

Almuñecar International School.

Calle Pinariego, 1. 18690 Almuñecar, Granada, Spain.

School's regional authorisation number: 18601965

Date of Inspection:

February 16th 2024

Inspection Team:

Gill Kaye (Lead inspector)
Nicola Crawford (Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

to assess the whole school from nursery to year 13 for reauthorisation as a British school.

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from **nursery** (aged 3 years) to **year 13** (aged 18 years) for a period of **4 years** for **340 pupils**.

The next inspection is due in February 2028.

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History and Context of the School:

Almuñecar International School was founded in 1989 and is located in a residential area in Almuñecar on the Andalusian coast of Spain.

It is privately owned by a large group of shareholders.

The school was last inspected in March 2020 and given authorisation for 340 pupils from nursery to year 13.

Currently there are 270 pupils of whom 54% are Spanish, 17% are British and the rest made up of various nationalities.

Accommodation and Resources:

The accommodation provides a stimulating and colourful environment in a spacious, four-storey building. There is a lift in place for disabled access to all floors. Suitable toilet, washing and changing facilities are provided for children of all ages and staff.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classrooms have direct access to safe, spacious outdoor play areas where effective learning can take place. All outdoor areas have matted surfaces. A great variety of resources and experiences encourage children to explore, touch and feel, therefore developing language and physical skills. For example, the nursery children used various resources to reinforce pencil control, cutting skills and to negotiate space and obstacles.

The primary and secondary classrooms are all suitably furnished and adequate in size, each with ample space for 18 pupils and are well resourced enabling teachers to meet pupils' learning needs.

Specialist rooms include an art room, music room, two well-stocked libraries, and two very well equipped science laboratories. The latter includes a suitable teaching area for examination classes. There is a well organised science preparation room with fume cupboard. Information and communications technology (ICT) is taught in two well equipped ICT suites with 20 computers in each. The school has 65 chrome books and these are well used by pupils.

Sports facilities include a large outdoor multi sports facility for ball games, an indoor facility for dance, gymnastics and drama and shaded playground areas for students to relax at recreation times.

The school kitchen provides healthy meals for the students and dining facilities are good. Children told inspectors, "We all really enjoy our lunches."

Pupils enjoy a very pleasant learning environment and the overall impact on learning is very positive. Children take an active role in displaying their work in classrooms. This good practice recognises effort, showcases high quality art work and celebrates achievements but could be enhanced by providing more samples of pupils' writing.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

The school has appropriate policies effectively implemented by staff to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying.

The school complies with the relevant safety laws and fire safety standards, including those for the local authority. Fire drills are carried out three times per year and are suitably recorded. Clear emergency routes are displayed in every classroom and there is an effective programme for monitoring alarms and extinguishers.

Procedures for dealing with accidents are effective. Several members of staff are trained first aiders and are fully aware of the emergency protocols and how to respond in case of emergency. There is a well-equipped first aid room.

Safeguarding arrangements and child protection are a priority for the school and are rigorous and well monitored. There is a designated safeguarding leader who is known by all the children.

Comprehensive risk assessment procedures safeguard and promote the welfare and safety of the students. They are thorough, applied diligently and any concerns addressed quickly. In addition, sixth form science students provide their own written science practical risk assessments for all experiments undertaken in their lessons.

The school carries out appropriate checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children.

The school site is secure, very clean and well maintained. There are supervised entry and exit points. Students take pride in the school environment and treat their surroundings with respect.

The Curriculum:

The curriculum at all key stages and in the sixth form is broad and balanced. It provides a good British education for the aptitudes and needs of all pupils including those who speak English as an additional language. Whilst the curriculum is good overall and enables pupils to learn and make progress, the school is aware of the need for further improvement in science and it has become a priority throughout the school.

Homework is planned to consolidate and extend learning for each class, once a week in primary and for each subject area in secondary.

The EYFS framework is implemented effectively following the seven areas of learning. The development of the children's language is supported particularly well. Children learn independently in small groups or with the guidance of the teacher. They are confident and happy learning through play and through a range of carefully planned activities.

The English National Curriculum is clearly evident in the primary classes. The children work well in groups and independently. Teachers frequently make links to previous work and use technology well to stimulate learning. There are some imaginative and

effective opportunities for learning such as in a topic lesson where the children explored paintings by Van Gough, inspiring them to create their own painting whilst developing their own painting techniques using oil pads, paint and pencils for sketching, learning how to articulate personal responses to their experiences. However, key stage one science allocation does not provide the required time to teach the relevant programme of study for scientific enquiry. As a result the children's understanding of scientific ideas in KS1 is weakened.

The secondary curriculum is good and provides a strong British experience. The range of subjects offered prepares the students well for the IGCSE programme in key stage 4 (KS4) as well as for the requirements of the Spanish curriculum. The key stage 5 (KS5) opportunities are good and the range of subjects provided ensures that the students' needs are met.

The school uses assessment data well to identify students who need additional support, set targets for individuals to achieve and provide personal learning intervention strategies supported by the special educational needs (SEN) teacher.

An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities provides opportunities for students to gain additional skills in various sports, ukulele, rap and drama. They are enjoyed by all students throughout the school. There are various events throughout the year such as shows, the spring carnival and exhibitions of pupils' work and school fun days. Key stage 3 (KS3) pupils recently performed a theatrical production in the town cultural centre.

Sixth form pupils thoroughly enjoy providing classroom support throughout the school as part of their work experience programme and the school delivers effective opportunities and expectations for the working world. Appropriate careers guidance is provided and all students leave to study at universities.

Staffing:

Staffing levels are sufficient for the successful delivery of the curriculum. The majority of teaching staff have qualifications appropriate to their role, have suitable experience and are deployed effectively throughout the school.

There is an effective leadership structure in place, with responsibilities clearly understood. The priorities are to drive improvement and change in line with the school development plan such as improving ICT throughout the school. The changes are already making a positive impact on teaching and learning.

There are excellent relationships between the staff and the pupils. Students appreciate being listened to and their contributions valued. The effective communication between the support teachers and class teachers results in support that is accurately targeted on exactly what the children need to strengthen their academic learning.

Three teaching assistants are deployed effectively in the primary classes to support learning in EYFS and KS1. In year seven there is support in mathematics and English classes.

Staff induction is effectively lead by the head teacher and supported by the senior managers who work closely with the new staff enabling them to settle quickly into their roles.

Staff-pupil ratios are very good and impact positively on pupil progress.

Teaching and Learning:

The quality of teaching and learning varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Overall it is very good. The best teaching and learning enables pupils to make good progress in acquiring knowledge, increasing understanding and developing skills across the curriculum. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods which play a crucial role in engaging students and enhance pupils' learning. For example year 8 English students used fictional extracts to investigate how figurative language creates atmosphere to make a setting more interesting. In a year 5 writing lesson children were using various pictures to help build their emotional vocabulary in order to write a poem. All students are keen to share their ideas with their teachers as well as with each other.

Early years teachers create an inclusive and supportive environment. This helps children settle into school well and develops children's confidence. Teachers understand how children learn and develop. They provide opportunities for children to learn through active play and exploration, for example the reception children were engaged in an outdoor long jumping activity, measuring length with string, measuring tape and rulers. These activities promoted independent learning skills and improved their knowledge of the world around them. As a result, children make good progress overall in achieving the early learning goals.

Primary lessons show thorough planning and clear structure which leads to very effective use of time in most areas. Activities are prepared to meet the need of different abilities and children are provided with appropriate challenge and support where needed, for example, providing adapted materials, challenging worksheets and one-to-one help with individuals. A range of activities and teaching styles keeps pupils engaged and motivated.

Secondary students show a determined approach to their learning, encouraged by teaching that is in most cases demanding and appropriately challenging. Good subject knowledge promotes confidence and enjoyment in lessons. Where learning is most successful teachers have high expectations and set challenging work that is closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Tasks encourage pupils to think about their learning, rather than just acquiring knowledge, and this encourages them to become more self reliant. Lessons are well structured so that learning moves forward at a brisk pace.

In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, it is because tasks do not have sufficient challenge and lack pace. Despite this, teaching is never less than satisfactory.

Overall, students make good progress and show positive attitudes to their learning. The good questioning in the majority of the lessons is used to assess and extend learning. In the best lessons there is enthusiasm and energy in teaching and learning.

Teachers know their pupils well as individuals and have a sound knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. Most teachers assess pupils' work effectively and give constructive, high quality feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work and promote further learning.

All pupils make good use of the opportunities offered to develop their independent learning skills. The use of the latest technology has a significant impact on standards and students' effective learning skills and is used effectively across all subjects.

Assessment:

Pupils' achievements are now assessed regularly and tracked appropriately and systematically throughout the school. The teachers continually judge the progress of the students and adapt the lessons appropriately. Close monitoring is used effectively to identify pupils who require further support and appropriate interventions are secured. As a result, progress is consistent throughout the different age groups. All staff are encouraged to contribute to new initiatives during staff and key stage meetings. Changes agreed to assessment practices have resulted in more detailed and effective tracking of pupils' progress.

Marking and feedback are satisfactory overall. Where marking and feedback are very good, pupils are given helpful guidance, which clearly encourages pupils to improve their work further.

There is regular communication between school and home. Reports are issued at the end of each term. These indicate progress, achievement and next steps for learning. The EYFS children have individual profiles providing a well-rounded picture of each child's knowledge, understanding, abilities and progress. All parents have opportunities through the year to meet with teachers and EYFS parents are encouraged to engage in online dialogue with teachers.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and fostered by the values and atmosphere of the school. Pupils have developed desirable qualities, notably, reflectiveness, respect and compassion.

Behaviour is excellent with conduct around the school orderly, and an attitude in class which is supportive of learning. Children value the house system and the individual achievement points which are issued for improvements made in classwork and for demonstrating the school learning values.

Provision for personal, health and social education (PSHE) is good, ensuring respect and supported with guidance and advice concerning issues faced by students today. The programme is well linked to themes in primary assemblies.

The school is very inclusive and welcoming. Well-established procedures ensure that new pupils settle quickly in the friendly and supportive atmosphere. Pupils are known well as individuals, and positive reinforcement from teachers helps develop their self-esteem and sense of personal worth. The school provides a strong network of support that identifies and addresses any issues quickly and effectively. Pupils commented that they found teachers very approachable.

Leadership and Management:

The leadership and management provides clear and knowledgeable educational direction, within a very caring atmosphere.

The head teacher ensures the school operates within the British style of management team structure and has a clear vision and aspirations for the school which are reflected in practice. There are additional members of the leadership team who are part of the appraisal system. She is well supported by managers, key stage leaders and an EYFS coordinator who work successfully to encourage good practice.

A comprehensive staff appraisal system is designed to be a supportive process to ensure that all teachers have the skills they need to carry out their roles effectively. Regular observations provide information to identify strengths and weaknesses. This information is used to bring about further improvement in teaching.

Response to the previous inspection reports:

The presentation of work in children's books and handwriting have improved considerably and all classes follow a clear policy which covers both handwriting and presentation.

An effective assessment and tracking system been established throughout the school and is successfully used to anticipate pupil outcomes and for the planning of future lessons.

Staff training has maintained its importance and teachers participate in courses covering science, interactive display, marking and feedback and key questioning technique.

Recommendations:

- Allocate more time to key stage one science to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum with regard to scientific enquiry.