



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS**

**INSPECTION REPORT ON**

**RIVERSIDE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Riverside School

Full Name of School	<b>Riverside School</b>
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Head	<b>Mr Peter Daish</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Ms Sharon Jackson</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>
Total Number of Students	<b>445</b>
Gender of Students	<b>Mixed (248 boys; 197 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2:           0       5-11:       189 3-5:           48     11-18:     208</b>
Inspection dates	<b>September 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 2012</b>

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:**

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

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

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Riverside School was founded in 1994 as a primary school for international students. In 2001 it merged with The Komenský Academy to form a school for students aged three to eighteen. The school was accepted into membership of COBIS in 2005. Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded onto four nearby sites in the northern suburbs of Prague, near to the Vltava River; it has also developed new sports facilities.
- 1.2 The school consists of early years, for children in Nursery and Reception; the primary school for students in Years 1 to 6; the junior high school, which is adjacent to the primary school, for students in Years 7 to 9 and the senior high school, for students in Years 10 to 13. Because the school combined with an American school, it also uses American terminology for year groups, as explained below. However, the school follows an English curriculum, with the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the sixth form; it also supports students taking standardised tests for entry to American universities.
- 1.3 The school has a strong Christian ethos reflecting its founders' intentions. It aims: to value the uniqueness of the individual and provide high quality education for students of diverse cultures, within a Christian ethos and supportive family environment. Students are drawn from 44 different nationalities, with the largest groups being British, American, Korean, Czech, and Russian. The staff are also drawn from a wide variety of countries.
- 1.4 Legal responsibility is vested in the three members of the management board, who are appointed by the founders. In practice the school board fulfills regular oversight of the school; it includes the director, who is a board member and with the principals of the schools and other senior staff as advisors.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection the school had 445 students, of whom 248 were boys and 197 girls. Students are admitted without academic selection. The school does not use standardised tests of ability. Inspectors judged that the ability profile was in line with the British national average, but with a much higher proportion of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Two hundred and sixty-five have EAL, of whom ninety-one were receiving support at the time of the inspection. About half the students pass through the EAL programme, leaving it when they achieve competence in English. Thirty-two students have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom thirty receive support.
- 1.6 The school uses both United States and English National Curriculum nomenclature to refer to year groups in the school. The latter is used throughout this report. In the report, the phrase *junior schools* includes both early years and the primary school; *senior schools* includes both the junior and senior high schools. The report follows the school's usage of referring to pupils in early years as children, and to all older pupils as students.

### **Early Years**

NC name	American name
Nursery	Pre-Kindergarten
Reception	Pre-Kindergarten

***Primary School***

NC name	American name
Year 1	Kindergarten
Year 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade
Year 3	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade
Year 4	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
Year 5	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Year 6	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade

***Junior High School***

NC name	American name
Year 7	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Year 8	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Year 9	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade

***Senior High School.***

NC name	American name
Year 10	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Year 11	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Year 12	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Year 13	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade

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

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

- 2.1 The students' achievements are good throughout the school. They are well educated in line with its aims, developing high levels of skill, understanding and knowledge. Younger students, from early years upwards, use literacy and mathematics well and, in all years, students think clearly and effectively for themselves. Older students show a thorough understanding of concepts, and apply their knowledge to new situations. Results in all external examinations have improved in recent years. Students make progress that is good and often excellent, with students with EAL and SEND making excellent progress as a result of the high quality support they receive. Students are excellent learners, showing positive attitudes to their studies, working well with their peers and playing a full part in class discussion. The excellent curriculum is extended by programmes such as the Skills for Life course and outdoor education. Teaching is good overall and much is excellent. The best teaching features excellent planning, imaginative approaches and excellent use of discussion. In some teaching, strategies fail to maintain proper focus and behaviour, or work is not challenging enough for all students. Students have greater opportunities for independent work than at the time of the previous inspection, and opportunities for more able students are in general improved. Marking is thorough and the school makes excellent use of assessment to monitor the students' progress.
- 2.2 Students show excellent self-confidence and sense of self-worth from an early age, reflecting the positive and individual support they receive and the strength of the school community. They are very aware of the needs of others, and the wide range of nationalities and cultures live and work in sensitive harmony. Students respect the school's Christian ethos and are increasingly aware of the need to develop beliefs and values of their own. They contribute in a wide variety of ways to the school's worship. Older students gain much from opportunities to travel and are growing into mature, responsible citizens of the world. The students' excellent personal development is supported by high quality pastoral care. Careful liaison ensures that transitions from school to school are seamless; the differing, but complementary, ethos of each part provides well for the students' developing maturity. The school provides a safe environment for students, giving careful attention to matters of safeguarding, welfare health and safety. Both parents and students are highly positive about the quality of the school community.
- 2.3 The work of the school is underpinned by excellent governance, leadership and management. There is a shared vision for the school, which is fulfilled through strong liaison at all levels. The school is constantly reviewing the education it provides, to further improve it; it is aware of those areas which need attention, though some inconsistencies currently remain. Links with parents are excellent. Parents are extremely positive about the education the school provides, as are students; there were no issues raised by significant numbers in either pre-inspection questionnaire.

