness of possible misconceptions or errors during the teaching input, which helps students be successful. Resources are appropriate and well-used in lessons to support learning. Additional adults in lessons understand their role and work effectively with students.

The EYFS offers a wide range of learning opportunities. Learning environments are being developed inside and in the garden areas outside of the classrooms. Continuous provision is child-led, enhanced and supported by teachers and teaching assistants (TAs). In the best lessons, teachers start the learning with a teacher directed activity which is closely matched to the needs of the students. During continuous provision the students are given the opportunity to practise their new knowledge and learning. For example, in a nursery class, following modelling and language development of 'full' and 'empty', children used various containers to explore the concepts. They took the learning in their own direction by adding boats and pushing these down into the water until it spilt over the top of the container.

Students take pride in sharing their learning and in the presentation of their work. Books are marked in line with the school's marking policy and marking in students' books reinforces and extends learning. Students are supported to self-assess against learning intentions, by highlighting the written objective in green - 'Got it!' - or pink - 'Not yet!'. Teachers provide constructive feedback and next steps, which students respond to with their 'purple polishing pens'. Consequently, most students understand their strengths and next steps. Peer and self-assessment are evident in lessons observed across all subjects. Teachers understand students' strengths and areas for development well and this ensures targeted support for students on 'school action' individual education plans (IEPs).

Displays throughout the school celebrate and support student learning. In early years the learning journey of children is evident in the displays and in the higher years learning walls are used effectively. Teachers use displays to support during lessons.

The curriculum and teaching in lessons do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Students are well prepared to enter or re-enter the UK education system.

Formative assessments are used to plan interventions and modify the curriculum as necessary. The school has recently developed its own 'Learning Rungs' which gather ongoing detailed attainment data and feed into reports. These are based on the learning objectives from each unit of work across the curriculum. The Heads of School support year groups in conducting termly gap analysis session of data, identifying trends, patterns and gaps in student learning. Annual summative assessments using GL *Progress through English* (PTE) and *Progress through Maths* (PTM) are conducted for years 1 to 8. Termly assessments of writing are moderated against UK and international standards using 'No More Marking'.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students meet the requirements for BSO and are outstanding. The quality of work completed in lessons, external assessment data and behaviour are all above UK standards.

Students' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are exceptional. Students are kind, hardworking and confident. On the rare occasion that there are issues with behaviour these are dealt with quickly and appropriately by members of staff.

Students complete GL PTE and PTM tests annually. The New Group Reading Tests (NGRT) are used to assess reading. External assessments in all year groups show students are working significantly above UK and international standards in English, mathematics and reading. This is supported by evidence from work completed in books and during lessons, which also demonstrate high standards in science. Students' writing is above UK and international standards, confirmed through moderation using 'No More Marking'.

Students make sustained progress across all aspects of the curriculum, which is evident in the outstanding development of knowledge, understanding and skills which were observed both inside and outside of the classroom. External data over time shows students make sustained progress from their individual starting points. Those identified as having special educational needs or needing additional support attain in line with their peers and are fully integrated into the school.

Attendance across the school is good at 95%. During the school day, there were very few examples of students being late for lessons, due to the well-established routines in place at the end of break and lunchtime. Only a small number of students are recorded as being late to school and processes are in place to register these individuals. The attendance and punctuality reflect the students' eagerness to learn and to be within the school environment.

Students participate in sporting and music competitions through the schools local and international connections including AIMS and FOBISIA. The school recently successfully competed in the FOBISIA games and students won first place in various competitions against their peers from other countries.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students meets the standard for BSO and is outstanding; it is a particular strength of the school.

Staff, students and parents are proud to be part of the SCIPS community, with its welcoming, inclusive ethos. The school's eight 'Personal Goals' - curious, resilient, respectful, expressive, cooperative, reflective, adaptable, and independent - promote personal growth and encourage strong moral values. They are at the heart of everything the school does.

