



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

**INSPECTION REPORT ON
THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BRUSSELS**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The British International School of Brussels

Full Name of School	The British International School of Brussels			
Address	163 Avenue Emile Max 1030 Brussels BELGIUM			
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Email Address	schooloffice@bisb.org			
Head	Mr Stephen Prescott			
Proprietor	Mr Stephen Prescott			
Age Range	3 to 11			
Total Number of Pupils	132			
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (82 boys; 50 girls)			
Numbers by Age	0-2:	1	5-11:	87
	3-5:	44		
Inspection dates	30 November 2015 to 03 December 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 May 2008.

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:

1. help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare;
2. provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
3. inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
4. report to the DfE the extent to which schools comply with the published Standards for British Schools Overseas;
5. 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:

- an exhaustive health and safety audit
- an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures

- 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 The British International School of Brussels is a co-educational day school for children between the ages of two and eleven years. It was founded in 2000 and is situated three kilometres from the city centre, midway between NATO and the European Commission. The school occupies two sites a few minutes walk away from each other, the infant department for pupils up to the age of seven years and the junior department for older pupils. A small minority of pupils travel to school by minibuses that cover the south, east and north-east of the city. Since the previous inspection, the school became an ASBL in July 2014 and is administered by a committee consisting of the headmaster and two other family members. Over the last three years the school has increased its use of digital technology.
- 1.2 The school's philosophy is to provide a welcoming and caring atmosphere where each person is respected as an individual. The school aims to create a friendly, safe and interesting environment that stimulates and encourages the fascination of learning. It seeks to ensure that pupils follow a well-planned and stimulating curriculum with a wide variety of learning opportunities that increase knowledge and promote understanding. The school also aims to foster qualities such as mutual respect, integrity, kindness, self-discipline, independence and self-confidence to equip pupils to become internationally aware citizens. Priority is given to communication between home and school.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 132 pupils at the school, 45 of whom were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and 87 in Years 1 to 6. There were slightly more boys than girls. Since the previous inspection the pupil population has changed from having British as the predominant nationality to one where, although families still come from many different nationalities, Indian is now the most common nationality. Pupils mainly come from international business backgrounds and families that are globally mobile.
- 1.4 Entry to the school is not based on academic ability. The ability profile for the school is slightly higher than the English national average. The school has 110 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom 25 receive targeted support. The few pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) receive additional learning support in school.
- 1.5 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 school is highly successful in meeting its aims and offers its pupils an excellent educational experience. Children in the EYFS make exceptionally strong progress, particularly in the acquisition of conversational English, as well as in their social interactions and basic skills for learning. The secure foundations laid in the younger years promote the excellent all-round achievement of pupils by the end of Year 6. The broad curriculum supports the pupils' achievements well, though younger pupils have limited experience of practical science investigations. A valuable range of extra-curricular activities enriches the learning of those pupils who take advantage of them, though not all take part. Teaching throughout the school is of a consistently high standard and the work planned enables pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, the most able and those with EAL to make rapid progress. The pupils' highly positive attitudes promote their learning well. Every pupil who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire said they are making good progress, including in learning English, and that they like the school.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. Within a safe and secure environment where high levels of co-operation, trust and respect are evident and pupils develop strong self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. They demonstrate a mature awareness of the needs of others and a keen sense of justice. Staff provide excellent pastoral support and guidance for pupils so their behaviour is excellent and they are keen to take on roles of responsibility. Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are efficient and effective.
- 2.3 The directors, in close collaboration with senior leaders, provide good governance, leadership and management, which are all characterised by strong self-evaluation and a deep understanding of the school's purpose and needs of its pupils. This promotes the excellent academic and personal achievement of the pupils highly effectively. The school has successfully addressed all but one of the recommendations of the previous inspection. It has established formal policies and procedures, but senior leaders do not have specific responsibilities for, or familiarity with, all the overseas standards to ensure they are monitored rigorously. Consequently, while all staff checks comply with Belgian regulations, staff from the UK have not received the required additional checks for British schools overseas. The school maintains excellent links with parents and provides a welcoming atmosphere to enable those new to the country to feel part of the school community. A very large majority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with all aspects of the school's provision and, in particular, the range of experiences and subjects offered, their children's progress, including in learning English, and the management of the school. A few parents had concerns about homework and extra-curricular provision. Inspectors found that concerns about homework were not founded and that while the school provides a valuable range of extra-curricular activities, these are not strongly supported.

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 does not meet all the requirements of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, and to do so it should:

- ensure that it undertakes checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Prohibition List on prospective staff who have lived or worked in the UK prior to confirmation of their appointment [Standard 4.2, and for the same reason 4.5 and 4.6 under The suitability of the proprietor and staff, and for the same reason Standard 3.2, under Welfare, health and safety and Standard 9.2, under Leadership and management of the school].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above action points related to the Standards requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Delegate specific responsibilities to senior leadership team members to ensure effective oversight of key policies and procedures
2. Ensure that planning in science for younger pupils includes frequent opportunities for open-ended investigations.
3. Explore ways to enable all pupils to discover and develop new skills and interests through increased participation in extra-curricular activities.

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 their learning, attitudes and skills is excellent. The school achieves its aim to work with the pupils to attain high standards in all aspects of school life.
- 3.2 In the EYFS, children make exceptionally strong progress in their development of English. They clearly enjoy coming to school and are sensitively helped by staff to develop independence. They quickly gain the confidence to make choices for their activities and play purposefully. Children in Nursery understand and use mathematical language to compare the sizes of objects and are developing an understanding of rhyme. Many children in Reception can identify numerals to 10, count to 20 and are beginning to do simple addition. They enjoy sharing books and blend sounds to read words. All the children demonstrate curiosity and a keen interest in learning.
- 3.3 From Year 1 onwards pupils rapidly gain proficiency in English, which enables them to express their ideas confidently. They listen attentively to their teachers and respectfully to one another. Across the school, pupils read with expression, fluency and understanding. Their writing is well presented and demonstrates capability in writing for different purposes across a range of subjects. Pupils develop considerable linguistic ability which enables them to achieve high standards of competency in French and also, in Year 6, to make good progress in Latin and Mandarin. Pupils develop strong mathematical competency and understanding which, as they grow older, they apply to investigative and problem-solving work. The oldest pupils are confidently working at levels far in advance of their ages.
- 3.4 Pupils greatly enjoy science and display excellent levels of knowledge and understanding. Older pupils use scientific vocabulary confidently and accurately such as when explaining DNA extraction. Whilst investigative skills in science are well developed in the oldest pupils, they are less strong in younger age groups due to limited opportunities for practical experimentation. The pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills proficiently to present information and to practise skills and concepts in all areas of the curriculum. They also show competency in computing skills such as coding. In many subjects pupils display well-developed abilities to think logically and to explain their reasoning. Pupils develop good physical skills and their considerable creative ability is not only demonstrated in their writing but in the many attractive displays of their art.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses English national data for the years 2012 to 2014, the most recent for which comparative statistics are currently available. The school enters pupils for UK national tests. Results in these at the age of seven have been above the average, and at the age of 11 exceptional, as compared with pupils in UK maintained primary schools. Observation of pupils' learning in lessons, scrutiny of work in their books and subject interviews confirms this level of attainment and indicates that pupils make good and increasingly rapid progress as they move through the school, particularly in view of the fact that a very large majority of pupils have EAL. Pupils with SEND and the most able make similar rates of progress due to the well-focused teaching they receive and carefully planned support or increased levels of challenge within class.

- 3.6 Pupils achieve well outside of the classroom in a number of areas. They are regularly successful in UK national speech and drama examinations. Pupils have been placed in the top ten writers of the week in an international writing competition on several occasions and have been similarly successful in an international mental mathematics competition. The school had the second highest number of entries for any school in Belgium in an international art competition. When they leave the school, pupils are successful in gaining entry to a wide variety of senior schools in the UK and overseas.
- 3.7 The pupils' highly positive and diligent attitudes towards learning strongly promote their achievements. They take care with the presentation of their work and show exemplary concentration and perseverance. They are strikingly keen to acquire new knowledge and participate in lessons enthusiastically. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were pleased with their child's progress overall, and in learning English, and all the pupils indicated in their questionnaires that they feel they are making good progress with their work and, for those with EAL, in learning English.

