

The British School in the Netherlands Successfully Meets the COBIS Standards for Compliance and Accreditation and is Awarded a Beacon Status School

Introduction:

The British School in the Netherlands (BSN) has successfully met the [Council of British International Schools \(COBIS\)](#) standards across the five standards for Compliance and four standards for Accreditation. Moreover, The British School has been awarded the title of a Beacon School for demonstrating excellence in the student welfare standard. This is a significant achievement and reflects the school's dedication to supporting students in its care and providing a rich, encouraging learning environment where its students and community thrive.

Undertaking a robust school Accreditation with COBIS, a global association for International British Schools, provides valuable insights into the school's performance across the following areas of a school's provision: safeguarding and safer recruitment, student welfare, facilities, governance, ethos and values, learning and teaching, leadership in the school, communication, and finally, extra-curricular, enrichment and engagement.

Ultimately, an Accreditation is a quality assurance process rooted in school improvement. It is important to celebrate and recognise the strengths and commendations of the school; equally important, the feedback on areas where the school can develop its provision further will ensure the continued improvement of the BSN for the benefit of the students and community.

This executive summary reflects the feedback the BSN's COBIS Lead Improvement Partner and Peer Accreditors provided based on their observations of The British School in the Netherlands during their on-site visit from 11 to 14 March 2024 and the extensive documentation and evidence the school shared for each standard before the on-site visit. It has been edited for length; however, the language and wording reflect, as far as possible, the collective work of the COBIS Peer Accreditation Team.

Detailed in this summary are The British School's strengths and commendations, along with the areas for the school to develop its provision further.



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Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

The British School has implemented a rigorous approach to safeguarding and the safe recruitment of qualified and experienced staff, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all students. The school's safeguarding practices are thorough, with robust recruitment procedures that include comprehensive background checks and safer recruitment training for all involved. This commitment to child protection is evident in the school's consistent application of safeguarding policies across all campuses, providing a secure environment for all students.

During the COBIS Accreditation visit, it was clear from conversations that a consistent safeguarding culture exists across the campuses and is communicated at all levels. This includes the governing body. Staff and parents/guardians were well-informed about appropriate ways to address safeguarding concerns. This is a crucial aspect, as safeguarding necessitates an engaged and knowledgeable community working in tandem to ensure the safety of the children under the BSN's care.

Student Welfare

The British School in the Netherlands is dedicated to the welfare of its students. It has been awarded Beacon Status for this standard, reflecting the school's excellent practice and comprehensive approach to student welfare, which is evidenced across the student experience and curriculum. A wide range of pastoral care initiatives, from the comprehensive approach to student transitions and robust induction programmes to personalised assessments, ensure that every student feels valued and supported from the moment they join the school. This dedication to student welfare is a cornerstone of the school's ethos.

The clear lines of communication and student-centred approach to physical and mental wellbeing are evident from the warm welcome that students and staff receive as soon as they enter the building to the individualised support that is available in many forms across the school and within the curriculum. The strong synergy between medical, pastoral and wellbeing staff is to be commended.

The 'Healthy Minds' programme exemplifies the school's commitment to student welfare and its ability to adapt to its students' changing needs and ensure a positive school experience. The programme, which provided the basis for various initiatives across the four campuses, has helped students develop emotional literacy and supported students to build proactive attitudes towards their wellbeing, particularly in the post-pandemic landscape.



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In addition to helping students develop academically and emotionally, BSN strongly emphasises online wellbeing. Students across the Junior and Senior Schools reported feeling supported by the school's safeguarding and wellbeing practices to keep them safe navigating digital spaces.

The BSN demonstrates a commitment to positive behaviour, fostering an environment of respect and accountability. Students are held to high behavioural standards while also receiving support with empathy and understanding, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect within the school. The rapport between students and their teachers is consistently excellent across all year groups, fostering a conducive learning environment.

Across all campuses, an overarching culture of kindness and positivity prevails, which is evident in various settings, including classrooms, corridors, and extracurricular activities. This culture is integral to the school's ethos, facilitated by the dedication of the whole BSN leadership and staff.

Commendations: In addition to being awarded Beacon School status, multiple commendations were highlighted. These include the wide range of pastoral care initiatives in place across all four campuses; the comprehensive student transition programmes; the impact of the BSN Healthy Minds initiative; the collaborative working and communication between medical, pastoral, inclusion and wellbeing staff as well as the wider school community; the BSN counselling services; and the development of the Wellbeing and Behaviour Coach role.

Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching at the BSN are not just about meeting standards but also about providing a well-rounded education that caters to the diverse needs of students.

The BSN offers a broad and balanced curriculum that spans from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Key Stage 5, ensuring students have access to a wide range of subjects, including core areas like English, Mathematics, and Science, as well as languages, humanities, arts, and Physical Education. The curriculum is tailored to support both academic achievement and the development of essential life skills such as collaboration, resilience, and empathy, as outlined in the BSN Character Profile and the IB Learner Profile (and increasingly evident are the Values, Attitudes and Attributes outlined in High Performance Learning).

Although BSN follows the English National Curriculum, they have carefully tailored it to ensure it meets the needs of its international student body and celebrates Dutch heritage.



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In the Junior Schools, there is a strong focus on foundational skills, with programmes like "Maths Mastery" and structured phonics, which provide a solid educational basis and engage students to take ownership of their learning.

Students benefit from the flexibility to pursue subjects that align with their personal interests and career aspirations, particularly from Key Stage 3 onwards, where they can choose from traditional academic pathways like A Levels, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) and vocational options such as the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IBCP) and BTEC.

BSN's teaching staff are committed to continuous improvement and employ various strategies to engage students and promote a collaborative learning environment. Teachers at the BSN are praised for their subject expertise and innovative teaching methods, including integrating digital tools to enhance learning. The school's approach to teaching is student-centred and supportive, emphasising formative feedback and reflective practice to ensure that students can continuously improve their skills and knowledge.

In the future, there is a recommendation to review how technology is used to enhance lessons whilst not becoming overly reliant on devices. This will be part of a whole school teaching and learning policy setting out best practices and guidance so that learners at every level are fully engaged and supported.

The students at the BSN exhibit a remarkable enthusiasm for learning and a positive attitude towards their education. From the youngest learners in EYFS to Senior students preparing for exams, there is a strong culture of engagement and academic curiosity.

It was noted that the Arts are a central part of the BSN experience. Specialist teachers and excellent facilities, including practice rooms and recording studios, art studios, and creative media courses, provide students ample opportunities to develop their musical talents, perform in various school productions and recitals, refine their artistry and learn about specialist techniques. This emphasis on the arts enhances students' creative abilities and enriches their overall educational journey.

The British School in the Netherlands' curriculum demonstrates a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all students, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility across all stages of education. The BSN employs a comprehensive approach to supporting students with additional educational needs (AEN) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) that includes tailored support plans, professional development for staff, and specialised resources such as sensory rooms. These efforts ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed regardless of their background or abilities. One young student spoken to expressed



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this well, 'I am EAL and I have made a lot of progress. Learning something I couldn't do before....making progress makes me feel very proud!''.

The school has established rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This includes regular assessments, peer observations, and professional development opportunities through the Professional Development Academy. Learner Led Conferences at the Junior Schools provided an engaging way to involve students in reflecting and sharing their progress. Establishing further cross-school assessment systems that are aligned across the four campuses is a way to improve the quality of teaching and learning further.

Adopting High Performance Learning (HPL) at the BSN is a unifying method across all campuses, promoting alignment and excellence in education. Still in its early days of implementation, HPL aims to provide the challenge and aspiration for all students to achieve success in their learning and could provide a springboard for a learning and teaching policy to facilitate the success of these aims.

Commendations: Commendations were received for the approach to AEN and EAL at the BSN and the high-quality provision in performing arts.

Facilities and Environment

The British School in the Netherlands prides itself on providing an environment conducive to learning. Each campus has modern facilities supporting a wide range of educational activities. Classrooms are well-lit, spacious, and designed to accommodate the specific needs of different age groups. The school also boasts excellent specialist facilities, including Music rooms, Art studios, and Science laboratories, which are instrumental in fostering a rich educational experience.

Notably, the Forest School programme and Eco Clubs offer students a unique opportunity to engage with nature, enhancing their learning through outdoor activities that build critical thinking and problem-solving skills and providing a space for students to challenge themselves and take age-appropriate calculated risks.

A set of learning environment guidelines for all BSN campuses is designed to ensure a consistent approach to display in the respective learning environments and support the whole school's mission, vision and values. Thus, displays aim to represent all students and be inclusive, for example, using neutral backgrounds to support those students with neurodiversity and celebrate, motivate and support all students' learning.



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A secure environment for students, staff, and visitors is fundamental to a conducive learning environment. The BSN's approach includes concierges, security guards and senior staff standing at the entrances to welcome all parents and students on all sites and to ensure no strangers enter the premises; each campus is equipped with a CCTV system, intercom system with video and audio connection, burglary alarm systems and fire alarm systems; and school leaders providing safeguarding training with external contractors for their campus. The result of all this is an unobtrusive but robust security environment.

The students state that they feel very safe in the school and appreciate the regular fire evacuation practices and lockdown drills.

Commendations: The school received a commendation for its safe and secure environment.

Governance and Leadership

The governance at the BSN is strong and supportive, with a dedicated Board of Governors who actively engage with the school community. The Governors are committed to continuous improvement, regularly reviewing policies and attending school events to stay connected with the student and parent community. One strength is the Governors' proactive safeguarding involvement and commitment to transparent governance practices.

There are written descriptions for each governor role (e.g. Finance, Safeguarding, Parental Interest, etc.), but some also act as "link" governors with a campus or role within Central Services. These documents also detail the term for which they may serve. The Headteachers and Board of Management members spoke positively about the link governors and their presence and role in supporting the BSN.

Members of Senior Leadership were visible across Junior and Senior Schools throughout the day. They welcomed students and parents at the start and end of the school day and were available for parents and carers to speak to. During a discussion with parents, it was mentioned how compassionate and child-focused staff, including the leadership team, were and how they listen and act where they can to any parental concerns.

Across the Junior and Senior Campuses, there is a deliberate focus on nurturing leadership at all levels to enhance the educational experience consistently. This concerted effort aims to create a supportive network to deliver enriching learning experiences. Providing additional opportunities for staff from different departments and campuses to collaborate would help to share the breadth of expertise, knowledge, and perspectives across the BSN.

The Board of Management meet weekly to discuss operational and strategic issues. The BSN's well-defined Vision, Mission, and Values framework serves as a guiding tool, aligning



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pedagogical practices across all four campuses and a strong directional compass for clarity of strategic priorities. Confidence in the respective leadership teams and trust at all levels create an effective model of distributed leadership within the school.

Commendations: The Governance and Leadership at the BSN received commendations for their dedication and commitment to ensuring a high-quality experience for students and its community. The visible presence of leadership at the start and end of the day was highlighted as supporting the positive and supportive environment.

Ethos and Values

The BSN's ethos is deeply rooted in British educational values while embracing an international perspective. The school fosters an inclusive environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and supported. The curriculum includes cultural awareness and global citizenship education, ensuring students develop a well-rounded worldview. Beyond creating a global mindset, the community, from its youngest learners to its staff, engages with the community and takes action to make a positive difference in their school and local communities.

The British School cultivates a sense of community and belonging through initiatives such as the House System and the Positive Behaviour Policy. These programmes encourage cooperation, mutual support, and a strong sense of responsibility among students. In the future, developing the House System further across the whole school would create connections between the students at different campuses.

The school's educational philosophy is rooted in a holistic approach that integrates the British educational ethos with a comprehensive development of learner qualities. The BSN Character Profile, which includes Courage, Perseverance, Creativity, Curiosity, Digital Responsibility, Compassion, Collaboration, and Environmental Integrity, are integral to this philosophy. The Character Profile is augmented by the High Performance Learning (HPL) initiative (which relies on a similar set of core values). These values are deeply embedded in all aspects of school life and are essential in promoting positive behaviour, inclusivity, and personal growth.

The BSN is dedicated to inclusivity, providing robust support for students with additional educational needs (AEN) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The learning support department and EAL program are designed to ensure that every student has the resources and assistance they need to succeed academically and socially. This inclusive approach is complemented by continuous professional development opportunities for staff, fostering an environment where educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support diverse learners effectively.



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The school's focus on language development is evident in its systematic approach to teaching reading and writing and its support for EAL students. Teachers at the BSN incorporate language acquisition techniques into their subject teaching, enabling students to improve their English skills while engaging with the curriculum. The school's EAL team works closely with class teachers to provide targeted support, ensuring that all students can access and benefit from the curriculum, regardless of their initial language proficiency.