Students' spirituality is developed through a range of learning opportunities. Students are taught mindfulness and visualisation to help them relax and find gratitude. In year 2 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), students listened to a chime ring, while focusing on their breathing and looking at an image of nature, helping to develop feelings of peace and calm. In year 4 music, students studied Hokusai's woodblock print, 'Great wave of Kangara' and used this as inspiration to compose pieces of music in groups. ASAs include mindfulness art, yoga, calm art and dreamy designs, all of which encourage contemplative thought.

Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They are polite and helpful, welcoming and friendly. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare, because students are engaged and happy at school. There is a systematic approach to dealing with any inappropriate behaviour and students are clear about the rules and sanctions. They know right from wrong. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly, following the school's anti-bullying policy. The school's eight personal goals represent the schools' values and are focused on in detail during PSHE lessons and assemblies. Star Awards, linked to the personal goals, are presented to students in the weekly assemblies for demonstrating these goals. The Jigsaw PSHE programme ensures consistency in the teaching and learning of personal, social and moral education across the school.

There are opportunities across the school for students to take on leadership roles. In classes, there is a regular rotation of responsibilities for things such as handing out books and tidying up. Students in years 1 - 8 can apply to be OPAL play leaders. In year 6, students are democratically elected by their peers as House captains, student librarians, and prefects; positions much sought after and respected. Student leaders take pride in their roles; the year 6 prefects who open car doors for students on arrival, welcome their peers with politeness and a big smile. House captains and prefects are responsible for organising a range of events during the year, for example, the English scavenger hunt. Students in years 7 and 8 have the opportunity to sit on the Student Council. Their role is to survey and seek the opinions of students in the school and, where appropriate, implement their ideas.

Students are encouraged to show compassion for people from other countries or in circumstances that may be different from their own. Students develop an understanding of

the situation of other people around the world, and learn empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. From this empathy, direct action results. For example, students learn about the refugee crisis across the world. They develop an understanding of some of the causes of migration and work in partnership with the Rohingya Education Centre for Refugees, organising a picnic for child refugees and raising funds for the centre. In year 4, students learn about children in need. As part of this project each student fills a shoe box with treats and toys which are then donated as gifts.

Students have an appreciation and respect of their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. Global citizenship and intercultural learning are embedded. The school celebrates festivals from around the world and students can talk about the similarities and differences across the various festivals, such as Diwali, Hari Raya, Christmas and Chinese New Year. These celebrations are very meaningful to students and emphasise a respect for their own and other cultures. Parents are invited to share in key celebrations and cultural events. The annual 'Food and Fun Festival' is an excellent example of the school's international-mindedness and welcoming culture.

The school recognises the importance of carefully managed transitions for students as they move between year groups, across phase or to a new school or country. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. To support transitions within school there is a handover day where students visit their new class. Staff meet to discuss each student's personal and academic development as part of the process. To ease the transition for children between EYFS and KS1, staff have adapted the year 1 curriculum to make it more play based, particularly at the start of the year. New children starting nursery are invited into school to meet their teachers and play in the nursery environment with their parent. At the start of the academic year, parents meet with the nursery class teacher and children have a staggered start for a period of up to two weeks.

Students learn about different careers that are available to them, from the start of their time at SCIPS. In nursery, children had a visit from the fire department (Bomba) and were able to go outside and see the fire truck and meet the fire officers. Subsequently, in the outdoor learning area, children were able to experience being fire fighters and putting out pretend fires.

Students are very proud of their school and feel privileged to be a part of it. When asked to talk about their school, a student in year 4 said 'It's so good, I can't describe it'.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety meets the standard for BSO and is good. Staff are well trained and student welfare is at the heart of the school.

The safeguarding of children is well embedded and seen as a key priority. The school has appropriate child protection and safeguarding procedures, with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) overseeing student safety through clear reporting procedures. Staff, including outsourced staff, receive regular training, ensuring effective handling of safeguarding issues. Training is also provided for local staff in their mother tongue. Policies are implemented, monitored, and reviewed to maintain a safe environment. Staff recruitment processes follow UK best practice. Any concerns regarding students' welfare are raised with the DSL and are followed up.

