

The Olive Tree School

Modistes 8, Sant Pere de Ribes, 08810 Barcelona

School's regional authorisation number: BOE 08072012

Date of Inspection:

Monday 18th November 2024

Inspection Team:

Rachel Evans	(Lead Inspector)
Christa Mickel	(Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

To assess the school from Nursery to Year 11 for the renewal of the current authorisation as a British school in Spain.

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from Nursery (3 years) to Year 11 (16 years) for a period of four years. The school has an authorised capacity of 355 pupils. The next inspection is due in November 2028.

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

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

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History and Context of the School:

The Olive Tree School was founded in 2010 to offer British education to pupils in the town of Sitges, near Barcelona.

In 2012, the school relocated to its current premises in Sant Pere de Ribes to accommodate its growth. The secondary department underwent its last inspection in November 2020, followed by the primary department in March 2022. There is a commitment to maintain small classes in order to maximise the personal attention for each child. There are currently 184 pupils enrolled at the school.

One-third of the pupils are native English speakers, contributing to the excellent IGCSE English results achieved by Year 11 pupils.

Accommodation and Resources:

The school provides accommodation and resources appropriate for the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and the English National Curriculum.

The school has three floors. Classrooms are suitably furnished and are bright, spacious and safe. Early Years classrooms are on the ground floor along with the Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms. There is also a multi-purpose hall and stage which is used for assemblies and drama lessons.

The classrooms for Early Years (ages 3 and 4) and Key Stage 1 (ages 5 and 6) pupils are thoughtfully set out with direct access to an outdoor learning area, which facilitates the various areas of learning expected in this phase. These are well resourced, and pupils can move around freely in their activities. The toilet and washing facilities are easily accessible and suitable for the age of the pupils.

On the first floor, there are classrooms for Key Stage 2 pupils (7 to 11 years of age). Classrooms and corridors are attractively decorated with a combination of displays of pupils' work, reference material and hand painted murals. Additionally, displays effectively serve as teaching tools, featuring the important vocabulary and mathematical concepts being taught in class. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson a pupil referred to the classroom display to confirm the divisibility rule he had applied was correct.

The primary library is located on the first floor and has an excellent selection of English books. The library is used regularly by pupils and provides a warm, welcoming environment conducive to learning and promotes good attitudes towards reading.

The school currently does not have an on-site kitchen. Pupils have the option to bring their own packed lunches from home or lunches are available through an external catering company. Additionally, the oldest pupils are granted permission to leave the school premises during lunchtime.

The dining area has a limited capacity, accommodating only fifteen pupils at a time. This space is directly connected to the Year 6 classroom, with only a curtain serving as the divider between the two areas. While functional, this arrangement underscores the need for improved

facilities to better serve the growing needs of the school community and to create a larger dining space for pupils.

On the second floor there are classrooms for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils (12 to 16 years of age). The art teacher has a key role in creating an engaging atmosphere. This is achieved through the captivating display of pupils' artwork in the corridors.

There is one a well-equipped science laboratory, fully resourced to support the practical requirements of the GCSE curriculum. For example, during a Year 10 science lesson, pupils conducted an engaging practical experiment investigating the effect of temperature on enzyme activity. Additionally, there are specialist rooms for art, music, computing and a well-stocked library.

A good range of teaching resources is available, ensuring that teachers are equipped with all the tools and materials required to support effective learning.

The outdoor areas are spacious and are used for physical education lessons and recreation. There are also picnic benches located outside for pupils to use during breaktimes.

A lift enables easy access to each floor should pupils have mobility difficulties.

Overall, the school provides an excellent learning environment that fosters creativity and gives ample opportunities for pupils to thrive.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

The school provides a safe environment for staff and pupils. There are relevant policies covering health and safety procedures. At the start and end of the day, staff are posted to ensure that pupils leave and enter school safely. Fire drills are held regularly.

The required criminal record checks have been carried out for all members of staff working in the school. In response to the previous inspection, the headteacher has taken measures to include up-to-date UK and Spanish requirements in the child protection and safeguarding policy.

The safety and wellbeing of children are a clear priority for the staff at the school. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and first aid.

The school has clear guidelines on anti-bullying and expectations for behaviour, which are effective in practice.

Adequate supervision is provided during break times.

The design of the school allows for safe and uncongested access to all areas. Pupils behave very well when moving around and this contributes to the safe atmosphere in the school.

Staffing:

Staff are happy and very enthusiastic. They take pride in their roles, actively contributing to the ongoing development of the school. One staff member described it as “a lovely place to work,” reflecting the positive atmosphere and supportive culture within the school. This environment has contributed to excellent staff retention rates.

The majority of staff are trained in the United Kingdom and demonstrate teaching methodologies typical of the British system.

The staff to pupil ratio is excellent with learning assistants in every primary class. Moreover, they are used effectively. For example, during a Year 1 mathematics class, a learning assistant was actively engaged with a small group of pupils, encouraging them to work independently. This not only positively influenced the learning experience but also allowed the teacher the opportunity to provide focused attention to other pupils.

Additional support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. This includes the writing of individual education plans and advising teachers on the implementation of strategies which support pupils in their learning.

All teachers are observed teaching by the senior management team. Following this, a meeting is held to set personal targets for professional growth and development. Additionally, these meetings provide an opportunity to discuss ways in which teachers can further contribute to the wider school community.

The Curriculum:

The school offers a curriculum that is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) and English National Curriculum.

In the EYFS, the curriculum effectively covers the appropriate learning areas, allowing pupils to independently choose activities during parts of the day, while also benefiting from more structured learning guided by teachers and learning assistants. The early years classrooms foster a productive atmosphere, characterised by positive relationships between staff and pupils.

