



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	King's College, The British School of Alicante		
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Email Address	info.kca@kingsgroup.org		
Head Teacher	Mr Derek Laidlaw		
Chair of Governors	Sir Roger Fry CBE		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	997		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (512 boys; 485 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2:	0	5-11: 447
	3-5:	105	11-18: 445
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	997	
Inspection dates	27 to 30 October 2015		

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 April 2012.

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 a co-educational day school which opened in 2000 and is part of the King's Group of Schools, who operate a number of schools in Spain, the UK and Panama. The school is governed by the King's Group board of governors, assisted by its various committees and the chief executive. Day-to-day operation of the school is delegated to the head teacher, who is also advised by a local advisory council.
- 1.2 The school aims to promote independent learning, self-confidence and creativity, to achieve consistently outstanding results in public examinations, to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest levels of fluency and confidence in their use of English, to prepare pupils for their future lives in a rapidly changing world, and to promote a safe, caring but challenging ethos in the school.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the school had 997 pupils of whom 512 were boys and 485 girls. Five hundred and fifty-two pupils were in the primary school, for pupils up to the age of 11; of these, 105 were aged five and under. The remaining 445 pupils were in the secondary school, for pupils aged between 11 and 18; 98 were in the sixth form. In total, 79 per cent of pupils are of Spanish nationality with 8.4 per cent who are British and 12.6 per cent who are of other nationalities; all live within travelling distance of the school.
- 1.4 The school follows the English national curriculum, whilst also providing education in Spanish, Valencian and Spanish culture in line with the requirements of the Spanish Ministry of Education. In the secondary school, pupils pursue IGCSE, GCSE and A-level qualifications. In the sixth form, many pupils take Spanish qualifications as well as English ones, to enable them to enhance their access to Spanish universities if they wish.
- 1.5 The range of pupils' abilities is below the English national average in the primary school, and above that average in the secondary school. Almost all pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), receiving either in-class or small group support as required. Many of the pupils arrive at the school with little prior experience of English. About twenty pupils receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), either individually or in class.
- 1.6 Since the previous ISI inspection, a new head of primary, a new head of secondary and other senior staff have been appointed, new classrooms and other facilities have been constructed and the school has implemented a programme of e-learning.
- 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 The pupils achieve excellent standards throughout the school, and show outstanding attitudes, working extremely well both with their peers and independently. All pupils, and a very large majority of parents, who responded to the questionnaires were pleased with pupils' progress. Pupils make excellent progress as they move through the sections of the school. They apply their understanding to new situations, ask searching questions of the teacher and review the quality of their work, often with other pupils. Pupils with EAL make rapid progress in their acquisition of English, as a result of the excellent support they receive and, by the time they leave, express themselves eloquently and accurately in English and Spanish. Pupils with SEND progress well, particularly in the primary school where support is more structured. The secondary school is still developing its new systems to identify and support pupils with SEND, or who are gifted and talented, bearing out the concerns of a small minority of parents. Some gifted and talented pupils produce work of considerable distinction.
- 2.2 Pupils' excellent attainment is shown, in particular, by their A-level results, which are in line with those in English selective schools. Their rapid progress is supported by excellent arrangements for the curriculum and a very wide range of activities. The school combines local and UK requirements skilfully, so that pupils can move easily to Spanish and English language universities. Their rapid progress is also supported by excellent teaching, which includes a wide range of activities to stimulate pupils' learning and carefully targeted questioning to further their understanding. Teaching is generally very well matched to pupils' abilities and needs.
- 2.3 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They show considerable self-confidence and awareness of the needs of others. They treat each other with respect, show tolerance of others' views and beliefs, and enjoy taking a wide variety of responsibilities. Pupils' development is supported by excellent arrangements for pastoral care and welfare. They enjoy excellent relationships, both with each other and with members of staff. In almost all cases behaviour is well managed and pupils say that any difficulties between them are handled well. Concerns expressed by a small minority of pupils in the questionnaires about fairness were not borne out in discussion in the inspection.
- 2.4 The quality of governance, and of leadership and management, is excellent. Governors give clear strategic oversight to the school, have provided increased support to the professional development of staff, and have invested recently in new resources and accommodation; the quality of governance has improved since the previous inspection. The excellent quality of leadership and management ensures that all sections of the school work well together so that pupils enjoy a consistent experience of education as they move from section to section. Staff take full benefit of opportunities for professional development. Links with parents are excellent, reflecting the very positive responses in the questionnaires.

