



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS**

### **INSPECTION REPORT ON GENEVA ENGLISH SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

|                        |   |                  |  |
|------------------------|---|------------------|--|
| Full Name of School    | <b>Geneva English School</b>                                |                  |  |
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| Head                   | <b>Mr Tim Meunier</b>                                       |                  |  |
| Chair of Governors     | <b>Mr Mark Williams</b>                                     |                  |  |
| Age Range              | <b>3-12</b>   |                  |  |
| Total Number of Pupils | <b>288</b>  |                  |  |
| Gender of Pupils       | <b>Mixed (156 boys; 132 girls)</b>                          |                  |  |
| Numbers by Age         | <b>3-5: 59</b>  | <b>5-11: 223</b> |  |
|                        |   | <b>11-12: 6</b>  |  |
| Inspection dates       | <b>20 to 23 March 2017</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 October 2013

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) Regulations 2014, 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 Geneva English School aims to provide an outstanding education within a warm, welcoming, international community, where pupils grow up and learn together in a caring, purposeful and stimulating environment. It seeks to provide pupils with as many opportunities as possible and to encourage and guide them to acquire the personal attributes and skills, such as curiosity, creativity and confidence, that they will need in their future lives. The school was founded in 1961 by parents who wanted a British education for their children. It is an association by Swiss law and all parents who join the school automatically become members with voting rights. The school is administered by a governing body which comprises equal numbers of parents and external governors.
- 1.2 The school moved to its parkland site overlooking Lake Geneva in the commune of Genthod, fifteen minutes from central Geneva, in 1989. Accommodation, the most recent dating from April 2013, is arranged around a historic listed main building. The educational programme is aligned to the English National Curriculum and French is taught throughout the school. Children below the age of five are taught in Nursery and two Reception classes, which broadly follow the UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a Nursery class was opened in January 2014 and in September 2016 a Year 7 class was added. Year 7 forms the nucleus for Geneva English School's new secondary school which opens on a nearby site in Versoix in September 2017. A new headmaster arrived in September 2016.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 288 pupils, of whom 59 were in the Nursery and Reception classes. Boys slightly outnumber girls. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 are taught in two parallel classes and at the time of the inspection there was one Year 7 class.
- 1.5 The school is not academically selective. Pupils are admitted if they have sufficient command of English to enable them to access the curriculum at an appropriate level for their age. The ability profile of the pupils is above average. Just under half the current pupils are British nationals and a small minority are of dual nationality, one of which is British. Of the very small minority who do not have English as their first or second language, many are local French or Swiss children and others come from various nationalities. Pupils come from families with a range of backgrounds; some are second or third generation living in Switzerland, others come for a short time to work and remain, whilst some move on after a few years when the family relocates for work.
- 1.6 The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional specialist support in small groups. Of the 27 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), none requires additional specialist support.
- 1.7 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### 2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievement is excellent and successfully meets the school's aims. In the early years, children make excellent progress so that most reach or exceed the developmental levels expected for their age by the end of Reception. Older pupils demonstrate good and often excellent progress. They show high standards in all their learning and excellence in French. Attainment is high in relation to English national age-related standards. Across the school pupils develop highly proficient learning skills because they are encouraged to challenge themselves. They apply their knowledge and understanding very effectively across a broad curriculum which includes an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, and places a distinctive focus on the development of critical thinking and cross-curricular learning. Throughout the school, teaching of consistent high-quality is highly effective in promoting the pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils with SEND and EAL, and the more able, make similar progress to their peers due to work which is carefully planned to meet their abilities. The school pays exemplary attention to assessment, but in some year groups it collects too much data, which results in duplication or inconsistency. Pupils' achievement is extremely well-supported by their highly positive attitudes to learning; they demonstrate a genuine spirit of enquiry and a strong commitment to do their best.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and reflects well the school's core values. They develop mature self-awareness and self-confidence, are kind and well-behaved and, when discussing ethical issues, display a strong moral sense. They willingly assume responsibility and are proud of their school. Within an international community, pupils demonstrate tolerance and mutual support and develop an excellent cultural awareness. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all pupils indicated that they like being at the school. The school provides sensitive pastoral care based on excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Excellent welfare, health and safety standards take full account of local requirements and the British Schools Overseas (BSO) Standards.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent and provides committed and well-informed oversight of the school. Governors discharge their responsibilities including those for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, very effectively. Leadership and management are excellent and provide clear and strong direction for the highly-committed staff team. Planning for improvement is founded on perceptive evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. Links with parents are excellent and questionnaire responses indicate that they are happy with most aspects of education that the school provides. In the questionnaires, a minority of parents expressed concern about provision for pupils with SEND and the more able. Inspection evidence confirmed good practice in these areas and a commitment by the school to improve further the provision of academic support for individuals. A small minority of parents expressed concern with encouragement to be involved in the school's life and work and the handling of concerns. Inspection evidence did not support these views. The school has successfully addressed all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