## **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) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that all teaching maintains the students' focus fully, and offers consistent challenge

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

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

3.1 The quality of the students' achievements, and of their learning, attitudes and skills, is good throughout the school, in accordance with its aim of providing a high quality education for students of diverse cultures. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, all parents and almost all students were happy with the progress students make.

##### *Junior Schools*

3.2 Good, and frequently excellent, achievement means students are well educated. In the Early Years, children achieve good literacy and numeracy skills and use these skills independently in their play. They develop independent thinking skills confidently, for instance finding ways to cross the Thames, a strip of blue carpet, once "*London Bridge had fallen down*". Their creativity is successfully developed through group work such as building houses for the 'Three Little Pigs' in the garden, and through the many opportunities for painting and building that the excellent setting provides both indoors and out.

3.3 Older students demonstrate good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. They are challenged to fulfil their potential through the excellent Skills for Life and gifted and talented programmes. Literacy, numeracy and thinking skills are good, as exemplified in Year 4 science where students demonstrated experiments they had devised and researched themselves.

3.4 Students with EAL make rapid progress through daily small group lessons. Those with SEND progress well as a result of the close liaison between class teachers and support staff, ensuring that every lesson supports their next target.

3.5 The following analysis uses the English national data for 2009 to 2011, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in English national tests at age 11 have been, overall, above the English national average for maintained primary schools. They have steadily improved from 2009 to 2012. In 2012, over half the students achieved a higher level than that expected in England in English, and just under half achieved the higher level in mathematics.

3.6 In these recent results, girls performed more strongly than boys in English and boys performed more strongly than girls in mathematics. In these years, all students with EAL have reached the expected level in English; in the same period over three-quarters have reached that level in mathematics. This represents excellent progress.

3.7 The school is now entering students from Year 4 upwards for International Schools Assessment Tests, comparing performance in a range of subjects with schools with similar proportions of EAL students. The analysis of these scores shows that students make good progress from year to year in all areas, as is confirmed by inspection evidence.

3.8 Most students have positive attitudes to learning. For example, students in Years 3 and 4 enthused about the research they had done in the Thinking Club, and Year 6 students enjoyed their research into early native Americans. However, occasionally their learning is impeded by a lack of focus in lessons.

- 3.9 All students are fully engaged in the wide range of activities both within and without the school. Recent successes include the gold medals won at the Year 5 and Year 6 2012 COBIS Games in both 800m track and 50m freestyle swimming events. Through taking measured risks and rising to the challenges these offer, students grow in confidence, developing the skills and attitudes that will prepare them extremely well for the next stages of their education.

