



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS**

**INSPECTION REPORT ON**

**KING'S COLLEGE, THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ALICANTE**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## King's College, The British School of Alicante

Full Name of School	<b>King's College, The British School of Alicante</b>
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Head Teacher	<b>Mr Derek Laidlaw</b>
Chairman of the Board	<b>Dr Roger Fry</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>870</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (460 boys; 410 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>2-5: 148    11-18: 267 5-11: 455</b>
Inspection dates	<b>20 Mar 2012 to 21 Mar 2012 23 Apr 2012 to 26 Apr 2012</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI Schedule* for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection consists of two parts: a preliminary two-day visit followed by a four-day (team) inspection. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and overseas. As such, ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas and the *ISI Framework* requirements. ISI is also the agency responsible for the inspection of schools in membership of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC). Accordingly, ISI inspections of British schools overseas are required to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare;
- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- report to the DfE the extent to which schools comply with the published Standards for British Schools Overseas;
- where applicable, assure ISC Associations that their member schools maintain the quality of provision expected.

ISI inspection is for the benefit of the pupils in the schools and through public reporting makes the information available to parents, governments and the wider community.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. The major difference is that schools in England must comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, which do not apply with legal validity to schools outside the United Kingdom. However, the inspection of overseas schools takes account where possible of compliance with any local requirements and it judges the extent to which the schools comply with the British Government's Standards for British Schools Overseas. The range of these Standards is as follows.

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

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:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's College, The British School of Alicante is an independent day school which opened in September 2000 with 100 pupils, aged from 3 to 12, in response to a parental initiative. It moved to its present purpose-built premises in 2001 and in 2003 became part of the King's Group. The school now has nearly 900 pupils aged from 2 to 18 and is governed by the King's Group Board of Governors, which takes all strategic decisions, delegating more detailed planning for all its schools to the Schools' Management Board. In common with all King's Group schools, it operates under the direction and management of the General Manager and the Head Teacher.
- 1.2 The school states that its mission is to sustain and develop an educational environment in which all pupils are able to fulfil their maximum potential, both as individuals and as members of a community. It aims to help and encourage pupils to achieve their highest level of academic success, by utilising the best features of the British educational system set in an international environment, and to prepare them for life by encouraging traditional values and by fostering self-assurance, mutual respect and a sense of duty.
- 1.3 The school numbers 870 pupils: 460 boys and 410 girls. Of these, 603 are in the junior section of the school, Primary, including 148, aged 2 to 5, in the Early Years, which offer the English Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. Secondary, the senior part of the school, has 267 pupils aged 11 to 18, including 46 in the sixth form.
- 1.4 The school follows the English National Curriculum and enters pupils for International GCSE (IGCSE) and A-level examinations. It also provides elements of a Spanish education, following programmes of study stipulated by the Spanish Ministry of Education.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the pupils is broadly in line with the English national average, with the younger primary pupils falling below this. The majority of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), with 29 receiving specific English language support. The vast majority of primary pupils are from local Spanish families. Four pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); all receive specialist learning support from the school.
- 1.6 Since the previous ISI inspection, a new Head Teacher, new heads of Primary and Secondary, and a Director of Studies have been appointed. Developments in facilities include a new infant wing, four new secondary classrooms and an all-weather pitch.
- 1.7 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Pupils are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims to help and encourage them to achieve their highest level of academic success, by utilising the best features of the English educational system set in an international environment. The quality of the pupils' overall achievements is excellent, due to their positive attitudes to study, dedicated and often excellent teaching and exemplary curricular provision flexibly adapted to meet each pupil's needs. They attain high standards overall in external examinations, particularly, in recent years, at A level. The outstanding progress made in English by pupils, the great majority of whom have EAL, is a key feature of the school, particularly in the Early Years. The curriculum is enriched by a range of outstanding extra-curricular activities.
- 2.2 One of the school's most distinctive features is the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of its pupils. Exemplary pastoral care provides a supportive, enabling environment, in which pupils feel safe and valued. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is central to the school's ethos. Relationships are outstanding. Initiatives to encourage pupils to raise expectations of both themselves and others have led to greater self-belief and genuine concern for each other's welfare. Respect and trust transcend age groups. The commitment of the staff is exemplary.
- 2.3 Governance is good overall and, in many respects, excellent. The Head Teacher and management team provide excellent leadership. Their strong collaborative approach lies at the heart of the school's success, encouraging all to take up their challenging vision and make it their own. Quality assurance systems are exceptional. Secure, comprehensive policies and procedures, implemented effectively, safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. Responses to parental pre-inspection questionnaires show overwhelming support for the academic and pastoral sides of school life and the view that worthwhile values are promoted. Parents showed high levels of satisfaction with governance, leadership and management, and with communication with the school. Some parents felt that reporting of pupils' progress could be clearer; others felt governors could do more to communicate their plans for the school. Inspectors agree with the latter concern, although new online systems are being bedded in to improve parents' access to details of their children's progress. All recommendations from the previous report have been followed up effectively.

