



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT ON KING'S COLLEGE MADRID, SOTO DE VIÑUELAS

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

King's College Madrid, Soto de Viñuelas

Full Name of School	King's College Madrid, Soto de Viñuelas			
Address	Paseo de los Andes, 35			
	Soto de Viñuelas			
	Madrid			
	Spain			
	28761			
Telephone Number	00 34918034800			
Email Address	info@kingscollege.es			
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Blaus			
Chair of Governors	Sir Roger Fry CBE			
Age Range	2 to 18			
Total Number of Pupils	1417			
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (682 boys; 735 girls)			
Numbers by Age	0-2:	29	5-11:	535
	3-5:	132	11-18:	721
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	1371		
Number of Boarders	Total:	46		
	Full:	37	Weekly:	9
Inspection dates	03 Feb 2014 to 06 Feb 2014			

PREFACE

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

- 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 Madrid, Soto de Viñuelas, is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged from two to eighteen. It was founded in 1969 and originally located in the centre of Madrid. It moved to its present campus in Soto de Viñuelas, about 20 kilometres from the city centre, in 1978.
- 1.2 The school is governed by the King's Group Board of Governors, which takes all strategic decisions, delegating detailed planning for all its schools to the Schools' Management Board. In common with all King's Group schools, King's College Madrid operates under the direction and management of the Group's chief executive officer (CEO) and the headteacher.
- 1.3 The school states that its mission is to provide high quality British education that delivers a transformative learning experience to all its pupils. It aims to enable children to achieve their academic ambitions and lifetime careers by providing engaging teaching based on its core values and the best most up-to-date UK educational practice. At the same time, it aims to nurture individual talents with an emphasis on educating the whole child.
- 1.4 There are currently 1417 pupils on the school roll, 682 boys and 735 girls. Of these, 696 are in the primary department, with 161 in the Early Years. The school has an additional intake in Year 3 from King's Infant School in Chamartin. There are 721 pupils in the secondary department, 196 of whom are in the sixth form. The boarding house accommodates 46 pupils of secondary age, nine of whom board weekly. Since September 2011, an additional intake of pupils has joined the school in Year 10 from King's College Madrid, La Moraleja. The vast majority of the pupils are Spanish and have English as an additional language (EAL). Eight of these receive specific English language support. Sixty-four pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 33 of whom receive specialist learning support from the school.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the pupils on entry to the school is broadly above the English national average in the secondary department and below the English national average in the primary department, although in both sections a wide spread of abilities is represented.
- 1.6 Since the previous ISI inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and a major leadership and management restructure has taken place. Developments in facilities include a purpose-built boarding house, new facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), a full-sized artificial sports pitch and new accommodation for music and art
- 1.7 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years

School	NC name
Pre-Nursery	Nursery, 2 to 3
Nursery	Nursery, 3 to 4
Reception	Reception, 4 to 5

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils throughout the school are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims. The excellent progress made in English by the pupils is a notable feature of the school. Children make an excellent start with their learning, particularly in speaking and listening, in the Early Years. Building on strong foundations, older pupils achieve high standards in IGCSE and A level examinations. Teaching is good overall, with many excellent features, though it is not entirely consistent in quality. Some marking of the pupils' work in the secondary department, is not sufficiently frequent, does not always value what they have done or show them what to do to improve. Pupils are successful beyond the classroom and in all their activities demonstrate a capacity for hard work and excellent attitudes to learning.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. From an early age, they show respect, both to the adults around them and to each other. By the time they leave the school, they are articulate, confident and mature. The pupils receive good support and guidance. The quality of the boarding is excellent and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Procedures for safeguarding and welfare, including staff training, are effective. Arrangements for health and safety are good, although procedures in some science laboratories do not always follow guidance and, in some corridors of the school, bags are left lying around and form a potential safety hazard. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussions, most pupils were positive about the school, particularly on the quality of education provided. Although a minority of pupils raised concerns about a variety of pastoral matters, inspectors found that in most cases there was little or no evidence to support their views. However, inspectors did find that, on occasions, communications with pupils about some of these matters were not always handled well.
- 2.3 Arrangements for governance are good. Governors provide thorough oversight of the school and carry out their responsibilities effectively. Good leadership and management reflect the successful achievement of the school's aims. Leadership has established a clear vision for the school's future development, underpinned by various recent initiatives. Some of these initiatives, however, have not yet successfully been shared with or understood by all members of the school community. The school has good links with parents who were particularly positive about the progress made by their child, particularly in English, the breadth of the curriculum, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and the provision for boarders. However, in a small number of cases, communications with parents to allay their concerns about other aspects of school life are not always successfully handled.