### **Senior Schools**

- 3.10 Students achieve good standards for their ages and abilities, and much learning is excellent.
- 3.11 In the junior high school, students develop high level number skills and write imaginatively. They use information and communications technology (ICT) skills effectively, whether putting together a tabloid newspaper or presenting ideas in religious education (RE). They show a good sense of rhythm in music and good ball skills in football. In science, they understand the difference between independent and dependent variables, and devise experiments to investigate these. They improvise well in drama and are creative in art. In a few lessons, where work given is insufficiently demanding, students do not develop their skills and understanding to their full potential.
- 3.12 In the senior high school, students build well on core skills as they progress towards IGCSE. They show a good understanding of concepts such as cash flow, and understand the need for a balanced diet. They manipulate mathematical equations well and use spreadsheets fluently. Sixth form students apply inductive and deductive logic. They discuss issues in modern history intelligently. They use their artwork to convey ideas, and bring their considerable understanding of literary texts to issues of communication. In interview, students spoke fluently and confidently about many aspects of their work.
- 3.13 Individual students have won a series of international awards for their IGCSE results, for work in ICT and media, and in a French cooking competition. They have been recognised for their work in environmental awareness. A good proportion of students achieve success in sport. They perform music to a high standard. They are successful in their application to a wide range of higher education institutions.
- 3.14 The following analysis uses comparative data for 2009 to 2011, the most recent three years for which statistics are currently available. Students take a range of subjects at IGCSE. In most subjects where groups are large enough for comparisons to be made, results are above the average for worldwide schools; they have improved over this period. Nearly two-thirds of results obtained by students whose first language was English were at A\* or A grade; a quarter of grades obtained by students with EAL were at this level. The proportion of A\* and A grades has increased significantly and, in 2011, almost half the grades were at this level overall.
- 3.15 The school has taken the IB in 2011 and 2012. The results have been in line with or above the worldwide average; they improved from 2011 to 2012. Students' results in American university entrance tests have been above the average for each of the last three years.
- 3.16 Students in Years 7 to 9 take International Schools Assessment tests. These scores show that progress is good from year to year, as borne out during the inspection. Inspection evidence and analysis of IB results suggests that students continue to

make good progress thereafter. Students with SEND and EAL make excellent progress as a result of the way they are integrated fully into the lessons.

- 3.17 Both boys and girls are excellent students. They are well organised and enthusiastic, working very hard in almost all lessons; just occasionally they lose focus when not challenged or managed well. They put forward many ideas of their own and take an active part in questioning and discussion. Students work extremely well together, and they learn much through discussion and peer review. Their creative work shows considerable imagination and initiative. They enjoy their learning. Students engage in a good deal of independent study, meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection.

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

- 3.18 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent throughout the schools. Parents and students are overwhelmingly positive about the curriculum provision and extra-curricular opportunities offered.

#### ***Junior Schools***

- 3.19 The rich and creative curriculum offered for children in the early years addresses all the areas of learning. In the primary school, the broad curriculum offered includes excellent cross-curricular links. This curriculum extends well beyond the English National Curriculum, with the Skills for Life programme providing very significant extension, with a range of learning opportunities for students of all ages and abilities. Timetabled personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons include regular use of circle time with the younger children. They follow a published programme within the primary years, which addresses the social and emotional aspects of learning. The use of specialist teachers extends the breadth of the curriculum further, most notably in the range of creative and sporting activities such as cookery, ballet and drama which are available.
- 3.20 A welcoming and attractive resource area, where computers are available before and after school, together with the new all-weather sports dome, provide significant additional teaching resources for the school, as do the recently constructed houses for the 'three little pigs' and the 'bug hotel' in the early years garden.
- 3.21 Outdoor education is an integral part of the curriculum, with the youngest students going horse riding as well as benefiting from a stimulating outside area, including a garden for students. Older students enjoy opportunities such as canoeing, camping and residential expeditions. These provide students of all abilities new challenges, alongside opportunities to develop their teamwork and leadership skills.
- 3.22 Flexibility in curriculum planning, including excellent provision for the students' diverse needs, ensures that these are met extremely well. This approach is fully consistent with the school's stated aims, and its commitment to valuing each child and nurturing individual talents.
- 3.23 In the early years, the curriculum is enriched through contributions from parents and visits to local places of interest, such as the zoo and university farm. Older students enjoy excellent links with the community. A writing activity produced an informative Riverside newsletter and, in music, individual instrumental tuition and group performances have prepared students for public performances to a wider audience in the city.