### **2.(b) Action points**

#### **(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas**

(The range of the Standards for British Schools Overseas is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Standards for British Schools Overseas.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Keep parents informed of its strategic plans.
  2. Ensure that the recently introduced computerised system for reporting progress is sufficiently clear to parents.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent. They are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims to help and encourage them to achieve the highest levels of academic success, optimising the best features of the English educational system within an international environment. Almost all parents responding to the parental questionnaire are highly pleased with their children's progress.

##### ***Primary***

3.2 The pupils' achievement in the Early Years is outstanding. Most pupils join the school with little or no English. They make rapid progress in their acquisition of English language skills. They show well-developed numeracy skills and achieve excellent standards in the English Early Learning Goals.

3.3 Primary pupils are extremely well grounded in the knowledge, skills and understanding required for success in their future studies. Literacy is successfully developed and mathematics is strong. Pupils rapidly improve their speaking skills and increase in confidence. High levels of creativity were observed. Pupils make strong progress in physical activities, with one football team undefeated in the local league. In Years 5 and 6, pupils gain merits or distinctions in London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) examinations. Several show outstanding ability in chess, flamenco dancing, judo and table tennis.

3.4 The following analysis uses the English national data for the years 2008 to 2010, the most recent three years for which comparative data is currently available. Results in English national tests in Year 6 have been above the English national average for maintained primary schools overall. Results in mathematics have been well above the English national average. The pupils' performance in English is now consistently at a similar level to the English national average at the expected Level 4 or above. Nationally standardised measures and inspection evidence indicate that, given their initial low levels of language ability, the pupils' progress throughout their primary years is exceptional.

3.5 Pupils have an extremely positive attitude to learning and show great enthusiasm in their lessons. They are highly motivated and work well both independently and in groups, willingly helping their peers if they need support.

### **Secondary**

- 3.6 Secondary pupils are keen and articulate. They develop strong linguistic abilities, with many achieving top grades in languages at A level. They argue cogently, as was seen in a mature Year 9 discussion of Shakespearean language and theatre, and are highly numerate. Confident, capable users of information and communication technology (ICT), they display an outstanding visual sense and creativity. Those with EAL or SEND make excellent progress, because of their determined attitudes and teaching adapted to their needs. Gifted and talented pupils excel; in recent years, top marks have been achieved nationally and internationally in history and Spanish A levels. Pupils achieve high levels of success in football, golf, judo, rugby and tennis, with several playing at national level. Others excel in music and chess.
- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in IGCSE examinations have been above the worldwide average. At A level, results were in line with the average for English maintained schools in 2008 and 2009, but were far above the maintained schools average and above the average for English maintained selective schools in 2010, with more than 75 per cent of grades at A\*, A or B. Results have shown notable improvement over the last three years. Standardised national measures of progress and inspection evidence indicate that pupils make exceptional progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.8 The pupils work with concentration and enthusiasm. They relish independent learning and collaborate very effectively with others. Their level of involvement in activities is high.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.9 The quality of curricular provision is excellent. It makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, in line with the school's aims. The comprehensive PSHE programme fosters greater self-awareness and an understanding of different cultures. Since the previous inspection, a Director of Studies has been appointed and a new curriculum has been introduced in Primary. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire are pleased with the school's curricular provision.

