



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**Pembroke House School**

**February 2020**



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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Pembroke House School			
<b>Address</b>	Pembroke House School PO Box 31 Nyahururu Road Gilgil 20116 Kenya			
<b>Telephone number</b>	+254 20 2312323			
<b>Email address</b>	headmistress@pembrokehouse.sc.ke			
<b>Head</b>	Mrs Deborah Boyd-Moss			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Richard Vigne			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	220			
	<b>Boys</b>	102	<b>Girls</b>	118
	<b>Day pupils</b>	34	<b>Boarders</b>	186
	<b>Pre-prep</b>	34	<b>Juniors</b>	118
	<b>Seniors</b>	68		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25 to 26 February 2020			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Pembroke House is a co-educational boarding school for pupils aged between 5 and 13 years old, with a pre-prep unit for day pupils aged between 2 and 5 years. The school is governed by a council which is made up of nine members. The school was founded in 1927 as a boys' preparatory school, on its present site in the Great Rift Valley outside Nairobi. It became co-educational in 1988. Male and female boarders are accommodated in two separate buildings. The previous inspection was undertaken by the Schools' Inspection Service in February 2018. Since then, a former head has been re-appointed to the role, and there have been significant changes to the management of safeguarding and other areas of school life.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school's aim is to help each child develop to the very best of their ability; to use confidence and self-belief engendered in many disciplines to drive progress in other areas; to give children a sound education across the spectrum of the curriculum; to develop balanced children with integrity and good manners; to help children develop respect and tolerance for all around them; to produce children who work well as a team, but enjoy making decisions and are not afraid to take the lead.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from varied backgrounds and educational experience, and demonstrate extremely diverse levels of prior attainment upon entry. Some enter the junior school with no previous formal school experience. Pupils represent over 20 nationalities, and although pupils predominantly live in Kenya, a minority of boarders have homes in other African countries. The school has identified 77 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom have additional support. Of the 19 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 7 receive support. The school identifies the more able in various subjects through testing, and provision is made for them and those with particular talents in sport, art, music and drama through the scholarship programme.

## 2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas. It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

**Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the Standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.**

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in February 2018 and was undertaken by the Schools Inspection Service.

### Key findings

**2.1 The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas and the Minimum Standards for Boarding except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified.**

### Part 1 – Quality of education provided

**2.2 The Standards relating to the quality of education in paragraphs 2(a) to (c), (d)(i) and (e), 3(a) to (i) and 4 are met, but that relating to paragraph 2(2)(d)(ii) (encouraging respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics) is not met because it is precluded by the country's legislation.**

2.3 The curriculum in both the junior and senior parts of the school is well planned and takes account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils. It provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education; enables them to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills and a good understanding of English; provides personal, social, health and economic education, up-to-date careers guidance focused on their destination schools, and appropriate programmes of activities for all pupils. All pupils study Kiswhali. The programme of activities for pupils under the age of five is appropriate for their individual educational needs in relation to their personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills. The curriculum cannot without constraint encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to all the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, because planned discussion of many related issues is precluded by the country's legislation. The curriculum otherwise remains based on the English national curriculum in line with many independent preparatory schools in the United

Kingdom, provides all pupils with the opportunity to learn and make progress and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British and Kenyan societies.

- 2.4 Teaching is well planned and shows a good understanding of the pupils and their needs; good subject knowledge and understanding; effective use of resources; and successful strategies for managing behaviour. It gives pupils the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and make good progress, and fosters self-motivation, application and interest. Teaching does not undermine fundamental British values.
- 2.5 There are frameworks in both the junior and senior parts of the school to assess pupils' performance by reference to the school's aims or worldwide norms, and assessment information is used to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

## Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 **The Standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in sub-paragraphs 5(a), 5(b)(i) to (v) and (vii), 5(c) and 5(d) are met but that in sub-paragraph 5(b)(vi) [promotion of principles which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010] is not met because it is precluded by the country's legislation.**
- 2.7 The school promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It promotes principles which enable pupils to develop self-knowledge, esteem and confidence; distinguish right from wrong; accept responsibility for their behaviour; contribute to the lives of others; and gain knowledge and respect for public institutions in England and for responsibilities of Kenyan citizenship. Further, it encourages tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions and a balanced presentation of political issues and preclusion of partisan political views. The school's encourages respect for other people with regard to the protected characteristics set out in the UK Equality Act 2010, except where precluded by the country's legislation.
- 2.8 Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school.

## Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 **The Standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.**
- 2.10 Suitable arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and such arrangements are in line with Kenyan law and have regard to guidance in the United Kingdom. The school demonstrates the thinking and training and implements systems that ensure that pupils are listened to and provided with early help. The particular vulnerability of those with SEND is recognised. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who has the necessary status and authority to ensure that safeguarding is given pre-eminence in any decisions. The DSL has sufficient time to undertake the role, and maintains an effective overview of safeguarding, communicates appropriately with external agencies, and trains and supports staff suitably in their safeguarding duties. The DSL is assisted by several deputies (DDSLs), all of whom have an up-to-date level of training necessary to undertake the responsibility. All teaching, pastoral and auxiliary staff, receive annual training appropriate to their roles from the DSL, supplemented by advice from an external consultant. In addition, there are regular reminders and updates in weekly staff meetings. All new staff receive appropriate induction training which includes the school's safeguarding policy, information about the identity and role of the DSL(s), the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures and acceptable use of technologies. There is good guidance on mitigating risk for the many adults who have dual roles as parents and staff members. In response to

the pre-inspection questionnaire, all staff said that safeguarding training equips them to deal effectively with any concerns about pupils which may arise, and almost all staff said that they would have no reservations about using the school's whistleblowing policy and that the school would deal promptly and correctly with any concerns about the conduct of adults towards children. The school has openly co-operated with Kenyan and overseas authorities over the handling of historic allegations about a former member of staff.

- 2.11 The school promotes a culture of listening to children. A school counsellor has recently been appointed. In the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said they feel safe. The school deals immediately with any allegations or suggestions of peer-to-peer abuse. Records of any potential issues concerning pupils are meticulously kept. Relevant staff, including those in the medical and counselling roles, meet regularly with each other and parents to discuss pupils who are in need, and the DSL has no reticence in seeking support from the school's network of external professionals.
- 2.12 A new designated safeguarding governor has been appointed since the previous inspection and liaises closely with the DSL and the head. The school outlines and follows rigorous procedures for the safe recruitment of staff. The school has rectified omissions noted in the previous inspection so that all the employment checks possible are completed on all staff and members of the council before they take up their appointment. Documentation has increased in thoroughness since the previous inspection and now shows an effective overview of procedures. Pupils have a secure awareness of how to keep safe on-line. Security arrangements, including the checking of visitors, safeguards pupils as far as is practicable.
- 2.13 Good behaviour is promoted; the system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood and effective and bullying is prevented as far as is reasonably practical. The school complies with the national health and safety laws and fire safety standards. Pupils are properly supervised, and attendance and admissions procedures ensure that the school can find the whereabouts of pupils. The risks to pupils of all activities is appropriately assessed and recorded. First aid is administered in a timely manner and qualified nursing care is available on site throughout the time pupils are at school.

#### **Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.14 The Standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.15 The suitability of persons appointed as members of staff is checked in line with both national requirements and guidance issued to schools in the UK. Appropriate checks are made on those working as contractors, and volunteers. Members of council are checked to an appropriate level. All employment checks within the control of the school are now completed before staff take up their appointments. The school has been proactive in arranging for local staff recruitment checks and certificates of good conduct. This represents a further tightening of recruitment procedures to ensure that, as far as possible, staff, members of council and volunteers are suitable to work with children since the previous inspection.
- 2.16 A comprehensive and accurate register is now maintained that contains the required information of the recruitment checks undertaken on all those above. This is supported by files which show evidence of meticulous checking, including of application forms and authenticity of references.

#### **Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.17 The Standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.18 Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided, including those for disabled pupils. The medical rooms attached to the boarding houses are staffed at all times and can be accessed by pupils throughout the day and night. They provide a surgery and separate rooms for the short-term care of

male and female pupils who are sick. Changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils taking part in physical education and games. Premises and accommodation are maintained to a standard so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils, including boarders, are ensured at all times. There are well thought out arrangements to ensure the security of the school site. The acoustics and lighting are suitable, and external lighting ensures that pupils can safely move around the site after dark. Back-up generators ensure that lighting is not uninterrupted during power cuts. The provision of water for drinking and washing is suitable, and ample outdoor space on the school site is provided for physical education and play.