**Senior schools**

- 3.24 The high quality of curricular provision contributes much to the students' learning and achievements, and fulfils the school's aim to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, adapted to individual needs.
- 3.25 The curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the needs of a diverse international community. The programme in Years 7 to 11, offers a choice of five modern foreign languages, and also English and Czech as first languages. There is a good balance of creative subjects, humanities, mathematics and science. In the sixth form, the choice of twenty-five subjects within the IB Diploma Programme provides students with a rich choice. Provision for PSHE has recently been introduced into the Year 10 curriculum as a discrete subject and, for younger students, is successfully embedded across the curriculum.
- 3.26 The students' curricular experience is enriched by the Skills for Life programme, which aims to develop life-long interests, as well as developing self-confidence, self-reliance, interpersonal skills and a student's capacity to lead. This extensive and wide-ranging programme takes place for an hour after school every day, and sometimes at lunch time. It provides opportunities for IB Diploma students to complete the creativity, action and service (CAS) component of their course.
- 3.27 Students choose from many sporting activities at school and other venues, where professional coaching is provided. They join musical ensembles and a drama club. Adventure is provided through the International Award Scheme and canoeing, and the many small clubs cater for a range of tastes and interests. Students develop their skills further by making a strong and positive contribution in school assemblies.

**Provision for students with particular needs**

- 3.28 Overall, the school makes excellent provision for students with particular needs, through a mixture of specialist teaching and sensitive support by classroom teachers. It values each individual student and the inclusive ethos provides a positive learning environment for all.
- 3.29 Excellent systems identify students with SEND. Concerns are followed up promptly by the special needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) who work closely together. Individual education plans (IEPs) support specialist teaching, in one-to-one or small groups twice a week, as well as supporting classroom teaching. In most lessons, good provision is made for these students. These arrangements ensure that all students with SEND make excellent progress in literacy, numeracy and self-esteem through carefully planned weekly learning targets which are closely linked to classwork, enabling them to participate confidently and achieve positively in class; for example, in a Year 6 history lesson, students correctly named and located a Native American tribe. Parents are kept fully informed about their progress.
- 3.30 The school celebrates the diversity of cultural and language backgrounds of its students and provides extremely well for the high proportion of students with EAL. Initially they are withdrawn from class on a daily basis for individual or group lessons. These specialist lessons are well planned, and through this extensive support students make rapid progress. In the primary school, a letter is sent to the parents of EAL students each week identifying vocabulary for learning and reinforcement at home. Classroom teachers are adept at checking the students' understanding of specialist and regular vocabulary. They provide additional materials or special tasks according to the students' language competence. Students with EAL are encouraged to take a full part in lessons, and participate well

in drama, role play and other speaking and listening activities. Most students show high levels of consideration and respect for each other; positive and patient attitudes from their fellow students provides further support and encouragement to those adapting to an English speaking environment.

- 3.31 Teachers identify students with particular gifts or talents. Specific plans provide a range of opportunities for students to foster their talents and nurture their specific gifts. These gifts and talents are recognised across a wide range of disciplines, including academic, sporting and creative arts. A Model United Nations activity, for example, provided an open-ended challenge and an opportunity for students to develop higher order debating skills, when preparing for an international conference. Musically gifted students are rehearsing to play with professional musicians in a cafe in Prague.

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

- 3.32 The contribution of teaching to the students' learning is good, fulfilling the school's aims to value the uniqueness of the individual and supporting the progress that students make. Students say that teaching is fun, that teachers help them to learn and that they give them individual support when needed.

#### ***Junior Schools***

- 3.33 Teaching in the junior schools is good overall. Much teaching is excellent, but in a small amount of teaching, strategies fail to maintain the students' focus. Tasks are skilfully devised each week for students with SEND or EAL to meet the carefully set targets, which support individual students' needs well.
- 3.34 The best teaching is characterised by detailed planning for the wide range of the students' abilities and is creative, employing the imaginative use of resources. It is characterised by energetic pace and a sense of fun. For example, a Roman battle was enacted in the playground in a Year 5 lesson. In the early years, excellent questioning during more structured activities challenges children's thinking. Subject co-ordinators support staff enthusiastically, and ensure that teaching moves forwards quickly and captures students' imagination. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally excellent and they impart this knowledge with confidence. Specialist teachers in ICT, modern foreign languages, art, drama and sports enhance students' experiences.
- 3.35 All students' work is marked, with some upper primary teachers using self-assessment and giving helpful and supportive comments with suggestions for further improvement. The symbol approach used in the early years and the lower primary school classes is much appreciated by students.
- 3.36 From early years onwards, teachers monitor each student's progress in literacy, numeracy, science and humanities carefully, through the meticulous recording and analysis of attainment on the school's tracking document. Teachers use these results in their planning.