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

- 3.8 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and achievements and covers all the required areas of learning. The broad and balanced curriculum supports the aims of the school in its emphasis on personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development.
- 3.9 A carefully planned programme for the EYFS follows the English early years framework with additional specialist teaching in French and music, and swimming sessions added in Reception. A strong emphasis on the acquisition of oral communication skills in English, together with interest shown by staff in the children's home languages, which they sometimes use in their play, supports the children's rapid progress in language skills. Children are given ample opportunities to work and play both inside and outdoors and staff achieve a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The learning experiences offered strongly support the children in reaching and, in some cases, exceeding expected levels of development.
- 3.10 In all years, literacy and numeracy are given appropriate emphasis, but pupils also enjoy opportunities to develop their creativity through art, drama and music; the provision of a varied range of sports encourages pupils' physical development despite somewhat limited on-site facilities. Pupils throughout the school are taught in English enabling the many pupils for whom English is a second or third language to become fluent and articulate through immersion in the new language. French is taught from Reception and Latin and Mandarin provide additional challenge for older pupils.
- 3.11 The science curriculum offers strong investigative challenge for older pupils though it is more knowledge based for younger ones. Pupils throughout the school are clearly excited by the new computing curriculum, which incorporates coding, and they enjoy good access to ICT provided by tablet computers. Links between subjects are promoted through topic work and the weekly 'Talk Topic'. Pupils also create their own cross-curricular links when they carry out research, develop digital presentations and write blogs. A comprehensive personal, social and health education programme (PSHE), taught through circle time and assemblies, supports

pupils' personal development effectively and every opportunity is taken to ensure that all curricular and extra-curricular activities support this area of pupils' development.

- 3.12 Provision for more able pupils, those with SEND and those with EAL, is excellent and specialist support is offered in and out of the classroom. Class teachers provide work tailored to differing abilities, make effective use of teaching assistants and offer a high level of support where appropriate. More able pupils are fast tracked in mathematics. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with the range of experiences and subjects offered to their children.
- 3.13 A valuable range of after school extra-curricular activities, designed to appeal to different interests and age groups, supports and enriches the academic curriculum although uptake of these activities is relatively low. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of parents were less satisfied with extra-curricular activities offered but this view was not supported by parents who spoke to inspectors who judged the activities offered to be suitable for a small school.
- 3.14 The curriculum is enhanced by a considerable number of visits to places of interest, such as local museums, galleries, theatres and parks, together with visiting speakers who broaden pupils' horizons. Further enrichment is offered through the provision of theatre, opera and music workshops. Valuable links with the local community are promoted through support for local charities and pupils benefit from direct links with local places of interest, societies and a sporting club.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is excellent across the school. In the EYFS, staff develop the children's communication skills through the creation of an environment that is rich in oral language. The classrooms are well organised and brightly decorated, with interesting displays of the children's work and material to stimulate learning. Teaching is carefully planned and adapted to reflect the needs and interests of the children. Interesting and imaginative activities encourage the children to investigate as they play. Children's thinking skills are stimulated through open questioning which often encourages them to persist with tasks.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, excellent teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and their acquisition of independent learning skills. This is especially evident in the advanced research skills demonstrated by older pupils in their weekly digital global news presentations, which are eloquently presented and knowledgeably supported in question and answer sessions. Teachers make highly effective use of high order questioning to glean understanding from pupils and develop their thinking. A key strength of teaching is the calm and respectful relationships that the pupils enjoy with their teachers and assistant teachers, which provides a secure and supportive environment in which to maximise opportunities for learning. The teachers know their pupils extremely well and adapt their methodology to best suit their individual needs.
- 3.17 Throughout the school, most teaching shows a high level of subject knowledge which allows pupils' interests to flourish and engages them in stimulating activities that provoke reasoning and analysis. Well-structured lessons proceed at a brisk pace that covers much ground and maintains pupils' interest and engagement. Teachers use a variety of interesting resources such as photographs and video clips, including taking learning outside, for example in a lesson on Victorian games. Much teaching makes excellent use of digital technology which enhances

independent research skills and furthers pupils' understanding of complex subject matter, for example in the oldest pupils' research on Shakespeare.

- 3.18 The recently reviewed marking policy is broadly adhered to. Pupils are encouraged to self-assess and self-correct work, and teachers' comments not only celebrate the quality of individual effort but also provide pointers for ways in which to improve their work. Learning objectives and, for older pupils, marking criteria, are made clear so that pupils take note of teachers' comments. Assessment of pupils' knowledge and progress is effective throughout the school. Results in UK National Curriculum tests were tracked up to 2014 when the school introduced a standardised assessment system for mathematics and English, which has provided helpful data to guide teachers' planning for individual pupils' next steps. Although relatively recently introduced, this system provides useful information to monitor the progress of individual pupils and cohorts of pupils as they progress through the school.
- 3.19 Pupils with EAL and SEND are very well supported through the effective deployment of assistant teachers and the provision of expert help and efficient monitoring of pupils' needs by the EAL coordinator. Teachers maintain excellent records relating to pupils' language development, which promotes their exceptional acquisition of English. Pupils are successfully extended beyond the expectations for equivalent year groups in the UK Curriculum by sensitive integration of homework, class activities and research challenges that all pupils respond to at the highest levels of their individual capabilities.
- 3.20 In the pupils' questionnaires, all pupils agreed that their teachers help them to learn and an overwhelming majority stated that the teachers help them with any difficulties that they may encounter. A small minority of pupils and very small minority of parents indicated less satisfaction with homework. Evidence from pupil interviews and scrutiny of homework found that it is appropriately set to reinforce concepts, introduce new areas of learning and to challenge pupils to research and develop topics independently. At a representative parent meeting, parents concluded that their expectations differ according to their cultural background, and they agreed that generally their children were given an appropriate amount of homework for their stages of educational development.

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 pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school's aim to promote mutual respect and self-confidence, to equip pupils to become internationally aware citizens and to develop in them a broad range of valuable personal qualities, is extremely well met.
- 4.2 Children in the EYFS learn to take turns and share toys and resources, often through sensitive interventions by staff who demonstrate desired behaviour. Consequently they become increasingly adept at working co-operatively in group activities and demonstrate an understanding of rules for their behaviour. Children in the Nursery confidently choose their preferred activities and those in Reception settle to tasks well and demonstrate considerable perseverance.
- 4.3 From Year 1, pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils feel valued and able to develop their self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. Assemblies, circle time and the broad curriculum, which includes many dramatic, artistic and musical experiences enjoyed by the pupils, provide opportunities to reflect on and appreciate the non-material aspects of life. In an assembly, younger pupils learnt to appreciate that the attributes displayed by Saint Nicholas reflect the strong personal qualities they are encouraged to develop. Older pupils displayed great empathy as they reflected on the plight of children suffering from mental health issues in readiness for a charity fund-raising day.
- 4.4 Pupils display a strong moral awareness that is reflected in the high standards of behaviour and levels of courtesy displayed throughout the school. They show respect and genuine concern for others and selflessly support those whose English skills are still developing, displaying patience and providing appropriate prompts when needed. An awareness of the needs of others is evident in their ready engagement in charitable activities and generous response to crises around the world. The pupils' sense of justice is acute and they are quick to address any perceived unfairness or unkindness. Their resilience is developed successfully by teaching older pupils how to resolve difficulties themselves, such as by using buddies. The golden rules, and the values upheld in school, help pupils to develop strong personal qualities and to actively support and care for others.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is outstanding and reflects the exceptional relationships enjoyed within school. High levels of co-operation and support are evident between pupils, and respect and trust epitomise the pupils' relationships with their teachers. Pupils of all ages willingly take on roles of responsibility, from prefects and house captains in Year 6 to classroom helpers for younger pupils. School council members take their responsibilities seriously, ensuring they represent the views of their peers by canvassing opinions and being proactive in their suggestions for school improvement. Pupils appreciate the fact that their views are listened to and frequently acted upon. They display their care for the world around them in the environmental projects that they embrace. Their sense of social responsibility extends into the local community where they happily participate in local events and support local charities. The oldest pupils have developed a good understanding of political systems and recognise the values associated with democratic societies.