The BSN celebrates its students' cultural and linguistic diversity through various initiatives, such as cultural lunches and assemblies, where parents and community members are invited to share their heritage and traditions. These events help foster a sense of belonging and pride in students' cultural backgrounds. Students are encouraged to share their personal languages, previous experiences, and cultural backgrounds in less formal ways, too, enhancing their overall educational experience.

Commendations: The British School received commendations for this standard for the work of the EAL team and opportunities for language development across BSN while also respecting and encouraging home and personal languages. In addition, for the range of projects undertaken with and for the local community.

Communication

The British School has established a comprehensive and effective communication strategy that ensures parents are well-informed and actively engaged in their children's educational journey. The communication practices at BSN foster transparency, inclusivity, and community involvement, thereby supporting the progress and wellbeing of students.

This begins with a clear, well-supported admissions process. The Admissions team is very experienced and prides itself on the personalised service it provides to the whole family. Tours are arranged so that the most appropriate person leads the visit.

The school ensures that parents receive regular and comprehensive updates on the whole school, individual campus developments, and their children's progress. There are a variety of channels, including newsletters, Compass (the BSN's intranet for parents and staff), and urgent messaging systems like SIMS, which keep parents informed. Feedback from parents indicates a high level of satisfaction with the school's communication efforts. Parents appreciate the depth and range of activities communicated through newsletters and online platforms.

The BSN recognises the importance of parent/guardian engagement and encourages parent participation through the Family Association, which meets regularly and is actively involved in



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school events. The Family Association is vital in helping families feel part of the BSN community and welcoming new families when they join the school.

The school offers opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers outside formal reporting times (three times per academic year), ensuring open communication between the school and families. Concerns are addressed promptly, and parents feel involved in their children's education.

Staff at all levels were described as very approachable, and parents feel they really know the students. The accessibility of the Headteachers and the visibility of the Deputy Heads also make it easier for parents to raise concerns and feel heard.

Commendation: There was a commendation for this standard highlighting the range of opportunities for communication between the school and parents/guardians, particularly through transitions.

Extra-Curricular and Enrichment Activities

The BSN offers a vibrant range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the student experience beyond the classroom and was described as "exceptional". From sports to arts and community service, there are numerous opportunities for students to explore their interests and develop new skills.

Activities on offer are far-ranging and aim to provide challenge, enrichment and enjoyment to meet the needs and interests of the whole BSN student population. BSN Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) are led by teaching and non-teaching staff, showcasing the community feel across BSN where everyone is part of the school and can share their passions and talents to enrich the lives of BSN students.

A wide range of sports opportunities are also available, feeding the students' keen appetite for competitive sports. Many are linked to the local community, such as the long-standing association with the local hockey club. The cultural arts are also well provided for and often work towards whole school productions, which the entire school community can enjoy.

BSN prides itself on the enrichment and challenge opportunities it offers its students through its well-planned and organised educational trips and outreach programme to the local community and beyond. These programmes are extensive and continually being nurtured to remain current and meaningful for the students educationally.

Junior School residential trips focus on the local environment and build up from an overnight stay in school for Year 3 to spending a school week in the Ardennes in Year 6. Senior School



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residential ventures further afield and are often strongly linked to the subject areas, such as the music and drama trip to New York or the COBIS competition in Bahrain.

Across the campuses, there is a wide range of opportunities for the students and staff to interact with the wider community, including charity work, co-curricular activities, and sustainability projects. They focus on commitment to the seventeen sustainable development goals within the school, which includes work with the local Homeless Shelter and charity shops that provide outlets for second-hand clothing.

Commendation: The range and breadth of the BSN Co-curricular Activities and the engagement from all staff across the school to support these activities and opportunities for students received commendations.

Overall Observations:

At the time of the visit, there were over 2,100 students on the four sites, representing nearly 90 nationalities. The school consists of two Junior and two Senior Schools on three sites and a Central Services site. It is clear from the moment you enter the gates of any BSN campus that there is a high level of emphasis placed on making sure everyone is welcome, safe and valued. Every member of staff embeds this ethos, each playing a role and dedicated to providing the best for the students and the BSN community.

Each campus has its own identity; whilst it is important that this remains, further opportunities to work as a whole school should be prioritised going forward. There are so many wonderful examples of great practice, projects and ideas across each campus which could be even more powerful with a collaborative approach.