The primary school consistently maintains high educational standards. The curriculum is well-balanced, ensuring pupils receive a comprehensive education.

In the secondary school, all aspects of the English National Curriculum are covered. Moreover, in recent years more subjects have been added to the list offered at GCSE, such as global citizenship. The school has achieved very high academic results, with 53% of Year 11 pupils who were examined in English as their first language at GCSE achieving grades 8-9, and 47% achieving the same grades in mathematics. On average, pupils taking GCSE examinations achieve excellent results, thus indicating that they make good progress and demonstrate the school's high standards of teaching and learning.

The academic curriculum is enhanced by a diverse range of enrichment activities such as cookery and astronomy. This commitment to providing varied extracurricular opportunities

demonstrates the school's dedication to holistic pupil development and a well-rounded education.

Teaching and Learning:

The standard of teaching and learning is consistently good across the whole school.

In the early years, the planning of topic-based activities is well thought out, providing ample opportunities for both child-initiated play and structured learning within the classroom and in the outdoor settings. The lessons conducted are highly engaging, fostering an environment where children not only actively participate but also achieve an impressive command of the English language. This combination contributes to a highly enriching learning experience for the children in this early stage of their education.

Primary and secondary pupils are presented with challenging and engaging learning experiences through effective questioning and well-planned activities that allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and build upon it.

For example, in a Year 9 computing lesson, the teacher planned an activity that required pupils to apply their coding knowledge by incorporating variables such as scoring and timing into a computer game they had created. The quality of the work produced by the pupils was exceptional. Notably, one pupil demonstrated advanced understanding by successfully integrating additional variables, including gravity and velocity, into their video game. This demonstrates pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their motivation to continue progressing and developing their skills.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. A range of effective systems is in place to reward and encourage good learning behaviour, ensuring that pupils remain motivated and engaged. One of the most impactful strategies is the use of restorative talks, which occur regularly. These structured conversations provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect on their actions and express their concerns in a supportive setting with a member of the senior management team. Following these discussions, pupils return to class with a clearer understanding of how to address their needs constructively. This approach helps pupils develop essential skills for building and maintaining positive relationships, promoting personal growth and emotional resilience.

Across the school, teacher-pupil relationships are positive, fostering a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes towards learning, contributing to a culture of mutual respect and academic engagement.

Assessment:

The school's assessment and tracking are effective. Periodic assessments take place to evaluate pupils' performance, and the results are documented in a database. This information is then used to ensure pupils are making progress by tracking and monitoring their attainment. Teachers can identify areas where additional support may be needed ensuring that every pupil receives the guidance they need to achieve their full potential.

In addition to the tracking system, the school implements a clear and consistent marking and feedback policy. A book scrutiny across the school shows that teachers regularly provide constructive feedback, informing pupils about what they have done well while offering specific suggestions for improvement. The consistency of this policy across all year groups ensures that pupils benefit from a unified and effective approach to learning and development.

There is very good communication between home and school and parents receive detailed written reports about their child's progress.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

There is a strong ethos, and the core values of the school are clearly promoted in the corridors and classrooms. For instance, in the primary school, there is a dedicated display which recognises and rewards pupils for demonstrating acts of courtesy towards others.

The pupils feel respected and cared for and know what to do or who to ask if there is a problem. A secondary school pupil said that everyone is kind to each other and that the teachers really care about them.

The secondary school has a robust and well-established mentoring programme in place, ensuring that every pupil aged 11–16 receives dedicated mentoring sessions from a trained mentor for 30 minutes every fortnight. Furthermore, pupils experiencing challenging circumstances are provided with daily mentoring support from a senior leader, offering tailored guidance and care to meet their individual needs.

Weekly assemblies cover a wide range of topics including recent world events and elements from the Personal, Social and Health curriculum. These also provide an opportunity to celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements.

Leadership and Management:

The school is effectively led and managed. The progress the school has made since the previous inspection demonstrates this. The headteacher assumes the responsibility for the academic management of the school supported by two assistant headteachers for primary and one for secondary. The co-owner of the school is responsible for administration and finance.

The leadership team has a clear understanding of the improvements needed in the school's facilities and plans are in place to construct a new dining room and additional classrooms in the future. The good leadership and management are evident in the consistency of expectations across the school, notably in the quality of teaching and learning and behaviour. These areas are strengths of the school.

The staff enjoys a supportive relationship with the leadership team, and there is a sense of professional camaraderie and solidarity that permeates the school's atmosphere.

Response to the previous inspection reports:

The school has taken action to address all the recommendations identified in the previous inspection reports, demonstrating a strong commitment to improvement.

It has enhanced the assessment and tracking of reading to ensure that all pupils are provided with materials suited to their ability levels, enabling them to make consistent progress. The child protection and safeguarding policy has been updated to meet current UK and Spanish requirements, ensuring compliance with the latest standards. Investments in technology and practical resources have been prioritised. Furthermore, the school has established clearly defined middle leadership roles, alleviating some of the headteacher's workload while creating opportunities for teachers to take on wider responsibilities and contribute to the school's strategic direction.

Conclusion:

The Olive Tree School is an identifiably British school, which employs dedicated and suitably qualified staff to deliver the curriculum. This is complemented by a diverse range of enrichment activities. Pupils enjoy coming to school and make good progress during their time there.

The headteacher is passionate about her role and leads with high aspirations for the school, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to its continuous growth and improvement. Through her dynamic leadership, she cultivates a positive and inclusive environment where the entire school community feels valued and motivated to strive for excellence.

Recommendations:

The school should:

1. maintain the high standards of teaching and learning which are a strength of the school, especially in attainment in English and in the culture of community which reflects British values so well;
2. improve the dining facilities for pupils' lunch time.