

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools

INSPECTION REPORT

INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO BSO STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Name of school:	Two Boats School
Location:	Ascension Island
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett Supporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley
Dates of inspection:	24 to 28 November 2014

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Section A: Introduction and Summary

Section B: Report on Compliance with BSO Standards and Requirements

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Two Boats School	
Address of school:	Two Boats Village Ascension Island ASCN 1ZZ South Atlantic Ocean	
Telephone number:	School Office: +247 4432 Headteacher: +247 6155	
Email address:	enquiries@tbschool.edu.ac	
Proprietor:	HM Administrator – His Honour Mr Marc Holland	
Headteacher:	Mr David Blunt	
Senior Teacher Secondary:	Mrs Amira Helme	
Senior Teacher Primary:	Miss Andrea Tompsett	
Type of school:	Maintained Comprehensive	
Age range of pupils and students:	3 to 16	
Gender of pupils:	Mixed	
Total number of pupils on roll:	93	
(Early Years Foundation Stage)	Boys: 10	Girls: 3
(Primary)	Boys: 26	Girls: 26
(Secondary)	Boys: 16	Girls: 12
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 0	Girls: 0
Annual fees:	None	
Type of inspection:	British Schools Overseas Standards and Requirements	
Inspection Team:		
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Simon Bennett	
Supporting Inspector:	Dr Martin Bradley	
Dates of inspection:	24 to 28 November 2014	

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with the standards and requirements for British Schools Overseas (BSO) recognition, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted. It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as demanded by the current requirements. The professional inspectors looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the school. These findings are summarised in Section B Part 8 of this document.

Information about the school:

Two Boats School operates under the auspices of the Ascension Island Government (AIG) for the children of those who work on Ascension Island (the Island). The school population is subject to considerable flux. The present school was opened in purpose-built accommodation in 1966 by the BBC. It was opened to all pupils on the Island, replacing the original school in Georgetown, and is a state school in that the education it provides is free to all. It is the only school on the Island. The Island's Administrator, a foreign office posting that lasts for approximately three years, serves as the school's proprietor. The school governors committee (SGC) is advisory and consists of parental, business and staff representatives. Its chair is appointed by the Administrator.

Pupils are aged between three and sixteen. At the time of the inspection, the school had 93 pupils, of whom just under three-quarters were pupils whose families come from St Helena but work on Ascension Island. The rest were the children of RAF, telecommunications, signals and administrative personnel. The school has minority groups from the UK, Seychelles, US and other mixed backgrounds. Pupils take English National Curriculum tests at the ages of seven and eleven, followed by IGCSEs at the age of sixteen. However, very small cohorts make it impossible to draw meaningful statistical conclusions from their examination results for comparison with external averages. Many pupils' education is disrupted by periods spent overseas during term time. At the age of sixteen, pupils move to education or training in the UK or on the islands, as is relevant to their circumstances.

In view of the small numbers, the primary school contains cross-year classes for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children (aged three to five years), Years 1/2 (Lower School), Years 3/4 (Middle 1) and Years 5/6 (Middle 2). The senior school contains a combined class for Years 8/9 and separate classes for pupils in Years 10 and 11. During the inspection, there were thirteen pupils in the EYFS and fifty two in Years 1 to 6, making a total of sixty five in the primary school altogether. The senior school contained 28 pupils.

Summary of main findings:

Two Boats School is highly successful in meeting its aims. It provides a good education for its pupils, making use of its stimulating location. The school has created a positive environment for learning, rooted in a school community where commitment by staff to the interests and education of the pupils is paramount. As a

consequence, pupils' behaviour is excellent. Teaching is good and a third of that observed was outstanding. The curriculum is good, and is broad and balanced. As a result, pupils make good progress. The social and moral development of the pupils is excellent and their cultural and spiritual development is good. The school puts great emphasis on communication with parents through such mechanisms as the weekly newsletter, detailed written reports on pupils' progress and performance, and access to the school's policies on the website. The involvement of the Island community and its sharing of its expertise with the pupils is an added benefit. The school is very well led and managed, is well resourced and is successful in achieving high standards of performance. Strong emphasis is placed on safeguarding and attention to the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent.