### **Primary**

- 3.10 The quality of the curriculum in the Early Years is outstanding. The school follows, with great expertise, the English EYFS Framework. From the outset, the mission to value and care for every child as a unique individual ensures that all pupils' needs are successfully met. The six areas of learning are well covered. English language teaching pervades all activities.
- 3.11 The excellent curricular provision in Years 1 to 6 caters for the needs of all pupils. Those with EAL, the majority, are provided for within lessons through the 'friends and family' scheme, language plans and appropriate teaching. Pupils joining the school at a later stage, whose English is minimal, are provided with discrete EAL lessons. Due stress on increasing pupils' numeracy and literacy is combined with a creative curriculum, based on the English National Curriculum, which adopts a thematic approach to learning and integrates the core subjects of English and science with all foundation subjects.

- 3.12 The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of optional activities, ranging from German, Chinese and Russian, through a plethora of musical and sporting activities, to chess, judo, Brazilian martial arts and 'brilliant intelligence'. Large numbers take LAMDA examinations. The curriculum is also extended by a good range of trips and residential visits.

### **Secondary**

- 3.13 The curriculum offers appropriate challenge and enables the development of knowledge, understanding and skills to high levels across all required areas of learning. It is flexibly tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. It complies with Spanish regulations, offering a Spanish curriculum, comprising Spanish language, literature and culture, and Valencian in Years 7 to 11, whilst also teaching the full English National Curriculum, with English as the language of the classroom. Design technology is provided through project work. Spanish and French are offered as modern foreign languages and the three separate sciences can be taken at IGCSE. Sixth formers study A-level courses, in addition to physical education and PSHE. A provisional A-level year caters for new pupils, whose language skills are not sufficiently developed to start A-level studies. Pupils can select two additional subjects, taught in Spanish, in preparation for the Parte Especifica examinations. A challenging enrichment programme is provided in Years 12 and 13, ranging from scuba diving to investment tracking. Pupils receive extensive careers advice and support for university applications. Those in Years 10 and 12 take part in work experience.
- 3.14 The provision of learning support is excellent and each pupil's progress is closely monitored. Teachers willingly extend support to pupils outside formal lesson time. Provision for talented pupils lies with academic departments; pupils with good skills in languages and mathematics sit IGCSE, AS- and A-level examinations early. Several pupils study further mathematics.
- 3.15 Since the previous inspection, the school has greatly increased the range of extra-curricular activities. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils' involvement in sport and the performing arts, as well as in subject based clubs and the International Award. The curriculum is further extended by a range of cultural trips and visits.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.16 The quality of teaching is excellent overall and plays a significant role in enabling the school to meet its academic aims. Since the previous inspection, extensive planning has helped the school to raise the standard of teaching to high levels and improve its consistency. Both parents and pupils greatly appreciate the enormous help, concern and support provided by the teachers.

### **Primary**

- 3.17 The quality of teaching in the Early Years is outstanding. High quality planning and use of the pleasant setting ensure that pupils make excellent progress. Highly effective assessment and tracking systems have been introduced. The learning environment created by teachers enables pupils to grow in confidence and embrace all learning opportunities.
- 3.18 Throughout, teaching is good overall; in a great many cases, it is excellent. Very occasionally, it is unsatisfactory. Teachers have an excellent understanding of the pupils' needs; effective, highly organised planning enables these to be met. Provision for pupils with EAL is exceptional. English language skills are reinforced

at all levels across all subjects. Teachers' planning, attitudes and creative delivery of lessons foster interest and independence and inspire a love of learning in the pupils. High standards are achieved, despite large class sizes. However, in a very few lessons observed, teaching did not engage and involve the pupils sufficiently in their learning.