BSN has many achievements to celebrate, from their ethos of inclusion and wellbeing to their creative use of outdoor space and learning. The school is on a journey to implement the High Performance Learning approach, further enhancing the current offer at The British School in the Netherlands.

BEACON AWARD

The British School in the Netherlands is recommended for **Beacon Status for Standard 2A and 2B**. The level of pastoral care and wellbeing support is exemplary and made possible by the proactive and effective communication of staff across the whole BSN team. In particular, the team around the child approach, which is supported by medical, pastoral and academic staff, is something to celebrate.



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Recommendation to COBIS Director of Accreditation:

The British School in the Netherlands has met the Compliance and Accreditation standards and is recommended for COBIS Accredited Membership.

THE BSN'S PERFORMANCE ACROSS THE COBIS COMPLIANCE & ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

	Evidence is insufficient to meet the standard		Evidence supports the standard
	Evidence is currently below the standard		Commendation

COBIS COMPLIANCE STANDARDS

1.0 SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT	
1A. The school recruitment process is fair, thorough and transparent and applies to all appointments consistently	
1B. All staff within the school including volunteers and supply staff meet high standards of child protection and the safeguarding of students	
2.0 STUDENT WELFARE	
2A. The school provides a pastoral structure that meets the needs of all students and promotes their personal development	
2B. The school has provision for the physical and mental health, and safe supervision, of all students to allow them to flourish in the school environment	
2C. The school ensures that through positive behaviour management students are supported in their learning and safety	
2D. The school ensures that off-site activities are appropriate and safe	
3.0 FACILITIES	
3A. Accommodation supports the learning needs of all students	
3B. The site provides a secure environment for students, staff and visitors	
3C. The fabric of the school provides an effective and safe working environment	
3D. Overall facilities meet the needs of all students, including those with additional educational needs and/or a physical disability	
4.0 GOVERNANCE	
4A. All governors / proprietors meet all the requirements for adults with access to young people reinforcing the importance of safeguarding within the school	
4B. Measures are in place for governors to register interests and to manage any conflicts of interest	



4C. There are written procedures / protocols for the remit of the work of the governing body	
4D. There is appropriate support for new governors	
4D. There is appropriate support for new governors	
4E. Governors have a commitment to their own training and development	
4F. The governors provide records of meetings and decisions which show evidence of active and committed governance The profiles and contact details for the governors are available to parents along with key policies	
5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES	
5A. British educational ethos and values are at the heart of a holistic approach to learning and to the development of learner qualities	
5B. The school has an outward-looking perspective promoting its values via a wide curriculum and through opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures and global issues as far as this is permissible within the host country	
5C. The school teaches the majority of subjects through the medium of English	

COBIS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

7.0 LEARNING AND TEACHING	
7A. The curriculum meets the needs of all students The curriculum should be broad and balanced and aspire to develop learner qualities and skills The curriculum offers broad opportunity and choice for all students at all stages	
7B. Teaching consistently encourages and enables students to make progress	
7C. The quality of learning and teaching is monitored effectively across the school to ensure improvement and to identify best practice which can be shared and celebrated	
7D. Marking, assessment and feedback supports and enables students to make progress The school meets the learning needs of the full range of students	
7E. Student attitudes to learning	
8.0 LEADERSHIP IN THE SCHOOL	
8A. The school's leadership at all levels actively promotes the well-being of students and staff	



8B. The leadership at all levels has high expectations and works to improve and enrich the educational experience of all students	
8C. The leadership gives clear direction and vision for the school	
8D. Student leadership and the student voice contribute to the development of the school and the quality of the students' experience.	
9.0 COMMUNICATION	
9A. Parents are aware of the school's aims and ethos and regularly receive news relevant to their children and about the development of the school	
9B. Parents are suitably informed about their child's progress and pastoral welfare as well the curriculum, wider opportunities and important stages as their children move through the school	
9C. Parents know how to contact key personnel and how to raise issues, or seek advice and information	
9D. Parents are aware of admission arrangements and have open access to relevant school policies	
10.0 EXTRA-CURRICULAR, ENRICHMENT AND ENGAGEMENT	
10A. The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular, enrichment opportunities for all students.	
10B. There are a range of opportunities for all students to engage with the outside world - locally, regionally and internationally - which support and promote the school's educational ethos and values and provide rich learning experiences	