Behaviour, bullying and e-safety concerns are well-managed, and issues are rare. Incidents and sanctions are recorded, and the culture of the school ensures students feel safe. Students have positive relationships with staff which allows for open communication should there be any issues or concerns. E-safety is taught through PSHE, ICT and through Safer Internet Day.

Healthy lifestyles are actively promoted as part of the school day, including regular exercise through PE and play times. The inclusive environment fosters good relationships, and safe play areas are adequately supervised through organised duty rotas. Staff on duty are trained in assessing risk and use 'dynamic risk assessments' to ensure that students can take appropriate risks during their play. Children bring their own meals, and most were observed to be healthy. There is an outsourced delivery service for parents who wish to have food sent for their child. The school regularly checks menu options to ensure they meet expectations.

Appropriate health and safety policies are in place. Risk assessments for OPAL, school visits, residentials and the use of the swimming pool at the sports club are in place. These risk assessments are detailed and cover most of the high-risk aspects of the school site. Before going on a school visit, staff recce the venue to ensure it is appropriate and safe.

The school is well-maintained, clean, safe, and secure. The Head of Maintenance records actions in an electronic maintenance log, and there are clear procedures for reporting problems. Compliance with local fire standards is ensured through regular fire drills and fire equipment checks; evacuation routes are clearly displayed in all rooms. Processes are in place for deputising key members of staff during an evacuation should there be any absences. There is an agreement with the neighbouring Moral Uplifting Society to allow their premises to be used should a full site evacuation be required. Staff use a lightning warning app to inform decisions regarding outside activities when the weather looks stormy.

High standards of hygiene and safety are maintained, with students taking an active role in keeping the communal areas tidy at the end of break and lunch time. Chemicals in the science laboratories are securely stored. There is currently no need for the removal of toxic waste from the laboratories, however a provider has been identified for the future should this be required.

A well-equipped clinic with a full-time nurse and a clear medical policy provides immediate medical care when needed. Parent consent forms give permission for basic administration of first aid and medications. Displays in staff rooms highlight the students who have medical needs and their individual care plans. The nurse is also responsible for tracking illnesses in line with local regulations for contagious infections such as hand, foot and mouth disease.

Student arrivals and departures are well managed. Parents can have a quick drop-off or park and walk their children to their classrooms. School organised transport is available, managed by a staff member who checks the students getting on and off the buses, however, most students are brought to school by their parents.

Attendance is recorded digitally, with accurate and up-to-date registers enabling the tracking of students' attendance and punctuality.

The school is aware of a few minor issues regarding health and safety and is taking the appropriate steps to resolve these, including an independent audit of all current practices. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive environment, fostering students' well-being, academic success, and personal development.

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

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

Robust recruitment procedures follow UK best practice, including interview processes, verification of qualifications, identity and other background checks, all of which ensure that teachers are qualified and fit to teach the age group and subject areas for which they are employed. Two professional references are sought, one of which is followed up with a telephone conversation. Wherever possible, the principal visits short-listed candidates in their school, observes them teach a lesson and meets with their current headteacher. All staff involved in recruitment receive regular safer-recruitment training.

Newly appointed staff are invited to visit Penang and the school prior to taking up their appointment. This optional visit is fully funded by the school and includes opportunities to meet colleagues and children, explore Penang and accommodation options, and complete some induction formalities. Further induction is provided online and on arrival in August.

A two-term probationary period is compulsory for new teaching staff. Systems are in place to monitor standards of teaching and learning, and provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on and develop their practice, including lesson observations. The probationary period can be extended into a third time if required. On successful completion of probation, staff contracts are confirmed.

Ongoing performance review is supported by the coaching culture of the school. Through one-to-one, trust-based relationships, staff are encouraged to explore their strengths and areas they wish to refine. This process will be further developed in the next academic year by the introduction of the Great Teaching Toolkit, an online resource which supports teacher development. Professional learning communities within the school will explore and develop ideas, which will feed into further school improvement. Wider professional development opportunities are available locally and internationally, including access to the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) suite of trainings.

A well-established board of governors provides an oversight of the school's work and development. Strategic development decisions are made in partnership with the principal. The school's capital budget is managed prudently by the finance sub-committee, while day-to-day budgeting lies with the principal. The commitment of the Board is such that a significant number of the board members have been in place for more than 15 years. Consideration is now being given to succession planning for the Board to ensure a balanced level of areas of expertise across the governing body into the future.

The school maintains a comprehensive single central register of all staff and governors, past and present, which was made available to inspectors.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

Premise and accommodation of the school meets the standards for BSO and are good. All areas of the school site are suitable for the delivery of the curriculum and utilised well. SCIPS provides a safe and well-maintained learning environment for pupils from nursery to year 8.

The site consists of three buildings, which are connected by shaded outdoor walkways. Age-appropriate play and learning areas for EYFS allow for free-flow between indoors and out. The Infants, Juniors and Prep school blocks have light and spacious classrooms. Specialist facilities are available for music, ICT, languages, science and learning support. A hall provides a multi-purpose space for break times, PE, assemblies and performances. A shaded canteen area allows students to eat comfortably, while the café offers a place for parents to meet and relax. All classrooms are equipped with interactive technology and are well-resourced with high quality equipment, much of which is sourced from the UK. The classroom and corridor displays are well presented, and celebrate and support students' learning.

Outside areas are green and leafy, and provide plenty of natural shade. Outdoor facilities include grass and astroturf areas, two basketball courts, a large football pitch, an amphitheatre and impressive treehouse. Designated play areas include facilities for den building, sandpits, two water courses and a mud kitchen, all of which enrich the students' experiences as part of the OPAL provision. An array of resources for play are refreshed and updated frequently. The drop-off area in front of the main entrance is secured during break and lunch times and transformed into an area for wheeled play such as scooters and tricycles.

The nurse's clinic is well resourced and situated in a central position within the school. The clinic meets the needs for short term care of sick or injured pupils, and meets local requirements. Accessibility features such as ramps within the central building allow access for those with disabilities. All play areas are on one level allowing for inclusive opportunities during break times. The school utilises the swimming facilities of the local sports club. Additionally, a dedicated car park allows for parents to easily access the school.

All internal and external areas are frequently cleaned and hygienic. Air-conditioning is in classrooms and offices. Ceiling fans are fitted in frequently used outside areas. Classrooms are bright and well-lit, with plenty of natural light. Rooms are adequately sound-proofed. Drinking water is available at many points around the campus. There are separate toilets for boys and girls, with water for hand washing not hot enough to scald. Security guards on the school gates manage access to the site and help with the organisation of pick-up and drop off.

Overall, the school provides a comprehensive and inclusive educational environment that supports student learning and well-being. There are plans to further develop the outside area on recently leased adjacent land, including a swimming pool, covered sports areas, and a forest school.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers and others meets the standard for BSO and is outstanding.

The school has a comprehensive, easy to navigate website, which contains all essential information about the school, including contact details, admissions information, key dates and policies. A parent handbook offers a comprehensive guide to parents regarding policies, procedures, routines and expectations. Each term parents receive a curriculum information booklet outlining key learning outcomes. The school app, *Audiri*, together with emails, is used for regular communications from the school, including weekly class updates, upcoming events and the principal's E-News. Facebook is used to inform a wider community of events that have taken place, such as key learning events, sporting fixtures, cultural celebrations and residential trips.

An open-door policy encourages parents to communicate directly with their child's teacher regarding day-to-day matters. Parents and teachers also communicate together via email when this is not possible, or parents may telephone the school office.

Parents receive three academic reports over the course of the year and are invited to follow-up parent teacher consultations, face-to-face or online according to their preference. An open-door policy encourages ease of conversation between staff and parents as needed.

Parents are regular visitors into school. They are invited to a range of workshops to help them support their child's learning at home. Recent sessions have included phonics, reading, mathematic calculation, PSHE, OPAL and internet safety. Parents are encouraged to attend a termly class IPC entry or exit point activity, to share in and celebrate their child's learning, and develop a greater understanding. They attend a range of community and sporting events and concerts. Parents enjoy the facilities of the onsite café, which is located near the community and school notice boards, as well as school social events such as discos, Deepavali and Chinese New Year and the annual 'Food & Fun Festival'.