- 3.19 The marking of pupils' work in this section of the school is a key strength. Teacher comments clearly guide pupils on how to improve their learning. Pupils are given regular opportunities to assess the quality of their own work, and that of their peers. As a result, they make more rapid progress in their learning. Marking is regularly monitored as part of the school's internal quality assurance systems. Teachers use a wide range of resources to support learning and help to create an exciting and supportive learning environment.

### **Secondary**

- 3.20 Excellent teaching underpins the pupils' exceptional progress. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and display good time management. They provide an interesting, informative range of activities, presented with both pace and rigour. Inspirational and imaginative methods incorporate active and creative learning. The excellent relationships between teachers and pupils create a purposeful learning environment.
- 3.21 Teachers understand their pupils' needs and provide support and guidance for all, whether through worksheets designed for different academic or linguistic abilities, or through open-ended tasks. Pupils are encouraged to learn independently through project work and assignments, and to learn from each other, working co-operatively in small groups. Resources are well used to support learning. For example, pupils in Year 7 strengthened their knowledge of negative numbers through mathematical bingo.
- 3.22 Since the previous inspection, the school has significantly improved the monitoring of curricular documentation, adopting a standard format for departmental handbooks. Assessment is now linked to the recording and reporting of pupils' progress and in many lessons, it forms an integral part of the learning. The pupils' written work shows many examples of detailed marking, which explains to pupils how they can build on their work and suggests targets for improvement. However, the quality and frequency of marking sometimes vary within and between departments.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

4.1 The excellent personal development of the pupils reflects the school's aim of preparing them for life by encouraging traditional values and fostering self-assurance, mutual respect and a sense of duty. Pupils' high levels of self-awareness and self-confidence derive from a secure learning environment and from the excellent PSHE and activities programmes.

#### ***Primary***

4.2 In the Early Years, pupils demonstrate a joy for life and confidence and self-awareness beyond their years. They have a true sense of right and wrong and their conduct is exemplary. Awareness, respect and caring for one another are the foundation for the high degree of multi-cultural harmony and awareness amongst pupils.

4.3 In Years 1 to 6, the pupils' outstanding growth in confidence and self-esteem is underpinned by a carefully developed integrated curriculum that has personal development at its heart. Their appreciation of non-material aspects of life is fostered in assemblies, as in an assembly for Years 5 and 6 on pursuing goals, where exploration of the views of Martin Luther King and Ghandi led to a discussion of human rights, including those of pupils. In activities, pupils develop strong self-awareness from an early age.

4.4 The pupils implement their strong moral awareness in their daily lives. Their behaviour is excellent; they respond extremely well to its consistent and positive reinforcement and to the range of rewards and incentives appropriate to their age.

4.5 The pupils enthusiastically accept responsibility and consider it an honour to be elected to the school council. They readily translate their strong social and civic awareness into action, sharing responsibility for aspects of health and safety, 'eco' schools and healthy lifestyles, and raising money for local, British and international charities.

4.6 The pupils' strong cultural awareness is enriched by daily contact with others from a range of backgrounds and by the school's celebration of world festivals. The Spanish complementary curriculum ensures a high level of cultural understanding of Spanish and Valencian customs.

#### ***Secondary***

4.7 The pupils develop excellent self-awareness and a strong sense of identity. At ease with themselves, they relate exceptionally well to others. A feeling of joy is prevalent in the school. The pupils' strong self-esteem is stimulated by challenging, imaginative and creative lessons and activities. The pupils enjoy reflecting on world events in assemblies or considering attitudes to life in tutor sessions.

4.8 The sense of moral responsibility is seen most clearly in the pupils' considerate and respectful conduct. Their awareness of moral issues was displayed strikingly in a film made by sixth formers about consequences of bullying. Ecological issues are central to activity, including recycling bins and the clean maintenance of beaches.

4.9 The pupils grow into confident, articulate, caring young adults, who go out of their way to help others. Their outstanding sense of social responsibility and citizenship

entails contribution within the community, such as leading assemblies, mentoring younger pupils, joining the school council and supporting charities.