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. Ensure that health and safety practice matches policy expectations in all cases with regard to safety in science laboratories and bags left lying in corridors.
2. Identify the best practice in teaching and ensure that it is reflected in all lessons throughout the school.
3. Mark work in the secondary section more frequently, showing pupils what they have done well as well as what they need to improve.
4. Improve communications with all stakeholders to promote better understanding of the school and enable them to understand recent initiatives more fully.

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' academic and other achievements is excellent. They are very well educated in line with the school's aims to educate the whole child with attention to emotional and social development, as well as enabling pupils to achieve their academic ambitions and lifetime careers. The vast majority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires were very pleased with the progress their child makes at school, particularly in the acquisition of English language skills. The pupils agree that they make good progress and find the work that they do interesting.
- 3.2 The children's achievements in the Early Years are excellent. They make very rapid progress towards the English Early Learning Goals because teachers and assistants have a clear understanding of how young children learn. Children show highly developed social skills and work with great enthusiasm, whether in child-initiated or adult-led activities. Most of them arrive at the school with little or no English. As a result of the language-rich environment provided by the staff, the children make particularly sustained progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. The emphasis on the use of songs makes learning fun, increases their vocabulary and enables them to develop confidence in their abilities. By the time they leave Reception, they have begun to write independently in simple sentences, such as 'My dragon is spiky'. Children work well with numbers up to ten and beyond. The youngest children settle quickly when they arrive in the morning and they develop good skills in sharing and taking turns. Older children behave sensibly in their classrooms and around the school, and they are happy to talk to visitors about, for example, healthy eating or making noodles to celebrate Chinese New Year. Most reach or exceed the English Early Learning Goals by the time they leave Reception.
- 3.3 During their time in the school, pupils build on the excellent foundations provided in Early Years. Considering that nearly all pupils join the school with little or no English, the improvement seen in their spoken and written English is particularly noteworthy. They discuss ideas and express their opinions with confidence and, by the time they are in the sixth form, can articulate their ideas with fluency and accuracy. Pupils in the primary department have well developed numeracy skills and show good levels of creativity and progress in physical activities. Secondary pupils' use of numeracy and ICT is good across the curriculum. They reason logically, have good physical skills and show strong creative skills in music, drama and art. Sixth form leavers successfully gain places on demanding degree courses in the UK, Spain, the USA and elsewhere.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses data for the years 2010-2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In the primary department, results in English National Curriculum tests at the age of seven have been below the English average for maintained primary schools. Results have shown improvement in the last three years and, in 2012, were in line with the English average. Results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 11 have been above the English average for maintained primary schools, with English results being well above the average in both 2011 and 2012. In the secondary department, performance at IGCSE has been higher than worldwide norms. In the sixth form, A-level results have been above the English average for maintained schools and similar to the English average for maintained selective schools. Results at A level have shown steady improvement over the last three years and, in 2012, were above

the English average for maintained schools and above that for maintained selective schools. Results in both IGCSE and A level examinations improved in 2013, but statistical comparators are not yet available for that year. Results in the Spanish Bachillerato examinations are good.

