

Report on a survey of British schools within regional overseas British schools organisations

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Purpose of the survey

The survey was undertaken in response to a request from the Department for Education (DfE) for data on the possible uptake, within British Schools Overseas, of the Assessment Only route to UK Qualified Teacher Status. The data would inform discussions and decision about the possible location of testing centres outside of the United Kingdom, where candidates for the AO route could take the required tests in Literacy and Numeracy.

The opportunity was also taken to assess the current and possible future levels of employment of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) who had attained this status within the UK.

Organisations surveyed

In order to avoid double counting of schools, the major, discrete regional organisations, recognized by DfE, were surveyed. These are (in alphabetical order)

- British Schools in the Middle East with 73 member schools (BSME)
- Federation of British International Schools in Asia with 43 member schools (FOBISIA)
- Latin Association of Heads Conference with 41 member schools (LAHC)
- National Association of British Schools in Spain with 61 member schools (NABSS)

As an aside, the numbers of schools in at least two of these organisations are expected to grow very considerably over the coming years.

The survey would not have been possible without cooperation between the four organisations and, in particular, coordination between Chairs of each: **Donat Morgan** (NABSS); **Janet Lewis** (LAHC); **Shaun Williams** (FOBISIA) and **Ed Goodwin** (BSME)

Response rate and nature of consequent sample

Total number of Schools in membership of the four organisations	218
Percentage of schools that responded to the survey	38%
Total number of students in schools that responded	84,036
Average enrolment in responding schools	1012
Number of teachers employed by responding schools	7873
Number of British teachers employed by responding schools	5557
% of teaching force in the responding that is British	70.6%

Extrapolation to all schools

Extrapolating the sample figures to the whole population gives an approximation to the actual numbers involved. These are probably accurate to +/- 10%

Total number of students in all member schools	>200,000
Number of teachers employed by in all member schools	19723
Number of British teachers employed in schools	13394
% of teaching force that is British	68%

The detailed figures show that the percentage of British teachers in LAHC schools (24% in the sample LAHC schools) is significantly lower than in the other three organisations where the figure averaged 73%.

Questions re the uptake of BSO and the likelihood of a non-BSO school submitting to a British Schools Overseas (BSO) inspection in the future

The BSO inspection regime was set up at the behest of DfE and is quality assured by Ofsted. Inspections under BSO regulations are recognized by the DfE and Ofsted as comparable in standard to ISI inspections for UK-based independent schools.

A school that has undertaken a BSO inspection is listed on the DfE website and is eligible for certain benefits, including access to the AO route to QTS. The service of NQTs in such schools can qualify as satisfying the probationary period required to achieve fully-qualified status.

Schools were asked if they had undertaken a BSO inspection and, if not, how likely were they to do so in the future.

28 of the **83** schools that responded have undertaken a BSO inspection. This is about **66%** of the current worldwide total of BSO schools. As such this is an excellent representative sample.

The percentage of schools that would definitely, or were very likely to, have a BSO in the future varied considerably between regions.

Attitudes of schools to BSO inspections, by regional organisation			
	Will or very likely to have a BSO	Can't assess at this time	Will NOT or very unlikely to have a BSO
BSME	86%	7%	7%
FOBISIA	42%	41%	17%
LAHC	18%	27%	55%
NABSS	73%	18%	9%

In all cases, a significant number of schools that had not yet undergone a BSO inspection indicated that an increase in benefits accruing from BSO inspection, would increase the likelihood of the school undertaking a BSO inspection in the future.

Comment

The take up of BSO clearly varies considerably from region to region. If BSO is to grow across the world, then DfE needs to assess the reasons for this variance and to take account of this in any strategy.

Possible causes of the variance are physical distance from the United Kingdom and the degree of promotion of BSO within each organization. A further factor could be (very speculatively) the much lower percentage of British teachers employed in LAHC schools, with a possible consequent reduced feeling of “Britishness” within a school. Personal experience certainly indicates that the relevance of a BSO inspection is viewed differently in different parts of the world.

It is contended that, if benefits increased significantly AND were easily accessed, the growth of BSO would be rapid. The bottom line is, very simply, that Schools need to see clear benefits from undertaking a BSO inspection.

Employment of unqualified, graduate teachers

Schools were asked about the number of unqualified, graduate teachers they employ currently. The average was **3.1** per school with an extrapolated total of around **700** such staff for all four organisations.

The number eligible to pursue the AO route is significantly smaller, since this benefit is restricted to BSO schools only. The number estimated as currently eligible to take this route is **100**.

Schools were also asked, if the AO route to QTS is in place, would this increase (or not) the likelihood of employing more such teachers in the future. About **50%** of BSO schools that responded answered that they were MORE likely to hire such teachers in the future. In non-BSO schools the figure was around **25%**.

The employment of NQTs

The number of NQTs employed in sample schools was **329**, indicating a possible figure of around **1,100** in the total population of member schools.

Schools were asked how many NQTs they were likely to hire in the future. The response would indicate a total demand, from all schools, of **388** NQTs per year.

Comment

Comments made by participants at the recent BSO Conference in Barcelona indicated a lack of awareness of the fact that BSO schools can take NQTs through their probationary period. As the scheme becomes better known (as is happening in the Middle East) the employment of NQTs could increase significantly.