



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**New Cairo British International School**

**October 2019**



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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	New Cairo British International School			
<b>Address</b>	New Cairo British International School Road 17 1st District, 3rd Zone, 5th Settlement New Cairo Egypt			
<b>Telephone number</b>	+202 2758 2881			
<b>Email address</b>	principalpa@ncbis.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Bagust			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Heliopolis Society for Cultural and Social Care of English Speaking Foreigners			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	735			
	<b>Early Years Under 5s</b>	82	<b>Primary Years 1 to 6</b>	343
	<b>Secondary Years 7 to 11</b>	253	<b>Sixth Form Years 12 to 13</b>	57
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14 to 17 October 2019			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 New Cairo British International School (NCBIS) was founded in 1978. The school is the sole operating activity of the Heliopolis Society for the Cultural and Social Care of English Speaking Foreigners (The Society), which is an independent, non-profit organisation established to operate and manage the school. Membership is open to all parents with children at NCBIS. The Society elects from within its membership the board of directors, who are thus all parents of pupils at the school. It is they who govern the school and are responsible for determining its strategic direction. The school is divided into a primary school, which caters for children under the age of 5 and pupils in Years 1 to 6, and a secondary school, which caters for pupils in Years 7 to 11 and for sixth-form pupils in Years 12 and 13. The school also incorporates a small separately managed Dutch School for pupils up to the end of Year 8, who join in with some of the activities of NCBIS. The Dutch School is inspected separately.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school's motto is: 'Bringing out the best in everyone'. The school seeks to provide a safe and secure learning environment that supports academic achievement whilst promoting personal growth within a caring international community committed to the traditional values of honesty, courtesy, respect, integrity and fair play. It aims to ensure choice and challenge both within the curriculum and the extra-curricular programmes; to promote academic and personal achievement; to inspire intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and enthusiasm for learning; and to develop each pupil's unique talents to help them achieve their potential.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Currently, the school is only allowed to accept children of ex-patriate families and one Egyptian child of dual nationality for every two ex-patriate children. Prior to 2016, the school was allowed to accept children who only had Egyptian nationality. The school currently has around two-thirds ex-patriate pupils, representing around 60 nationalities, and one-third Egyptian pupils. They come largely from wealthy middle-class Egyptian or ex-patriate families with parents on fixed-term assignments. The school's own assessment data indicate that the level of ability of pupils, when they join the primary school or Year 7 in the secondary school, is broadly average. There is a turnover of approximately one-fifth of pupils each year. The school has identified 160 pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs (SEND), all of whom receive additional support through the school's inclusive learning team. Just under nine-tenths of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and around 70 pupils, mainly in the primary school, receive additional support to enable them to access the curriculum. The school identifies pupils who are particularly gifted or talented in a given area and seeks to provide additional challenge for them through the curriculum or other activities.

## 2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

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: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

**This is a COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas.** The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

**Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.**

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in November 2012.

## Key findings

**2.1 The school meets all the Standards for British Schools Overseas and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### Part 1 – Quality of education provided

**2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

2.3 The curriculum provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. It enables them to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills and a good understanding of English. It also provides personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and offers careers guidance for pupils in the secondary school. Policies, plans and schemes of work for all subjects take account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils. Although a small minority of parents do not feel the school offers a good choice of extra-curricular activities, there is, nevertheless a sufficient range to provide opportunities for pupils to gain additional skills. These activities, a variety of special events throughout the year and the formal curriculum prepare pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life beyond school, underpinned by an understanding of fundamental British values which reflect the value systems of many other countries.

2.4 The teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress, a view endorsed by a very large majority of both parents and pupils in their response to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Additional support is provided for those who join the school with little knowledge of English and for those with SEND. The teaching is generally well planned, employs effective teaching methods, uses a range of resources, demonstrates good subject knowledge and understanding, and manages behaviour effectively. The teaching does not discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics, as outlined in Part 2. In a very small minority of lessons, lack of challenge, slow pace and occasional unchecked low-level disruption are irritants to the majority of pupils but not severe enough to prejudice their chances of making good progress.