- 3.5 Results in English National Curriculum tests at the age of 11 indicate that primary pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. This level of progress is particularly noteworthy given their initially low levels of English. Standardised measures of progress using UK norms indicate that the pupils in the secondary department make progress that is at least good, and often high, in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Results at A level indicate that pupils make consistently good progress in their time in the sixth form. Inspection evidence confirms these analyses.
- 3.6 Spanish admission requirements mean that 30 per cent of the pupils in the school are in a year group above where they would be placed in an English school. The school's tracking data, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that these pupils make similar progress to their peers. Those pupils who arrive in Years 3 and 10 from the King's Group schools in Chamartin and La Moraleja settle quickly into the school and make similar rates of progress to their peers, as a result of highly effective transition arrangements. Pupils with SEND and the few pupils whose first language is neither Spanish nor English benefit from the specialist support provided and make excellent progress. The most able pupils make similar rates of progress as their classmates, particularly in those lessons where activities challenge them and allow them to develop their independent learning skills. The Extended Project Qualification, for example, has recently been introduced to the highest achievers on entry to the sixth form and, although no results are yet available, the evidence indicates that they are making excellent progress in independent research and thinking.
- 3.7 Outside the classroom, pupils meet with success in a range of sporting and other activities. In 2012 and 2013, the school won both the Madrid and all-Spain rounds of the European Youth Parliament initiative. Pupils have performed at the Edinburgh Festival and many achieve highly in accredited music examinations across a range of instruments.
- 3.8 Attitudes to learning are excellent and pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Pupils take their education seriously, making a strong contribution to their own success. They are very diligent and apply themselves wholeheartedly to the task in hand. They work productively in small groups and, when given the opportunity, show independence and initiative. They take pride in their work, persevere with tasks and are keen to do well. In Early Years, the children show great joy in their learning and settle quickly to tasks. Pupils in the sixth form are perceptive, self-assured and seek out opportunities to learn independently. They persevere even on the occasions when limited opportunities to practise their skills are offered in class.
- 3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**
- 3.9 The quality of curricular provision is excellent, making a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, in line with the school's aims, enabling them to make excellent progress towards meeting their academic and personal goals. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils in the school and covers the required elements, adapting the

English National Curriculum with skill and vision, as well as reflecting Spanish requirements where required.

- 3.10 Transition arrangements from Early Years into Year 1 and from primary to secondary are thorough and have improved since the previous inspection. There are good arrangements for those pupils arriving in Years 3 and 10 from Chamartin and La Moraleja, enabling them to settle quickly into their new classes.
- 3.11 In the Early Years, the curriculum largely follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and provides excellent coverage of all the required areas of learning. There is an effective balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and children have excellent opportunities to play and learn outdoors. English language teaching pervades all activities, although the presence of Spanish-speaking staff in all classrooms helps to ensure that children feel comfortable and secure whilst they acquire confidence in English.
- 3.12 The curriculum in the primary department is also excellent and provides a thorough grounding in literacy and numeracy, enhanced by engaging and exciting cross-curricular topic-based work in subjects such as art, music and humanities. The enriched language environment provided in the Early Years and throughout Years 1 to 6 enables pupils to fully access the curriculum in English from an early age. Mathematics and phonics classes are setted by ability and this is having a positive impact on standards in mathematics and English. Spanish is taught to all pupils from Year 1 upwards, in line with the requirements of the Spanish Ministry of Education.
- 3.13 The secondary curriculum provides a suitably wide range of subjects. Choices at IGCSE and A level are suitably varied and include the recent introduction of subjects such as drama and German. The two-year combined science course at IGCSE has been replaced with a three-year single science programme, starting in Year 9, which more closely meets the needs of the pupils. Many pupils take IGCSE mathematics early in Year 10, thereby allowing them to study further mathematics at A level. There are opportunities to study three modern foreign languages. Option groups at IGCSE and A level are built up directly from pupils' own choices, and the vast majority of them are able to be entered for their first choice subjects. In addition to the English curriculum, Spanish pupils follow courses in Spanish, literature and social studies whilst those who are not of Spanish nationality study Spanish as a second language. The sixth form curriculum successfully supports the school's aims to provide a comprehensive international education that enables pupils to continue their education anywhere in the world. Very few pupils now take the Spanish Bachillerato and most pupils say that they particularly value British qualifications, which they feel will equip them for higher education in any country, including Spain.
- 3.14 Homework is generally used as a meaningful extension to classroom learning and contributes effectively to the development of critical thinking skills and an independent attitude to learning.
- 3.15 The curriculum is enhanced by the creative use of trips and visits to countries and places of interest. The academic curriculum is supported by an excellent range of well-chosen extra-curricular activities, including horse riding, debating and robotics. The debating society recently invited the Oxford Union to host a workshop and the robotics club reached the top ten competing teams in the European Robotics Festival. The sixth-form curriculum is supported by an effective programme of lectures and guest speakers as well as the annual university admissions fair. Pupils receive extensive careers advice and support for university applications.