What the school does well:

- It creates a successful environment for learning.
- It has inculcated high standards of behaviour.
- Teaching is generally of high quality.
- It is highly effective in enabling pupils to become part of the school community, given the relatively transient nature of the school population.
- The school has done extremely well in terms of facilitating tests and assessments relating to the National Curriculum and keeping itself informed of regulatory requirements.

What the school must do to improve:

Recommendations:

- Ensure that documentation and policies relevant to pupils with special educational needs (SEN) be more consistently implemented.
- Explore the potential benefits of video-conferencing to facilitate access to such subject areas as modern foreign languages.

Regulatory requirements (Standards):

- Improve facilities for pupils who are ill.

Fitness for recognition for British Schools Overseas status

The school meets wherever possible all standards for BSO recognition with one exception, which it will shortly address. It is therefore recommended for BSO status.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum:

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is supported by appropriate schemes and policies, with most subjects using material published to meet the requirements of the English National Curriculum. There is full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age and from the age of three children are admitted to the Nursery sessions held each morning. This is appropriate provision. There is a good range of experiences in most areas of learning including English, mathematics, science, technology, the human and social area, and physical, aesthetic and creative work. At present provision for modern foreign languages is limited: the school is aware of this and is seeking to address the issue. In Key Stages 1 and 2 a number of lessons are timetabled as 'creative curriculum'. The nature and content of such sessions vary and the link with other curricular areas is not always sufficiently clear. The curriculum supports pupils' learning effectively and enables its progression and continuity to be maintained. Overall the pupils make good progress.

The curriculum takes account of English assessments for school attainment tests (SATs) at the end of key stages, optional assessments for other years and IGCSEs, although due to its status, it has to obtain SAT materials independently and cannot follow moderation procedures. In the Reception Year, the Foundation Stage Profiles are completed.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately identified; however, the current record keeping system has not recently been reviewed in order to ensure that policy is implemented effectively. Oversight of the provision for those pupils is currently shared by three senior members of staff. The school makes considerable efforts to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, its capacity to address more acute needs is limited. The school is aware of this and is seeking to work with the Island government to address this issue.

The pupils acquire good speaking and listening skills, and most are able to express their ideas and feelings well and have a strongly developed sense of empathy. They also develop good literacy and numeracy skills. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is good. It is well considered and there is a good variety of opportunities to develop it, including in assemblies and links with Island organisations such as the police, the conservation team, the church and hospital and fire services. The pupils are appropriately prepared for their future life, through specific careers lessons, work on personal finance and life skills such as cookery, where pupils are able to develop high standards and use a good variety of practical techniques to prepare meals. The headteacher and the SGC actively promote a range of educational and employment opportunities for when pupils leave the school.

The quality of teaching and assessment:

The quality of teaching is good across the school, and a third of lessons observed were outstanding. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen and none were less than good. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong, and relations between

staff and pupils excellent. This reflects positively on the ethos of the school and its commitment to provide a strong and creative environment for learning, given the enforced transience of the school's population. Pupils are responsive to the high levels of expectations of the teachers, whose management of classes creates a positive atmosphere where pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, develop their understanding and involve themselves in debate. The teaching facilitates pupils' progress and their acquisition of new knowledge through careful and detailed planning, clear understanding of pupils' ability and potential, and excellent work relationships. They are able to increase their understanding and develop their skills, as was evident in every lesson seen. Lessons are planned in such a way as to offer clear, easily understood objectives for learning. Opportunities are given for pupils to think and learn for themselves and pupils' ability to concentrate is carefully fostered. The careful use of learning support assistants enable classes of a wide range of ability to proceed at their own individual pace without distraction. Teachers plan in great detail, with care and emphasis placed on differentiation and meeting individual needs, matching the work to pupils of different abilities. Information and communication technology is increasingly evident in planning and provision, and is used to good effect. Continuity between lessons is clear and plenaries supplement the regular opportunities taken by teachers to assess pupils' progress and understanding of the work in hand.

