



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

**INSPECTION REPORT ON
KING'S COLLEGE, THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF MADRID**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

King's College, The British School of Madrid

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|------------------------|---|-------------|--------|------------|
| School | King's College, The British School of Madrid | | | |
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| Head | Mr Matthew Taylor | | | |
| Chair of Governors | Sir Roger Fry, CBE | | | |
| Age Range | 2 to 18 | | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 1616 | | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (789 boys; 827 girls) | | | |
| Numbers by Age | 2-5: | 135 | 5-11: | 570 |
| | 11-16: | 650 | 16-18: | 261 |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 1577 | | |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 39 | | |
| Inspection dates | 24 to 27 April 2017 | | | |

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI Schedule* for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection consists of two parts: a preliminary one-day visit followed by a four-day team inspection. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2014.

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 King's College, The British School in Madrid, is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls from the age of 2 to 18 years. Founded in 1969, it was originally located in the centre of Madrid. It moved to its present campus in Soto de Viñuelas, about 20 kilometres from the city centre, in 1978. The school is governed by the King's Group Board, which takes all strategic decisions, and operates under the direction and management of the chief executive officer (CEO) and the headteacher. It also receives advice from a separate Council which meets termly. The school's previous ISI inspection was in February 2014. Since then, the school has opened a new indoor sports hall and science centre. There have been two changes of headteacher, the current head and deputy head taking up their posts shortly before the inspection, in January 2017.
- 1.2 The school states that its mission is to provide high-quality British education that delivers a learning experience to all its pupils that will transform their lives. It aims to enable pupils to achieve their academic ambitions and enjoy successful lifetime careers by providing engaging teaching based on its core values and the most up-to-date and best UK educational practice. At the same time, it aims to nurture individual talents with an emphasis on educating the whole child.
- 1.3 The school has 1616 pupils, 789 boys and 827 girls. It is divided into two sections. The primary school caters for 715 pupils from pre-Nursery to Year 6. The secondary school caters for 901 pupils from Year 7 to Year 13, of whom 39 are boarders and 261 are in the sixth form (Years 12 and 13). Over 60 different nationalities and a variety of religious backgrounds are represented in the school, although four-fifths of pupils are of Spanish origin. The school serves families from the highly mobile international business sector, from the professions and from government. Although the majority of pupils start in the Nursery or Reception and proceed to the sixth form, there are large intakes of pupils from King's Infant School, Chamartín in Year 3, from King's College School, La Moraleja in Year 10, and from other schools into different year groups.
- 1.4 The ability profile of pupils varies throughout the school, but is broadly average as measured by standardised tests. Around a tenth of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEND), most of whom receive additional support from the school's learning support department. The large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL); of these 11 receive support in addition to that provided for most pupils through normal classroom teaching. One-third of the pupils are educated in a year group which is above that in which they would be placed in an English school, because of Spanish admission requirements.
- 1.5 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in fulfilling its aims to prepare pupils for their future and to help them to become proficient in the English language. Results in A-level examinations at the end of Year 13 are well above UK national averages, and the large majority of pupils proceed to universities which have high standards of entry, in the UK and other countries. Pupils' progress in learning English is extremely good, especially as most pupils start their formal education speaking little if any English. Throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress in their academic work; their achievements outside the formal curriculum are wide ranging thanks to the broad programme of additional activities provided by the school. Excellent teaching overall, and pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning are key drivers for pupils' academic success. The curriculum provides a suitably broad range of options whilst at the same time fulfilling Spanish national requirements. Pupils with SEND receive additional support and the most able pupils are suitably challenged, although the individual needs of pupils are not always identified and met as consistently in the secondary school as they are in the primary school. Similarly, the feedback provided to pupils through the marking of their work is not of a consistently high quality in the secondary school.
- 2.2 The excellent level of care and support provided by the staff contributes strongly to pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils leave the school as mature, self-confident and responsible young people. Behaviour throughout the school is extremely good, and relationships between pupils and staff are particularly strong. The school's personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme helps pupils to consider a wide range of relevant social and moral issues. Boarding provision is extremely well organised and has a very positive impact on boarders' personal and academic development. The wide range of nationalities represented in the school helps pupils to develop excellent cultural knowledge and understanding and display tolerance and mutual respect. Thorough attention is given to safeguarding and all aspects of pupils' welfare, health and safety, which is of very high quality.
- 2.3 Governance maintains thorough and well-informed oversight, ensuring that the school meets its aims and that leaders fulfil their responsibilities. It ensures that facilities are well maintained and used efficiently. Governors ensure the school is well equipped with learning resources, and teaching staff who are well qualified and have excellent opportunities for professional development. They ensure that all legal responsibilities are met and pay careful attention to the safeguarding of pupils. Although there have been recent changes in senior leadership, there is a clear sense of direction and a common striving for excellence which have resulted in many areas of improvement since the previous inspection, including a successful response to its recommendations. Teachers have better opportunities than before to observe and learn from each other, although the quality of teaching is not always monitored rigorously enough in the secondary school. Links with parents are excellent. Communication with parents is wide-ranging and there are many opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school. Although a small minority of parents and pupils responded negatively to some of the questions in the pre-inspection questionnaires, the large majority are pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. Inspection evidence supports these views.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas

(The range of the Standards for British Schools Overseas is given in the Preface)

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Standards for British Schools Overseas.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. In the secondary school, ensure that the teaching identifies and meets the needs of all pupils and that the marking of pupils' work provides helpful feedback.
2. Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored rigorously and consistently across all departments in the secondary school.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils achieve at a very high level across a broad range of subjects and activities. Considering that a high proportion of pupils join the school with little or no command of English, this is a significant achievement which fully meets the school's ambitious aims, and is recognised in the positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires by parents and pupils. Almost all pupils gain access to university institutions worldwide, with the large majority leaving to attend universities with very high standards of entry. Responses to the questionnaires indicated that both pupils and parents feel that pupils are making good progress overall.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve significant individual and group successes, for example, in art, mathematics, poetry and science competitions. Debating and public speaking are strong features of the extra-curricular provision, and the school achieves notable success in these areas. Achievements extend to local and international sports events, for example in football and athletics. The school is a regular, successful contender at games events organised by the Council of British International Schools (COBIS). Each year, over 100 pupils complete the international Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme (DofE) at some level. Last year, 21 pupils completed the gold award. These achievements also make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 3.3 By the end of Reception, most children reach at least the developmental levels typically expected for their age group in the UK. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed English national average, but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent. The pupils follow a demanding curriculum, with a particular focus on the development of fluency in English. At the end of the primary school, the vast majority of pupils' English skills have improved substantially to the point where they can easily access the secondary school curriculum.
- 3.4 Senior school pupils, including the most able and those with SEND, achieve excellent results in external examinations. The school enters pupils for the International GCSE (IGCSE), GCSE and A-level examinations. GCSE and IGCSE results for the past three years have been above UK and worldwide norms, a standard to which the school's aims aspire. Results in IGCSE Spanish have been outstanding. A-level results have been well above UK norms. For the last three years, almost half of A-level passes have been at grades A* or A, and three-quarters at grade B or above. Particularly noteworthy is the attainment of pupils with SEND who, in 2016, achieved a 100 per cent pass rate at GCSE and A level. There is a difference between the attainment of boys and girls at both GCSE and A level. The school has identified this and devised strategies to close the gap, introducing a focus on the use of academic English, encouraging boys to read for pleasure and prominently displaying key words in classrooms and common areas. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on boys' progress. Most pupils with SEND make excellent progress.
- 3.5 The older children in the early years develop an excellent understanding of phonics which they apply to their reading and independent writing. As they move through the school, pupils develop excellent literacy skills due to the high standards and expectations of their teachers. They increasingly deploy subject-specific vocabulary with confidence and understanding. In the sixth form, pupils have strongly developed oral and written expression. Mathematical and scientific knowledge and skills are

excellent overall at all ages, and pupils apply these appropriately in other subjects. As they grow in academic confidence, pupils demonstrate excellent powers of analysis and logical thought, particularly in the sixth form. They are competent and confident in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils demonstrate excellent creative and performing skills in art, drama and music and many pupils achieve success in instrumental examinations.

3.6 These results, together with internal measures of progress, indicate that pupils make progress that is excellent in relation to pupils of similar abilities. This was confirmed during the inspection by lesson observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, which indicated that pupils make excellent levels of progress considering their starting points.

3.7 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Their motivation and strong work ethic contribute greatly to their academic success. Pupils are attentive and have an excellent rapport with their teachers. Pupils are confident and frequently ask appropriate questions to clarify their understanding. Throughout the school, pupils work efficiently in pairs, small groups and independently.