3.16 The school enjoys good links with the wider community, for example in visits to a residential home in Tres Cantos and in reading parties at a local children's hospital. Pupils volunteer to help at a soup kitchen for the homeless and at an annual Christmas event to donate toys to disadvantaged children. Such activities contribute effectively to a sense of belonging to the school community as well as making pupils aware of those less fortunate in the local community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

3.17 The quality of teaching is good overall. In the pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussions during the inspection, most pupils agreed that the work they do is interesting and that their teachers help them to learn.

3.18 Teaching in Early Years and in the primary department is excellent. Teaching fosters pupils' interests through the provision of well-planned, creative and interactive activities and tasks. Pupils benefit from a strong focus on speaking and listening, enthusiastically sharing ideas with their 'talking partners' in most lessons. Most lessons have a brisk pace, which helps to maintain pupil engagement and support high achievement. A wide range of resources is used effectively. Classrooms are colourful well-resourced environments which support learning and celebrate pupils' work. Teachers manage behaviour well, particularly in the youngest classes where there is a significant and consistent focus on positive behaviour management, including the use of very effective praise.

3.19 Teaching in the secondary department is good overall, with many excellent features. Teachers know their pupils well and almost all show good awareness of their needs in their lesson planning. Most lessons have a brisk pace and good levels of challenge, engaging and motivating the pupils. In a few lessons, opportunities to encourage independent learning are sometimes missed, with too much direction from the teacher, thus inhibiting the pupils' active involvement. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of a wide variety of resources, although opportunities to use ICT, including classroom interactive white boards, are not fully exploited. The excellent relationships that teachers have with their pupils, combined with the pupils' very strong commitment to learning, mean that behaviour in lessons is usually good.

3.20 Most lessons, although not all, support the needs of the most able effectively, for example by providing opportunities for them to extend their thinking, presenting them with open-ended tasks that require them to apply their subject knowledge to challenging problems. In a small number of lessons, however, tasks provide insufficient challenge.

3.21 A small minority of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concerns that the school does not provide sufficient help for pupils with SEND. Inspectors found that these pupils are supported effectively by a specialist teacher when withdrawn from class for small group work, linked to their individual education plans. In a few classes, however, planning does not always fully account for their needs.

3.22 Pupils' progress throughout the school is carefully monitored. Pupils are actively involved in target setting and good use is made of self and peer assessment. At its best, marking acknowledges success, encourages high standards of presentation and helps pupils know how to improve their work. However, marking is insufficiently frequent in the secondary section, sometimes inaccurate and does not always help pupils to value their work or show them what they have done well and how they might extend their learning.

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' personal development is excellent and reflects the school's aims well. By the end of their time in the school, the pupils have grown into confident, articulate and thoughtful young adults.
- 4.2 The pupils show a good understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. Their self-esteem is high from an early age and they grow in confidence as they progress through the school. They have a capacity for philosophical reflection, as seen, for example in a primary lesson in which the pupils discussed whether a falling tree made any noise if there was nobody to hear it. Throughout the school, they express their feelings beyond the materialistic, as evident, for example in the high quality of their art work.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. From the firm foundation of the Golden Rules in the primary department, through to the Core Values seen in the secondary school, they demonstrate an excellent understanding of right and wrong. Pupils show a good understanding of the plight of those in need, shown in the amount of money they help to raise for charities at home and overseas.
- 4.4 Social development is excellent. The youngest pupils are very welcoming to visitors in the school and show excellent social skills at lunchtime or when trying to meet a target in Early Years of 'playing and sharing with friends'. They play together happily, sharing and taking turns well. In lessons throughout the school, pupils provide real support for each other in an informal and caring way. Pupils are tolerant and thoughtful. The recent re-introduction of the house system has created opportunities for both co-operation and competition, and pupils take good advantage of these. They have a strong sense of social responsibility and enjoy opportunities to act as monitors, prefects or representatives of the school council. Sixth-form pupils show great enthusiasm when they help with children in the Early Years. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils said that there were insufficient opportunities to take responsibility. Inspectors found that there is an appropriate range of such opportunities, including prefects and house captains.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They show respect for and curiosity for different cultures and clearly enjoy studying in an international environment. Children in the Early Years showed an excellent understanding of Chinese New Year when they made kites, practised writing in Chinese script and learnt how to use chopsticks. Older pupils take advantage of cultural trips to places such as Britain and Jordan. They show a very good understanding and respect for their own and other cultures and appreciate the opportunities to learn about both the Spanish and the British way of life.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety, including the quality of pastoral care are good. The school is a welcoming community which provides a safe and secure environment. The pastoral system provides high levels of support and guidance, in line with the school's aims. A thorough personal, social, health and education (PSHE) programme prepares pupils well for their future lives.
- 4.7 In the Early Years, staff understand children's individual needs well. As a result, they are happy and settled and thoroughly enjoy coming to school.

