



UK Government Recognition for British Schools Overseas

Joint release from British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) and Penta International

BSME and Penta International have worked closely with the Department for Education (DfE) over the summer and earlier, to develop a kitemark for British schools overseas that have been successfully inspected under the BSO framework.

As a result, we have just been advised by the DfE that it is possible for the government to register a term such as 'British Schools Overseas' as an Official Sign, and that it is their intention to do so. The British Council and Ofsted are supportive of the initiative. The process uses a treaty called the Paris Convention, which is specifically designed to grant international protection to official governmental marks such as governmental crests and hallmarks.

The rights that the Paris Convention grants are very similar to trademark / certification marks, but will be extant in almost every country of the world. The British Council and Ofsted have indicated their support for the proposal. Government in-house patent attorneys are currently filing a Paris Convention application accordingly.

Ed Goodwin, Chair of BSME said:

"Of the 48 BSO-inspected schools so far, 40% are BSME members and we have, over an extended period, argued strongly for an official sign for BSO-inspected schools to display. Indeed, a proposal and outline design was included in BSME's "Extended Position Paper on the need for UK Government Support for BSME Schools", submitted to the government in 2012. We are delighted that the initial, very encouraging response has now led to the government filing the Paris Convention application. After this positive step, BSME will, of course, continue its successful work with the DfE and other ministries, to garner further recognition and support for British Schools Overseas".

Mark Evans, Managing Director of Penta International said:

"I am particularly delighted for the schools that have undergone the inspection process already – the voluntary nature of the inspections made it necessary for a few confident schools to take the risk of being 'early adopters'. Penta is the main provider of BSO reports, having inspected more schools than any other agency. The move by the DfE will be very well received amongst those schools; it will certainly encourage other schools to look more closely at the benefits of the process, too. Parents, headteachers and teachers alike will welcome this stamp of approval from the UK government. We have always focussed on supporting schools in their search for continuous improvement – and the BSO Official Sign will be a great help in validating those schools".

BSME is a not-for-profit membership organisation of over 70 schools in countries around the Middle East, educating around 70,000 children and employing 6000 teachers of whom 4000 are British. BSME also has 80+ Associate Members, which are companies supplying goods and services to schools overseas. Many of these firms are British.

Website: BSME.org.uk Further information: enquiries@bsme.org.uk