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

3.8 The contribution of the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. It enables pupils to develop independent learning skills and attitudes, to build self-confidence and encourage creativity, successfully meeting the school's aim. The school follows the most up-to-date versions of the English National Curriculum and, for children aged 2 to 5, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework. It also provides elements of the Spanish curriculum as stipulated by the Spanish Ministry of Education. This ensures that the curriculum is wide-ranging and more than covers the subjects usually taught in British schools. Careful planning ensures that the curriculum supports and challenges those with SEND as well as the most able pupils.

3.9 In the early years, highly appropriate educational programmes cover the seven areas of learning extremely well. An excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities is provided, both inside and outdoors. The high-quality outdoor provision, including the allotment, enhances the curriculum greatly, enabling active learning.

3.10 Throughout the school, a strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' communication and numeracy skills, and key skills are reinforced, when appropriate, within many subjects. Additional opportunities, such as participation in the Model United Nations, the European Youth Parliament and other debating competitions, also make a strong contribution to the development of pupils' speaking skills. Similarly, participation in poetry and creative writing competitions, mathematics Olympiads, and young scientist events extend pupils' skills beyond the classroom. Annual drama productions involve many pupils in the performing arts where they develop their confidence and skills in a public setting. The introduction of tablet computers in the primary school and personal devices in the secondary school and the increasing use of ICT within the classroom contribute strongly to the development of pupils' technological skills, recognised by a recent award for the King's e-learning initiative.

3.11 A well-planned programme for PSHE in the primary school and effective use of assemblies and tutorial times in the secondary school contribute most effectively to pupils' personal development. However, provision in the secondary school is not as wide ranging as in the primary school as there are no discreet lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Senior staff are aware of this and are planning to improve provision in September by alternating the teaching of religious education and PSHE on a two-

weekly rota. Nevertheless, visiting speakers and workshops develop secondary pupils' understanding of a wide variety of social topics, such as mental and sexual health, anti-bullying and online safety. Pupils in Year 11 have their own PSHE online platform for the sharing of ideas and information. Curricular provision is strengthened by a buddy and academic mentoring system through which sixth-form pupils develop leadership skills whilst supporting younger pupils in a range of subjects. Pupils receive extensive careers advice and support for university applications. There are good links with the wider community, including the use of parental expertise to advise pupils, and links with local and international charities are also strong. Arrangements for transition from one stage of education to the next are excellent, both within the school, such as from early years to Year 1 or from primary to secondary, and for pupils joining the school in Years 3 and 10.

- 3.12 The range of extra-curricular provision is excellent and offers the opportunity for all pupils to participate in a wide range of clubs, societies and clinics at lunchtimes and after school. Various academic clubs and other activities provide important stimulus for the more able. Over 50 trips and educational visits took place in the primary and secondary schools during the last year, and around one-fifth of the pupils took part in one of the many residential trips. Participation in COBIS events and sporting fixtures against other schools contribute strongly to pupils' success in a variety of sports. Provision for music has improved since the previous inspection, with an increasing number of pupils taking part in musical activities, including concerts for parents and music competitions. The increasing popularity of the DofE results in the majority of pupils in the upper part of the secondary school learning new skills, contributing to the community, broadening their horizons and developing self-confidence and resilience.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent. Teaching promotes fully the school's aim to provide a learning environment that enables pupils to achieve excellent academic results and promotes their personal development. In response to the questionnaire, most pupils acknowledged that their teachers help them to learn and felt that teachers give them individual help when they need it.
- 3.14 The teaching in the early years and the primary school is excellent, consistently enthusiastic, creative and relevant. It cultivates extremely positive attitudes to learning and enables high levels of achievement. All adults fully understand how young children learn best and what they can achieve. They demonstrate high expectations for all pupils and are excellent role models for both behaviour and learning. Teaching totally engages and inspires the pupils to be inquisitive learners and sets firm foundations for future learning.
- 3.15 The teaching in the secondary school is good overall, and includes many excellent elements. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and pupils often find their teachers' enthusiasm for learning infectious. For example, during discussions in an A-level history lesson, excellent subject knowledge of the reign of Elizabeth I and a high level of interest were demonstrated by both pupils and teachers.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, a wide variety of teaching methods are employed. For example, creative teaching was clearly in evidence in a number of lessons in Year 6 on the Second World War as an entire corridor had been converted into an underground shelter. In a primary-age English lesson, a range of excellent teaching strategies fostered high levels of concentration and application during a spelling review of words that many native speakers would find challenging. Sixth formers enjoyed practising their technical skills in an extended practical investigation into the

chlorination of 2-methylpropan-2-ol. The use of video engendered real interest and enthusiasm in an ICT lesson for younger pupils on algorithms.