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)

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

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Implement fully the more systematic approach in the secondary school to the identification and support of pupils with SEND, or who are gifted and talented.

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 and of their learning, attitudes and skills is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims, building on their excellent work in the previous inspection. In questionnaire responses, all pupils and most parents were pleased with the progress that pupils make.
- 3.2 The children's excellent progress in Early Years reflects the careful focus on the acquisition of language skills. In Nursery, children develop excellent fine and gross motor skills, and make excellent progress in English. They contribute confidently to discussion and listen well, in both English and Spanish. In Reception, they develop further independence and confidence, responding well to challenging activities. They retell stories, read with understanding, and appreciate the world around them. Children use their ability to count in practical situations.
- 3.3 Primary pupils are articulate, reason clearly and share ideas with their talk partners. They apply their understanding to new situations, speak lucidly about their work and write creatively. They show a particularly good grasp of grammar and punctuation, considering that most have EAL. By Year 6, pupils have an excellent understanding of mathematical ideas and eagerly apply this to new challenges. They use information and communication technology (ICT) to develop skills in reading and mathematics, in presentations using on-line research, and to record their considerable creativity in art. In physical education (PE), they develop good agility. In Year 6, pupils develop an excellent understanding of scientific ideas as a result of specialist teaching and laboratory experience.
- 3.4 Secondary pupils also make excellent progress, showing an increasing grasp of vocabulary, both in English and in the Spanish and Valencian languages. They think carefully, show an excellent understanding of historical issues, ask searching questions, and review the quality of their own work critically. They express themselves eloquently, giving articulate and thoughtful responses to questions. They show creative ability, having a good grasp of musical improvisation and producing imaginative work in art.
- 3.5 Sixth-form pupils show excellent skills and understanding across the curriculum. Non-native speakers of Spanish use complex phrases correctly, whilst non-native speakers of English present sophisticated and cogent arguments in that language. Pupils show an outstanding ability to apply their understanding of ideas in subjects such as mathematics and history, using careful reasoning to solve new problems and discuss new situations. They use ICT very effectively, especially when conveying key ideas to their colleagues. Pupils achieve equally well in the English and Spanish curricula, and are successful in gaining admission to higher education institutions, in the UK, in Spain and elsewhere.
- 3.6 The most able pupils produce work of the highest quality, showing a strong command of language and plot when publishing novels, writing poetry of exceptional quality for a magazine, or devising commercial video games. Pupils play sport at a competitive level, both regionally and nationally, and perform in musical and dramatic performances. In debating, pupils showed both eloquence and good preparation in making their arguments.