The school has worked hard to strengthen its systems of assessment and make these relevant to the needs of the school. Teachers have a clear understanding of the aptitudes, attainment and background of the pupils and prepare and pitch the lesson to achieve maximum benefit for the pupils, whose behaviour across the school and in class is excellent. Assessment is a work in progress, and the school has clear aims and objectives as it increasingly develops the framework to evaluate pupils' performance. This is supported by clear requirements for marking based on three prongs: an evaluation comment, diagnostic analysis and target setting. This last is the area which the school is in the process of developing more fully. The school is also hoping to facilitate the taking of SATS officially, to have them moderated externally and to do the same for EYFS profiles.

The characteristics of the best lessons were the engagement of the pupils, the interaction between pupils and staff and between the pupils themselves, the development of their listening skills, the provision of regular opportunities for their participation in and contribution to discussion, the open-ended questioning and developing of responses, the progress checks and plenaries, the sustaining of interest and the well-modulated pace. In terms of assessment, this is further strengthened by peer review.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with some outstanding features. They are able to develop their self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-esteem, as well as to distinguish right from wrong and respect for the rules of the school and the wider Island community. A range of faiths and religious festivals is considered. At the time of the inspection Diwali was discussed in Year 8,

with the significance of the festival to the faith community being appropriately addressed. The spiritual development of the pupils is sensitively handled, given the wide-range of backgrounds from which the pupils are drawn. Their awareness comes from their interaction with each other, their opportunities for reflection and the atmosphere in which their education takes place.

Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent overall; they show initiative and understand how they can contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. The library on the school site has recently been reviewed by staff and pupils. It is used both by the school and the Island community. In preparation for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, pupils took part in the Ascension Island contribution to the Queen's baton relay. Pupils from Year 1 upwards are represented on the school council and they are able to develop a broad general knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship, locally, in the UK and internationally. This is supported by the school's good links with the local conservation department.

The cultural development of pupils is good. They consider the work of famous artists. They have decorated wooden posts leading to the school entrance, to develop its appeal. Music is particularly well developed and Year 1 and 2 pupils show great enjoyment and concentration when performing complex rhythms. Older pupils show enjoyment when singing with percussion accompaniment. Drama is also taught effectively. Many families are resident on the Island for fixed terms; consequently the pupils have a variety of experiences of education elsewhere, notably in the UK and on St Helena. This supports their appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures as well as developing their tolerance of different cultural traditions. The school is highly effective in supporting pupils who join the community from elsewhere. Through PSHE lessons their general knowledge and understanding of modern British life and values is developed effectively. This includes awareness of the values of tolerance, democracy, freedom of expression and other human rights.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school complies fully with all the AIG requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and has recently updated all its policies in this area, with the intention of ensuring its compliance in the future with new standards recently introduced in England and Wales. All the key policies are available on the website to parents, and the school has placed safeguarding at the top of its agenda. Staff have been trained in child protection and the three child protection officers work closely together with the headteacher, as overall lead, and the two deputies holding responsibility for their respective curriculum areas, ensuring that a child protection officer is always on site. First aid and lifeguard training is in place for staff, as well as safeguarding. Pupils are properly supervised, records of sanctions are kept correctly and admission and attendance registers are in order and regularly monitored. Relations between staff and pupils and between pupils are strong. Pupils report that it is easy to talk to staff and they say that bullying is not an issue. The inspectors found no evidence to rebut their comments. There is a comforting atmosphere created by the courtyards,

landscaping and seating, open spaces and a pond, which help to encourage reflection, relaxation and social contact during break and lunch time. The work of the school council, with two representatives from most years in secondary and primary, has encouraged a sense of involvement, responsibility and belonging by pupils.