- 3.17 In the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils did not feel that the work they are given to do out of class helps them to learn, and a few parents were not content with the work that their children have to do at home. Inspectors judged that the large majority of the tasks that they observed being set were appropriate, as was the total amount of work being set. Some uses of homework are excellent. For example, differentiated homework tasks were used highly effectively to challenge pupils in Year 9 as a follow-up to a citizenship lesson on evaluating Brexit.
- 3.18 The use of resources throughout the school is excellent. In the early years, the richly resourced environments, both indoors and outside, enable calm purposeful play throughout the setting. The use of tablet computers throughout the school is becoming embedded into schemes of work and lesson plans. The use of readable barcodes in corridor displays, particularly those aimed at pupils in the primary school, stimulates pupils' interest in topics. The facilities in the newly opened science and sports centre are used well to support practical hands-on learning. The appropriate use of technology to enhance pupils' learning experience is developing and regularly supports work outside the classroom. In ICT, some of the youngest pupils worked in pairs to create a short animation piece.
- 3.19 In their response to the questionnaire, a small minority of parents expressed concern that the school does not provide sufficient help for pupils with SEND. Inspectors found that in the early years and the primary school, SEND information is used consistently well to identify individual learning needs, inform lesson planning and to devise suitable teaching strategies to enable progress. In the secondary school, such information is readily available to all teachers but is not always used in a consistent way to maximise pupils' progress.
- 3.20 Independence, interest and engagement in learning are fostered throughout the school. In their response to the questionnaire, most pupils acknowledged that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently. Inspectors agree.
- 3.21 Planning throughout the school is excellent. In the early years, pertinent observations and assessments enable individual next steps to be planned for in detail, and this allows all pupils to make excellent progress. In the primary school, topics for study are carefully chosen and the progress of pupils through these is tightly monitored to ensure consistency. In the secondary school, examination syllabi are central to all schemes of work to provide a clear foundation for success. Lesson plans are often detailed and ambitious, but not always implemented with consistent success; opportunities to provide interesting and challenging tasks for the more able pupils or accessible activities for those with SEND are sometimes missed, hindering progress.
- 3.22 This year, in order to establish pupils' starting points more clearly, the school has changed its procedures for measuring progress and has conducted a number of external benchmark tests. In the primary school, the current systems track pupils' progress, although do not always help to identify individuals who might be falling behind or what needs to be done to ensure these pupils continue to make excellent progress. The planned introduction of progress tests in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 is intended to ease transition to the secondary school and to provide an additional layer of data for the school to act upon.
- 3.23 Marking and assessment have improved since the previous inspection. Relevant policies are clear, and they are implemented successfully in many areas and departments throughout the school. Often, teachers' comments guide improvement

and provide pupils with a clear understanding of their strengths as well as areas for development. There is some variability between subject areas in the secondary school in frequency of marking and the provision of constructive comments and appropriate follow-up. The encouragement of shared peer-to-peer assessment throughout the school is an initiative that addresses a recommendation from the previous report successfully.