- 4.8 Relationships are positive throughout. Pupils are friendly and courteous and show commendable concern and care for one another. Although a few parents raised concerns about behaviour in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, inspectors judged behaviour to be generally good, and sometimes excellent, particularly in classrooms. In corridors, however, congestion sometimes leads to minor examples of inappropriate behaviour, which are not always picked up by staff.
- 4.9 Measures to promote good behaviour and discipline are effective. Pupils reported that instances of bullying are rare and dealt with well when they occur. In some cases, however, they felt that bullying was not always picked up quickly enough. Inspectors examined the evidence carefully and judged that responses were appropriate and sensitive. A minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the school does not listen to their views and that teachers are not fair when giving rewards and sanctions. There was also a view that teachers do not treat pupils equally and are more lenient with girls than boys. Inspectors did not find any evidence to support the view that teachers treat pupils unequally with regard to gender, but do agree that responses to pupils about their suggestions are not always communicated effectively.
- 4.10 The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy, with procedures that are clear and available to all staff. Although recruitment checks were not sufficiently rigorous in the past, more recently the school has taken all the necessary steps with regard to pre-appointment safeguarding measures. All staff currently working in the school have undergone checks on their suitability to work with children. Staff are suitably trained in child protection matters both on arrival and at regular intervals thereafter. Several staff have undergone training at the higher level, including the head of boarding.
- 4.11 Arrangements for pupils' health and safety are rigorous in most instances. School records show that they satisfy all the Spanish legal requirements. Fire drills are held regularly and meet local requirements. Potentially hazardous substances are safely stored. Risk assessments are carried out for school trips and visits. However, although there are appropriate procedures with regard to safety in the science laboratories, these are not always adhered to in practice. At the time of the previous inspection, a potential safety hazard was identified with regard to pupils' bags being left haphazardly in school corridors. This remains the case.
- 4.12 The school has excellent facilities for pupils who are ill. There is a full-time qualified nurse on site and many staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid training for those working in Early Years. Medications, including those in the boarding house, are securely kept, recorded and administered when required and key staff are aware of those pupils with potentially hazardous medical conditions. Accidents are suitably recorded and monitored. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities to take regular physical exercise. Children in Early Years learn how to keep safe, for example on the stairs, and are sensible about taking turns and sharing. Healthy eating is promoted at lunchtimes. A minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires raised concerns about the quality of food. In discussions with pupils, they said that it could be variable in quality and that choices sometimes ran out. Inspectors noted that the lunches were of good quality during the inspection and that lunchtimes were pleasant social occasions. Children in Early Years, for example, talked knowledgeably about why vegetables were good for you and enjoyed chatting with their friends and teachers.
- 4.13 Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.14 The quality of boarding education is excellent and makes a positive contribution to the life of the school as well as to the personal development of the boarders. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- 4.15 House staff provide a secure, welcoming and inclusive environment and are readily available to boarders. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their boarding experience and their warm relationships with staff. The availability and approachability of the boarding staff provides pupils with a welcome sounding board and, in discussions during the inspection, the pupils said there is always an adult with whom to discuss any concerns. Within the house, relationships between pupils of all ages and from different backgrounds are friendly and positive. New boarders benefit from thorough induction and know they can turn to other pupils or a member of staff for support and advice.
- 4.16 Record keeping is well maintained, policies are comprehensive and effectively implemented, and there are ample opportunities for boarders' views or concerns to be expressed and acted upon appropriately. Pupils are regularly in contact with their parents by telephone or email. Detailed handbooks provide useful advice to staff, parents and pupils on house routines and how to deal with problems. Boarders have access to good medical care in the school at any time of the day and to a local general practitioner or nurse by appointment.
- 4.17 The new boarding house, situated on the edge of the campus, provides excellent accommodation on three floors for a mixed group of pupils aged from 11 to 18, most of whom come from overseas. Boarding accommodation is of a high standard. Bedrooms are of a good size, with en-suite facilities, and are well decorated and furnished. Pupils are able to personalise them with posters and belongings. Younger pupils share twin rooms, whilst older pupils have single rooms. The spacious dining room is supplemented by a boarders' kitchen where they can prepare their own snacks. Communal space is good with a large cinema room and prep room. Staff accommodation is self-contained and does not impinge on boarders' privacy, yet it is well placed to provide any necessary support.
- 4.18 A minority of boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire raised concerns about the number and quality of activities provided in the evenings and at weekends. In discussions, however, boarders felt there were sufficient leisure activities to keep them occupied. Inspectors looked at the evidence carefully and concluded that boarders benefit from a good range of activities that run through the week and the weekend. They have regular supervised access to facilities such as the all-weather sports pitch and the swimming pool, and there has been a marked increase in the number and quality of weekend activities since the previous inspection. These range from visits to the Prado, paint-balling, the Madrid Monopoly orientation trip and visits to the cinema and restaurants. The boarding house includes facilities such as games tables, a large social area and an ICT suite. There are also suitable opportunities for pupils to be on their own if they wish.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good overall and strongly supportive of the ethos of the school. Excellent features include a clear strategic vision to drive the school forward. The board provides highly effective oversight of the school, including the Early Years, and discharges effectively its responsibility for educational standards, financial planning and the safeguarding of the pupils' welfare.
- 5.2 Executive powers are delegated to the school's management board, the King's Group CEO and the school's headteacher. Relationships with the school are positive. Past failings in monitoring the recording of appointment checks have now been rectified. Roles and responsibilities are clear. An effective committee structure, strengthened by regular meetings, ensures that governors remain abreast of the school's needs. The expertise of the governors provides valuable support for the school and there are good opportunities to undertake recent relevant training.
- 5.3 Governors take seriously their responsibilities for child protection and for welfare, health and safety, approving comprehensive policies and procedures, and conducting an annual review of the child protection policy. Policies are displayed on the school's website and reviewed annually. However, there are some areas of health and safety where monitoring procedures have not been sufficiently robust.
- 5.4 Although most parents are happy with the quality of the school's governance, a small minority raised concerns in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and inspectors found there are insufficient opportunities for parents to develop their understanding of the role of the governing body and its strategic plans for the school.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good. The school's outcomes in terms of the pupils' academic achievement and personal development reflect its aims well. The senior leadership team work closely together and have a shared commitment both to maintaining the ethos of the school and to the continuous improvement of the quality of education and care it provides. Self-evaluation is used well to identify agreed priorities in improvement plans at both whole school and subject levels. Senior leaders have established a clear vision about how to provide a transformative learning experience to the school's pupils. However, this vision is not yet fully shared by all members of the school community. The school has been through a thorough period of review and change in recent years and, in some cases, these changes have been rapid and far-reaching. As a result, a number of recent initiatives are not yet clearly understood and valued by all members of the school community.
- 5.6 There is a close and increasing collaboration between the primary and secondary departments of the school in order to secure a more coherent learning experience for pupils within the two sections. A cohesive middle management structure has been created to ensure effective implementation of agreed initiatives. Improved systems to track pupils' progress over time are thorough and effective. Induction and monitoring procedures for new staff are suitable and include good arrangements for child protection training. The non-teaching staff and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the whole school community and to pupils' welfare. Good

financial management has enabled ongoing improvements in accommodation and resources.