Fire drills are held regularly and reports on these are given to the SGC. Separate records are kept for the routine equipment checks.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

PART 4 - Suitability of the proprietors and staff

The school has worked hard to ensure that all staff have been duly checked for their fitness to work with children. The single central register of staff appointments is detailed and maintained in order. The school has been diligent in following up any administrative anomalies, and has the full support of AIG to achieve this.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet the requirements in almost all respects, facilitating effective learning. Building maintenance is satisfactory and there are plans to upgrade some facilities, including toilet provision and worn flooring. Funding is being made available to upgrade parts of the perimeter fencing in order to prevent sheep and other unwanted animals entering the school grounds. Parts of the premises, including the public library and resource centre, are used by the community and care is taken to ensure that their use does not interfere with the smooth running of the school. Washroom facilities are appropriate, although those for older pupils are not labelled to indicate single sex use. The recently upgraded provision for pupils who are unwell includes a washbasin in the school office, and is near to adult and visitor toilets. However, there is no separate facility for pupils who need to rest. The adult and visitor toilets have cloth towels rather than paper towels.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

- Ensure that there are facilities so that pupils who are unwell are able to rest quietly and privately in a space not used for other purposes.

PART 6 - The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The parental questionnaire responses indicated high levels of support for the school and full appreciation of all that it offers and the opportunities it gives to their children. One hundred per cent of the sixty-three returns endorsed positively that their children liked school, appreciated the support given to help them settle and the progress they made. They were highly affirmative of the standards of behaviour, the quality of

teaching, teachers' high expectations, and the setting of homework. Two areas were of concern to a small minority of parents and these were concerns about the range of trips and the running of the school. Inspectors found that the school was steadily increasing opportunities for visits, trips and school clubs. The inspection found no evidence that the school was not well run, as there has been determination on the part of the headteacher, senior management team (SMT) and the SGC to bring policies up to date and implement them effectively. The many positive outcomes for pupils endorsed strongly by parents in responses to the questionnaires result from a well-managed school. All key policies are on the website, and regular weekly bulletins keep parents well informed. Information is supplemented by regular assessments, meetings with parents and detailed annual reports.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's complaints procedure, as revised during the current term and adopted by the SGC, meets the requirements fully.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

PART 8 - Leadership and management of the school

The educational direction of the school is clear and is based on effective leadership and a good working partnership between the headteacher and the SMT, and between the headteacher and the SGC, which has an advisory role. The recently appointed Administrator of the Island is proprietor of the school and is taking a keen interest in the school. All parts of the school benefit from high-quality and committed staff and teaching assistants. The SMT meets on a regular and daily basis with an agenda for its meetings. They work well together and clearly understand their roles. The headteacher and the SGC review and approve, where appropriate, all key policies. The school's routine works efficiently and the school is well served by its administrative and support staff.

Management has produced a wide-ranging and comprehensive development plan with target dates, objectives and allocation of responsibilities. There is also a constructive policy review list, making clear which policies have in-house responsibility and which are AIG.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the requirements fully?

The school meets the required standards.

EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE INSPECTION

The inspectors received from the school a completed pre-inspection self-evaluation and regulatory compliance form, accompanied by considerable additional information, such as the timetable and the school's development plan. Material included the Ascension Island Government's Education Policy, and the aims and objectives of the school. A meeting of the governors' advisory committee was attended, and a detailed discussion was held with the Administrator of the Island, who, in that capacity, is proprietor of the school. Informal interviews were held with parents, and more formal discussions with pupils. Pupils over eleven years old completed confidential questionnaires, and sixty-three parental questionnaires were returned. The inspectors attended thirty-one lessons, covering the complete age range of the school, and a full spread of the curriculum and teaching staff. The school made available all documents relevant to compliance with the standards.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk