



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT ON ST GEORGE'S BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St George's British International School

Full Name of School	St George's British International School
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Email Address	principal@stgeorge.school.it
Principal	Mr Martyn Hales
Chair of Governors	Signora MariaTeresa Anderson D'Ecclesiis
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	811
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (426 boys; 385 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5: 67 5-11: 307 11-18: 437
Inspection Dates	10 Feb 2014 to 13 Feb 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI Schedule* for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection consists of two parts: a preliminary two-day visit followed by a four-day (team) inspection. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2010.

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

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

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

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

- The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
- The premises and accommodation.
- The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
- The school's procedures for handling complaints.
- The quality of provision for boarding.
- 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 St George's British International School in Rome is a day school for pupils aged from three to eighteen. It aims for excellence in learning and teaching, providing a challenging and caring environment for pupils within an international community. It seeks to develop the individual talents of pupils and to teach them to relate the experience of the classroom to the realities of the world outside. The school was founded in 1958 and is located on a 14-acre site to the north of Rome, known as St George's La Storta. It has a second junior school in the centre of Rome, St George's Nomentana. The two sites are run as one school.
- 1.2 There are two elements to the governance of the school. The school is owned by the parents' association, a non-profit-making trust, which elects 10 of the 12 governors. The elected governors are responsible for the overall long-term strategy of the school. A second body, the Società a Responsabilità Limitata, the Italian equivalent of a limited liability company, is responsible for the overview of the day-to-day running of the school. It comprises six directors drawn from the school's senior management, governors and independent individuals.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has added a sports dome and an artificial grass pitch. It has reshaped the arts and technology floor and the music room, and it has improved information and communication technology (ICT) provision. The governing body and senior leadership team, known as the Principal's Strategy Group (PSG), have been restructured.
- 1.4 There are 811 pupils in the school, 426 boys and 385 girls. Of these, 437 are in the senior school, aged from 11 to 18, 186 in the La Storta junior school and 121 in the Nomentana junior school. Both junior schools have Nursery and Reception provision, with 36 children at La Storta and 31 children at Nomentana. The pupils represent a wide range of nationalities, 62 at the time of the inspection, from around the world. About a fifth of them are British and a third are Italian. The ability profile of the pupils at all stages is above the UK average.
- 1.5 The school has identified 100 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and it provides specialist learning support for 47 of them. A further 197 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and the school provides support in English for all of them.
- 1.6 English National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Years 1 to 13 and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school for Nursery and Reception and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Red Dragons	Nursery
Green Dragons	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent. In the Nursery and Reception, the children respond to the high expectations of staff and rapidly develop their basic skills. Throughout the school, pupils have good literacy skills and are particularly proficient with languages. They show capable mastery of mathematical skills, and their creativity is evident in action and in wall displays. They make excellent progress over time and perform well in national tests in Year 6, and in GCSE, International GCSE (IGCSE) and International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations. The pupils are articulate, and show themselves capable of independent thought and awareness of contemporary issues. They come to school ready to learn and have excellent attitudes to their work. Pupils' achievements are supported by an excellent curriculum that provides a sound foundation for learning at all ages, as well as opportunities to develop individual interests and talents. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, in which there is a good level of participation by pupils, who enjoy them and achieve notable successes. Teaching from the Nursery to Year 13 is of a very high standard, helping pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development at all levels is excellent. They benefit from close, supportive relationships with staff and with each other. They show concern for others, both those known to them and those in the wider world. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high standard from the Nursery onwards. They are confident, curious, respectful and well behaved. The cultural diversity of the school is a benefit which they relish and they are quick to ensure that their language of choice includes those around them. In responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, most pupils said that they like being at the school, although a minority expressed concerns that they have no adult to talk to if they have a difficulty, that teachers did not treat them equally, that they are not given opportunities to take on responsibilities and that their views are not listened to. However, in interviews they were positive about their experiences at school and the inspection team found no evidence of unfair treatment, while staff were observed to provide sympathetic encouragement. There are many opportunities for them to take on responsibility and to express their views. Safeguarding and pastoral care in the school are strong.
- 2.3 Since the previous inspection, the governing body has clarified the roles of its two constituent groups and has established sub-committees to enable them to carry out their roles efficiently. They have worked with the senior leadership team to produce a strategic plan for the future of the school. Governance is now good and is continuing to develop its strengths. Excellent leadership at every level has been instrumental in achieving fulfilment of the school's aims and has made great improvements since the previous inspection. The school has established excellent communication with parents and responds rapidly to their concerns. In responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, most parents said that they are pleased with the progress that their children are making and think that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. A minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the provision for pupils with SEND, with the school's handling of concerns and with the information they receive about their children's progress. The inspection team examined these views closely but found no evidence to support them.