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. In accordance with its aims, the school is highly successful in developing thoughtful, sensitive and reflective young people who delight in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world through a variety of experiences, including those of a spiritual nature. The newly introduced mindfulness programme, observed in the primary school, is already making an impact on pupils' self-awareness, including in early years; pupils benefit from relaxation exercises to calm their minds before learning. Pupils recognise the benefits, speaking enthusiastically about a mindfulness lesson which taught them how posture can affect their moods. In the early years, children show awe and wonder, frequently witnessed in the delight and excitement expressed in their responses, such as to creating new, colourful planets from food dyes and washing up liquid. Pupils in the secondary school gain a delight in their own achievements, for example, during mathematics challenges. Pupils returning from their DofE trip were applauded for being a credit to their school.
- 4.2 The moral awareness of the pupils is particularly strong and clearly visible in the way they accept and adhere to the core values of the school. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a real sense of respect and fairness towards each other, which is instilled in them in the early years, and nurtured during their time in the primary school. When they reach the secondary school, moral understanding is well embedded, creating a community of learners who are able to apply their moral values and sense of justice to aspects of the wider world, helping them to discuss issues pertinent to life today. For example, during an assembly in the secondary school, pupils applied their values to consider whether certain world figures had lived a life of integrity or not. Pupils in a GCSE French lesson gave their opinions thoughtfully about the use of social media. The values of pupils in the sixth form were clearly evident in their responses to a lecture entitled 'What makes people happy?'
- 4.3 The pupils' social awareness is extremely well developed. A sense of belonging, not just to their class but to the school community as a whole, is ingrained from an early age. The youngest pupils learn to take turns and adopt basic manners to enable them to exist harmoniously with their peers, whether at the lunch table, moving around the school or working co-operatively in their lessons. Pupils in the primary school readily accept responsibility and carry out their various tasks seriously and with commitment. They wear their house badges with pride, and participate as dedicated members of the school council and eco council. In the autumn term, the pupils in Year 6 take roles as playground buddies to pupils in Year 3 seriously. Pupils in the secondary school are actively involved in projects that demonstrate their keen social sense. Pupils in Year 11 fundraise and collect items of clothing for those in need. Older pupils are well aware of the personal needs of their peers and have created a support network for one another. Many pupils in Year 12 also work as regular helpers in the primary school. A real sense of family exists within the boarding house.
- 4.4 Pupils throughout the school respond positively to the diversity within their own school community and embrace the ideas and beliefs of other cultures and faiths inherent in it, with an intrigued curiosity and respect. They gain a good understanding of British and Western cultural traditions through learning the importance of individual liberty, democracy and the rule of law embodied in the 'King's Values', which are clearly and colourfully displayed throughout the school. They participate in cultural celebrations held at school, such as 'Carnavales' and the Christmas 'Mighty Merienda'. In the boarding house, all faiths are catered for; some boarders regularly go to Mass on

Sunday, and visits have also been made to the mosque. Cultural dinners are held to celebrate Chinese New Year and Eid. Experiences within the wider world, such as the trip to Swaziland last year and to countries such as Iceland and Poland during the February enrichment week, provide opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the aesthetics of different cultures.

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

- 4.5 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent. Staff provide high levels of support for pupils and there is a well-organised system of pastoral care across the whole school. Pupils are happy that they know to whom they should speak if they have a problem. In the early years, staff provide an extremely happy, caring and purposeful environment, built on mutual trust and respect. Relationships are strong at all levels, and the children form particularly strong bonds with staff. Adults are excellent role models and promote high standards of behaviour and courtesy.
- 4.6 Across the whole school, relationships amongst the pupils and between staff and pupils are exemplary. Two psychologists support pupils' well-being across the school. The strong pastoral system underpins the very positive relationships throughout the school and, consequently, pupils are very happy and confident young people. Pupils are respectful, polite and proud of their school. There is a positive learning environment and a clear feeling of community which is enhanced by the school's eight core values promoted on posters, in assemblies and tutor times. Behaviour is excellent, and there are clear systems of rewards and sanctions across both phases of the school that are understood and followed by pupils and monitored frequently by staff. The house system works well and encourages healthy competition. Although a minority of pupils expressed concerns about unfair treatment by staff in the questionnaire, inspection evidence shows that records, kept and monitored by pastoral staff, of the number of rewards and sanctions given by each teacher demonstrate the system to be balanced and fair.
- 4.7 There are effective policies and procedures to tackle any incidents of bullying, and an annual anti-bullying week provides suitable guidance for pupils. In the summer term, local police addressed issues such as cyber-bullying. There is clear guidance for staff in the policy and in annual training on how to manage reports of bullying. Very few incidents of bullying occur. All pupils are given advice on how to stay safe online. Parents receive regular reports on the internet activity logs of their children and also have opportunities to attend presentations on e-safety.
- 4.8 The school has excellent policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection. There are thorough systems in place to control entry onto the site, and staff receive annual training and regular updates in relation to safeguarding and child protection. There is an effective online system for reporting concerns, and pupils are clear about who to speak to. Induction of staff in both safeguarding and health and safety is comprehensive. In the questionnaire, a minority of pupils expressed an opinion that the school does not listen to their views, but the inspection team found that pupils do indeed have a voice via the student council, staff open-door procedures and a formal complaints procedure drawn up specifically for pupils.
- 4.9 The maintenance of a safe environment for pupils is a high priority for the school and successfully achieved. An external company advises on risks from fire and other hazards, and staff from the school's central services team monitor these and other health and safety issues on a daily basis. Staff receive a variety of training in first aid, manual handling and as fire wardens. A full-time qualified nurse provides high levels

of first-aid care and records any accidents or visits by pupils who are reporting illness. Lifts provides access for pupils with limited mobility. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for practical activities and external visits. Issues regarding health and safety in the science laboratories related to the storage of bags identified in the previous inspection have now been resolved effectively.

- 4.10 Assemblies and registration times contain clear messages about resilience and healthy lifestyles, and the recent programme of mindfulness, is improving well-being of pupils. Sex and relationships education is covered by external providers in the primary school and by members of the science department or through other subjects in the secondary school. This is in accordance with the school's aim to educate the whole child. In responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of pupils and parents commented adversely on the quality of the food; the inspection team found the quality and quantity of food supplied to be acceptable, and pupils in interviews reinforced this view. Healthy eating is promoted via posters and presentations, and pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of sports and exercise to maintain fitness. Pupils in the early years and Years 1 and 2 learn about healthy eating and enjoy nutritious lunches and healthy snacks. Regular exercise is taken in play sessions and in physical education.
- 4.11 The school's admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.12 The provision for boarding is excellent. It plays an important role in promoting boarders' personal development and enhances their school life. Boarders feel that the boarding experience develops their independence, self-reliance, social skills and their ability to manage freedom, and that it prepares them very well for university and adult life. Inspectors agree. Most parents feel that the school makes good provision for its boarders.
- 4.13 The boarding house is a welcoming and inclusive environment, where relationships between boarders of all ages and from different backgrounds are excellent, friendly and positive, as is their relationship with all the boarding staff. Any problems are quickly resolved and overcome by discussion amongst themselves and with the house staff. Boarders consider the community to be a close family with a clear sense of mutual trust and respect. The boarders are friendly, confident, articulate and polite, and are kind to one another. In line with the school's aims, the boarding house is a tolerant and open-minded, international community, where cultural differences are respected and celebrated. The school also provides for boarders' religious and cultural needs.
- 4.14 The boarders have an excellent range of activities available to them after school and at weekends, including sport, fitness and the performing arts. There is a full programme of varied weekend trips, ranging from visiting art galleries and cinemas to paintballing and karting. Boarders can go into Tres Cantos and Madrid, with excellent safety checks and regular phone contact when the pupils are off-site. Suitable procedures are implemented for signing-in and out, and for curfews and limitations, according to age. School friends can visit the house, with staff permission. Other visitors and contacts are carefully checked. Free time and appropriate homework time are built into the week; the boarders commented that they enjoy being busy and that this helps with any initial homesickness. Only a small number of boarders stay in the house at the weekend, but they are happy with the arrangements made for them.
- 4.15 Communications are excellent. Boarders are able to connect easily to the internet and are well informed about current affairs. Senior boarders produce a weekly house

news-sheet, which also goes to parents, and there is a closed social media page for the house. There are also debates and talks in school. Boarders are free to contact parents and guardians via phone and the internet. Boarding staff communicate freely with parents, keeping them up-to-date not only with problems, but also with boarders' successes. The school provides clear guidance to boarders. New staff and boarders are carefully inducted; they are given a comprehensive and helpful handbook, and pupils are given a 'buddy' to help them settle in. Staff handbooks and policies are updated and disseminated annually.

- 4.16 The accommodation is outstanding, set in a modern, bright and attractively decorated, purpose-built residence which was opened five years ago. It is light, spacious and airy and very well equipped, furnished and maintained. It is also immaculately clean. Boarders have either twin or, in Year 13, single bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms, ample privacy and lockable storage. Rooms can be personalised by the boarders themselves. Facilities for relaxing and socialising are excellent: there are three common rooms with a television, also a pool table and a cinema, a computer room, and a garden. Excellent support is given by the housekeeping staff. Laundry is collected each morning and returned, ironed, the same day to boarders' rooms. There is a separate catering facility on site, which provides good, healthy meals and caters for dietary needs, including an excellent snack after school.
- 4.17 The attention given to boarders' welfare, health and safety is excellent and procedures are outlined in thorough and well-considered policies. Boarders have a well-equipped sanatorium, access to the school nurse and to a school doctor on call. Medical records are kept carefully. Staff are trained in first aid and defibrillation procedures. House staff keep parents informed of any health problems. There is disabled access and a lift. All staff, senior boarders and the independent listener are trained in safeguarding and handling child protection matters. All boarders know how to get help and can contact the independent listener, whose telephone number is on display. Fire drills are carried out regularly and at different hours of the day, and all staff and boarders are aware of fire escape procedures. Appropriate security and supervision is maintained. The boarding house conforms to the relevant Spanish regulations and all British Overseas Standards.
- 4.18 Staff provide excellent care and support for the boarders and are always on hand to deal with problems promptly. Boarders are treated fairly and without bias. There are appropriate rewards and sanctions, and a clear complaints policy for the boarders. Staff live in the house and can be contacted personally, or via the duty phone. A weekly house meeting for the boarders and staff allows for any problems to be discussed and ideas aired freely. Boarders' school work is monitored well, and teachers contact the house with any concerns about the boarders' progress. The house is very well organised and run.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. Responsibilities for governance are clearly defined and result in highly effective oversight of the school. Financial investment since the previous inspection has resulted in major improvement to the school's facilities and has ensured that buildings and grounds are well maintained. In comments submitted with the questionnaires, several parents and pupils expressed concern that the number of pupils per class and the growth in the size of the school were having an adverse impact on pupils' education. The inspection found that all areas of the school are used effectively, that the school day is managed very efficiently to make maximum use of the school's facilities, and that staff manage large classes effectively to provide an excellent quality of education, although the size of some classes makes it more difficult for teachers to ensure they meet the needs of all pupils within the class and restricts the nature of some teaching activities. The use of facilities to maximum capacity does also impose limitations on the range and nature of new activities that the school might wish to introduce. Governance has ensured that the school is well resourced. Investment in ICT resources is already having a positive impact on pupils' education in the primary department, but it is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of more recently introduced equipment in the senior department. Governors have invested heavily, and to good effect, in the training and ongoing professional development of the staff. The board has been seeking ways to provide better career progression for staff within its group of schools to mitigate the problem of staff turnover, but ensures that the school has a full complement of appropriately trained and qualified staff to meet the needs of the pupils.
- 5.2 Through regular contact with the chief executive officer and reports from the headteacher and other senior staff, the Board and the Council have an excellent insight into the working of the school. They are effective in exercising their monitoring role and holding leaders to account for the school's performance, the standards achieved and the quality of education provided. By ensuring that those appointed to the Board or the Council have a wide range of expertise and experience, and by accessing the advice of other professionals, governance ensures excellent support for the school's leadership. Involvement with other schools within the King's College Group provides a further source of support and stimulus for growth and improvement.
- 5.3 Through the chief executive officer, who assumes overall responsibility for safeguarding for the Group, and through the work of staff from its central services team with particular expertise, the Board is effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection and for welfare, health and safety.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The school's leaders are very effective in discharging their delegated responsibilities, ensuring the school's identified development priorities are achieved and providing effective and engaging teaching and learning. Since the previous inspection, the school has become more reflective. Consequently, the school's leaders have implemented many new initiatives that have not only improved the quality of education but have also had a positive impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. The new classroom management behaviour system is effective and well liked throughout the school community. In the early years, leadership and management provide clear and ambitious educational direction, as reflected in the excellent quality of the children's

education and personal development. Throughout the school, the curriculum has been revised to reflect changes in the English National Curriculum, providing greater opportunity for cross-curricular work through the introduction of more themed days and the introduction of more vocational subjects, such as accounting, at A level. Provision for pupils who arrive at the school speaking little English is excellent. Thanks to new and improved PE facilities, pupils now have more opportunities to engage in a greater variety of sports activities, both within the formal curriculum and during after-school activities. The school has also greatly improved its ICT provision. This has enriched pupils' learning. Considerable work has been carried out to improve the school's procedures for reporting and tracking pupils' progress. However, ensuring that the teaching offers appropriate challenge to take account of pupils' differing needs, developing greater clarity in the interpretation of assessment data and improving the quality of both teaching and PSHE provision in the secondary school all remain areas for further development.

- 5.5 The leadership and management of the school provide staff with clear educational direction, motivate colleagues and ensure that the school's strategic plans for development are fulfilled and regularly reviewed. Middle leaders have benefited greatly from the training opportunities provided from within the King's Group of schools to improve their leadership skills. Once trained, middle leaders are given the autonomy to lead new initiatives and drive the school forward. In the early years, regular monitoring of the educational programmes is highly effective and ensures that planning and assessment across the setting enable all children to achieve well, in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. In the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed a view that the school is not well run. This was not corroborated during the inspection. The leadership and management of the school are highly regarded, have a strong presence in the school, and a clear vision and determination to provide the highest possible standards of education for the school's pupils.
- 5.6 The school's leaders are successful in recruiting well-qualified and capable staff. An excellent ethos and a great sense of teamwork are evident throughout the school. Colleagues are supportive of one other, creating a high level of staff morale. A common sense of direction and purpose is very evident throughout the school. All new staff undergo an excellent induction programme prior to joining the school. Opportunities for continued professional development are varied, highly appreciated by staff and are of an excellent quality. Throughout the school, the quantity and quality of peer assessment have developed significantly since the previous inspection. Staff appreciate the opportunity both to observe others teaching, and to be observed, and feel that the openness which exists between colleagues and the appraisal process as a whole help them to develop their teaching practice. In the secondary school, however, teaching and learning are not always monitored rigorously enough to ensure that the quality of all teaching is consistent.
- 5.7 The leadership and management of safeguarding is excellent. All members of the senior leadership team have been trained to the same level, illustrating the school's clear commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all pupils. Clear policies, regular training for staff and strategically placed posters ensure that all staff and pupils know what to do should any safeguarding concerns arise. Improved procedures for recording any concerns about a pupil mean that all staff are fully informed about the pupils they teach and can contribute to a secure and safe environment which places a very high priority on the safety and well-being of every pupil. The school has ensured that all staff and governors have been checked for their suitability to work with children.

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

- 5.8 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the school has taken steps to improve links with parents and has implemented various ways of communicating with them more frequently, both about their children's progress and about what is happening in the school. The strengthened partnership makes a significant contribution to the fulfilment of the school's aims and has an extremely positive impact on the pupils' learning and development.
- 5.9 The school's leaders and teaching staff monitor parental opinion closely. In their response to the questionnaire, a small minority of parents indicated that they are not satisfied with the information they are given about their children's progress. Inspectors judge that the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that parents are informed. The reports and grade cards sent out at regular intervals are detailed and informative, and highlight pupils' targets and next steps. Appointments to speak to staff are easily arranged, and the school's 'open-door' policy ensures that parents are made extremely welcome in the school at any time. Regular formal parents' meetings with teachers, which pupils also attend, provide essential feedback. In the boarding house, frequent contact with boarding staff and easy email access to teachers keep parents abreast of their children's challenges and successes.
- 5.10 All necessary information, including policies and procedures, are posted on the school website and parent portal in English and Spanish, and parents of prospective pupils are provided with extensive and relevant information about the school. Parents are also kept up to date with information regarding school events and successes through a variety of methods including a termly magazine, a monthly eNews circular and, in the case of some subjects, a weekly information update. Other electronic communication systems, including the use of a parent portal and the effective use of social media, keep parents well informed. In the early years and the primary school, daily contact books and shared learning journeys allow for regular exchanges of information to allow staff and parents to work in partnership for the benefit of the children.
- 5.11 A very small minority of parents feel that the school does not encourage them to be involved in the life and work of the school. Inspectors found, however, that parents have excellent opportunities to be involved in school life. Parents have the opportunity to attend curriculum evenings and presentations on supporting pupils' learning. They attend concerts, plays and sporting events, and make significant contributions to various festivals and theme days, including the popular May Fair. Informal weekly coffee meetings for parents enhance their involvement as part of the school community. The school also provides access to workshops on topics such as online safety, the British education system and personal well-being. These workshops have provided invaluable advice and support to parents, increased lines of communication and created a greater understanding for parents of the workings of the school.
- 5.12 Strong links with parents are established before entry to the school, including a widely appreciated integration meeting for pupils entering Year 7 and visits to local feeder schools by teaching staff. In the early years, questionnaires are sent out to gather information about the children before they start school.
- 5.13 The school maintains highly constructive relations with the parents. A small minority feel that concerns are not handled well. Inspection evidence found that concerns are dealt with effectively and complaints are handled in accordance with the school's published procedures. The strong home and school partnership ensures that most concerns are dealt with informally and to the parents' satisfaction.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

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| Mr Graham Sims | Reporting inspector |
| Mrs Jeanette Adams | Primary school team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school, UK) |
| Mr Simon Crane | Secondary school team inspector (Deputy head, COBIS school, Abu Dhabi) |
| Ms Deborah Duncan | Secondary school team inspector (Head, International school, Cyprus) |
| Miss Patricia Griffin | Early years team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school, UK) |
| Mr Paul Keach | Secondary school team inspector (Head, International school, Russia) |
| Mr Timothy Kirk | Secondary school team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school, UK) |
| Mr Kieron Peacock | Primary school team inspector (Head, IAPS school, Kuwait) |
| Mr Timothy Roberts | Secondary school team inspector (Head, International school, Dubai) |
| Ms Christine Williams | Primary school team inspector (Head of junior school, HMC school, Italy) |