- 4.6 Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is exceptional. New pupils from other countries are readily assimilated into the school community and made to feel most welcome. Respect and tolerance for each other's religion and culture is effectively fostered through the celebration of both religious and secular festivals, and through an international day where pupils learn about each other's cultures. The preparation and presentation of weekly news reports enables the oldest pupils to keep abreast of current affairs and extends their knowledge of the world. Pupils leave the school as confident, self-aware and caring individuals who display strong moral values, a keen sense of social responsibility and a deep appreciation of the multi-cultural world in which they live.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good. The school ensures that its aim to create a friendly, safe and interesting environment, and to treat everyone in the school community as an individual, is well met through the priority given to each pupil's well-being and excellent pastoral care. In the questionnaires, a very large majority of parents stated that they are happy with the pastoral support given to their children.
- 4.8 Teachers in the EYFS create a welcoming atmosphere where children quickly form trusting relationships with adults around them so that they enjoy coming to school. The children feel secure and happy within familiar routines so that they develop confidence and independence.
- 4.9 Pupils throughout the school feel well supported by staff, and those new to the school are given particular care to help them settle. Teachers develop a strong knowledge of each pupil and liaise effectively with one other to ensure that any welfare concerns are communicated promptly and individual needs addressed. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are notably strong. In the questionnaires a very large majority of pupils indicated that teachers show concern for them as a person and give them individual help when they need it. Every pupil agreed that they like the school and pupils are conspicuously happy and keen to attend.
- 4.10 The school has a minimal number of rules reinforced by clear sanctions and rewards, which are highly effective in securing pupils' excellent behaviour. In the pre-inspection questionnaires an overwhelming majority of parents expressed the view that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. A small minority of pupils indicated that teachers do not award rewards and sanctions fairly but this view was not supported by inspection evidence. In interviews with inspectors, pupils reported that sanctions are rarely necessary since reflecting on poor behaviour with their teacher is effective in preventing its reoccurrence. They were happy with rewards for good work or behaviour. The school's records confirm this view and also that no sanctions for serious misbehaviour have ever been required.
- 4.11 The school implements an effective anti-bullying policy. Pupils have a good age-appropriate understanding of bullying; those of all ages reported that it rarely occurs and that they are confident that staff would deal with it effectively. This view was reinforced by the questionnaires in which every pupil was happy that the school deals effectively with any bullying that occurs.
- 4.12 Arrangements to secure the pupils' safeguarding are effective and, in almost all respects, carefully implemented. The school's close attention to pupils' well being means staff are alert to any possible concerns. The child protection policy has been

updated recently and reflects both UK and local guidance. Staff have all completed training in accordance with UK requirements and understand the local system for managing any concerns. The school carries out the great majority of recruitment checks for new staff conscientiously, including background checks with the local police, in compliance with Belgian regulations. However, staff from the UK have not undergone the additional checks required for British schools overseas. Once alerted by inspectors, the school acted promptly to rectify this. The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and registration is carried out carefully.