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)

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.4 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Build on the recent work undertaken by the governing body on efficient governance structures to develop effective strategies for supporting the school leadership.
2. Improve the speed of serving meals in order to reduce queues in the dining hall.

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 pupils' achievements, from the Nursery to Year 13, are excellent and represent fulfilment of the school's ambitious aim to achieve excellence in learning. Although at least a quarter of pupils are working in their second or third language, their basic skills for learning are at a high level so that they can apply these with flexibility.
- 3.2 In the Nursery and Reception, children make excellent progress with their learning. Children with EAL make particularly rapid progress in their English language skills. The youngest children recognise their written names using their phonic skills and enjoyed counting five birthday candles. The older children can write their names, choose books and use their addition and subtraction skills when playing board games. Responding to high expectations set by the staff, many children reach or exceed the English National Curriculum Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils apply logical and independent thought in lessons. For example, in a Year 11 chemistry lesson, pupils could construct chemical equations for the extraction of iron. Creativity is evident everywhere in the school, particularly in the vibrant, extensive art displayed in every corridor. It is also noticeable in ICT, music and design and technology, as in a film made and edited by pupils in Years 9 and 10 to showcase extra-curricular activities, which was shown at a whole-school assembly, and in the poetry published in the school's creative writing magazine, *Literati*.
- 3.4 Pupils engage easily in discussion within lessons, and are confident when speaking aloud to their classes and, more formally, in registration, house and school assemblies. They are particularly good listeners, respecting what teachers and other pupils have to say. At all ages, reading is well developed, and writing is of a high standard, for example in Year 4 creative writing. In mathematics and science, numerical skills are applied confidently. In Year 12 physics, pupils were able to apply Hooke's Law and Newton's Second Law to interpret experimental data collected from observation of simple harmonic motion.
- 3.5 Pupils are successful in public examinations. The following analysis uses English national data for the years 2010 to 2012, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Attainment in English national tests at the age of 11 has been well above the UK average for maintained primary schools. Results at GCSE have been well above the UK average for maintained schools and similar to the UK average for maintained selective schools, and in 2012, were above the UK average for maintained selective schools. The trend of achievement at GCSE is one of improvement, year after year. Results in most IGCSE subjects have been higher than worldwide averages. In the IB, attainment has been above the worldwide average and similar to the UK average. Results in public examinations in 2013 have been better than in previous years. A good proportion of Year 13 leavers enter world-class universities in the UK, other EU countries and North America.
- 3.6 Achievement is high for pupils with SEND and those with EAL, shown by the rapid progress they make in relation to their difficulties or their starting points. In the most recent GCSE examinations the achievement of pupils with EAL equalled that of their peers and, in the past three years, over a third of GCSE grades for pupils with SEND have been at A or A*.

- 3.7 In the junior schools, excellent levels of progress were observed in lessons, and evidence from the pupil tracking system in the senior school indicates that a high level of progress is maintained. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and enthusiastic. They enjoy lessons, come to school ready to learn and so make rapid progress. These positive attitudes are reflected across a wide range of aspects of the school outside lessons: in corridors, in assemblies, at lunch and in the playground. The pupils are used to working in co-operation with others, either in pairs or in small groups, and are also highly productive in their individual work.
- 3.8 In extra-curricular activities, pupils' group and individual achievements are considerable, such as in instrumental and voice ensembles, where those in Years 12 and 13 were preparing to perform at the Vienna Festival. Pupils in Years 3 to 10 were sufficiently skilled to take part in a ballet performance. They confidently participate in drama productions of a high standard. Other areas of achievement include: The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award; participation in media conferences related to technology, entertainment and design challenges, and Model United Nations (MUN) conferences, where pupils have been winners of best delegate awards each year; and several mathematics challenge gold awards at junior and intermediate level. Pupils have also won many Italian, UK and IB art awards. Sporting successes have included junior pupils' championship in a football tournament and senior pupils playing with élite soccer academies. In addition to the many honours they win for the school, the pupils are actively encouraged to seek distinction in activities that they pursue in their own time, such as motor racing, martial arts and drama.

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

- 3.9 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision throughout the whole school is excellent. It contributes to making a positive impact on pupils' achievements and learning, enabling the school to fulfil its stated educational aims.
- 3.10 The curriculum is compliant with the Standards for British Schools Overseas at all stages. It covers the requisite areas of learning and is suitable for pupils of all ages, abilities and needs. In the Nursery and Reception, the curriculum follows the English framework and fully covers all seven areas of learning, with physical education, Italian and music taught by specialists. In the junior schools, the curriculum extends far beyond requirements and cross-curricular topic work allows pupils to reach heightened levels of engagement and achievement. At the end of Year 6, pupils sit English national tests in English, mathematics and science. In the senior school, the broad curriculum encompasses GCSE, IGCSE, AS level and the IB, ensuring that pupils work towards international standards.
- 3.11 A strong feature of the curriculum is the emphasis placed on encouraging independent learning and developing individual talents, in line with the school's aims. This approach encompasses activities as diverse as philosophy in Year 5 and enquiry-based learning across the IB, including the extended essay.
- 3.12 Curriculum planning has been significantly improved since the previous inspection. A small minority of parents expressed in their responses to questionnaires that they are dissatisfied with provision for SEND. Inspection evidence and observation of lessons demonstrated that provision for SEND and for EAL is excellent, with careful attention given to pupils' individual needs. The school has developed the position of a challenge and inspiration co-ordinator to work with teachers to ensure that particularly able pupils are appropriately challenged in all areas of the curriculum.

- 3.13 Language provision throughout the school is strong. It includes Italian for all pupils in the junior schools and in the senior school up to Year 9. The school manages its statutory obligations in Italian language well and with creativity. Many pupils complete their Italian IGCSE at the end of Year 9 and have the option of further strengthening their linguistic skills through an AS-level or pre-IB course. In addition, dual IB diplomas further support languages as an inherent part of the curriculum. French, Spanish, German and Mandarin are also provided, adding to the rich linguistic environment, and many pupils have strong proficiency as a result. English language teaching is a key element in all activities, enabling pupils to make rapid progress from the Nursery to Year 13.
- 3.14 Technology is used innovatively and, in addition to the existing ICT facilities, the school has developed a range of activities designed to support and extend the existing curriculum, making it more relevant to contemporary life. A joint project between the junior and senior schools, where pupils were given a webpage to develop on Victorian life, exemplifies this innovative and creative approach. In Year 4, pupils were given freedom in a lesson on volcanoes to manage their own internet research, with appropriate safeguards in place.
- 3.15 Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is a strong and integral part of the curriculum, ensuring understanding and respect for others as well as helping pupils to understand their responsibilities in a global society. This work is ably supported by key interventions by tutors and class teachers. Pupils are well prepared for university entrance.
- 3.16 The extra-curricular programme has been considerably expanded since the previous inspection. It is supported by the staff, many of whom run several clubs a week in addition to their teaching commitment. Activities take place at morning break, at lunchtime, after school and at weekends. Creative and artistic opportunities are of a high standard. Drama is popular, with recent performances such as *The Forbidden Planet* playing to the school and wider community with great success. The calendar includes a great many trips encompassing cultural, sporting, artistic and academic pursuits. Participation rates are high.
- 3.17 The school enjoys a full range of excellent links with the wider community, incorporating both a local and international dimension. For example, close liaison between Nomentana and the British Council has enabled evening English language classes for Italian schoolchildren. The school also supports an orphanage through its Zambian Orphans Appeal programme. The school also holds frequent coffee mornings in support of links with the local community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching throughout all sections of the school is excellent. The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were excellent and nearly all were at least good. Both teaching and assessment practices are effective in promoting pupils' progress at every level and they fully support the school's aim of achieving excellence in teaching.
- 3.19 In the Nursery and Reception, teaching shows an exemplary understanding of children's individual needs. Detailed and effective assessments of each child's attainment in the seven areas of learning highlight any need for additional support and inform future planning. The excellent resources and stimulating learning environment created by the staff engage and motivate the children. They grow in