2.5 The school follows a variety of curricula, each of which provides a framework for assessing pupils' performance and tracking their progress. Learning in the early years is based on the UK's Early Years Foundation Stage framework. In Years 1 to 6, pupils follow the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme (PYP) as well as the English National Curriculum. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is based on the English National Curriculum. In Years 10 to 11, pupils are prepared largely for International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations and, in Years 12 and 13, for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma which prepares pupils for entry to a wide range of universities in the UK and around the world. Whilst the school helps pupils to take advantage of the individual strengths of each of these curricula, the different emphases and approaches lead to a disjointed approach to teaching and learning, and the differing formats for assessment make it difficult for the school to gain a really clear picture of pupils' progress as they move through the school.

2.6 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

### Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

**2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

2.8 The school promotes values which are fundamental to life in Britain and many other countries through its PSHE programme, assemblies and a variety of special activities and events which take place throughout the year. It encourages pupils to have respect for other people regardless of their background or the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It promotes

tolerance and harmony between the many different nationalities represented within the school. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour although, occasionally, a very small minority of pupils choose not to heed the school's guidance. The school prepares pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship in the UK, Egypt and the wider world. It encourages respect for democracy and the democratic process and helps pupils to develop balanced views on political issues. It provides opportunities for pupils to make meaningful contributions to the lives of others within the school, the local community and globally. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very large majority of parents agree that the school supports their children's personal development and actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and most pupils agree that the school encourages them to respect other people.

- 2.9 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

### **Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

#### **2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.**

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and takes into account both local requirements and guidance provided for schools in England. Some adjustments to the school's policy and procedures were made as a result of advice given on the pre-inspection visit and implemented effectively before the start of the inspection. Staff are thoroughly trained in the school's procedures, not only when they join the school, but through training sessions at the start of the school year and regular updates. In their response to the questionnaire, the vast majority of staff expressed confidence in the school's safeguarding procedures and the training and guidance they receive. The safeguarding policy covers all of the areas required of schools in England and is implemented effectively. Safeguarding matters are overseen by a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who is supported by a deputy DSL. The DSL cooperates with the board of governors to ensure effective oversight of safeguarding procedures, to monitor the implementation of the policy and to ensure that an annual review of policy and procedures is undertaken. The school maintains confidential records of all child protection concerns. Pupils are made fully aware of issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through assemblies and topics covered in the school's PSHE programme.
- 2.12 The school has appropriate policies in place to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying, including cyber-bullying. Various initiatives, such as the anti-bullying week which took place during the week of the inspection and posters on display in many parts of the school, educate pupils about bullying, how to prevent it and what to do should they encounter it. Although a very small minority of pupils and parents are not content with the school's efforts to eradicate bullying, discussions with pupils indicate that one-off incidents of unfriendly behaviour, usually quickly resolved, are often incorrectly labelled as bullying. Pupils clearly understand the advice they are given about bullying, and most follow this, with the result that bullying is a rare occurrence. Procedures to promote good behaviour, which are known and understood by pupils and staff, are generally implemented effectively. This is not always the case in a small minority of lessons, where pupils' behaviour does not live up to the high standards evident throughout the school for most of the time. The school maintains appropriate records of pupils' behaviour and any bullying incidents.
- 2.13 The school's approach to health and safety is thorough; its policies and practice meet the requirements of the Egyptian authorities and are in accordance with expectations for schools in England. Records are kept of all health and safety checks, many of which are undertaken by external specialists, and are submitted for scrutiny by the local civil defence authorities. There are regular fire drills and separate emergency lockdown procedures. An external company carries out an annual fire risk assessment and deals with any issues identified. Hazardous materials, such as those used by

cleaners or in the science laboratories, are stored securely. The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy and ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated. In response to their questionnaires, a very large majority of parents and pupils agree that the school provides a safe and healthy environment.