**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. Rationalise the current range of assessment tools to ensure that the information provided is consistent and helpful in improving pupils' learning and progress.



### **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 pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is excellent in accordance with the school's aim for pupils to acquire personal attributes that they will need for their future lives, such as curiosity, creativity and confidence. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of the parents who responded were pleased with their child's progress and most pupils were confident they were doing well; all pupils with EAL were pleased with their progress in learning English.
- 3.2 In the early years classes, children make rapid progress in their acquisition of oral language, particularly those who start school speaking little English. Children in Nursery develop confidence in communicating, counting and mark making. They delight in discovery, such as when searching for spiders outside, and then recording their finds on clipboards. Children in Reception learn to form letters correctly, write sentences and read basic texts. They use numbers confidently and are becoming competent with programmable toys and tablet computers. Most make excellent progress in relation to their starting points so that they reach or exceed the developmental levels expected of their age in English schools. By the end of Reception children with lower starting points have caught up or are closing the gap with their peers.
- 3.3 Throughout the school pupils demonstrate highly proficient learning skills. Their ability to work thoughtfully and to think logically is notable and enables them to apply their knowledge and understanding particularly effectively. For example, older pupils can evaluate opposing arguments and from these, form and justify their own opinions. Pupils listen well both to their teachers and to one another, and are articulate and confident when offering their ideas and opinions. As they progress through the school their reading develops well. They write fluently for a wide range of purposes, both creative and factual, and their handwriting is generally neat and well-formed. As a result of systematic teaching, they demonstrate good awareness of grammar, punctuation and spelling relative to their ages. Throughout the school their extended writing is of a high standard due to the many opportunities they are given in various subjects.
- 3.4 Pupils progress well in mathematics, showing considerable competence when explaining their reasoning. They apply these skills to solving mathematical problems and in subjects such as science and geography. The pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) proficiently to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, they demonstrate an excellent understanding of coding and use paint, photo, and office software and the internet confidently. Pupils enjoy and make rapid progress in physical education (PE) because of highly effective peer- and self-assessment which enables them to see how they can improve their skills. They use their imagination well in creative writing, dance and drama.
- 3.5 The pupils' progress towards fluency in French is a strength of the school. Standards are high so that in Year 5 they successfully undertake science experiments in lessons conducted entirely in French and by Year 7 they converse comfortably with teachers and one another. This level of attainment is an excellent foundation for the next stage in their education and enables those whose parents so choose, to gain entry to local French-speaking schools.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against English national tests but, on evidence from the school's own assessment data, lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with them, it is judged to be high in relation to English national age-related expectations. By the time they reach Year 6, the pupils' levels of attainment in reading and mathematics are similar to those in English independent schools, which represents substantial progress since a significant proportion of younger pupils enter the school with limited experience in English. Pupils achieve these standards within a broad curriculum and through an approach to teaching which develops deeper and transferrable thinking skills aimed at developing a love of learning and skills for the future world. On leaving the school most gain places at their first choice of secondary school. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good and often excellent progress in relation to those of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND and EAL make similar progress because they receive targeted support in class and, for some, small group work. The most able pupils progress well since teaching consistently challenges them to think deeply, broaden their enquiry and develop independent learning skills.
- 3.7 Pupils enjoy many successes beyond the classroom. Each year they compete successfully in a range of local and international sporting activities, such as winning the annual Geneva Escalade race and performing well in the British Schools Ski Championships. The school's netball and rugby teams have competed successfully against several preparatory schools during their annual tour to the UK. Some pupils are successful in British speech and drama examinations and play leading roles in productions by an external local English-speaking drama school. Others achieve well in British music examinations.
- 3.8 Pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning strongly support their overall achievement. Throughout the school they conspicuously enjoy and are interested in their learning. A highly collaborative approach is present in the classroom and pupils communicate extremely effectively to explain their thinking both to each other and to their teachers. They demonstrate a genuine spirit of enquiry and strong commitment to do their best.
- 3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**
- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent and fully supports the school's aim to combine the traditions and values of British education with the best modern, international programmes, to create an engaging, relevant and cutting-edge education that prepares individuals for the interconnected world of the future. The programme for children in the early years follows the English framework closely. It covers all the required areas of learning as well as additional daily teaching in French from qualified mother-tongue teachers, and specialist teaching in dance, drama and art. Children are introduced to pre-reading and writing skills, early numeracy skills and digital learning through interesting activities linked to a common theme. Staff ensure that there is excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children are given ample opportunities to work and play both inside and outdoors to enable them to develop their physical and creative skills.
- 3.10 Curricular provision in Years 1 to 6 is wide-ranging and covers all the requisite areas of learning. It is well aligned with the English National Curriculum and the addition of French from the early years allows pupils to develop a thorough knowledge of one of the main languages of their host nation. Spanish is added as an additional language in Year 7, in line with the international context of the school. In their responses to

the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents declared their full support for the range of subjects offered.

- 3.11 English, French, mathematics and science are prominent in the curriculum, while creative and expressive subjects, including opportunities for extended writing, art and music now have greater representation, in accordance with a recommendation from the previous inspection. Art, drama and dance are all taught by specialists. However, the allocation of time given to specialist-taught art in some years is insufficient for a practical subject. The PE curriculum offers pupils excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills, and provides many opportunities to participate in local and national tournaments.
- 3.12 A distinctive feature of the curriculum is the school's approach to learning. Higher order thinking skills, as well as deep level learning to promote long-term recall, are embedded into the programmes of study for pupils of all ages. Full use is made of cross-curricular links to enable pupils to transfer their learning between subjects and apply it to the world in which they live, and many opportunities are provided for co-operative and independent work. The life skills scheme of work which includes topics on healthy lifestyles and keeping safe, ensures that worthwhile values and the international ethos of the school are promoted and helps pupils to take their first steps in preparation for adult life.
- 3.13 In the questionnaire, a minority of parents was not content with the school's provision for pupils with additional needs. Inspection evidence confirmed that appropriate procedures to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of additional interventions are now established, both for more able pupils and those with SEND, and that the school is committed to further developing the provision of academic support for individuals. The school provides highly effective focused support, where appropriate, such as a working memory group. Support for both groups of pupils is viewed as a shared responsibility of all staff and classroom practice in adapting work to all abilities is excellent. As part of its development plan the school has embarked on a review of its procedures to improve further the impact of its provision for pupils with SEND.
- 3.14 The pupils' learning experience is enhanced by regular educational visits, locally and further afield. For example, a planned progression of residential visits from Years 2 to 7 helps the pupils to develop valuable life skills, such as independence and initiative. Day trips to local museums, the United Nations (UN) and environmental locations enable the pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of the country in which they are living, engage with both the local and wider community, and to experience the natural features and culture of Switzerland.
- 3.15 A strong feature of school life is the extensive range of extra-curricular activities which enable all pupils to enjoy opportunities to develop their skills outside the classroom. These provide for a range of interests and include ballet and football, water-colour painting and rugby, food fun and judo, as well as two choirs and an ecology club. An overwhelming majority of the pupils expressed themselves pleased with the range of extra-curricular activities available to them.

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

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent and contributes positively to the school's aim to provide an outstanding education within a caring and collaborative working environment. Teaching throughout the school is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and achievement. In questionnaire responses and during discussions, the overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that teachers help them to learn and give

individual help when needed, and most indicated that their work is interesting and that they are encouraged to work independently. A few were less certain that homework helps them to learn but inspection evidence showed it to be generally useful in consolidating progress.

- 3.17 Staff in the early years classes ensure that children learn in an environment which is rich in both oral language and the written word. They make excellent use of questioning to challenge children's thinking and widen their vocabulary, yet allow them time to frame and articulate their responses. Children enjoy a wide variety of interesting activities which enable them to develop their knowledge and skills as well as their creativity; for example, a minibests theme resulted in writing, calculations, role play, programming an electronic bee and scientific enquiry. Staff record and track children's progress electronically so that the next steps in children's learning are clearly identified and woven into meticulous planning which is adapted to take account of individual and group interests.
- 3.18 A strength of all teaching is the consistent focus on skills for learning, which challenge pupils to predict, infer, solve problems and to discuss alternative strategies. All lessons have clear learning objectives, which ensure that pupils know exactly what is required in order to be successful. These are re-visited in highly-effective plenary sessions to enable pupils to evaluate their progress. Teachers encourage pupils to be responsible for their own learning, which encourages motivation and initiative. For example, in many lessons pupils select which level of the "piste" system they would like to attempt for their learning task. As a result of knowing their learning targets and the motivational atmosphere in class, pupils choose to work at the highest level they can.
- 3.19 A common feature of teaching is teachers' energy and enthusiasm and their skilled use of targeted questioning, which checks the pupils' understanding and encourages them to extend and articulate their thinking. Teachers demonstrate thorough subject knowledge and make effective use of well-chosen and interesting resources and ICT to enhance pupils' learning experience. Teaching reflects teachers' in-depth knowledge of their pupils. Lesson planning is thorough, always indicating how teaching will be adapted to suit the range of abilities and learning needs within the class. Teachers employ a wide range of methods to stimulate active learning and lessons proceed at a brisk pace which sustains pupils' interest. Both group and independent activities are effectively used, frequently allowing pupils to collaborate, learn from each other and work at a pace appropriate to their needs. The school has developed excellent opportunities for teachers to share good practice, such as learning walks and peer observations, in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection. This has enabled the school's initiative on higher order thinking to be so quickly established.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants have an exceptionally warm and positive rapport with the pupils, instilling in them a 'can do' attitude, which builds their resilience and perseverance. They provide a supportive environment in which pupils feel secure in learning from their mistakes. Pupils learn at an appropriate level and pace in French because they are taught in groups according to their prior experience, knowledge and ability. This contributes strongly to the high standards of fluency they achieve. Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of those pupils identified with SEND and adapt teaching methods to enable them to progress well. Pupils are closely monitored, their progress effectively tracked and shared with parents. The needs of the more able are well met through adaptation of tasks, extension challenges and deeper questioning.

3.21 Marking and assessment provide an excellent framework for future learning, informing planning, intervention strategies and effective target setting. Marking is regular and provides useful suggestions for further improvement as well as praise. During interviews, pupils were appreciative of constructive oral feedback and guidance, saying this enables them to gauge how well they are doing. The pupils are very aware of their personal targets and what they need to do to make further progress. The school tracks the progress of pupils systematically, using a wide variety of assessment tools. In addition, teachers assess pupils' recall and understanding after each unit of work in the core subjects and adjust their planning accordingly. The school is diligent in collecting a large amount of assessment data, but sometimes the resulting information is less helpful as an aid to promoting pupils' progress because data is duplicated or inconsistent. Careful interpretation of assessment data facilitates effective planning for the pupils' next stage of learning, including their transfer to senior school. Monitoring of data also informs the evaluation and ongoing development of the curriculum.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. By the time they reach Year 7 pupils have gained a natural confidence and self-awareness. This is in accordance with the school's aim to provide an outstanding education within a caring and collaborative learning environment, and reflects the school's core values of teamwork, community, respect, courage, opportunity and integrity.
- 4.2 Throughout the school the spiritual development of pupils is excellent. The youngest children develop in confidence due to high-quality relationships with staff which provide them with support and security. They are encouraged to become independent and develop negotiation and co-operation skills as they choose their activities for part of the day and tidy away their equipment. They settle to their tasks quickly and demonstrate considerable perseverance. When they share their work at the end of a session they are proud of their achievements. Older pupils demonstrate high levels of self-awareness and self-worth. Through the strong encouragement they receive in class to share and develop their ideas, they develop considerable self-confidence. For example, in a recent visit to a model UN debate, pupils in Year 7 spoke with confidence and conviction, having volunteered to represent their groups, which included much older pupils. Pupils are emotionally mature and demonstrate a genuine concern for each other's welfare. They respond thoughtfully and perceptively to issues presented in assemblies and in lessons. Living in an area of outstanding natural beauty, pupils acquire a sense of wonder about the world around them. As they embrace the school's values they learn to appreciate the non-material aspects of life.
- 4.3 Pupils show strong moral development promoted by the school's core values. Through clear explanation and the positive role models offered by staff, younger children develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. They behave well and are kind to one another. Older pupils respect the boundaries established by the school, regarding them as reasonable, and told inspectors that they believe self-discipline to be important. They show the same respect and support for their peers, as they themselves are shown by their teachers. Across the school pupils discuss ethical matters with conviction and considerable maturity. They are encouraged to embrace challenging issues, such as the plight of refugees and migrants, and reflect on personal and moral responsibility. The proximity of the UN office means that there are many links with the school, and pupils have developed a strong sense of justice and the rights of children.
- 4.4 The pupils' social awareness is extremely well developed. They are eager to contribute to the well-being of the school community, of which they are so proud, and they work and play together with friendliness and mutual support. A feeling of inclusiveness is promoted by pupil play leaders who help to organise playground games and from an early age pupils look out for others who might be lonely. Pupils willingly assume responsibility as members of the school council, and take their roles seriously in representing the views and ideas of their peers, such as when interviewing applicants for teaching positions, and suggesting matters for school improvement. Pupils say their opinions are listened to, and that they have helped to bring about improvements in the running of the school. They have a strong empathy with people less fortunate than themselves, and have raised money in various innovative ways, including taking part in the UN annual sponsored walk *Children walking for children* and holding a Christmas collection for under-privileged children

in Moldova and Belarus. Pupils acquire an increasing measure of independence and learn about team-building through the various residential trips that are arranged.

- 4.5 Pupils' excellent cultural awareness is readily evident in their understanding of, and respect for, their own culture and that of others represented within the school. They enjoy upholding Swiss traditions; every eligible year group enters a team for the *Escalade* race, and *La Nuit du Conte* is celebrated annually. Pupils learn about, and appreciate, their own and other cultures through lessons in art, music, literature, dance and the humanities. They take part enthusiastically in celebrations of national diversity, widening their cultural horizons through being part of an international community. Through day to day contact with their peers, pupils develop an understanding of the celebrations of the major religions of the world, and they enthusiastically support and embrace values of tolerance and mutual support.
- 4.6 By the time pupils leave the school they are extremely well prepared for transfer to the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent. Staff are highly committed to providing sensitive pastoral care in accordance with the school's aims. Class teachers know each pupil and their home circumstances well and are therefore able to foster their emotional well-being most effectively as well as to provide effective guidance and support, such as when agreeing personal targets. Pastoral and welfare systems and the implementation of policies are kept under constant review to ensure they remain effective. As a result, almost all the pupils agreed in the questionnaire that there is an adult or senior pupil they can turn to if they have a personal difficulty, and all the pupils agreed that they like being at the school.
- 4.8 Across the school a high priority is placed on helping children new to the school to feel welcome and to settle. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm; staff impart a strong sense of positivity and kindness and these attitudes are reflected in pupils' relationships with one another. The well-being of pupils is a standing item at meetings across the school so that excellent communication of any concerns, both formal and informal, ensures individual pupils' needs are recognised and promptly addressed. In interviews pupils told inspectors that they are well supported; they not only feel safe and secure in school but say staff take good care of them.
- 4.9 The school's behaviour policy promotes the school's core values. Pupils conform well to the school rules since they agree them with staff in assemblies and the school council, and they are reinforced in life skills lessons. Consequently, pupils of all ages are friendly, courteous and well-mannered. Records indicate that sanctions for poor attitude or work are rarely required and questionnaire responses showed that most parents agree that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and pupils show a good awareness of bullying, developed through the curriculum and events such as anti-bullying week. They confirmed to inspectors that although they have not witnessed any bullying, they would report it to any member of staff, confident that it would then be quickly dealt with.
- 4.10 Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating, gained from their science and life skills lessons and, for the younger children, from topics on healthy food. They have the option of a nutritious hot lunch as an alternative to a packed lunch. They enjoy the opportunities they are given for exercise both within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities and understand its importance for a healthy lifestyle.

- 4.11 The school's safeguarding policy conforms with local requirements and also reflects the most recent UK statutory guidance. All staff receive a thorough induction in safeguarding when they arrive. The entire senior leadership team has undertaken higher level training in safeguarding, and all staff receive regular refresher training which includes online training. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, particularly on the internet. The school makes appropriate checks on the suitability of new staff so that the BSO are met; these checks also comply with the pre-employment checks required locally. Staff who have lived or worked in the UK have additional checks reflecting current requirements for schools in England. Checks are correctly recorded on a single central register of appointments.
- 4.12 The school has thorough arrangements to promote the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors. These are guided by a comprehensive set of policies which are explained to new staff on induction. Checks of the premises and equipment conform to Swiss regulations and records of maintenance are carefully kept. The premises are well maintained. The school has a thorough approach to risk assessment which takes expert advice when appropriate so that risk assessments for the site and more hazardous activities are carefully undertaken. A similarly thorough approach is taken when organising day or residential visits. Arrangements to reduce the risk from fire or other hazards are carefully undertaken; fire equipment is regularly tested, staff training is kept up to date and fire evacuation drills are undertaken at regular intervals.
- 4.13 Arrangements for pupils who are injured or unwell during the school day, including any who have ongoing medical conditions, are caring and efficient. Many staff are trained as first aiders, including in paediatric first aid. Records of first aid and medication administered are carefully maintained and parents informed as necessary. The admission and attendance records are completed appropriately and correctly stored, and staff promptly follow-up any unexplained pupil absence.



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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent and successfully supports the school in meeting its aims. The governing body, which is composed of parents who have been elected by the parent association and external governors in equal numbers, provides committed and well-informed oversight of the school. The governors' wide range of expertise, which includes education, finance, the law and business, enables them to provide effective support for the leadership. Through prudent financial planning governors ensure that staffing, sufficient resources of good quality and the school accommodation are important contributors to the quality of pupils' education. They carry out strategic planning collaboratively with senior leaders. Proactive governance with carefully researched objectives has enabled the school to successfully add a Nursery to its provision since the previous inspection and to initiate the process of developing a secondary school. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated their satisfaction with the quality of the school's governance.
- 5.2 Governors have excellent insight into the working of the school since they are well-informed about its strengths and challenges through detailed reports from the headmaster, their attendance at school events and thorough discussion at meetings, as well as from frequent informal contact with the leadership when any concerns are discussed. Governance is further informed through several committees, all of whom are chaired by a governor who reports to the full board. Parent governors enhance the board's understanding through their close involvement in academic and pastoral life and their frequent interaction with staff. New governors undergo a comprehensive induction programme and all governors have undertaken child protection training. The board holds regular training sessions, using external expertise, to ensure their knowledge remains up to date.
- 5.3 The board takes its responsibilities for oversight of safeguarding and pupils' welfare, health and safety very seriously and discusses these areas carefully at each full board meeting. All key policies are considered by the education committee prior to recommendation for full board approval. Governors with nominated responsibility, such as for safeguarding, hold regular meetings with their staff counterparts to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively. Consequently, all the requirements for meeting the BSO, as well as local, requirements are met.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The senior leadership team works cohesively to ensure that the school's ethos is upheld and its core values promoted across the school community, so that the school's aims are met most successfully. Leaders have clearly defined responsibilities and those responsible for compliance with the BSO ensure that the school's policies and procedures not only fully meet these, but, where not conflicting with local regulations, the most recent UK guidance. New staff receive a comprehensive induction programme and all staff undertake regular update training to enable them to exercise their regulatory responsibilities. The school has thorough arrangements to ensure that all staff, governors and any volunteers are suitable to work with children. These meet local regulations and, where possible, UK requirements.

- 5.5 The new leadership has carefully evaluated the school's strengths and areas for improvement, in order to determine the school's strategic direction, taking into consideration the views of staff, parents and pupils. This self-evaluation is extremely perceptive in identifying areas for improvement, and has resulted in a comprehensive school development plan so that staff, governors and parents are aware of common objectives. The leadership team has produced a clear action plan to show how and when these objectives are to be achieved. While senior leaders provide strong and committed leadership, they have involved many staff in working groups to discuss some of these priorities, such as the development of higher order thinking skills, lunch arrangements and staff welfare. This approach has promoted a sense of openness and confirms that the contributions of all members of staff are valued. As a result of effective strategic planning, arrangements are now well underway for the opening of the new secondary site, building on the successful addition this year of Year 7, which has incorporated innovative methods of teaching and learning whilst ensuring that the school's ethos is maintained. In discussions with inspectors, staff across the school demonstrated immense commitment to the school and their pupils and strong teamwork. Leadership and management of the early years classes is knowledgeable and extremely effective in providing for the needs of the children and ensuring that provision dovetails with the school as a whole. In the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of both parents and pupils agreed that the school is well run and managed.
- 5.6 Pupils receive high-quality teaching which supports their excellent achievement and personal development because management recruits and supports well-qualified staff who have the necessary experience and skills to move the school forwards. Thorough monitoring systems promote high standards and contribute strongly to improvements in teaching and learning. For example, senior leaders monitor books, observe in class and undertake learning walks, providing effective support and challenge to staff. Peer observation and work scrutiny is well established and promotes the sharing of best practice. Leadership and management is in the process of being strengthened further by the appointment of leaders for a greater range of subjects. Evaluation of the quality of pupil care and welfare is well organized through meetings of the senior leadership, health and safety committee and at departmental level.
- 5.7 Arrangements for the teachers' appraisal against the UK teaching standards are well established. The school development plan includes widening this system and extending it to include administrative and support staff. Opportunities for professional development are plentiful, both in terms of whole school training sessions which cover both regulatory training such as in first aid, fire safety and safeguarding, as well as aspects of teaching. This represents an effective response to a recommendation of the previous inspection to extend opportunities for staff development in pedagogical matters.

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

- 5.8 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. The school maintains excellent relationships with parents, in accordance with its aim to be a warm, welcoming and outward-looking international community in which the fundamental school values are lived out in reality. Parents are automatically members of the parents' association which meets with the headmaster and board of governors twice a year to voice opinions and offer ideas. They have influence in the management of the school since this association elects the parent governors. Class representatives and the events planning team organise social events, such as the Christmas Fair, and raise funds for the school. Parents are welcomed into school to

speak at assemblies or to offer their skills and expertise in pertinent topic areas. Parental questionnaires seek their views on aspects of school life, such as the opening of the Secondary School. Parents receive regular invitations to events which showcase pupils' talents. In the questionnaire, a small minority did not agree that the school encouraged them to be involved in its life and work. From discussions and observations during the inspection, inspectors found that parents are a welcome part of the school community and that many participate in the events offered.

- 5.9 A very large majority of parents are happy with the information that they are given about the school. An informative handbook, describing routines and expectations, is available to all new and existing parents. Information evenings with question and answer opportunities take place at the beginning of each year and workshops with a specific focus, such as e-safety, are also offered regularly. Weekly newsletters, electronic mail and the school website, keep parents fully informed of forthcoming school events, demonstrating very effective lines of communication from the school.
- 5.10 Parents receive a comprehensive report on their child's progress twice a year, which includes strategies for further improvement, and parents of children in Nursery and Reception access online journals which keep them fully informed of their child's progress, together with targets to work towards. Parent consultation meetings are held each term and the parents of pupils with SEND are invited to regular review meetings. Parents appreciate the school's open-door policy as a means to discuss their child informally. Senior leaders are a visible, approachable presence at the beginning and end of the day.
- 5.11 The school has a suitable complaints procedure, which is published on its website. The questionnaire indicated that a small minority of parents were not satisfied with the school's handling of their concerns. Inspectors found that the school provides sufficient opportunities to raise concerns, maintains appropriate records and that at the time of the inspection these indicate that invariably concerns are resolved informally.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Mrs Jan Preece     | Reporting inspector                                |
| Mrs Penny Forsyth  | Team Inspector (Former head, IAPS school)          |
| Mrs Linda Hamilton | Team Inspector (Head of junior school, HMC school) |