- 5.7 Management is successful in recruiting high quality and experienced staff and all current staff have been checked in accordance with Spanish regulations or the Standards for British Schools Overseas. Although recruitment checks have not been sufficiently rigorous in the past, with a few checks not being completed and recorded until after staff had begun work at the school, more recently procedures have been tightened and all necessary steps are now taken to ensure suitability to work with children.
- 5.8 A small minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires raised concerns about the leadership and management of the school with regard to communications and what they felt was a high turnover of staff. Inspectors examined these concerns carefully and agreed that communications with parents and other members of the school community do not always help them to understand the school's strategic vision. However, staff turnover falls well within the average found in similar international schools.

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

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is good. Most parents indicate satisfaction with the quality of education and care provided by the school. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the curriculum, the values promoted by the school and with the provision for boarders. They are also pleased with the progress their child makes, particularly in English. The regular newsletter, introduced since the previous inspection, provides much valuable information and is welcomed by parents. The website contains the school policies but, unlike some other school documentation, these are only available in English.
- 5.10 Although the school has developed positive partnerships with parents in very many aspects of its work, it is not always successful in its communications with them. A small minority of parents was dissatisfied with the quality and clarity of information regarding their child's progress. Inspectors found little evidence to support this view. Grade cards, progress reports and full reports are provided at appropriate intervals during the year and parents have opportunities to meet teachers at least twice a year. Inspectors agreed, however, that the current format of reports in the secondary department, introduced in September 2012, is not yet fully understood by all parents. In addition to reports, there are useful academic information evenings. Parents with children in the primary department are invited in to school at the start of each year for an introduction meeting and there are also open afternoons. For parents who want to be more involved with their child's studies, there is an increasing amount of information available on learning platforms via the internet.
- 5.11 A small minority of parents are critical of the lack of encouragement to be involved in the life and work of the school. Inspectors found, however, that there are many opportunities for parents to be involved in school life although, in some cases, school communications do not provide them with sufficient information to help them understand the purpose of some of these activities and, as a result, parents do not feel that the school is listening to them. In addition to parents' evenings and performances, parents are invited to information evenings on topics such as internet safety and to the newly-introduced coffee mornings. Parents of children in Early Years are involved in their child's work through contributing to their Learning Journey books and there are opportunities in Years 1 to 6 to attend assemblies, accompany pupils on school trips and talk to pupils on a variety of topics. In the sixth form,

parents visit the school to talk to pupils about various careers and also offer placements for work experience. Small working groups that include parents have reported on progress reports, school lunches and car parking arrangements.

- 5.12 Reservations were also raised by parents about the handling of concerns, timely responses to questions and ease of communication with the school. The school's complaints policy has been revised since the previous inspection and now provides for an independent member of any complaints panel. Formal complaints are handled appropriately and in line with the school's policy. However, the responses to concerns and less formal complaints are not always monitored to ensure satisfactory resolution. As a result, parents sometimes feel that their concerns have not been fully heard. Communications with parents in the primary department are particularly strong, for example through parent/teacher contact books in Early Years, which include helpful responses to concerns as well as the sharing of information, support and advice.

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 and the CEO, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and 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

Dr Lynn Bappa	Reporting inspector
Mr Malcolm Hebden	Junior Team Inspector (Head of Dept, COBIS)
Mr Gerard Flynn	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head, COBIS/IAPS)
Mrs Rebecca Layton-Short	Junior Team Inspector (Head of Junior School, COBIS)
Mrs Serena Alexander	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS)
Mr Alan Cooper	Senior Team Inspector (Houseparent, HMC)
Ms Mareve Kilbride-Newman	Senior Team Inspector (Head, COBIS)
Mr Michael Dodd	Senior Team Inspector (Head of Dept, ISA)
Mr Andrew Hansen	Senior Team Inspector (Assistant Head, COBIS/HMC)