- 2.14 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and related matters and provides good cover for pupils who are ill or injured. The well-equipped medical centre is staffed by a full-time doctor, and a qualified nurse is on duty whenever pupils are on site. In addition, many staff are trained in first aid, and staff in the early years have had paediatric first-aid training. Appropriate records are kept of any medical incidents or consultations. Medicines are stored securely. First-aid kits are available in different locations around the school and are provided for school sports events and trips. Although a small minority of pupils do not feel that suitable first aid is given quickly if they are ill or injured, the inspection findings are that the school's arrangements for dealings with such incidents are more than adequate.
- 2.15 Rotas provide for members of staff to be on duty at breaks and lunchtimes at various locations around the school, and pupils are supervised appropriately throughout the school day. Admission and attendance registers meet local and UK requirements, are backed up electronically every day and are maintained for the requisite period of time.

#### **Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.16 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.17 The required checks are carried out on staff and proprietors to ensure their suitability to work with children. The school verifies each person's identity and previous employment history and carries out a criminal record check with the Egyptian authorities and, where relevant, overseas authorities. The school checks each person's medical fitness and their right to work in Egypt. Checks ensure that no staff appointed from the UK have been barred or prohibited from teaching or from managing a school. All checks are recorded on a single central register of appointments. At the time of the pre-inspection visit, this register did not meet the standard required but, before the inspection took place, all of the necessary information, which had been recorded in staff files, was transferred to the register so that it met requirements by the end of the inspection.

#### **Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.18 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.19 Suitable and well-maintained toilet and washing facilities are provided for pupils in many different locations around the school. Separate, clearly labelled facilities are available for staff and visitors. Changing rooms and showers are provided for pupils in the secondary school taking part in swimming or physical education (PE) lessons. The school's medical centre provides appropriate accommodation and facilities for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. The buildings are maintained in good condition and are checked regularly for any issues that might compromise the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Any identified issues are rectified quickly. The lighting and acoustics in teaching rooms are suitable. Drinking water dispensers are available for pupils throughout the school. There is adequate space for outdoor play. Two grass pitches and a large shaded hard-surface playing area are available for PE and games.

## **Part 6 – Provision of information**

### **2.20 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

2.21 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and local authorities. This information includes details about the proprietor, the aims of the school and the curriculum offered. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. Arrangements and policies for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, complaints, health and safety, first aid, provision for pupils with SEND and those with EAL are available on the school's website. Particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year and its results in public examinations are published. Although a small minority of parents do not feel they receive helpful information about their children's performance and progress, the school fulfils requirements by providing a full written report at least annually on each child's attainment and progress, as well as holding parent-teacher meetings and providing progress reports at various times during the year.

## **Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

### **2.22 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

2.23 At the time of the pre-inspection visit, the school's complaints policy and the manner in which complaints were recorded did not comply with the standard relating to the handling of complaints. A revised policy, which has clarified the deadlines for each stage of the process, is available to parents through the school website, along with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. This process seeks to resolve any complaint informally but, if concerns are not resolved, parents may proceed to lodge a formal complaint in writing. If the complaint remains unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel which includes at least one person independent of the management and running of the school and which parents may attend, accompanied if they wish. The panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. A confidential record is kept of all complaints and findings, including action taken by the school whether or not the complaint is upheld. The school's records show that complaints are handled promptly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the complaints policy.

## **Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

### **2.24 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

2.25 The proprietors ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards for British Schools Overseas are met consistently, and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. The school's leaders responded quickly and effectively to a small number of issues which were identified during the pre-inspection visit.

### 3 Inspection of Educational Quality

#### Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development;

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- 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;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

The report refers to year groups in accordance with the system most commonly used in England.

#### Key findings

**3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is good.**

**3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

#### Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- enable pupils to achieve consistently well in all subjects by improving the quality of teaching in known areas of weakness;
- help pupils to make consistent progress throughout the school, particularly in mathematics and in their IB studies, by ensuring the curriculum builds progressively and coherently on pupils' prior learning;
- improve pupils' progress by implementing a whole-school assessment policy which provides the school with a clear picture of how much progress pupils are making from one year to the next and especially from the transition from primary to secondary.

#### The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

**3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is good.**

3.5 In many respects, pupils achieve extremely well during their time at the school, but there are also areas where pupils' progress is slower than expected, resulting in an overall judgement of good for their learning and achievement. Children make particularly good progress in the early years as they develop independence and learn to explore the many interesting learning opportunities provided for them each day. In the primary school, pupils' progress in developing their reading, speaking and listening skills is excellent, as is their ability to work collaboratively in pairs or in groups when

undertaking inquiry-based learning. However, their progress in developing their mathematical skills and applying these to other areas of learning is slower. In the secondary school, pupils achieve excellent results in most of their IGCSE examinations. From 2016 to 2019, IGCSE results improved year on year so that, in 2019, 54 per cent of the passes were at grades 7 to 9, almost 12 percentage points higher than the equivalent A\* and A grades in 2016. However, in a few subjects, such as first language Arabic, business studies, computing, music and PE, results have been consistently lower than in other subjects. The excellent progress made from Years 7 to 11 has not been maintained over the last three years in the sixth form, where the IB diploma results, whilst still consistently above worldwide norms, have been lower than predicted in the light of earlier IGCSE results. In 2018, 83 per cent of pupils achieved the full IB diploma, whereas in 2019 the percentage was 72.

- 3.6 There are various reasons for this unevenness in pupils' progress. The first has to do with the quality of the teaching. In a large majority of lessons, the teaching engages the pupils, provides consistent challenge, meets the differing needs of pupils within the class, makes good use of time, communicates expectations clearly and ensures pupils make good and often excellent progress. In a small minority of lessons, in both primary and secondary, the teaching offers significantly less challenge, moves at a slow pace and does not fully engage the pupils. The school's leaders identified that the pace of teaching in some subjects in the sixth form had been too slow and did not always show full understanding of the IB curriculum. They have made concerted efforts to improve the quality of teaching in the sixth form; discussions with pupils indicate a substantial improvement since the start of the school year.
- 3.7 The second factor has to do with the planning of the curriculum. Whilst there are clear well-thought-out plans for the different curricula identified in paragraph 2.5 above, the changing emphases lead to a lack of continuity from one part of the school to the next. In the secondary school, lessons in a given subject are not always spread evenly over the two-week timetable in the secondary school, and pupils find some 100-minute lessons, which are suitable in a few subjects, challenging. The planning of deadlines for pupils in the sixth form in previous years has led to undue pressure in Year 13, although leaders have successfully resolved this particular issue.
- 3.8 The third factor has to do with the systems for assessment. From Nursery through to Year 13, pupils experience a whole range of assessments which seek to show how well they are achieving. However, they do not provide a crystal-clear picture of how well pupils are progressing, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary where there is a lack of correlation between the final assessments in Year 6 and the initial assessments in Year 7. In terms of day-to-day assessments, the secondary school leaders have revised the marking policy. Where this is implemented well, pupils say that the feedback is helpful, but the policy is not being implemented consistently in all subjects.
- 3.9 Despite these factors, inspectors observed many examples of pupils making excellent progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. Children in the Nursery showed great confidence in developing their ability to swim and inquisitiveness as they explored the topic of water through imaginative play-based activities. Children in the Reception demonstrated strong development of language skills whilst older pupils in the primary school developed an in-depth understanding of the problems of climate change. In the secondary school, pupils showed great engagement in drama, excellent knowledge of angles in a geometry lesson and deep insights into the hyper-inflationary economy of Germany before the Second World War. Sixth-form pupils discussed poems using clear, varied and accurate language, and demonstrated good understanding of grammar in French. Throughout the school, there are examples of highly creative and expressive artwork. Pupils with SEND make particularly good progress as a result of the support provided by the inclusive learning team and well-planned individual programmes of study which significantly narrow the gap between their performance and that of other pupils.
- 3.10 Pupils' communication skills are excellent, all the more remarkable as English is an additional language for the large majority. Those who join the school with little knowledge of English make rapid progress because of the additional support they receive. For all pupils in the primary school, there is a very

strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. Older pupils were observed giving presentations with great confidence, whilst their classmates listened attentively and responded maturely and knowledgeably. Pupils say that they have many opportunities to communicate with their teachers through question-and-answer sessions and with their peers through paired and group work. Delivering presentations to the class after home-learning tasks, drama productions and participation in assemblies all contribute to strengthening these skills. Pupils also develop excellent reading skills. Fluid groupings in guided and paired reading across year groups facilitate individualised learning and progress, whilst readers' theatre allows them to study and perform play scripts. Their writing skills are good but not as well developed. In some classes, pupils' progress in writing is hindered by over-use of worksheets, which limit their independence, creativity and imagination, and a lack of opportunity for extended writing. The strong foundations built in the primary are consolidated well in the secondary school so that pupils leave as articulate young adults who engage in interesting conversation, are well read and have very good writing skills.

- 3.11 In the primary school, pupils have strong numeracy skills, but they are less successful in applying these in other subjects or when dealing with mathematical reasoning and solving word problems. This is because, in planning the curriculum, mathematics has received less emphasis than English. Primary school leaders have noted this and have implemented initiatives this year to improve the rate of progress in mathematics. In the secondary school, however, pupils make excellent progress in mathematics up to the end of Year 11 where IGCSE mathematics results rank alongside the sciences and humanities as one of the strongest performing subjects. However, pupils find the transition from IGCSE to IB difficult and do not perform nearly as well at the end of Year 13.
- 3.12 Although IGCSE and IB examination results in computing have been lower than in most other subjects, pupils are nevertheless highly proficient in using ICT whenever required. Significant investment in ICT-related equipment and software have contributed to the development of pupils' skills in this area. Opportunities for them to develop and use their ICT skills vary throughout the school, but pupils quickly adapt to using new software in a wide range of subjects and are thoroughly conversant with using computers and tablet devices for research and to produce and store their work. Pupils studying for the IB diploma stressed that it would be impossible to complete their IB work without excellent ICT skills.
- 3.13 Pupils make excellent progress in developing higher-order skills in the primary school as a result of the emphasis placed on inquiry-based learning as a fundamental part of the PYP curriculum. This was seen particularly clearly during the inspection in the engaging presentations given by different groups of pupils who had been working together in groups to research factors affecting the development of a fictitious country and to produce an election campaign to bring improvement. Pupils showed considerable initiative and application, the ability to synthesise information from different sources, to hypothesise and to draw conclusions. Although these skills are still much in evidence in the secondary school, they are not always developed as effectively, especially in lessons where there is a tendency to spoon-feed rather than encouraging pupils to think for themselves, a reason, perhaps, why some pupils find the transition from IGCSE to IB quite challenging.
- 3.14 The school's extra-curricular programme offers a good range of activities for pupils, though not as wide or extensive as in many of the highest performing schools in the UK, and limited in some respects by the school's facilities, particularly with regard to the ability to offer a really wide range of sporting activities. Nevertheless, the programme enables pupils to achieve well in many different areas outside the formal curriculum. Each evening, around one-third of the school participates in some extra-curricular activity; most pupils in the secondary school engage at least once a week and many primary-school pupils twice a week. Around one-fifth of pupils learn to play a musical instrument, and many discover hidden talents through performing in the school's major productions for both secondary and primary pupils, or participating in concerts, choirs, bands or the Rockfest. Some pupils develop their debating skills as part of a debating team or participating in Model United Nations. Many pupils participate in extra-curricular sports, and a recent drive by the school's leadership to improve the

school's competitiveness has seen successes in football, netball and swimming. Others pick up new skills in the clubs dedicated to hobbies such as chess, lego, minecraft, gardening, golf, judo, origami and karate. A small number of primary school pupils are pioneering participants in the Junior Award Scheme for Schools, a precursor to the more well-known International Award in which 42 secondary pupils achieved the bronze and 7 the silver award in the previous year.

- 3.15 Pupils' attitudes to learning in the primary school are generally excellent. Pupils are very enthusiastic and responsive to their teachers' ideas. They want to improve their work and to get things right. In the secondary school, the large majority of pupils continue to have a good attitude towards learning and participate enthusiastically in class activities to further their educational outcomes.
- 3.16 The school's motto is 'Bringing out the best in everyone'. The school is successful in fulfilling this primary objective in many areas, as it is in its aim to promote academic achievement and enthusiasm for learning. Ultimately, the school's success is seen in the fact that a large majority of pupils secure places at their first-choice university in the UK, the USA, Europe and other countries. The senior leaders, nearly all of whom have only been in post for just over a year, have identified areas where the school's performance requires improvement and have implemented initiatives to bring improvement, the early signs of which are encouraging.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

#### **3.17 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

- 3.18 The school is highly successful in fulfilling its motto with regard to promoting pupils' personal development. In line with its aims, the school promotes traditional values of honesty, courtesy, respect, integrity and fair play. The school's leaders have created a safe, secure and caring environment, in which relationships between pupils and staff are generally excellent, and have introduced interesting initiatives, particularly in the primary school, which help pupils to develop a greater understanding of themselves and to develop into thoughtful, caring human beings who are well-equipped for the next stage of their lives.
- 3.19 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 13, they come across as highly confident young adults, secure in themselves, resilient and with a strong determination to do well. The foundations are laid early on as staff in the early years work successfully to wean children from their dependence on parents or nannies by encouraging them to pack their own school bags, to tidy up the classroom after activities and make their own choice of activities. In the primary school, pupils grow in confidence as a result of the approach encouraged by the school's leaders to develop a 'growth mindset'. One pupil, for example, said that there is no such thing as failure, that you learn from your mistakes and that success will come if one keeps on trying. Such spirit was noted during the inspection on many occasions as pupils discussed and refined their ideas with others and subjected themselves to assessment by their peers. Older pupils, for example improved their design of a board game through such discussion and reflection. Activities outside the formal curriculum also make a strong contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development, but particularly their self-confidence and resilience. For example, pupils in the primary school progress from having a sleepover in the school, to a one-night residential in the desert, a five-night residential in a small village and an adventure trip to the UK. Pupils spoke of how helpful these activities had been in helping them to grow as people.
- 3.20 In the secondary school, many pupils told inspectors how the school had helped them to develop from shy individuals into self-confident people, willing and able to interact confidently with others. A key factor here is the ever-changing population of the school, where friends leave and pupils are constantly having to re-adjust to new relationships. Secondary school pupils said that, although they found these constant adjustments hard, they nevertheless valued the important life lessons they learnt through encountering new people. Pupils demonstrate an excellent level of self-understanding for their age, are generally self-disciplined and display a good ability to organise themselves. Pupils cite participation in drama productions, speaking in front of the whole school in assembly, performing

in public, becoming 'leaders of learning' and engaging in a wide range of projects through CAS, a requirement for the IB diploma to engage in 'Community, Activity, Service', as pivotal points in their own personal growth.