- 3.7 Pupils' attainment is excellent by the time they leave the school. The following analysis uses the English national data from the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in the English national tests at age 11 have been above the English national average for maintained primary schools. Results in GCSE have been similar to the English national average for maintained schools. At IGCSE, results in most subjects were in line with, or often above, worldwide averages, though they were below in some subjects. The A-level results have been above the English national average for maintained schools, and similar to the average for maintained selective schools. In 2015, three-quarters of grades were at grade A* to B, an improvement over the previous three years. These results, together with standardised measures of progress and the high level achievement and progress in the work observed during the inspection, show that pupils of all ages make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability and in relation to the fact that the great majority have EAL. Pupils with SEND make good progress, especially in the primary school. The high quality of the best work shows that gifted and talented pupils progress extremely well.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, showing high levels of independence from the earliest age. They show considerable commitment to, and perseverance with, their work; only occasionally are lessons marred by poor concentration or behaviour. Pupils work extremely well with each other, providing support and challenge in discussion and activity, developing their understanding through the sharing of ideas and showing considerable enjoyment. Only occasionally are they hesitant to offer ideas. They review each others' work in a mature and sensible way. They take part in activities with considerable enthusiasm.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. Throughout the school, the curriculum achieves the aim of following an English National Curriculum whilst complying with the legal requirements to provide tuition in Spanish and Valencian. The exceptionally well-integrated approach between the English and Spanish curricula enables them to enhance each other and enrich pupils' educational experience. A very large majority of parents were pleased with the curriculum in pre-inspection questionnaires.
- 3.10 In Early Years, the curriculum supports children in their required areas of learning, and has an excellent balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities, supporting their differing abilities and development needs well. In the primary years, the creative approach to the curriculum provides a cohesive education, whilst ensuring a strong focus on English language development. Secondary pupils have a wide and varied range of options at GCSE and A level, supported by enhancement and effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE). Detailed curriculum plans are reviewed regularly, which leads to developments such as teaching Year 9 science in separate subjects, and introducing Use of English.
- 3.11 The curriculum is supported by extensive resources, and classrooms provide an excellent environment for learning; excellent use is made of the outdoor terrace areas as a rich and varied learning area. Some secondary facilities, such as science rooms, are used by Year 6 pupils, making important links with the secondary school. The school provides well for the use of ICT, using tablet computers, an increasing number of cloud-based laptops and, for primary pupils, a well-resourced ICT suite.

These facilities are used well in many areas, though not consistently. Recent ICT developments reflect a co-ordinated approach across the schools in the group.

- 3.12 Pupils benefit considerably from the exceptionally smooth transition from primary to secondary school. Excellent co-ordination occurs in many areas, including EAL and ICT, and the integration of the English and Spanish curricula. This allows transfer between phases with little disruption and provides a highly integrated approach to pupils' education.
- 3.13 The school's EAL provision is outstanding in all areas. Both teachers and teaching assistants are exceptionally aware of pupils' needs, and well trained in supporting individuals and groups. This enables pupils to make rapid progress in language acquisition.
- 3.14 In the questionnaires, a small minority of parents were critical of support for pupils with SEND. Inspection evidence, including observation in class and of individual support lessons, and discussion with both staff and pupils, showed that in the primary school pupils with SEND are well supported with rigorous systems of identification, monitoring and support. At secondary level, systematic identification has only recently been introduced; in general, pupils are extremely well supported in class, but this support is not yet consistent.
- 3.15 Wide-ranging support for gifted and talented pupils is provided in many lessons through suitable adaptation of tasks to their needs, leading to excellent examples of outstanding work.
- 3.16 The extensive activity programme, with more than 450 students enrolled in 27 activities, is led by qualified and experienced enthusiasts. A very large majority of both pupils and parents were pleased with the activity programme. Activities include music and sport, many languages, and a wide range of creative and challenging pursuits. From this year, many take place within timetabled time. The introduction of this enrichment programme, alternating with PSHEE and house activities, reflects the importance placed on pupil's personal development. Pupils can develop interests ranging from community service to chess, film club to football, table tennis to touch typing and student newspaper to Spanish conversation. In some activities pupils have good opportunities to develop new skills.
- 3.17 In addition, social service and charity fundraising provide successful opportunities to develop organisational and leadership skills, and to develop strong links with the local community. Much fundraising is co-ordinated by pupils. Last year, pupils supported children in need, animal welfare groups and an international medical aid organisation. Pupils also benefit from work experience and community placement programmes. A mobile library, 'Bob the Bus', visits local schools and fiestas to promote reading in English. Performances by pupils at concerts and dramatic productions in the local area are well attended.
- 3.18 Trips, both within Spain and internationally, are a strong feature. They include Nursery trips to a local farm, residential trips focusing on the natural world in Year 5 and language visits abroad.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is excellent. This quality of teaching supports the school's aims well. It reflects the very large majority of parents who were pleased with the progress pupils make, and with the homework they receive. A similar proportion of pupils said they found the work interesting, that individual help is easily available, that teachers help them to learn, and that homework is useful. Almost all said they are encouraged to work independently. This high quality of teaching reflects the excellent quality seen in the previous inspection, though it continues to be slightly less consistent in the primary school.
- 3.20 In Early Years, teaching supports the excellent progress children make towards the Early Learning Goals. Teachers create exciting learning opportunities by meticulous planning and developing innovative and challenging activities. Both teachers and teaching assistants make excellent use of on-line assessment to monitor children's progress, and use that information well in planning. Throughout Early Years, teaching assistants make a significant impact on children's learning, providing appropriate skills and nurturing support, especially when children are new both to the school and to the English language. Teaching provides excellent opportunities for children to work confidently and independently; teachers are supportive and provide positive reinforcement.
- 3.21 Throughout the school, outstanding planning, based on excellent subject knowledge, provides a wide range of innovative activities, a clear understanding of pupils' needs, and excellent use of resources. Tasks chosen capture pupils' imaginations in most lessons, so that they are fully engaged in their learning. Teaching assistants are deployed very well, so that pupils, including those with EAL and SEND, receive the support they need. Lessons proceed with a brisk pace and clear purpose, with complementary ideas firmly linked together, highly effective strategies to develop pupils' understanding, and realistic but demanding time limits. Teachers draw ideas together well at the end of lessons.
- 3.22 In many lessons, though not in all, teaching is well matched to pupils' differing needs and abilities. Teachers place pupils in groups of similar ability, giving suitable tasks to each; they provide additional stimulus when the main task is finished or they have differing expectations. The sharply focused nature of much questioning enables teachers to develop pupils' thinking and to challenge their understanding. Frequently, questions are carefully targeted to individual pupils so that pupils of all abilities and needs make excellent progress.
- 3.23 In the great majority of lessons, behaviour is quietly and effectively managed so that a productive atmosphere is created; only occasionally does the lack of a clear strategy lead to some poor behaviour which disrupts the flow of the lesson. Teachers encourage pupils to work closely together, whether in pairs or in groups, encouraging them in their discussion and making positive comments on their work. They have an excellent rapport with their pupils and provide excellent support for their work. Wall displays, both in the primary and secondary schools, provide additional encouragement for pupils' efforts.
- 3.24 Almost all marking provides clear feedback and support for pupils' further improvement. Frequently these comments lead to a useful dialogue, which raises further questions for pupils to consider. The school has effective arrangements for the assessment of pupils, using baseline testing to provide the basis against which to measure their progress. It uses this data very effectively both to track individuals

and to monitor groups of pupils. In both cases it provides the basis for modifying the school's approach, to improve pupils' progress further.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is excellent. The high level of the pupils' personal development, both in Early Years and in the rest of the school, supports the school's aims fully. Almost all parents said they were pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes.
- 4.2 Pupils display considerable self-confidence, making them eager to share their views and opinions. In interviews, pupils' showed high levels of maturity, and considerable appreciation of the important role of friends and family in their life. They much value the supportive school community. Their experience in art, music and drama leads them to appreciate the awe and wonder of the world. Pupils develop a strong sense of character and individuality, leading to strong self-awareness and personality.
- 4.3 Pupils' excellent moral development reflects the school's high standards. They understand right and wrong, and know how to behave within the school community. They understand that making the right decision is not always easy. The school's golden rules and the importance of British values are highlighted through posters, and are discussed in PSHEE and sixth-form lessons. Pupils treat others politely and respectfully. They discuss moral and ethical beliefs in PSHEE and elsewhere. In addition, pupils develop empathy for those in need; they support local, national and international charities, with older pupils organising and publicising events to support them. Pupils also visit a homeless centre in the town to support others less fortunate than themselves. They show a keen awareness of environmental issues, looking for ways the school may improve in this respect.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is outstanding. They enjoy increasing responsibility and leadership as they move through the school, from being class helpers in Early Years to being head boy or girl in the secondary school. A very large majority of pupils said there were good opportunities to take on responsibility. Pupils understand their roles, and work with enthusiasm to achieve the very best results. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils said that their views were not taken into account by the school. Inspection evidence did not agree, finding that pupils value the school council, and understand that elections give all pupils the democratic right to represent their class; recent initiatives have included tomato sauce at lunch and increased basketball equipment. The house system enables pupils to build strong relationships and team spirit in mixed age groups. Pupils are aware of national and international issues through newspaper articles and television programmes. In career discussions, international issues are debated to extend pupils' understanding of world matters in preparation for the next stage in their education.
- 4.5 Each pupil's excellent cultural understanding is developed throughout each stage of their school life. Pupils develop respect for those who have different beliefs and culture from their own, especially through discussions in geography, history, English, art, music and drama. Pupils share their understanding through presentations, assemblies and class discussions; adding to their understanding of both western and eastern cultures.
- 4.6 Pupils are very well prepared to leave school, with confidence, positive attitudes and a strong value base to ensure they are ready for the challenges in the world.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent. Pastoral arrangements are well organised throughout the school, and are highly successful in providing effective support and guidance to the pupils. This supports the school's aim to sustain a safe, caring, but challenging culture both inside and outside the classroom.
- 4.8 In the Early Years, the children's self-awareness is supported by their teachers' warm care and encouragement; as a result, they thrive within an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect. For example, new children are guided into child-initiated play so that they engage happily, participate with enthusiasm, share and show mutual respect for each other. The staff know individual pupils very well and provide excellent support and guidance. Key staff form strong bonds with the children and promote high standards of behaviour and courtesy. Excellent links are forged between the Nursery and Reception classes, and staff have a sensitive understanding of children's emotional needs.
- 4.9 All pupils speak enthusiastically about their school and the support they receive. The school is very successful at developing happy, secure and valued pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent. Pupils gain considerably in confidence from the recognition they receive. The house system encourages a sense of community, as does the buddy system whereby secondary and primary pupils work together. Careers advice is particularly important in the sixth form, with opportunities for staff to discuss their own experiences and for past pupils to talk about life at university and in the workplace.
- 4.10 Strong and effective procedures promote good behaviour and guard against bullying; the few incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled constructively and with sensitivity. A range of strategies encourage good behaviour and support pupils, these include golden tickets in the dining room, the school council and the anti-bullying committee. A small minority of pupils were critical in the questionnaires of the fairness with which they are treated, but this was not borne out in discussion with pupils during the inspection. Most pupils said in the questionnaires that teachers care for them as people and that they have someone to talk to if they need it; almost all said that they like being at the school.
- 4.11 The school has thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils, which take proper regard for their welfare. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training; the school takes suitable action should any issues arise. The school takes appropriate action to support pupils' emotional needs, with the school counsellor playing a key role.
- 4.12 The school takes the necessary action to guard against the risk of fire and conducts appropriate drills and equipment checks. It gives careful attention to other matters of health and safety, making use of risk assessments where required. It supports any pupils who are ill or injured well. In addition the school encourages pupils to develop healthy patterns of diet and exercise, and takes special care of any with allergies.
- 4.13 It maintains admission and attendance registers in line with local requirements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The governors provide excellent oversight to the school and, in particular, provide support for the school's academic and pastoral work through extensive support for the professional development of staff. This enables the school to meet its aims and provide excellent education to pupils of all ages. Since the previous inspection, the quality of governance has improved and, in the questionnaires, a very large majority of parents were pleased with the governance of the school. A new local advisory council has been formed, to provide more local support, on which some members are current parents; currently, this board is looking at ways of involving parents more in the work of the school. In addition, the governors have invested heavily in both school accommodation and facilities, as well as providing the staff that are needed, and developing their roles and skills to meet the needs of the school.
- 5.2 The governors have a good insight into the work of the school through reports from the head teacher, the analysis of academic results and comparison with those in comparable schools, through visits to the school by governors and the chief executive, and through the work of the local advisory group, on which the governors are represented. This enables them to provide stimulus and challenge to the school, and to develop new initiatives in both this school and its partner schools, such as in ICT. It brings together staff from the various schools in the group at annual training events enabling schools to share expertise and good practice. Staff speak highly of these opportunities.
- 5.3 The board is effective in its oversight of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of the school's leadership and management is excellent. This high quality of leadership enables the school to achieve its aims. A very large majority of both pupils and parents said that the school is well led. The school's leaders have high aspirations and have successfully inculcated an ambitious atmosphere across all levels of the school community, monitoring the implementation of policies carefully. They have been highly effective in engaging all staff fully in decision making. Particular developments to enable pupils to receive the best possible educational opportunities have included introducing the new Use of English programme, the deployment of specialist teachers to enrich teaching for younger pupils, and enabling teaching assistants to develop their skills by becoming higher level teaching assistants.
- 5.5 Excellent co-ordination between senior leaders ensures that pupils benefit from a smooth transition through the school at every level, with careful liaison between primary and secondary sections. The school provides excellent opportunities for older pupils to learn from younger ones, and vice versa. Monitoring is reinforced through regular joint learning walks and work scrutiny procedures across both parts of the school.
- 5.6 All senior leaders show outstanding knowledge of the pupils and staff in their care, combined with a culture of innovation and recognition of the individual, and careful attention to self-evaluation. Subject leaders demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to analyse outcomes and improve teaching, which has had a highly positive