- 4.10 Excellent cultural awareness and empathy are fostered by strong friendships between pupils of different cultures, by pupils' daily contact with British and Spanish customs and by changes to the PSHE programme which allow for increased awareness of other cultures. Art, drama, literature and music deepen understanding, which is further extended through participation in activities and in external visits. The pupils support the work of a link school in Ghana.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.11 The quality of pastoral care and the arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. They meet the school's aim to provide a safe, secure, positive and enjoyable environment. Relationships are outstanding throughout. Success is celebrated. The outstanding care and support observed in Primary during the previous inspection are now in evidence throughout, enabling pupils to gain in confidence and develop their talents to the full. The great majority of parents are highly pleased with the pastoral care provided for their children.
- 4.12 Secure, comprehensive policies and procedures for safeguarding the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safe recruitment, are implemented effectively. All staff receive effective training in these areas. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Risk assessments cover all aspects of school life, including trips off site. Regular inspection by Spanish authorities ensures that high standards are maintained in the implementation of the school's health and safety procedures. Medical care is excellent. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and take regular physical exercise. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained.

##### ***Primary***

- 4.13 In the Early Years, pastoral care is of the highest quality and importance. Positive attitudes are expertly built upon, so that the children understand they are unique and valued. All children know which member of staff they can turn to if there is a need and develop strongly in self-awareness.
- 4.14 In Years 1 to 6, clear policies and exemplary commitment from class teachers and Key Stage Co-ordinators create a community based on safety, support and mutual respect, to which pupils respond, making it their own. Assemblies and pastorally focused PSHE schemes of work provide highly effective support and guidance. The LAMDA courses are an excellent conduit to greater confidence in speaking English.
- 4.15 Pupils readily help each other and are friendly and courteous with teachers and visitors. Their behaviour is almost invariably excellent. A clear, structured policy promotes good behaviour and is followed consistently by staff. Rewards greatly outweigh sanctions and each class operates a system of immediate merits that are highly motivating for the pupils. 'Constructive playtimes' were observed, where the pupils have developed their own playground games and rules.

**Secondary**

- 4.16 An excellent pastoral system provides all-pervasive support and guidance. Form tutors play a pivotal role in the pupils' everyday lives, offering care and support and monitoring progress, and providing a thought-provoking and often inspirational start to the day. One tutor group considered personal goals, watching a video of a landmine victim on a sponsored run across the desert. Tutors and Key Stage Co-ordinators meet frequently. Provision is well monitored. Sixth formers have personal tutors, who provide personalised support and help with career and university choices. A clear balance between respect and open friendliness is inherent in all relationships.
- 4.17 The school operates a policy of rewarding good behaviour and so there is much positive reinforcement, from film afternoons and ice skating to postcards home. Sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are consistently applied, but need only to be used to a limited extent. Effective guidance against bullying includes pupils making films and videos on the subject, which they show in assemblies.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good overall, with many excellent features. The effective strategic vision of the King's Group board, which provides governance for all its schools, is enabling the school to meet its challenging aims ever more successfully. The board provides effective oversight of the school and discharges well its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and the safeguarding of pupils' welfare. The very great majority of parents' responses to the questionnaire indicate their strong satisfaction with the school's governance and the values the school promotes. However, inspectors acknowledge some parents' concerns that they have little or no knowledge of governors' strategic plans for the school.
- 5.2 Executive powers are delegated to the Schools' Management Board, the group's general manager and the school's Head Teacher, with whom both the Chairman of the Board and the General Manager have a close and positive working relationship. The appointment of a link governor for each of the group's schools has enabled greater governor involvement and monitoring in recent years and thus, more detailed, direct insight into the working of the school. The link governor acts as a supportive, critical friend and visits three times a year, participating in work scrutiny and meeting with staff and pupils, in order to gain this insight. Past failings in monitoring the recording of appointment checks have now been rectified. Other board members contribute their considerable expertise in support of the school, for example in ICT resources planning, but do not often visit. The board's investment in staff, accommodation and resources, and its support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement have enabled the school to prosper and increase greatly in size. At present, a small number of parents consider resources to be somewhat stretched because of the school's success in attracting pupils, but governors have already approved various improvements to the facilities and infrastructure to cope with the rise in numbers.
- 5.3 The board takes its responsibilities for child protection and for pupils' welfare, health and safety seriously, approving comprehensive policies and procedures which are effectively implemented. These are displayed on the school's website and are reviewed annually.

## **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school are excellent and make an exceptional contribution to the pupils' learning and personal development, in line with the school's aims. Since the previous inspection, the highly collaborative management team has created a supportive learning community, in which relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding. It has devised, implemented and monitored initiatives to improve standards of teaching and learning, with conspicuous success, whilst the fully supportive community created has enabled pupils to develop further in self-esteem and grow in social responsibility. Pupils have been inspired to raise their expectations of themselves and a culture of innovation and self-evaluation has been encouraged, amongst staff and pupils alike. The recommendations in the previous inspection report have all been acted upon effectively. The great majority of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated the view that the school is well managed.
- 5.5 The Head Teacher and management team have a clear, challenging vision for the school's future, shared by middle management and staff. Priorities are implemented collaboratively. Thoughtful planning, clear direction, effective delegation and self-critical evaluation are strong features of the school's management. Development planning is realistic and rigorously challenging; it is closely allied to the school's aims. Middle managers are very effective; they take their responsibilities seriously and feel valued.
- 5.6 Management is mainly successful in securing and motivating high quality staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils and in safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. Safe recruitment policies are rigorously followed. A small number of past failings in recording have now been rectified. Excellent induction, appraisal systems and in-service training are in place and the school positively encourages the professional development of staff, taking pride in devolving leadership and establishing a network of procedures to share good practice. 'Learning walks', lesson observations, work scrutiny and departmental evaluations are planned throughout the year to help establish and maintain high standards of teaching. Support staff make a significant contribution to the school's caring ethos.

## **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.7 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is good overall; much is excellent. The links contribute to the school's ability to achieve its aims and the spirit of its philosophy. Since the previous inspection, the website has been extended and refined to improve parents' access to information.
- 5.8 Constructive relationships are fostered through termly parents' meetings and frequent reporting of pupils' progress, with termly interim reports supplementing the annual full report. These are not always fully understood. Monitoring days have been introduced, where parents and pupils discuss progress with tutors and targets are set. Spanish translators provided by the school facilitate communication at parents' meetings. Monthly dual language newsletters are made available online and all documentation is translated into both languages. An extended database and a virtual learning environment now enable parents to track their children's progress and access curricular information online. Parenting classes for parents of younger primary pupils, run by the school nurse and the school psychologist, are enhancing parents' knowledge of their children's learning.

- 5.9 Parental involvement includes taking activities in Primary, and giving careers guidance and providing work experience placements in Secondary. Sixth-form enrichment lectures are often given by parents, and others make costumes for musicals. Parents are frequently invited to attend talks in school, for example recently on cyber bullying.
- 5.10 The great majority of parental responses to the questionnaires indicated strong satisfaction with all major academic and pastoral areas of school life. Parents regard the values promoted by the school as worthwhile, and appreciate the governance, leadership and management of the school, and most areas of communication. However, a small minority of parents was dissatisfied with the quality and clarity of information regarding their children's progress. Online systems, introduced recently, are intended to allay their concerns. A small minority were dissatisfied with the opportunities for parents to be involved with the life and work of the school. Inspectors found a positive degree of parental involvement. Reservations were also expressed regarding the provision of facilities and resources, and a lack of information about governors' plans for the school. The facilities are being constantly upgraded and governors have approved further improvements, but inspection evidence supports the concern that parents receive little information from governors about their plans for the school. A clear and accessible procedure for complaints is in place.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff, and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, the Chairman of the Board and the General Manager, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr John Sugden	Reporting Inspector
Mr John Bagust	Head (Primary), COBIS school, Czech Republic
Mrs Olivia Boyer	Former Head of International Students, HMC school, UK
Mr Gerard Flynn	Head, COBIS/IAPS school, Egypt
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