- 2.19 Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders; separate for male and female pupils. Suitable living accommodation is provided for boarders for the purposes of organised and private study outside school hours and for social and recreational purposes. Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided which are quickly accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy. The boarding accommodation is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders who have short-term restricted mobility. Accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders, age groups and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean and suitable and is sufficiently warm or cool as appropriate to the range of temperature locally. Boarders can personalise an area of their accommodation with suitable posters and personal items if they wish. Boarding accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised persons, and the patrolling of school buildings or grounds for security purposes does not intrude unreasonably on boarders' privacy.

## Part 6 – Provision of information

### 2.20 The Standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] are met.

- 2.21 The contact details for the school, the head, the council and the name and address for correspondence of its chairman; and a statement of the school's ethos are provided for parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the school's website.
- 2.22 Policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for SEND and EAL; the school's academic performance; complaints procedure; curriculum policy; arrangements for promoting good behaviour, preventing bullying, health and safety and first aid are made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the school's website. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is made available to parents.
- 2.23 The school's policy on safeguarding pupils and a copy of the report of the most recent inspection against the BSO standards is published on the school's website and made available to the parents of each registered pupil. The school provides an annual written report of each pupil's progress and attainment.

## Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

### 2.24 The Standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] are met.

- 2.25 The school's complaints procedure is available on the school's website. It provides for concerns and complaints to be considered on an informal basis; a formal procedure for complaints to be made in writing; a hearing before a panel which includes an independent member should parents remain dissatisfied and allows for them to be accompanied; for the panel to make findings and recommendations; and for a confidential record to be kept of findings. All parents replying to the questionnaire said that they receive timely and helpful responses to their questions, concerns or complaints. Any concerns about boarding would be discretely identified.



## Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### 2.26 The Standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] are met.

2.27 The leadership and management of the school (including the members of the Council) demonstrate good skills and knowledge and have fulfilled their responsibilities so that the BSO Standards are met. The Council has piloted the school through a time of challenge during a change of head and bursar. It has listened carefully to criticism and has been quick to commission and act on external professional advice. Throughout this time, it has retained its focus on ensuring the continued maintenance of the arrangements to safeguard pupils, including the robustness of procedures to check the suitability of staff. Hence, in both the school's day-to-day leadership and in the oversight of decisions made by the board, the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. A very large majority of parents replying to the questionnaire agreed that the school is governed, led and managed well.

## Part 9 – Minimum Standards for boarding

### 2.28 The Minimum Standards for Boarding [Standards 1–20] are met.

2.29 The council monitors through the senior leadership the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary. There is clear management and leadership of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between teaching and non-teaching staff. The school follows and maintains all relevant policies. Relevant records of issues are maintained and monitored daily by the school's leadership so that the school can take immediate action as appropriate.

2.30 There is a suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice which is available to parents and staff, is made known to boarders, and is seen to work in practice. The arrangements for boarders' induction are detailed, and there is a range of adults to whom boarders can turn for support. Boarders can contact their parents/carers and families in private, and the school facilitates this where necessary. Their possessions are kept safe, and positive behaviour is actively promoted through the school's rules and culture. The school ensures that male and female boarders have equal opportunities.

2.31 There is a written agreement between the school and those over 16 not employed by the school but living occasionally in the same premises as boarders. The agreement specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, and the expectation that they are aware of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

2.32 Boarders' health, well-being and safety are actively promoted. There are suitable arrangements and accommodation for the care of boarders who are unwell. The Council and leadership ensure that the school continues to meet the standards relating to compliance with health and safety laws; fire precautions; child protection; staff recruitment checks; staffing and supervision. Accommodation is suitable for living and sleeping, and pupils have access to a wide range of sporting and other facilities. In the questionnaire, almost all boarders said that they are happy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and weekends. There is an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day. They have access to information about events in the world outside the school. Boarders have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors, and there are safe areas at school where they can be alone if they wish.

2.33 Boarders' accommodation is suitably heated, ventilated, furnished and maintained. There is suitable provision for food and drink outside mealtimes. Dormitory prefects are suitably trained, and the school has recently expanded the ways in which boarders' views are secured.

### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work in class. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of the council, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole

Reporting inspector

Mr Graham Sims

Accompanying reporting inspector