impact on the pupils' experience; as at senior management level, collaboration and communication between middle leaders is a highly effective element of the school's success.

- 5.7 Teachers are well supported in all aspects of their work by subject leaders, heads of year and assistant heads. The support and administrative staff are fully committed to achieving the school's aims, whether assisting with community service or playing the violin in the school musical. University placement students are effectively deployed supporting both the learning and personal development of pupils.
- 5.8 Management is largely successful in securing and motivating high quality staff to meet pupils' needs. Induction and training are strong, and include training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Safer recruitment policies are fully implemented. In addition to the excellent induction programme, the appraisal system develops the highest standards of performance from staff, and training opportunities are outstanding. They include professional development for both senior and middle leaders, as well as group and school-based training in Spain. One example is the opportunity given to staff to re-train to teach at different age groups, in line with their own interests and career ambitions.
- 5.9 Staff at all levels and in all sections of the school are clear about the vision of the school's leadership and are supportive of it; teachers, pupils and parents feel that they are a part of that vision, work hard to fulfil their role in it and feel valued.

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

- 5.10 Links with parents are excellent. In the parental survey before the inspection, the very large majority of positive responses showed that parents are happy with the school. They were particularly pleased with the curriculum and with the attitudes and values the school promotes.
- 5.11 A small minority of parents said there were too few opportunities to be involved in their children's education. Inspection evidence, including discussions with individual parents, showed that there is a wide range of ways in which parents can take part in the life of the school. Informative newsletters are sent home every month. Parents are invited to events such as the secondary school art exhibition and, from this year, primary assemblies. The school organises English lessons and workshops for parents for whom English is not their first language, for which parents and pupils are exceptionally grateful.
- 5.12 A very small minority felt they were not kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents receive highly detailed written reports on their children's progress each term, so they can compare their achievements against their expected progress. In addition, the school holds regular parent teacher consultation evenings at all levels, and provides translators to ensure that all parents fully understand what is being reported. The school also has a highly informative and clearly laid out website where parents can view the school's policies, as required, consult the latest calendar of events or submit questions or comments on-line.
- 5.13 A very large majority of parents said that they were very happy with the contact that they had with the school and the opportunities available to visit the premises. A very small minority of parents stated that the school was slow to deal with complaints and did not investigate them properly, but the scrutiny of a sample of complaints showed that the school had handled them properly.

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 the chair of governors, chief executive and members of the local advisory council, 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 Ian Newton	Reporting inspector
Miss Penelope Kirk	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school, UK)
Mr John Coombes	Team Inspector (Head of Dept, COBIS school, The Netherlands)
Miss Heather Fulton	Team Inspector (Head of School (Pre-Prep), IAPS school, UK)
Mr Christopher Wheeler	Team Inspector (Head, COBIS/HMC school, Kenya)
Mr Ian Mitchell	Team Inspector (Former Head of Dept, HMC school, UK)