#### ***Senior Schools***

- 3.37 Teaching is good overall, and much is excellent. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent, being both friendly and respectful. Teachers usually provide tasks appropriate to the needs of their students, whether they are gifted and talented, or have SEND or EAL.

- 3.38 Lessons are almost always extremely well planned, at best providing appropriately different work for students of differing ability. Starter activities are well used to catch the students' interest, and demonstration is used well to convey key ideas. When appropriate, lessons are broken up into short sessions of increasing difficulty and challenge, and plans adapted to meet the students' emerging needs. The majority of lessons are brisk and engaging, foster good application and make good use of resources, including ICT. In these lessons, searching and thought-provoking questions are used well to draw out the students' ideas and support their progress, reflecting the teachers' excellent knowledge and understanding. Questioning is sustained and challenging, leading to excellent discussion. The level of challenge for the most able students has improved since the previous inspection. In a small number of lessons, work set lacks structure, focus or sufficient challenge, or the pace is too slow, limiting the progress that students make.
- 3.39 Marking of work is good overall, and supports progress well, although clear guidance for improvement is provided inconsistently. Students say they much appreciate the feedback they receive.
- 3.40 The school makes excellent use of data from assessment to track the progress of individual students and identify areas for improvement. The students' records are passed on carefully as they move into the junior high school and on up to the senior high school, with detailed discussion between the staff involved.

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

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

- 4.1 The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires showed that the overwhelming majority of parents were pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes. This reflects the school's core aims of building positive relationships with students, as well as supporting the uniqueness of the individual extremely well.
- 4.2 The students' considerable spiritual awareness is shown by their strong sense of self-worth and well-developed sense of identity, as well as by the way they enjoy exploring values and beliefs. Students of various faiths respect the school's Christian ethos and appreciate its underlying emphasis on the family. They benefit from an environment that allows them to develop spiritually and nurtures a respect for humanity, alongside the qualities of care, respect and community. The students' spiritual development is well supported through PSHE, within tutor groups, RE lessons and assemblies, where students lead the worship and demonstrate compassion and maturity. The school's ambience reflects both its core values and the way it is open to students and staff of all faiths and none.
- 4.3 Younger students develop a good understanding of right and wrong, and an increasing awareness of the needs of others. Excellent projects such as bake sales, the harvest food collection and other fund-raising activities provide opportunities to give practical help to others. Older students show a highly developed sense of moral responsibility, and feel that service to the local and international community is important. Students speak enthusiastically about opportunities to work together, for example on the trip by students in Years 12 and 13 to Tanzania. They relish opportunities to take the initiative by organising fund-raising activities such as collections for refugee camps and a local orphanage, as well as by the cardboard sleep-out to raise money for a homeless charity in Prague.
- 4.4 In almost all respects, younger students' social development is excellent, and they play a full part in the school community. They enjoy opportunities for responsibility such as being house captain, running assemblies and taking part in peer assessment. Their exceptional self-confidence reflects the personal support they receive from staff. Older students' excellent social development is shown through their response to positions of responsibility, and their positive response to the new house system with its emphasis on wisdom, teamwork, competition and leadership. Students value these opportunities for leadership highly. For example, they express their voice through the school council and have further opportunities to lead through the Skills for Life programme and the CAS project in the IB. Through the PSHE programme, they develop a clear understanding of their responsibilities as individuals; in RE they learn about the British parliamentary system.
- 4.5 Students display an excellent awareness of other cultures, and enjoy sharing their life at school with over forty different cultures. This cultural mix encourages tolerance and harmony, allowing students to understand and celebrate differences. Older primary students discussed their cultural beliefs maturely. Through celebrations such as Red Nose Day and Fireworks Night, students enjoy aspects of British culture. In addition, they gain a strong appreciation of local culture, both from trips within the city and annual cultural trips to European capitals; they speak

enthusiastically of recent visits to Paris, London, Rome and Barcelona. The artwork on display around the sites is a further important influence.

- 4.6 The importance given to the family and school community mirrors the school's aim, and is exceptionally significant in creating the extremely caring and warm atmosphere to which both students and staff contribute.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent, reflecting the high priority placed by the school on its care for its students. Both students and parents were most positive about the care students receive. The overwhelming majority of students like being at the school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of students stated that there were no adults or senior students that they could turn to, but this was not borne out in discussions with students and teachers during the inspection. Almost all students felt that bullying was either dealt with well or did not occur at all.

##### ***Junior school pastoral care***

- 4.8 The school provides excellent pastoral care overall. Class tutors provide a very secure, positive and safe learning environment, which contributes to the excellent pastoral care that students receive throughout the day. Students feel comfortable speaking to their tutors, medical staff and members of the senior management team (SMT) when they have concerns. The school is successful in building positive relationships with students and in welcoming visitors to its community.
- 4.9 As students move up through the primary school, they develop excellent relationships, reflecting the strength of the school community and the effective use of PSHE. Behaviour is almost always excellent, though on occasion the rewards and sanctions procedures are not used fully, especially with younger students, resulting in poor behaviour. Teachers are always positive and caring towards the students. Unpleasantness between students is rare and generally dealt with effectively; the school has proper procedures to deal with bullying should it occur.
- 4.10 Students show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, exercise and how the body functions. Students have exceptional opportunities to participate in a variety of active and challenging sports; in early years they are exceptional. This outdoor element contributes to the children's pastoral development, in particular their physical and environmental awareness.

##### ***Senior school pastoral care***

- 4.11 The school provides excellent pastoral support for the students, reflecting its focus on creating a family environment. Both class teachers and tutors know the students well and create a happy, positive atmosphere. They provide a high standard of help, guidance and monitoring, much appreciated by the students and parents. Good advice and guidance is provided for the next stage of each student's education, including preparation for university.
- 4.12 Relationships between staff and students, and amongst the students themselves, are strong and this is evident not only in lessons, but also at break times and as students move around the school. A caring atmosphere is evident throughout the school and the students feel well supported. Behaviour in the school is exemplary, showing that students appreciate high expectations and take pride in the school's

ethos, which is a significant element in guarding against bullying. Students are invariably polite, friendly and helpful.

- 4.13 There is ample outside space for physical activity which is well used, and students are encouraged to participate in sports. Nutritious meals are provided and students understand the importance of a healthy diet, as was clear in a Year 11 biology lesson on the process of digestion.

***Whole school welfare***

- 4.14 The school has proper procedures for safeguarding the students' welfare. It has formed good links with UK agencies to support its work in this area, and both designated staff and others receive the training that is required. The requirements of local agencies are understood but active links are more difficult to develop. Proper attention is given to staff recruitment, and the safeguarding arrangements are reviewed annually by the school board.
- 4.15 The school has appropriate procedures for health and safety, with a health and safety committee consisting of school leaders and other staff; risk assessments are carried out as appropriate. There are detailed procedures in case of fire, and fire drills are carried out regularly. The school board reviews matters of safety annually. Proper care is taken of students who are ill or injured, and medical care contributes well to the students' pastoral care. Good access for the disabled has been provided in new buildings. Appropriate records are kept of admission and attendance.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent, contributing much to the maintenance of the school's core values and to the development of the education it offers.
- 5.2 Members of the various boards bring considerable commitment to their work and contribute much to the school's success. Both the management board and the school board share a clear vision of the school's aims and ethos. The school board, in particular, works closely and effectively with senior staff. Regular discussions with staff, both inside and outside formal meetings, visits to the school and for some, experience as parents of current students, means that the board has a detailed picture of the school, enabling it to fulfil its responsibility to provide stimulus and challenge well, and to ensure standards. In addition to their knowledge of the school, board members bring a good range of expertise and experience to their work. They also have a shared commitment to, and vision for, the school's Christian ethos and foundation; it is typical that members of the board joined staff to discuss the students' personal development during the inspection.
- 5.3 Careful financial management has enabled the school to develop new and improved facilities and resources, most recently for the oldest students in the senior high school, and for sport. In both cases, high quality facilities have been developed. The design of the high school is based on a clear understanding of the kind of education the board wants to develop. Thus the development of accommodation is closely linked to the school's educational aims. Staffing has been similarly developed carefully to meet its needs.
- 5.4 The board gives careful attention to overseeing matters of safeguarding, welfare and health and safety. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said they thought the school well governed.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent, enabling the school to fulfil its aims.
- 5.6 The school's senior management team gives strong and cohesive leadership to all parts of the school. It shares a clear vision for the school, so that all parts are working to a common goal. Despite the use of separate sites for the four parts of the school, members of the SMT work closely together and meet often and, when necessary, there is excellent liaison between staff in all four sections over academic, pastoral and practical issues. As a result, the school functions well as a whole, as well as in its discrete units. Other staff appreciate the easy access they have to the SMT. The school's Christian ethos is always central to all decision-making, so that the uniqueness of the individual is valued and the staff team is dedicated to building positive relationships.
- 5.7 The school takes great care over recruiting staff, and checking their suitability. Students thus benefit from well-qualified staff who themselves bring experience from a variety of countries and backgrounds. New staff are inducted well when they arrive to take up their appointment. All staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.

- 5.8 The future direction of the school is supported by high quality development planning; it has a clear sense of direction and educational purpose. It is beginning to make better use of data to monitor the progress of the school as a whole. Almost all parents and students say they think the school is well run.
- 5.9 The quality of leadership and management in the junior schools is excellent. The early years and primary heads work effectively together, ensuring transition from one stage to another is very well supported; these arrangements are enhanced by the excellent relationships between the subject co-ordinators. Educational direction is clear, planning is ambitious and self-evaluation is regular and frequent. Regular monitoring and sharing of best practice supports staff as they develop the strategies that characterise the most successful teaching at the school. Monitoring has ensured consistency in most areas of work but not quite in all. Structures are clear, reviewed regularly and highly effective.
- 5.10 Excellent leadership in the senior schools supports both the day-to-day work and strategic direction of the schools well. Subject leaders know they are accountable for the quality of work in their subjects, and use lesson observation, work scrutiny and other means to monitor its quality. Departmental meetings support planning and the sharing of best practice. Action is taken to improve standards where necessary. Subject leaders appreciate the support they receive from the principals of their section and from other members of the senior management team. Strong pastoral leadership supports the care of students, and PSHE is planned carefully to support their personal development.

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

- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent and fulfil the school's aim of providing an inclusive environment. The responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaires were extremely positive indicating, in particular, a high level of satisfaction with the school's curriculum, the progress which students make in English, standards of behaviour, the school's extracurricular provision, the way in which parents are involved in school life and the school's communication with them. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- 5.12 An open-door policy fosters constructive relationships with parents. In early years and the primary school, parents' rooms are provided, which makes parents feel welcome and valued. Active associations, in each section of the school, involve parents in fund raising for charity, putting on school events and selling snacks for the community. An important role of the parent-teacher association is to welcome new families to the school. Parents also contribute their talents by speaking in assemblies or lessons, invigilating examinations, hearing young students read, helping to organise trips or by teaching other parents English.
- 5.13 The lines of communication with parents are excellent. The parents receive a comprehensive and informative handbook. Small questions of concern are dealt with promptly either face to face, or by email, and in line with the school's published procedures. The school sends a weekly newsletter, and also sends emails to convey important information when necessary. Parents receive all the information that is required.
- 5.14 The school holds conferences for parents to discuss progress each term. The senior and junior high schools send reports to parents each term, and the primary school and early years section report to parents twice a year. Detailed accounts of the work covered and advice for further improvement are included. In the high

schools care is taken to describe progress in a way suitable for an American high school diploma, and also in relation to IGCSE and IB criteria. Parents are invited to attend meetings when students transfer from one section of the school to another, and parents were invited to attend a meeting to discuss recent developments in the school.

## 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 other 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 Ian Newton	Reporting inspector
Mrs Gillian De La Torre	Assistant Reporting Inspector (Former Deputy Head, ISA)
Mrs Clair Doubleday	Junior Team Inspector (Co-ordinator, COBIS)
Dr Alison Primrose	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS)
Mr Robert Chatburn	Senior Team Inspector (Deputy Head, SHMIS/ISA)
Dr Nicholas England	Senior Team Inspector (Head, HMC)