- confidence and make rapid progress, particularly in language and physical development.
- 3.20 Effective teaching is characterised by imaginative use of partner dialogue, focused questioning, good pace, skilled use of technology and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers know the pupils well and carefully match challenges to their needs and abilities. In the best lessons, the questions challenge and extend the pupils' thinking. Whether problem solving, planning investigations or exploring new vocabulary, pupils are confident to make predictions and share their ideas.
- 3.21 A wide variety of teaching methods and styles is used throughout the school. Carefully planned lessons incorporate a rich mixture of activities, which provide many opportunities for pupils to develop key learning skills and to grow in confidence. For example, Year 13 pupils could present and defend their positions in a presentation on the Truman Doctrine. In particular, mini whiteboards are used effectively with all age groups, as in the calculation of the n th term in a Year 7 algebra lesson, and in noting co-ordinates in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. The school library also greatly supports independence, with pupils working as volunteers and developing research skills from a very young age.
- 3.22 Through regular review and observation, teachers identify the most able pupils. They set extension challenges, such as through learning journals for junior pupils, promoting independent research.
- 3.23 Pupils with SEND or EAL receive excellent support from teachers. Additional one-to-one and small group sessions are provided by specialist teachers as appropriate, for example in preparing the vocabulary required for a Year 7 humanities lesson prior to the lesson. Teaching assistants across the school make a significant contribution to the high quality of teaching. They are involved in lesson planning and work collaboratively with the teachers, contributing to the positive learning environment in the classroom. Many have undertaken higher level training, which they have appreciated because of its contribution to their own professional skills. Teachers make sensitive provision in class for pupils with EAL, enabling them to become fully integrated into the class and to make rapid progress.
- 3.24 Formal and informal assessment are used well to monitor and track the pupils' progress, ranging from question-and-answer work in class to ascertain prior learning, to more formal standardised tests and public examinations. In the junior schools, cognitive ability tests (CATs) provide baseline data from Year 4, against which the pupils' progress is monitored. Regular progress review meetings identify apparent underachievement to assist teachers in their planning.
- 3.25 In the senior school, tutors and heads of department regularly review pupils' progress, offering advice and guidance, or initiating actions to provide additional support. These interventions range from social skills groups to optional 'drop-in' sessions or individual mentoring and individual education plans. The success of pupils in the IB is currently measured against IB world statistics and analysis of leavers' destinations. The recent introduction of CATs in the senior school is intended to provide further valuable data.
- 3.26 Teachers' marking of work, in most cases, is of a very high quality, celebrating success and encouraging endeavour. In the best marking, teachers also indicate next steps or areas for development. Occasionally, marking is cursory and does not inform pupils of targets. Marking is often linked to clearly stated learning objectives. The consistent use of criteria for success, in language appropriate for pupils' ages,

places learning in context and provides pupils with a framework for self-assessment and peer evaluation.

- 3.27 The school has acted on the recommendations of the previous inspection, and well-established procedures are now in place for monitoring teaching.

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 throughout the school, and reflects the school's aim to provide a caring environment.
- 4.2 At all stages the pupils' spiritual awareness is strong. Nursery and Reception children develop self-awareness, assisting their learning and development for the future. Pupils of every age demonstrate high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. For example, in a house assembly, pupils in Years 7 to 9 engaged the audience with poetry readings, exceptional musical performance and feedback from members of the MUN. Pupils are emotionally mature for their age and able to express themselves in lessons and around the school with openness, in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Their appreciation of non-material aspects of life is evident in their rich creative work in art, participation in music, dance and drama, and the celebration of these achievements expressed spontaneously by their peers. In their daily interactions with others, they develop understanding of and respect for the religious beliefs of others. Spiritually inspiring quotations are displayed around the school, stimulating thought and reflection.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Year 2 pupils accepted the need for simple rules and were able to express the idea that not following them could result in hurting others. Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is almost always excellent. In lessons they explore moral and ethical dimensions related to the curriculum, as seen in a Year 13 economics lesson where pros and cons of giving aid to developing countries were debated. In discussion, they are respectful of those who hold different views from their own.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is excellent. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Nursery and Reception children co-operate well with each other and respect differences. In the senior school, the values expressed in the 'Respect Charter' are evident in and out of lessons. Older pupils demonstrate a caring awareness of the much younger members of the community. High quality relationships form the bedrock for learning, creating a safe environment for social interaction. In responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils expressed the view that they are not able to hold positions of responsibility. Inspectors found that Year 7 pupils share information with those in Year 6, both at La Storta and Nomentana, to support transition to the senior school. Year 12 pupils mentor those in Year 7, helping them with organisation and homework. Pupils also have opportunities to take on other roles, such as sports captains and class representatives on the community council. In questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils indicated that they feel their views are not listened to. Inspectors found that the community council is in place for all parts of the school. As a result of issues raised by pupils, an anti-bullying council was set up. In interviews, pupils were confident that they could make their opinions known in an appropriate way.
- 4.5 Pupils are keen to support those less fortunate than themselves, for example by raising funds to assist in running an orphanage in Zambia. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award provides further opportunities for pupils to undertake voluntary work and to develop their social skills. Citizenship studies and opportunities such as the MUN enable pupils to take an interest in world affairs and to grow in social, political and economic awareness.

- 4.6 The pupils' cultural awareness illustrates fully the school's aim to relate the experience of the classroom to the realities of the world outside. Pupils benefit from the diverse range of nationalities, languages and family backgrounds represented in the school; an awareness of other cultural traditions is harmoniously embedded and valued. Pupils' awareness of other cultural traditions, British, Western and global, is excellent. In many lessons, pupils and teachers draw on this diverse experience to develop learning. For example, a Year 13 class empathised with North American Indians facing challenges to their sustainable way of life, and in a Year 7 lesson pupils enjoyed drawing on their own cultural experience when exploring trade routes into Baghdad as part of the Islamic civilisations topic.

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

- 4.7 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. The pupils are appreciative of the support they receive from staff. They enjoy friendly relationships with them and with their peers, which are evident throughout the school from the Nursery to Year 13. Pupils are well known to staff, whose personal knowledge is extensively captured on the school's information management system. Such information is used for the pupils' benefit and complements the individual attention that pupils receive from those with responsibility for them. In their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents expressed dissatisfaction with the provision of pastoral care, and a substantial minority of pupils said that there is not a member of staff or older pupil to whom they can turn with a concern. However, in interviews the pupils spoke warmly of the help and guidance available to them, and staff were observed to provide sympathetic encouragement. In questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils expressed the view that staff do not treat them fairly or equally. Inspection evidence did not support this view.
- 4.8 The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and expectations are set out in its code of behaviour. A minority of parents said in their responses to questionnaires that the school does not achieve high standards of behaviour. Inspectors found the pupils to be well behaved, courteous and friendly. The pupils are aware of the school's policy on bullying. Showing kindness to one another is well understood from the youngest age. Pupils are confident that the school will deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The school has arranged for an outside speaker to address pupils, staff and parents on cyber-bullying and safe use of the internet.
- 4.9 An appropriate safeguarding and child protection policy is in place and all staff are trained to respond to any concerns. The designated child protection officers have established networks of suitable local contacts to ensure that they can carry out inter-agency working when it is required for the welfare of the pupils. The single central register of staff appointments is accurately maintained and new staff do not begin work at the school until all of the required checks have been completed.
- 4.10 During the inspection, support was provided to make Nursery and Reception staff fully aware of safeguarding checklist requirements and procedures were put in place to ensure full compliance. The safeguarding of children is carefully ensured and children are helped, through example and teaching, to behave in a safe and healthy manner, for example by washing hands.
- 4.11 Both the La Storta and Nomentana sites are well maintained with due attention to the safety of the pupils. At the previous inspection, the school had been required to carry out a number of improvements with regard to health and safety. Since that time, it has invested substantially in improving both sites. A sophisticated, modern

fire safety system has been installed at La Storta and is appropriately maintained. The safety of the pupils is given a high priority by the governors, who have fully supported the many measures that have been taken to establish suitable procedures and checks. Efficient risk assessments are carried out for the premises and for activities, including trips away from the school sites. There are facilities for sick or injured pupils on both school sites and several of the staff have undertaken first-aid training. Should a pupil require hospital treatment, the school's first-aid policy requires that a bilingual member of staff should accompany him or her.

- 4.12 Pupils learn about the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. They are provided with a nutritious mid-day meal. Senior school pupils said in interviews and during lunch that the quality of food is variable and expressed dissatisfaction with the often long queues for meals in the refectory, despite lunchtimes being staggered. The inspection team found the food to be satisfactory, though observed long queues for meals.
- 4.13 Admission and attendance registers are very well maintained.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good. The whole-school vision to provide a high quality education in a stimulating learning, teaching and nurturing environment has been achieved. Sound financial planning has resulted in investment in an excellent standard of staff and resources.
- 5.2 The introduction of sub-committees has enabled the governing body to play a much more active role in the implementation of planned strategy and the monitoring of educational initiatives and standards, from the Nursery onwards. For example, staff appreciate the interest the education committee has taken in their writing innovations. They speak warmly of governors' involvement in school events. Governors draw on expertise from within the parent body if necessary skills cannot be supplied by board members. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that a small minority who are not governors do not have a clear idea of the board's functions and powers. The governors' role as 'critical friends' to the PSG is not consistently implemented by all board members. The constitution of the board makes succession planning and continuity problematic, as parents are often in full-time-employment and many relocate regularly.
- 5.3 Concerns raised at the time of the previous inspection have been carefully considered and much improved. The dual structures have been agreed and are in place, so that there is clarity about the roles of the two bodies. Training and membership of a professional organisation mean that governors are now more aware of their responsibilities in respect of welfare, health and safety, the appointments procedure and the checking of staff suitability. However, governors lack meeting minutes recording that all have been involved with the annual review of the child protection policy. Through a detailed review of all areas of the school, the board now has in place a comprehensive strategic plan through to 2020.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Strong, collaborative and distributed leadership unites the school's three sections, functioning as one school. The vision for the school to be a stimulating learning, teaching and nurturing environment is projected by the leadership to all staff, resulting in excellent pupil development.
- 5.5 Key appointments, made since the previous inspection, have provided a new framework of management that is able to give clear leadership to all areas of the school. There is increased visibility of leadership around the school sites. Middle management has been strengthened and developed to achieve the same clarity of purpose as is evident in the PSG. The strategic education and business plans have provided an excellent platform for recent development and there has been progress towards the next stage. Thus, leadership reflects, monitors and self-evaluates effectively. Progress targets are clear to all staff.
- 5.6 Leadership and management of the senior school have been ambitious in collecting and using data to monitor the progress of pupils, which has brought about a change of culture in the uses of data for the pupils' benefit.

- 5.7 The leadership and management have a system of regular meetings. This is appreciated by staff since it keeps them informed and enables them fully to play a part in further development. Staff feel that they have opportunities to discuss and raise issues or ideas. They are very positive about recent changes to the leadership structure, seeing these as a benefit to teaching and learning across the school.
- 5.8 An ambitious action plan for the Nursery and Reception is developed through excellent communication and teamwork by all staff on the two sites. The introduction of the peer observation programme in these departments is an example of the excellent progress made since the previous inspection. The safeguarding and support of all Nursery and Reception children are promoted in the welcoming, safe and stimulating environment, both inside and out.
- 5.9 The leadership of the junior schools has further strengthened their liaison, to the benefit of both. Their operations are aligned wherever possible, to excellent effect, and any differences have been well considered.
- 5.10 The quality of teaching is monitored by senior leaders. A comprehensive range of professional development and training opportunities is provided. These are included in the school's action plan and are based on identified needs. Training has been effective in preparing teachers for the introduction of new strategies. At all levels, staff are trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils and in safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. Staff appraisal is well embedded and regular review meetings give the teaching staff the chance to reflect on their own professional development.
- 5.11 Leadership has made the appointment of high quality staff a priority and through review, peer observation and training, has made excellence in teaching a target throughout the school.
- 5.12 In their responses to questionnaires, a small minority of parents indicated some concerns about the management of the school. Inspectors found that management is clearly functioning at a high level of purpose in carrying out its duties and achieving its vision.
- 5.13 The school practises safer recruitment and has thorough arrangements for checking and recording the suitability of staff, volunteers, supply staff and governors.

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

- 5.14 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Channels of communication throughout the school and on the different sites are many and highly effective, in line with the school's mission to maintain a sharing, supportive environment. Examples of active and excellent communication include regular newsletters, induction mornings for new pupils, reports, grade cards, events, questionnaires and the school's intranet. Parents are also encouraged to become volunteers in the library.
- 5.15 Excellent communication between the parents and staff of Nursery and Reception children at the beginning and end of the school day helps the children to settle in confidently and happily. Parents visit these classes regularly and become involved in and supportive of their children's learning.
- 5.16 The school seeks to listen to its parent body and takes the initiative in establishing links and communication. For example, meetings are held for the parents' association, where a parent representative from each class in the school discusses

with school leaders any concerns raised by parents and in turn communicates to parents useful information about the school. The meetings are minuted and the school has a good record in its responses to parents. Coffee mornings have been established as a direct response to parents' requests for increased communication with the school.

- 5.17 In responses to questionnaires, a small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the way that the school handles concerns. Inspectors found that parents have a good number of opportunities to raise such issues with the school and that the school has systems in place for responding to them. There is a published procedure for dealing with complaints but the school seeks to respond informally and promptly to any matters raised. A few parents indicated dissatisfaction with the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors found that in addition to receiving reports, parents are free to attend parents' meetings held every half-term if they have any concerns.
- 5.18 All sections of the school provide information documents for the parents. Class-parent links are of great support to new families and staff in the school. The governors' education committee has produced a diagram of the school communication network to maximise parents' awareness of the numerous and various channels available within the school community.
- 5.19 Parents can be actively involved in the work and progress of their children, and use the homework diaries as a means of communication with staff. The information booklets, which are compiled by parents and issued to the whole parent body, are excellent examples of parents' collaboration with the school. The booklets complement the wealth of information provided by the school.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff, and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with 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 Deborah Forbes	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Ann Stranack	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr Stephen Baird	Junior Team Inspector (Head, COBIS school, Switzerland)
Dr Iain Farrell	Senior Team Inspector (Former Director of Studies, HMC school, UK)
Ms Alison Horton	Senior Team Inspector (Head of Boarding, GSA school, UK)
Dr Alison Primrose	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school, UK)
Mr Stephen Rogers	Senior Team Inspector (Principal, COBIS/HMC school, Czech Republic)