- 4.13 Measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils, including risk assessments for the premises and visits off site, are thorough. The buildings are well maintained and records of testing and maintenance are carefully kept. The school has efficient arrangements for fire prevention and regular fire evacuation drills are carried out. Arrangements for pupils who are unwell or injured are appropriate. There are sufficient staff with a regularly updated UK first aid qualification on each site and suitable records are kept of any accidents and first aid treatment. Staff do not administer any medication to pupils, in accordance with local requirements. Pupils are taught about a healthy lifestyle in science lessons reinforced by an annual Health Week, and the school makes good provision for them to exercise on both sites. Pupils bring their own lunch and the school encourages them to eat healthily.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance, which is exercised by the headmaster as principal director of the association, exercises committed oversight of all aspects of the school's administration, working in close collaboration with the senior management team. Prudent attention to financial planning ensures that the accommodation is well maintained and that there are suitable resources and well-trained staff. This distinctive and collegial approach to governance results in decision making that is based on a thorough knowledge of how the school works and a clear understanding of the pupils' needs, as well as a strong commitment to working in partnership with the parents. Consequently the school fulfils its aims most successfully and the educational and welfare needs of the pupils are very well met.
- 5.3 Decisions about priorities for improvement and the future direction of the school arise from insightful self-evaluation and a keen understanding of the school's purpose, which are clarified in the well-structured school development plan. Governance ensures that staff are well supported in their professional development and that there are suitable arrangements to review their performance. The effectiveness of the school's health and safety arrangements, staff recruitment checks and child protection arrangements is monitored at leadership level and the directors review safeguarding arrangements annually. However those undertaking these responsibilities are insufficiently familiar with all the UK regulatory requirements for overseas schools, which has resulted in an oversight in relation to some staff appointment checks, although Belgian regulatory requirements are complied with.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is good. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in ensuring fulfilment of the school's philosophy and aims. Since the previous inspection, the management system has been reorganised to facilitate high quality and consistent leadership in respect to the implementation of policies and procedures on both sites, whilst retaining an ethos of one school. In the pre-inspection questionnaires an overwhelming majority of parents and all the pupils agreed that the school is well managed.
- 5.5 The senior management team comprises the headmaster, director of resources and the infant and junior coordinators who each have responsibility for a site as well as whole school responsibilities. This team is supplemented by subject co-ordinators for literacy, science and mathematics who ensure that high standards are achieved by all pupils, for example through the instigation of 'Master Classes', monitoring of assessments and pupils' work throughout the school, and by supporting colleagues in delivering their subjects effectively and efficiently.
- 5.6 A strong, pupil-centred ethos pervades the whole school. The management team provides highly committed and clear educational direction, which is supported by whole staff attendance at conferences for international schools, onsite training, individual training in the U.K. and on-line courses. The school has an effective system to appraise staff's performance, which includes observations by senior managers and subject coordinators. This process helps to ensure that staff receive

the necessary training to further their professional expertise. The leadership also ensures that staff undertake relevant training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities for welfare, safeguarding and health and safety. The quality of leadership, of both academic and pastoral areas of the pupils' lives, significantly contributes to the high standards of academic and personal development.

- 5.7 Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have produced policies and procedures which address issues that were more informally dealt with in the past. However monitoring remains somewhat informal so while high quality staff have been appointed across the school there are no defined responsibilities within the management team to ensure all recruitment checks meet the British overseas schools' regulatory requirements.
- 5.8 The whole staff undertake evaluation of the school's effectiveness in a collegiate manner, with strong support and guidance provided by the management team. All staff contribute to the school's development planning and senior leaders prioritise developmental initiatives and implement programmes to move the school forward most effectively. The staff are all committed to the success of the school and demonstrate a high level of loyalty and interest in its continuing development.

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

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. The staff develop highly positive relationships with parents in accordance with the school's aim to develop good home-school interaction to improve the quality of pupils' learning.
- 5.10 Highly effective arrangements welcome and support parents, particularly those who are recently arrived. For example a senior leader organises a conversation group for parents who seek to improve their English, a weekly coffee morning and the school's book club, which is attended by both parents and staff. Parents appreciate the social events arranged for pupils and their families, such as the popular celebration of autumn and Diwali, weekend walks in the woods and the International Day. Parent volunteers are welcomed into school to hear reading, assist with mathematics groups, or accompany swimming classes and visits outside of school. Many help with the various social events for families organised by the school.
- 5.11 A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly satisfied with the school. Almost all are happy with how easily they are able to contact the school; parents told inspectors that the staff are approachable and that their queries are answered speedily. Almost all parents are happy with the information that they are given about the school and a very large majority with the information they receive on their children's progress. The website is informative and includes the weekly newsletter which is also sent to parents by electronic mail. Class teachers publish a résumé of the work covered each week to ensure that parents are well informed. The school also organises curriculum evenings in the autumn term when teachers outline curricular priorities for the year. Parents receive an informative written report twice a year and are also invited to two parent teacher consultations. The school has a suitable complaints procedure which is published on its website. However, since concerns are invariably resolved on an informal basis, the school has not received any formal complaints.

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 Head as senior director, 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

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting inspector
Mr Andrew Bailey	Junior Team Inspector (Head of School (Prep), COBIS school, Canary Islands)
Mrs Joy Gatenby	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head of School and Director, GSA school, UK)