



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS**

### **INSPECTION REPORT ON ALOHA COLLEGE MARBELLA**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Aloha College Marbella

Full Name of School	<b>Aloha College Marbella</b>
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Email Address	<b>elizabeth.batchelor@aloha-college.com</b>
Principal	<b>Mrs Elizabeth Batchelor</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Joseph Fay</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>777</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (410 boys; 367 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5: 85      5-11: 336 11-18: 356</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>11 Mar 2014 to 14 Mar 2014</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 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 Aloha College is a British international school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 18. Situated in southern Spain on the Costa del Sol, it is a not-for-profit foundation, registered as an educational charity. Its board of governors, who are all parents of current pupils, is elected by assembly and represents the multi-national and multi-cultural community of the school. Over 40 nationalities are represented by pupils in the school, with the largest groups being Spanish and British.
- 1.2 The school aims to enlarge pupils' knowledge, experience and imagination, and to enable them to develop a set of moral principles, within a spirit of international understanding and interchange. It seeks to enable pupils to achieve the best academic results that reflect their true potential. Through its teaching methods, the school sets out to encourage pupils to discover, to create and to think for themselves.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the school roll numbered 777 pupils, 410 boys and 367 girls. Of these, 421 (217 boys and 204 girls) were in the Primary School, with 85 (43 boys and 42 girls) in the Nursery and Reception, known as the Foundation Stage, and 356 (193 boys and 163 girls) were in the Secondary School, including 76 (39 boys and 37 girls) in Years 12 and 13. Of the 575 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), 58 require additional specific targeted support. Of the 32 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 16 require specialist learning support.
- 1.4 The academic profile of the pupils is in line with the UK national average overall, with a very wide spread of abilities represented and some variation between different age groups.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, carried out by the National Association of British Schools in Spain in 2011, a new management structure has been put in place, with the promotion of the previous head of secondary to the post of principal. The school now offers A levels as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme.
- 1.6 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school from Year 1 and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school from Nursery to Reception and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Foundation Stage***

School	NC name
Foundation Stage 1	Nursery
Foundation Stage 2	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 An outstandingly caring, supportive ethos engenders a highly empowering learning environment, which enables the school to fulfil its challenging aims. The pupils achieve good and often excellent progress and standards in their learning throughout the school and perform well in external examinations, benefiting in the main from good and often excellent teaching. Pupils with EAL make excellent progress; those with SEND also perform well, in both cases due to supportive approaches from teachers. Opportunities are provided for the most able to excel, although this is not consistently the case. Teachers demonstrate outstanding commitment and caring support. Children in the Foundation Stage make particularly rapid progress with acquiring English language skills. Independent learning is becoming embedded in the school's learning culture, as is the sharing of effective methods in teaching and learning, although dissemination of existing examples of outstanding practice is insufficient, and peer observations and challenging monitoring are not yet consistent features. Following the recommendations of the previous inspection, regular identification of learning needs is now in place throughout the school. In the Primary School, systems to interpret data are complicated and difficult to interpret effectively. Parents' pre-inspection questionnaire responses revealed almost unanimous satisfaction with their children's progress.
- 2.2 The pupils achieve excellent levels of personal development, feeling secure and valued within the friendly, mutually trustful environment that prevails throughout the school. This is built on the excellence of relationships, underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures, appropriately implemented, to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. The pupils support each other readily and the school's highly inclusive ethos promotes extremely harmonious relations across a wide range of nationalities and cultures. Excellence is celebrated. The site and buildings are well maintained.
- 2.3 The supportive oversight and financial acumen of the school's governors have been key factors in its success. Strong, visionary leadership analyses accurately the school's needs and sets priorities to achieve them, engendering commitment from other staff. Facilities and resources are excellent. Almost all parents and pupils responding to their respective pre-inspection questionnaires indicated satisfaction with the way the school is run. A very small minority of parents were dissatisfied with the provision for pupils with SEND and with the range of activities offered. The inspectors found that while provision is good in both areas, that for pupils with SEND lacks co-ordination and take-up of extra-curricular activities is uneven in the Secondary School.

## **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. Extend the existing examples of highly effective vibrant and challenging teaching to all teaching, thus providing greater parity in pupils' learning experience.
2. Simplify, standardise and clarify the systems of assessment in use in the Primary School.

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

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

##### ***Whole School***

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and of their learning, attitudes and skills is good throughout the school.

##### ***Primary School***

- 3.2 The pupils' achievements fulfil the school's aims to enlarge the knowledge, experience and imagination of each. Foundation Stage children make excellent progress. Their particularly rapid acquisition of spoken English enables them to demonstrate well-developed skills in all seven areas of learning within the English Early Years Foundation Stage framework, meeting the Early Learning Goals. In Years 1 to 6, the pupils, including those whose command of English or Spanish is minimal on entry, develop strong speaking, reading, listening and writing skills in both languages. They gain a good understanding of the humanities and the sciences, and develop high levels of creativity. They apply their mathematical skills well and demonstrate clear logical and independent thinking, as when working out sequences of triangular numbers in Year 6. Strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills were observed in pupils' preparation of the *Aloha News*. The pupils achieve good standards in physical activities, whether in football teams or individually in gymnastics at national level.
- 3.3 Results of standardised tests in reading and mathematics indicate that pupils achieve results that are similar to English norms. Standardised measures of progress, inspection evidence of a high proportion of excellent teaching and the fact that three-quarters of the pupils have EAL indicate that pupils make good progress in the Primary School. Those with SEND make appropriate progress as a result of supportive teaching.
- 3.4 Pupils have an extremely positive attitude to learning and show great enthusiasm. They are quick to settle and apply themselves to their lessons. They work well independently and collaborate successfully, for example making simple circuits in a Year 2 class.

##### ***Secondary School***

- 3.5 The pupils are very well educated in line with the school's aims. A high proportion of pupils have EAL, and most are highly articulate. They achieve good and often excellent levels of knowledge and understanding across the curriculum, and develop strong reasoning and analytical skills. A Year 9 digital montage demonstrated a high level of ICT skills. Excellent creativity was seen in a Year 10 draft for a novel, as well as in outstanding artwork. Strong mathematical skills are displayed across the curriculum. Particularly able pupils excel, when challenged. More than 80 per cent of Year 13 leavers win places at their first-choice university, in Britain or in Europe.
- 3.6 Pupils have gained the Best Delegate award at the Model United Nations (MUN) and been international runner-up in the Royal Society of Chemistry's Bill Bryson Prize, whilst others perform well in international mathematical competitions. Individual pupils have enjoyed national success in golf and wakeboarding, whilst football and basketball teams have won area tournaments.

- 3.7 Over the period of 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available, results at IGCSE have been similar to worldwide averages, with results in almost half the subjects being above average. Forty per cent of grades awarded were A\* or A. In the IB, pupils' performance over the years 2010 to 2012, the most recent period for which comparative statistics are available, has been similar to the worldwide average, and above this in 2011. Standardised measures of progress and inspection evidence of a high proportion of excellent teaching indicate that pupils make good progress in relation to those of similar ability, both up to IGCSE and in the sixth form. Pupils with SEND make good progress because of the supportive teaching they receive.
- 3.8 Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to their work and strive for achievement. They concentrate well, particularly when actively involved in their learning. The pupils are exceptionally supportive of each other's efforts, and group and pair work is highly productive.

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

#### ***Whole School***

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good throughout the school.

#### ***Primary School***

- 3.10 The curriculum is effective in its coverage and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and achievements, in line with the school's aims.
- 3.11 Children in the Foundation Stage follow the English Early Years Foundation Stage Framework for literacy and numeracy, together with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) for that age range, fully covering all seven areas of learning. Spanish lessons in literacy and numeracy follow Spanish guidelines, while other areas of learning in Spanish are integrated into and further consolidate the IPC.
- 3.12 In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is both broad and balanced, providing a wide range of subjects which meets the needs of all pupils, although the use of ICT is limited. The core subjects of English, mathematics and Spanish are taught through the English National Curriculum, whilst the IPC offers comprehensive provision of science, humanities, art, music, design and technology (DT) and physical education. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship form an integral and effective part of the IPC programme, as do stimulating assemblies, such as an outstanding Year 1 assembly on light observed during the inspection. Careful thought is given to the needs of pupils with SEND, although overall co-ordination is lacking. A programme of support is designed for pupils who are still at an early stage in their acquisition of English.
- 3.13 The curriculum is enriched by an extensive, enthusiastically supported extra-curricular programme of academic, cultural, creative and sporting activities, including Irish dancing, the choir, which performs in the local community, and participation in local football leagues. An excellent programme of related educational visits is provided, including residential trips, and representatives of local community institutions come and talk to the pupils.

### ***Secondary School***

- 3.14 The well-resourced secondary curriculum offers rigour, breadth and balance. In Years 7 to 9, it offers an adapted version of the English National Curriculum, without DT but with a greater emphasis on languages, including Spanish, which is studied by all pupils throughout the school. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow IGCSE programmes of study. Appropriate flexibility is provided to suit pupils' needs. Able mathematicians take additional mathematics examinations, whilst history is taught in English or in Spanish, and examined in English. A feature of the curriculum is the introduction of A-level courses alongside the established IB Diploma Programme, in an attempt to cater further for individual pupils' needs. Most pupils' endorsement of the school's drive to promote independent learning means that the IB remains the choice of the majority. History at IB may be both taught and examined in Spanish.
- 3.15 All pupils are tested regularly to identify those requiring support for SEND or EAL; detailed, helpful individual education plans are produced annually, and three review meetings are arranged with parents. It is not clear how effectively these are used, since there is no named individual to co-ordinate support and ensure regular, expert monitoring. A register is kept of particularly able pupils, some of whom also have individual education plans.
- 3.16 A strong PSHE programme covers fundamental aspects of civic responsibility, personal health, relationships, financial literacy and study skills. Motivational assemblies form an integral part of this programme. A carefully structured programme of careers education covers the choice of options for IGCSE, IB and A-level courses, aptitude profiling and higher education guidance.
- 3.17 Extra-curricular provision is rich and varied, covering the creative arts, including exhibitions, concerts and large-scale musical and dramatic productions, cultural activities, such as the MUN, and an extensive range of sports, including team participation in local leagues. Subject clubs provide academic support. Participation in non-subject-based activities is low at times. Educational visits complement curricular provision, whilst residential trips encourage the pupils to test their values and skills in a team environment. Pupils, including those on the IB Creativity, Action and Service programme, contribute in various ways to the life of the local community.

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

#### ***Whole School***

The contribution of teaching is good throughout the school.

#### ***Primary School***

- 3.18 The quality of teaching is good. It is a significant factor in the school's fulfilment of its academic aims, stimulating good progress in the pupils' learning.
- 3.19 The teaching in the Foundation Stage is excellent, fostering interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment. The teachers have an excellent understanding of children's needs and their supportive approach sets the tone for outstanding relationships throughout the school. Child-centred learning, incorporating a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, provides for all abilities and developmental needs. Highly effective tracking and systems of assessment underpin the effective use of the English Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

- 3.20 In Years 1 to 6, teachers generally employ a variety of methods and strategies to stimulate active learning, with effective use of visual aids, such as interactive whiteboards. Lessons move at a brisk pace and sustain the pupils' interest across a variety of activities matched to their different abilities. The use of setting enables pupils to progress in accordance with their abilities, although lack of such variation of tasks within a small minority of lessons fails to involve all pupils sufficiently in their learning. Particularly able pupils are encouraged and supported, although this is not consistent. Specialist teaching and the use of individual education plans for pupils with SEND and those who are still at an early stage in their acquisition of English accelerate their progress.
- 3.21 Teachers have strong subject knowledge and lesson planning is excellent. It is thorough and detailed. The school is very well resourced and most teachers make very good use of teaching aids to engage pupils' interest and involve them actively in their learning. The effective deployment of teaching assistants plays a significant part in supporting pupils' learning.
- 3.22 The pupils' work is regularly marked and the marking regularly monitored. Teachers make constructive comments, but these are not always acted upon by the older pupils. Assessment is regular, extensive and thorough. A large amount of data is now being used effectively to plan teaching and learning, as recommended at the previous inspection. However, the system is unwieldy and difficult to interpret.

### ***Secondary School***

- 3.23 The good quality of teaching fulfils the school's aim to enable pupils to achieve the best academic results of which they are capable. Since the previous inspection, there has been significant improvement. The best examples encapsulate the school's aim to provide teaching that encourages pupils to discover, create and think for themselves.
- 3.24 Teachers have strong subject knowledge, and lessons observed were characterised by meticulous planning, effective use of resources, including ICT, and a variety of teaching strategies. Stimulating teaching was observed which captivated and enthused the pupils, challenging them with high expectations. Occasionally, however, lack of pace and methodical following of a textbook, made lessons less engaging. The existing examples of outstanding practice have not been extended across all teaching. Strategies for the sharing of the most effective teaching and learning methods have been discussed, but where they have been acted upon, monitoring has not always been sufficiently challenging.
- 3.25 Lesson objectives are clearly stated, advice in the pupils' individual education plans is generally followed and tasks are varied to match pupils' differing abilities. Extension work is provided for the particularly able pupils and highly effective support is given for those with SEND or EAL. Relationships between teachers and pupils are exemplary at all levels.
- 3.26 Following the recommendations of the previous inspection, the quality of assessment has greatly improved. Excellent use of data is made to inform planning and to set targets. An excellent marking policy supports pupils' learning, although it is not consistently followed.

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

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

#### ***Whole School***

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent throughout the school.

#### ***Primary School***

- 4.2 From the very beginning in the Foundation Stage, the pupils begin to develop strong self-awareness and express themselves with confidence. Feeling valued through teachers' constant care and support, they gain in emotional maturity and play their part in the creation of an inclusive community, built on mutual respect, understanding and acceptance. They happily celebrate each other's achievements. Pupils are uplifted by non-material aspects of life, through such experiences as the choir and Irish dancing.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent and reflects the school's aim to help them to develop a set of moral principles, within a spirit of international understanding and interchange. Positive attitudes towards school rules and respect for others permeate the community. Expectations are reinforced through assemblies, where a weekly target is set. The pupils learn to live up to expectations and distinguish clearly between right and wrong. Their moral awareness leads them to support several charities, both local and overseas.
- 4.4 From the Foundation Stage onwards, a high level of collaboration amongst children creates strong social bonds and excellent social awareness. Invariably, in interviews, pupils referred to the friendly nature of the school community. The pupils are keen to help each other. They readily grasp opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, including membership of the school council. Extra-curricular activities promote effective teamwork skills.
- 4.5 Excellent cultural awareness is all pervasive, fostering harmonious, supportive relationships between pupils from a diverse range of countries and cultures. An awareness of their own culture and that of others is enhanced through day-to-day interaction and the school's celebration of cultural diversity, as seen in assemblies and in informative displays of pupils' work around the school.

#### ***Secondary School***

- 4.6 The school fulfils its aim to foster self-assurance and mutual respect, as well as tolerance and appreciation of difference.
- 4.7 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are highly self-aware and self-confident. They appreciate non-material aspects of life well and demonstrate considerable emotional maturity at appropriate levels. Pupils eagerly seize spiritual opportunities in art, drama, music, and dance, uplifted, for example, by performance in assemblies.
- 4.8 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They show outstanding awareness of moral and ethical issues, including tolerance and mutual respect. The pupils know and accept the school rules, recognising the benefit of these for all. Pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong, and in PSHE lessons they consider topics such as developing a value system, making good choices and handling challenges. Their

strong moral awareness is clear in their enthusiastic support for charitable causes, such as the Philippines' typhoon appeal.

- 4.9 Social development is excellent. The pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with courtesy and friendliness. A number of older pupils mentor younger ones and stronger pupils readily support those who are less able. Pupils write stories for those in the Primary School. They readily grasp opportunities to take responsibility and provide leadership, for example as sports captains, house captains and prefects. Year 12 pupils are currently considering how they could help the local community by training as sports leaders.
- 4.10 Within the school's rich cultural diversity, pupils from many different backgrounds rapidly make friends, and play and work harmoniously together. They develop outstanding levels of cultural awareness and play their part in creating the inclusive community that is a hallmark of the school.

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

##### ***Whole School***

- 4.11 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent. The policy and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils' welfare, health and safety, including for safer recruitment, meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas and are implemented effectively. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. The school complies with the Spanish requirements for health and safety. Suitable, separate access is designated for pupils with physical disabilities. Medical facilities are appropriate and accidents are suitably recorded. Several staff are qualified first aiders, and in cases of serious injury or illness, the school has access to a local medical service. Pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and grasp opportunities to take regular physical exercise. School meals are nutritious, providing a balanced diet, as required by Spanish regulations. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained.

##### ***Primary School***

- 4.12 Pastoral care is excellent. Staff have a genuine interest in the care and holistic development of all the pupils. Class teachers demonstrate a good understanding of individual pastoral needs and how best to address them. Their supportive approach engenders security in their charges, who readily respond to high expectations and learn to celebrate others' success as well as their own.
- 4.13 Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils' interactions with each other are excellent. Policies to promote good behaviour and deter bullying are robust and clear, providing a set of standards to which pupils willingly adhere. The exemplary behaviour of the pupils reflects the school's caring ethos. Pupils feel valued; they know that their ideas are listened and responded to by the school. Pastoral care extends to the use of special days and focus weeks, such as a recent e-safety week.

***Secondary School***

- 4.14 Pastoral care and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. An extremely caring, supportive ethos engenders a highly empowering learning environment, which enables the school to fulfil its challenging aims. Tutors meet daily with pupils, providing high quality support and guidance, embedding the caring culture personally for each individual pupil. They know their pupils extremely well and use their knowledge to support their charges' pastoral needs. Tutors teach the excellent PSHE programme. The pupils recognise that they are cared for and become willing to care for others, welcoming newcomers or mentoring younger pupils. Outstanding pastoral leadership and management oversee this comprehensive care and support. As a result, the pupils develop into cheerful, polite, confident and well-rounded members of the school community.
- 4.15 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent. The pupils are highly supportive of their school. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed concerns about the availability to them of positions of responsibility. Inspection evidence found that such opportunities are on offer, for example in the school council.
- 4.16 Well-established policies and procedures promote excellent standards of behaviour and manners, and guard against anti-social behaviour. Pupils' outstanding conduct throughout the school reflects the effectiveness of these arrangements. Excellent supervision of pupils and pupils' own attitudes ensure that incidents of bullying are extremely rare. Any such incidents are effectively and swiftly dealt with by staff.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The board of governors, who are all parents of pupils at the school, discharges its responsibilities for strategic planning extremely well. Financial acumen has enabled it to preside over a significant increase in the school's infrastructure over the last ten years. The governors' clear vision and excellent insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses have led to investment in the recruitment of high quality staff in pursuit of academic excellence and to the planning of further facilities to strengthen the standard of the curriculum enrichment programme, in line with the school's aims. They have robustly challenged management and have taken firm decisions, such as revising their strategic planning and implementing significant change in the leadership of the school. This involved governors' relinquishment of their executive role, which they have embraced in the interests of the school. A good working relationship with the school's leadership enables governance to continue to provide support, challenge and stimulus for improvement.
- 5.2 The board takes its responsibilities seriously and has undertaken governors' training, both through an outside adviser and in-house. Comprehensive procedures for the induction of new governors are not yet in place. An effective structure of sub-committees, meeting at least termly, assists in discussion and decision making. The board discharges its responsibilities effectively for compliance with Spanish legal requirements, following legal advice. Policies and procedures covering safeguarding and welfare, health and safety have been approved by the board, are reviewed by them annually and are being implemented effectively. These now meet British requirements, the Standards for British Schools Overseas. A very large majority of parents responding to the questionnaire were happy with the governance of the school.

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

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The senior leadership team combines a challenging, clear and caring educational vision, with a principled belief in teamwork as the means to achieve it. Leadership and management at all levels demonstrate commitment and collaboration, which staff have been motivated to emulate in the interests of the pupils. A highly effective learning environment is thus created, in which an ethos of care, support and trust pervades, enabling pupils to develop exceptional levels of self-awareness and self-confidence. Leadership at every level has the confidence to make decisions, because lines of responsibility are clear and support is always available. Almost all pupils and parents responding to the questionnaires consider the school to be well run.
- 5.4 Senior leadership is adept at analysing the school's needs, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. It has successfully focused professional development on raising the standards of teaching and learning, and has overseen the regular use of external assessment data to measure and improve pupils' progress, in line with the recommendations from the previous inspection. However, the diverse systems being used in the Primary School are somewhat complicated and difficult to interpret. Development planning, both strategic and departmental, is strong. A robust system of oversight is becoming part of the school's leadership and management culture, allied to regular self-evaluation. The mentoring and development of key leaders have resulted in significant continuity and stability of

leadership in recent years. Structures are in place to engender consistency of approach and monitoring from heads of key stage and heads of department. Minutes of departmental meetings indicate a keen willingness to implement the sharing of effective teaching methods and mutual lesson observation, but some inconsistency remains, leading to a lack of parity in pupils' educational experience. Regular meetings at all levels enable initiatives to be discussed, evaluated and, if in the pupils' interest, pursued, such as the introduction of A-level courses to run alongside the IB in the sixth form and of the IPC in the Primary School. Following a change in Spanish practice with regard to criminal record checks, the school now fully implements thorough procedures for checking the suitability of staff and for training them in meeting the needs of all pupils and in safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. Recent strengthening of procedures is enabling the administration department to better serve the academic life of the school.

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

- 5.5 Throughout the school, the quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Bilingual English/Spanish letters and email messages are sent regularly to update and inform, whilst the parent portal on the school's website allows parents to access reports, assessment data and pupils' extra-curricular involvement. Pupil handbooks are used as the principal means of communication between class and subject teachers and parents regarding daily class-based issues. In the Primary School, parents have opportunities to learn about how areas of the curriculum are taught through visiting classes to observe mathematics, English and the IPC. They are also invited to attend information meetings by healthcare professionals. In the Secondary School, parents are invited to meetings about the transition process between key educational stages and the options available to the pupils. All required information is sent to parents or made available on the website, in line with regulations. The school follows its published procedures for dealing with complaints.
- 5.6 Responses to the parents questionnaire were extremely positive and supportive of the school. Almost all parents are pleased with the progress that their children make at school and with the information that they receive in relation to this. Almost all agree that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views, and express satisfaction with its handling of any concerns and its encouragement of their involvement in its life and work. Almost all parents of pupils with EAL were highly satisfied with their children's progress in learning English. Parents were almost unanimous in their view that the school is well run, that they can easily communicate with the school and that they receive timely responses. A very small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school's provision of worthwhile help regarding special educational needs and/or disabilities and with the range of extra-curricular activities provided. Inspectors found that pupils with SEND are well catered for in both schools, although the lack of centralised co-ordination and of regular, expert monitoring limits the further effectiveness of the provision. They also found that a rich and varied range of clubs and activities is provided. In the Primary School participation rates are high, but in the Secondary School take up in some areas is low.
- 5.7 In the Primary School, regular informative reports which provide details of pupils' progress in each of their subjects and of up-to-date school assessment data are sent to parents each half term. After each report is sent home, a week of parents meetings is arranged, either at their request or by school invitation. In the Secondary School, parents are sent two full reports and one interim report each year and two parents' evenings are arranged for each year group. Parents attend

assemblies in both schools and share in celebrating pupils' achievements. A strong parent teacher association works closely with the school to help it to fulfil its aims.

## 6. 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, 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
Mrs Laura Brook	Junior Team inspector (Co-ordinator, COBIS school, Italy)
Mr Stephen Gray	Senior Team inspector (Former Director of Studies, HMC school, UK)
Mr Eamonn Mullally	Junior Team Inspector (Interim Head, COBIS school, Mexico)
Mrs Carolyn Thomas	Senior Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school, UK)