- 3.21 In the primary school, older pupils spoke animatedly about the importance of making sensible decisions, fully aware that applying themselves to their work would have a significant impact upon their options and choices later in the school, for university, for their career and, ultimately, for their own children's possibilities. The development of such insight is encouraged by the school's leaders through the PYP curriculum and the provision of opportunities for pupils to make meaningful decisions. For example, in their presentations at the end of a unit of inquiry, primary-school pupils demonstrated that the decisions they had taken in relation to their political campaign for leadership of a fictitious country would have significant consequences for their overall outcomes and success, and realised that such scenarios reflected decisions they have to make in real life. In one class, pupils were allowed to take on the responsibility of arranging the seating and other furniture in their classroom. Pupils in the secondary school also display a mature ability to make choices about their work, and the subjects they wish to choose in order to pursue chosen careers. Their leadership of CAS activities also helps them to develop their decision-making abilities.
- 3.22 Occasionally, however, they do not always make the right decisions in relation to taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the school's expectations and credit the school for providing them with clear moral guidance and guidelines for their own safety, particularly when using the internet or mobile phones. Thoughtless behaviour in a small minority of lessons, very occasional bullying and other inappropriate choices reflect the continual human conflict between right and wrong, tempered reassuringly by a very clear understanding of what is right. Pupils in the primary school were observed, for example, talking at length about the need to respect each other, the importance of not tolerating bullies, what to do if there are disagreements, and the value of compromise. Throughout the school, pupils receive important messages about right and wrong through assemblies, their PSHE lessons and special occasions, such as anti-bullying week which took place during the inspection.
- 3.23 In contrast, pupils develop a strong sense of the intangible, promoted particularly well in the primary school, where pupils regularly use a tablet computer to register their different emotions at the start of the day and learn to recognise how to manage these. They also write about things they are grateful for in a gratitude journal which, they say, makes them appreciate and be grateful for what they have. Even at a very young age, pupils develop an empathy for others. Pupils in Year 2, for example, discussed with great empathy the poverty that resulted in slums being a feature of many Asian and African countries and the fact that many people in Africa do not have access to fresh water. They commented that they should be grateful to God for giving us things that we may take for granted. Pupils in the secondary school expressed the importance of appreciating beauty in art, drama and music, even if the starting point is as a reluctant participant. The school's leaders encourage musical and dramatic performance as a regular feature of assemblies and, during the inspection, the school was treated to a superb rendition by a sixth former of an aria from a Puccini opera and an accomplished jazz solo from a primary-school pupil. Pupils are very aware of the vulnerability of our planet and stress the importance of their generation taking steps to preserve its integrity for future generations.
- 3.24 Linked with their spiritual development, pupils display excellent cultural understanding and a strong propensity for respecting diversity. In the primary school, a daily mindfulness session helps pupils to take a genuine interest in the faiths of others. In discussing gender stereotypes, older pupils agreed that stereotypical concepts needed breaking and expressed the view that a person's gender should not create artificial barriers. In the secondary school, rooms are set aside to be used by pupils for reflection and prayer. In Ramadan, some pupils of other faiths fast alongside their Muslim friends. In learning-for-life lessons, pupils develop understanding of themselves and others as they explore topics such as sexuality and diversity. The many different cultures and nationalities represented in the school

are celebrated during international week which helps to further pupils' understanding of others and brings families and communities together to celebrate diversity in food, costume, tradition and culture.

- 3.25 Pupils' social development, their ability to collaborate with others and their contribution to others are real strengths. Throughout the school, pupils collaborate willingly and effectively when working with a partner or in small groups. They are cooperative, socially aware, attentive listeners and demonstrate good social skills. They enjoy each other's company at break times. School productions are seen as important contributory factors in developing pupils' ability to work with others, and they quickly learn that if they do not work well together it will reflect badly on them and the school. In the primary school, action projects such as the recycling of second-hand clothing, involvement in charity projects and visits to a school for deaf children promote social awareness and help pupils to develop a social conscience. Pupils undertake responsibilities as monitors seriously, interchanging roles each week so that all have the opportunity to contribute. In the secondary school, pupils willingly take on responsibilities as prefects, leaders of learning helping pupils in other year groups, or house captains working across and within year groups. Through their CAS activities, pupils make a significant contribution outside school, for example, visiting elderly people in a retirement home, supporting a local school with a reading programme, teaching English to a group of teenagers and adults from a poor area of the city, and undertaking construction projects in another part of the country.
- 3.26 Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. Through a unit of inquiry in the primary school, pupils showed a good awareness of, among other things, their changing bodies and puberty, the need for cleanliness and the importance of balanced diets. They have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe online as a result of the school's input. They are aware that, to remain healthy, they have to be active and take part in regular exercise. Practical demonstrations of pupils' awareness of safety is seen through the wearing of sun hats at break times, the use of safety spectacles in science lessons, and taking regular water breaks when engaging in sporting activities.

## 4 Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The reporting inspector undertook a pre-inspection visit five weeks before the start of the inspection, during which he gained a preliminary understanding of the school and provided advice and guidance to the school's leaders. During the inspection, inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house events, form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, pupils and staff to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Graham Sims	Reporting inspector
Mrs Penny Forsyth	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school, UK)
Mrs Linda Horton	Team inspector (Head of year, HMC school, UK)
Mr Kieron Peacock	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school, Kuwait)
Mr Umeschchandra Raja	Team inspector (Head, ISA school, UK)
Mr Matthew Taylor	Team inspector (Headmaster, BSO school, Spain)