Class Representatives facilitate communications between class teachers and home via WhatsApp class groups. The parent committee has been recently reformed after a pause due to the pandemic. Its role is to help bring the school community together. Parents' opinions are regularly sought and acted upon on a range of topics, for example, the recent changes to school reports.

Parents are very passionate and positive about the school. There is a strong sense that they belong to a community which is supportive in aspects of school life and beyond. Effective communications allow for a two-way dialogue that the parents feel supports the overarching development of their children, as individuals, through the school. Parents value the wealth of opportunities available for their children and the safe, caring school environment.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO. The school has a clearly written complaints procedure, available to parents on the website.

The concerns and complaints policy details specific steps taken to resolve any issues, in line with best UK practices, and includes clear timescales at all stages of the process. While complaints are very rare, if parents do have a complaint, the school treats it seriously.

For clarity, the school draws a clear distinction between a concern and a complaint. A concern is defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought' and a complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. As per the policy, concerns and complaints will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence. The school also states that, 'all concerns and complaints will be looked into thoroughly and fairly, and in a timely manner'.

The school aims to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and the first two levels of the process are informal. The first stage is through contact with the class teacher. The second level involves escalation to the Head of School who will aim to resolve the issue within 3 working days or discuss this further with the principal. Stage 3 requires a formal letter of complaint to the principal if the issue was not satisfactorily resolved at level 1 or 2. The principal will consider the complaint and discuss a resolution with the complainant. A response to the complainant will be made in writing within 10 school days of receipt of the letter.

Should the complainant wish to escalate the matter further, there is the option of a formal complaint, requesting a Governor's complaint panel. A letter addressed to the Chair of Governors within 10 days of the last meeting with the principal should be submitted. The letter should set out the complaint that had been previously discussed with the principal and show why the matter is not yet resolved. The complainant and principal are then invited to attend the Complaints Panel meeting which is made up of 3 people, who will not have been directly involved in the previous consideration of the complaint. One person will be independent of the management and running of the school. The complainant may bring an advocate with them if they choose to.

The school keeps a written record of all complaints and whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or if this proceeded to a panel hearing. There have been no formal complaints requiring the involvement of the Board of Governors since the last BSO report.

12. Standard 8

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good; many aspects are outstanding. They fully meet the standard for BSO.

Under the inspirational leadership of the principal, the senior and middle leadership teams work in unison to develop the school, with the best interests of students at the centre of decision making. They share a clear and simple vision, that the school should be a happy place where children will thrive and develop as rounded, confident individuals and love learning.

The implementation of the OPAL project is an embodiment of this, which has brought tangible benefits to children's wellbeing, as well as physical, and social and emotional development. The school's 'Personal Goals' represent the values by which the entire school community aims to live.

School leaders use attainment data in a robust manner to identify strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning, as well as for targeting support for individual students. Regular curriculum audits which also use learning outcomes as a tool, lead to curriculum adaptations. As a result, standards across the school are high, and value added over time is impressive.

A coaching culture within the school, where all staff are supported in their own professional development journeys, leads to high levels of staff morale. Staff feel supported to explore ideas and develop their teaching practice. Professional review is very much embedded within the coaching culture. Professional development opportunities are matched to staff interest and need, as well as aligned to school development priorities.

Recent developments and additions to the leadership team, including the creation of posts of year leaders and play leader, together with plans for further expansion for a deputy head and head of prep have provided additional leadership capacity and targeted support for teachers. The safeguarding of children is well embedded and seen as a key priority. Policies and procedures are robust and training is comprehensive; as a result, students feel safe at school.

Ambitious strategic development plans, initiated by the principal and supported by an experienced and committed board of governors, lay the foundations for future development. The school's growth into years 7 and 8, together with campus developments, have been carefully planned and managed. The vision for future development, including additional facilities and creation of a forest school, is ambitious and shows a clear desire to meet the needs of the school community in the years ahead.

Finances are well managed by the principal and board of governors finance sub-committee, and the school is well resourced. The school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis.