



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS**

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

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## King's College, The British School of Panama

Full Name of School	<b>King's College, The British School of Panama</b>		
Address	<b>Edificio 518 Calle al Hospital Clayton Panama REPUBLIC OF PANAMA</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>+507 282 3300</b>		
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Head	<b>Ms Vanessa Whay</b>		
Proprietor	<b>Sir Roger Fry</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 16</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>299</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (153 boys; 146 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2:	5-11:	<b>194</b>
	3-5:	11-18:	<b>50</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>299</b>	
Inspection dates	<b>19 to 20 Oct 2015 26 to 29 Oct 2015</b>		

## PREFACE

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

The 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.

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

**The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:**

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit**
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features**
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures**

**(iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law.**

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's College, the British School of Panama, is a day school that currently provides education for children and pupils aged between three and fourteen and plans to continue expanding to accommodate pupils aged up to eighteen. It aims to provide a safe, secure, positive and enjoyable environment for its pupils, and to encourage them to achieve their highest level of academic success, by drawing upon the best features of the British educational system, whilst set in an international environment. It seeks to foster self-assurance, mutual respect and a sense of duty, encourages Christian values, and intends that pupils should benefit from Panama's language, history and culture through complementary studies. Governance is provided by the King's Group Board, which sets the strategic direction for the school and oversees its development and financial planning. The Board is supported by a Central Council, which also has responsibility for other schools in the King's Group, and a local Advisory Council.
- 1.2 The school was established in 2012 at the request of the President of Panama and with the support of the British Deputy Prime Minister. It opened with 47 pupils in Nursery to Year 5. It is located in Clayton, within the Garden City of Panama, a few kilometres from the city centre. The original building was formerly part of an American military base and has been converted in stages since the school began, in order to accommodate the expanding number of year groups. The secondary school was opened in 2013 and new classrooms were added in 2015 as well as facilities for instrumental music tuition and a library for pupils of primary age. The site includes an expanse of rain forest.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 299 pupils were on roll, including similar numbers of boys and girls. There are 134 pupils in the infants section, including 55 in Nursery and Reception. The juniors section has 115 pupils in Years 3 to 6. The secondary section currently accommodates 50 pupils in Years 7 to 9. The school is planning that the oldest year group should enter Year 10 in September 2016 and Year 11 the following year. Six pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support. Thirty-three pupils receive support for English as an additional language (EAL). Ten per cent of the pupils are native English speakers.
- 1.4 Results in national tests for writing at age 11 have been below the UK national average for maintained primary schools. The ability profile of the senior school is in line with the UK national average, with a distribution comparable to UK norms. Pupils come from 37 different nationalities and cultures drawn from all continents. Around two-fifths of the pupils live in the local community, the others coming to the school from other parts of Panama City. Approximately one-third of the pupils are of Panamanian or other Spanish-speaking origin.
- 1.5 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is good, reflecting the school's aims. In the EYFS, children achieve highly and become very independent. Pupils of all ages develop good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills and show good research skills. Their attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school. They show an exemplary approach to their studies, and co-operate well. The attainment and progress of pupils in the infant, junior and senior schools cannot be measured in relation to English national age-related expectations, but are judged to be good overall, including those of pupils with SEND and EAL who benefit from additional support programmes. Pupils with EAL make excellent progress in their level of English. The progress of more able pupils is satisfactory; teaching does not always meet their needs. Pupils participate in local musical events and compete successfully in sporting competitions. The quality of the curriculum and of extra-curricular provision is good, and helps to prepare pupils for the next stages of their education. Pupils take advantage of strong links with the local community and contribute to it in practical ways. The quality of teaching is good. Resources are used effectively. Pupils with SEND and EAL receive appropriate support; that for more able pupils is limited.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They feel valued and become confident and reflective, showing concern and respect for each other. They support local charities and show a spontaneous care for those less fortunate than themselves. They participate enthusiastically in school activities and community projects. Pupils show a strong appreciation of cultural diversity and show particular respect for Panama itself. They work well together, creating an environment of tolerance. They understand the notion of democracy and reflect it in their elections to positions of responsibility. Throughout the school, high standards of behaviour are encouraged and achieved. Pupils receive regular guidance in online safety. The policy for the issuing of sanctions and rewards is not always implemented consistently. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good; they are supported by appropriate policies. In the past, not all recruitment checks have been carried out, but more effective procedures have been recently implemented. Appropriate measures are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good, supporting the school through effective oversight of finance and educational standards. Three advisory bodies support the work of the main board, which meets regularly, leading the school's development and providing strategic direction. The board monitors welfare, health and safety and safeguarding but has not shown sufficient oversight of the school's appointments procedures in the past. The quality of leadership and management is good, providing clear educational direction and promoting the school's vision. They contribute positively to the pupils' achievements. Arrangements for carrying out recruitment checks on staff are now in place, although they have not been similarly robust in the past. Safeguarding training has until recently been provided only to English-speaking staff. The continued expansion of the senior school means that management roles are not always defined sufficiently well. Links with parents are good. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed overall great satisfaction with the school, in particular with their children's progress and behaviour, though they did not always feel that the school encouraged their involvement or that they could communicate easily with it. Reports to the parents of pupils in the junior and senior schools could be improved. In their questionnaire, pupils were particularly positive

about their progress and the support they receive from teachers in their work, but they felt that punishments and rewards are not always fairly given.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas**

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

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.4 In addition to the above action points related to the Standards requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop the leadership and management structure and systems in the senior school to improve its effectiveness during the continuing expansion and development.
2. Embed procedures for pre-appointment recruitment checks and ensure that the content of references always addresses the suitability of the candidate to work in a school.
3. Improve the quality and detail of reports in the senior and junior schools to reflect the good practice already in place in the infant school and the EYFS.
4. Ensure that more able pupils are challenged sufficiently well and therefore make suitably high progress.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills are good. Children in the EYFS achieve extremely well. They make good progress in their learning and development relative to their individual starting points, abilities and needs. All children reach at least the developmental levels typically expected for their age. Their personal development is outstanding. At the end of Reception, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals, with some exceeding them. Children with particular needs or EAL also make good progress because of the individual support they are given by staff within lessons. By the end of Reception, children are highly independent. They are beginning to think critically and solve problems. They recognise individual letter sounds and use this knowledge to build words as they acquire early reading and writing skills. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop extremely well and children use tablet computers with increasing competence and independence. They are able to add and subtract numbers up to 20 and beyond. They are highly creative, for example when they worked on the theme of Hallowe'en. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim that they should achieve their highest level of academic success. In the infant and junior schools, the pupils' all-round achievement is good. They develop good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They read aloud with confidence and enjoyment, for example in a literacy lesson when they analysed the linguistic features of a given text.
- 3.3 Pupils of all ages achieve well and apply their knowledge successfully when they are given problem-solving and investigative tasks. They show particular achievement in ICT, for example using this to particularly good effect when designing an online safety poster. They achieve at a high level in mathematics and science. Artwork is displayed around the school. They show excellent research skills in topic work and their creative achievements were reflected in two- and three-dimensional displays, for example. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, pupils' achievement is excellent, for example when they discussed what might trigger anxiety and how to develop a range of strategies to overcome it.
- 3.4 Pupils develop good levels of skill in physical education (PE) and clearly enjoy taking part in these lessons. Pupils have participated in the annual Festival of Carols by Candlelight. They play sports fixtures against other schools in basketball and football. They participate at regional and national level in fencing and show jumping and have had success in taekwondo in local and international tournaments.
- 3.5 In the infant and junior schools, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to English national age-related expectations but is judged to be good. This is supported by evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress throughout the school in relation to pupils of similar ability. All pupils at the age of 11 proceed to the senior school. To date there have been no external examination results but on the basis of inspection evidence, attainment in the senior school is judged to be good in relation to English age-related expectations. This represents good progress in relation to the pupils' starting points.

- 3.6 Pupils who have SEND make good progress as a result of additional support programmes recently put in place. In discussions with pupils and from scrutiny of their work, it was clear that pupils with EAL make good progress in their work over time. All pupils with EAL make excellent progress in their level of English during their time at the school. Pupils who are able, or who have particular gifts and talents, make progress that is satisfactory; teaching does not always meet their needs.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to their learning and to their involvement in activities are excellent, reflecting the school's aim to promote a positive attitude towards learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They respond positively and enthusiastically to the activities offered at lunchtimes and after school. In lessons, they demonstrate an exemplary, self-disciplined and highly motivated approach to their studies, which helps them to contribute to a constructive and stimulating learning environment, and to benefit from it. They concentrate well on individual tasks and support each other's learning through effective co-operation.
- 3.8 In their responses to a pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated their overwhelming satisfaction with the good progress their children were making.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good, supporting the school's aim to ensure that pupils can benefit from Panama's language, history and culture. In the EYFS, appropriate educational programmes cover the seven areas of learning. There is suitable emphasis on the prime areas of learning for the youngest children. The curriculum for the EYFS is enhanced by specialist teaching in PE and Spanish. The trip to the fire station during the inspection was a most valuable learning experience for children in Reception. Detailed and thorough planning, which is often based on the interests of the children, allows scope for working either independently or as a group. There is a suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities provided, both inside and outdoors. Children with SEND or EAL and more able children make particularly rapid progress because committed staff focus on their individual needs by providing extra support or resources, and by working closely with their families. Meetings between staff in the EYFS and Year 1 ensure a seamless transfer for the children into the infant school.
- 3.10 The curriculum and extra-curricular provision support the school's aim to reflect the best features of the British educational system set in an international environment. In the infant and junior schools, the curriculum enables pupils to acquire a range of skills, knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. The curriculum is supported by the school's teaching and learning policy which guides subject leaders in the formulation of their schemes of work. The development of literacy, and particularly numeracy, is a key feature of the curriculum. Reading, writing and mathematics are given strong emphasis, ensuring that pupils make good progress. For example when pupils were trying to predict the outcome of an experiment, they were able to discuss the concept of a fair test. Additional research, investigative work and the creative use of outdoor areas enhance their progress in science. Tablet computers are used effectively across the curriculum.
- 3.11 The curriculum covers most requisite subjects with the addition of Spanish taught from Year 1 to both native speakers and those with Spanish as an additional language. The range of creative and technological subjects available is limited. Provision for PSHE encompasses topics that further enhance pupils' personal

development. Provision for PE enables pupils to achieve considerable autonomy in developing and maintaining their physical health. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in team sports including, for example, basketball, rugby and football. The curriculum is appropriate to the age and needs of all pupils. Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is effective in meeting their individual needs. Pupils with SEND receive additional specialist support. The curriculum has recently begun to include provision for the needs of the most able pupils, for example in the occasional setting of additional tasks and the tracking of their progress. Particularly stimulating and challenging work is set for pupils in the infant school, but this is not yet as fully developed in the junior and senior schools. The curriculum helps to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. Pupils see themselves as learners. Their literacy and numeracy skills, together with additional mind-mapping and research skills, promote a seamless transition to the senior school.

- 3.12 The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 provides English, mathematics, science and Spanish as core subjects. In addition, all pupils study a modern foreign language, humanities, PE, art, music and debating. In Year 9, the curriculum does not include music. Pupils benefit from the Model United Nations as well as courses in global perspectives and business studies. Classes are set on the basis of prior attainment where appropriate. In Year 9, pupils undertake an International GCSE programme of study and at this stage a course in global perspectives is introduced as an additional subject, reflecting the international nature of the school. Information and communication technology is embedded in the curriculum throughout Years 7 to 9 and computing has recently been introduced as a discrete subject, although the content of the programme is not structured adequately to reflect the different ages of the pupils. For example, Year 7 material in some subjects is repeated in its entirety in Years 8 and 9.
- 3.13 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents who responded felt that the school did not provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors did not support this view, finding a considerable variety of extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils, particularly in the EYFS, infant and junior school. Pupils benefit from participating in after-school activities, including swimming, dance, rugby, art, chess, ballet, taekwondo and basketball.
- 3.14 The school has developed strong links with the community, and gives particularly practical support to a local orphanage. As well as a rainforest adjacent to the school used regularly by the pupils, links with the local community have enabled the development of a good programme of extra-curricular enrichment, including visits to local museums, historical buildings, the Panama Canal, the national library and to ships of the Royal Navy.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good, reflecting the school's aim to help and encourage pupils to achieve their highest level of academic success. In the EYFS, excellent teaching reflects staff who are extremely knowledgeable about how young children learn. Staff engage the children well in their learning, developing effectively their investigative and imaginative skills. They employ imaginative play most effectively, for example in a role play area where the three bears' cottage had been created and Goldilocks paid a visit. Interactive whiteboards are creatively and skilfully used to enhance learning and to provide a helpful visual impact, especially for children who have EAL. Carefully judged interventions for those children with SEND or EAL ensure that they reflect on their learning and refine their skills, resulting in rapid progress. Adult intervention is supportive but not intrusive. The

expectations of staff are high for all children, including the most able, who are particularly well challenged in their use of language and questioned at a level which extends their understanding. No opportunity is missed to further develop language. Detailed planning and excellent organisation ensure that all children make at least good, and sometimes rapid progress. Assessment is used effectively to plan the next steps in each child's learning.

- 3.16 The quality of teaching supports the school's aim to be at the forefront of British education internationally. Teaching is effective and enables pupils to make progress in all parts of the school. There is a consistent approach to teaching. Planning is effective; throughout the school lessons are well structured. Teaching in most lessons provides appropriate challenge for all the pupils and is carried out with enthusiasm. The school attempts to disseminate best practice throughout all year groups by means of a peer mentoring programme and an open environment in which teachers regularly visit each other's classrooms and learn from one another. Appropriate tasks are set and pupils' different needs are met, although this is not consistent for more able pupils. Interventions are limited for pupils requiring extra challenge. There is specialist assistance for those pupils with SEND and EAL, for whom support staff are deployed as required.
- 3.17 Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and successfully employ a varied range of teaching methods that meet pupils' needs and foster interest and enjoyment. For example, in an art lesson pupils were given individual and effective support, and in a global perspectives lesson, a guest speaker was quizzed by the pupils after which the teacher offered advice to improve their questioning techniques. Pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and in groups, but the impact of this on pupils' learning is not always apparent. In a small number of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory, lacking appropriate planning, pace and challenge, and failing to engage pupils.
- 3.18 Across the school, teaching uses resources appropriately. Good use of the outside play area is encouraged in the infant school. Teachers also use a wide variety of ICT to support learning and help to create an exciting and supportive learning environment. Laptops and tablets are used effectively to support learning, for example in a Year 5 lesson pupils used their tablets to research the construction of the Panama Canal and enter their findings in a word processed document. The hall is used for a variety of teaching activities, including debates in the senior school and PE and dance to pupils in both the junior and senior schools. Despite limited resources available there, teaching is highly effective in enabling pupils to achieve a good standard of fitness and creativity.
- 3.19 Self- and peer assessment are well established. Teachers make use of a detailed approach to check pupils' understanding, though the effectiveness of this is not consistent or always apparent. Marking usually gives pupils guidance on the standards they achieve and constructive comments indicate what they need to do to improve further. An assessment and tracking system is in place and this is used to enable teaching to be collaboratively planned and to support pupils more directly in their learning. Relationships between pupils and teachers are warm and exemplary.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, clearly fulfilling its aim to prepare young people for adult life by fostering self-assurance and mutual respect. From the earliest years pupils develop increasingly strong spiritual awareness, stimulated by their surroundings, vibrant art displays and, for example, when painting glass bottles creatively or with a Halloween theme. Their high levels of self-esteem and self-awareness lead to trusting, open relationships, which is a defining feature of the school. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and develop into confident, independent young people. They feel safe and secure in a supportive learning community where they celebrate each other's successes. They feel valued and take pride in the rewards and accolades they receive, as was seen during the infant assembly, when children were awarded star worker certificates, and their photographs are then mounted in the hall of fame. During form times and PSHE lessons pupils throughout the school are reflective and set themselves appropriate goals for self-improvement. Their appreciation of their surroundings is testimony to their awareness of beauty and the non-material side of life.
- 4.2 The moral development of pupils is excellent. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, showing respect and concern for fellow pupils and all the adults with whom they come into contact. Developed strongly through the primary school's 'golden rules' of behaviour and the senior school's code of conduct, the pupils' moral awareness is strengthened by their exposure to a wide variety of issues and moral dilemmas. This was evident in an assembly where the theme of open mindedness was introduced and explored to ensure no form of discrimination is tolerated. Strong moral awareness underpins the pupils' spontaneous care and support for one another and for those less fortunate. This is demonstrated by their generous support for chosen charities, particularly for the local orphanage, from whom a letter of thanks was received during the inspection which inspired further support.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate excellent social development. They feel secure and well cared for and this allows them to reach out to others and accept responsibility. From the helping hands with the youngest children, and playground pals, to senior school house captains, every position is approached with pride and enthusiasm. A well-established school council enables the pupils' voice to be heard and gives them a strong sense of involvement in school life. They participate enthusiastically in activities and involve themselves in community projects such as building shelters for the homeless. Social confidence, teamwork and self-reliance are built up through residential trips, such as to the outward bound campsite for pupils in Years 7 and 8. They develop an increasingly broad knowledge of issues facing the world today; pupils in Year 9 will attend a world debate in Mexico later in the year.
- 4.4 The pupils' excellent cultural development and appreciation of cultural diversity is enriched by the large number of nationalities represented in the school. Pupils of all faiths and cultures work exceptionally well together, promoting tolerance and acceptance. Pupils display particular respect for the host country during the formal weekly ceremony which contains the Panamanian pledge and the singing of the national anthem. The celebration of Panama day is much enjoyed. British culture and values are promoted, for example elections for positions of responsibility are conducted democratically. Themed menus give an additional international flavour to the school. Differences are explored and increasingly appreciated, for example, in a Spanish lesson where the history, art, music and customs of South American

countries were exceptionally well presented. Weekly debates modelled on the United Nations, give excellent opportunities to explore local and international social and political structures, ensuring that pupils develop into international citizens.

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

- 4.5 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good. In the EYFS, the children's personal development is outstanding. Staff know and care for the children well. Great importance is placed on the well-being and happiness of all the children.
- 4.6 Staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils reflecting the school's aim to foster self-assurance, mutual respect and a sense of duty. This is accomplished, for example, through the PSHE curriculum and school assemblies which address a wide range of age-appropriate issues such as discrimination, empathy and open-mindedness. The good quality of pastoral care provided by class tutors is complemented by responsibilities undertaken enthusiastically by pupils themselves in order to care for other members of the community, including as playground partners, house captains and deputies, and members of the school council. A small minority of pupils said in the questionnaire that they were not given the chance to take on responsibility. Inspectors found that there was a suitable range of such experiences available to them, and interviews with pupils themselves, acknowledged this. Warm and positive relationships exist between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves. In their interviews and in the questionnaire, pupils strongly indicated that they greatly enjoy being at the school, and that there is always an adult to whom they can turn if any concerns arise.
- 4.7 The school encourages high standards of behaviour throughout all age groups. Effective measures to promote good behaviour are in place and consistently implemented. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare but that if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively and does not recur. Pupils are considerate and supportive of each other, and are regularly reminded of the positive enrichment they derive through their differences of background. They receive frequent guidance in online safety, including cyber-safety, within ICT lessons. The school has in place procedures for the issuing of sanctions and merits. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils indicated that these were not consistently implemented, a view reflected in discussions during the inspection. A similar proportion of pupils also felt that teachers did not treat pupils equally. From the evidence from lessons, tutor periods, assemblies, interviews and other activities, as well as records, inspectors found that pupils were treated in an even-handed manner.
- 4.8 Arrangements for promoting the health and safety of pupils and for safeguarding their welfare are good in most respects. , In a few areas, the school was not able at the time of the visit to produce evidence that recruitment procedures always accorded to the required standards but supporting documentation was subsequently provided to show that the standards are now met. The school has appropriate policies in place to protect pupils both in school and on school trips, for which risk assessments are carried out incorporating specific guidance for dealing with a variety of circumstances. In the past, some recruitment checks have not been carried out in a sufficiently timely manner, and safeguarding training has not been offered to all staff. New procedures are now in place which have ensured that all required checks will be carried out and recorded in the future, and that training is provided as required. The school has procedures in place to minimise risk from fire and other hazards, including those posed by the adjacent rainforest, and fire drills

are regularly held and centrally recorded. However, fire safety procedures are published in English only, which makes them inaccessible to non-English speaking staff. The procedures were found not to be adequate or consistently followed during a fire evacuation which occurred during the inspection, but the school immediately carried out a full review and has taken extensive steps to ensure that a more effective procedure is in place in the future. Pupils are appropriately supervised during activities and free time.

- 4.9 Pupils who are ill or injured are well cared for by qualified staff in a centrally located medical room. Medicines are securely stored and detailed records are kept. The school has and implements an effective policy for the provision of first aid. The health and safety of pupils with SEND are appropriately supported. Pupils are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise in physical education lessons and the opportunity to take part in after-school sporting activities. The food provided is plentiful and varied.
- 4.10 An accurate admission record is maintained by the school. Pupils' attendance records are kept by a combination of electronic and paper systems; some minor inaccuracies, partly resulting from the introduction of a new computer system, were found during the inspection and rectified through the immediate introduction of revised procedures.

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

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

5.1 The quality of governance is good and supports the aims and values of the school. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's finances and educational standards through the main decision-making body, the King's School Board (KGB). This is supported by an Advisory Council based in Madrid, a Schools Management Board, which brings together the heads of all the schools in the King's Group with members of the KGB, and a local Panama Advisory Board, whose members, drawn from the professions, business and the academic and diplomatic community, provide advice and guidance to the head. The KGB acts as the school's proprietorial governing body. It meets five or six times a year, evaluating the success of the school through scrutiny of reports from the head, setting policy and leading the school's development, as well as monitoring the progress and achievements of the pupils. The KGB provides strategic direction and planning for the continuing growth of the school. This is intended to include a move to a larger site in order to accommodate pupils between the ages of three and eighteen. The governing arrangements provide appropriate challenge to the headteacher; an annual appraisal system is in place.

The KGB is informed of the working of the school through reports following visits by individual senior governors. It monitors the expansion of the school's curriculum as the age range widens and provides effective support and stimulus for growth and development. It is effective in discharging many of its responsibilities for child protection and for welfare, health and safety throughout the school. It reviews the school's safeguarding arrangements, although the role of the Panama Advisory Board in monitoring safeguarding is not clear. The KGB monitors the training of staff in safeguarding, but has not ensured that this has been provided to all staff. There has been insufficient oversight of the school's appointments procedures in the past, but following receipt of additional information subsequent to the visit the school now ensures that all the necessary checks are completed.

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

5.2 The quality of leadership and management is good, in accordance with the aim of the school to provide a safe, secure, positive and enjoyable environment for its pupils. At all levels, leadership and management provide clear educational direction, demonstrated by the quality of education and the high standards of personal development evident in the pupils. Leadership and management are effective in sharing and promoting the vision of the school and in self-evaluation. They are active in setting priorities although these are not always consistently implemented. For example, provision for gifted and talented pupils has not yet been extensively introduced.

5.3 The school is successful in securing appropriately qualified staff and in enabling and encouraging professional development opportunities. Staff members can take advantage of the networking opportunities available through the school's membership of The King's Group and individual teachers have travelled to Spain for continuing professional development.

5.4 The school has comprehensive policies designed to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Some recruitment checks on staff have not always been rigorously carried out in the past, but meticulous procedures have now been

established. The central register of appointments is maintained appropriately. Safeguarding training has until recently been provided only to English-speaking staff but appropriate training for Spanish-speakers is now included in the programme.

- 5.5 The leadership team of the infant and junior schools implements the vision and educational direction of the school. A strong sense of teamwork is generated among the staff who share much and show a readiness to support new initiatives. Development plans are in place and oversight is provided by the headteacher. There are wide-ranging opportunities for staff to take on additional pastoral and academic responsibilities in a rapidly growing school. The roles of members of the primary school leadership team are well defined and clearly understood. Members of staff feel well supported by their line managers and the wider leadership team. Subject co-ordinators have considerable autonomy.
- 5.6 Leadership and management roles in the senior school are less well developed since the first pupils only entered Year 7 in 2013 and responsibilities continue to evolve as the school grows. Teachers with additional responsibilities provide oversight of both the academic and pastoral aspects of the senior school. The school has strengthened the management of the senior school through the appointment of a director of studies. Not all senior roles are clearly defined and there is a lack of clarity regarding the content, priorities and direction of the senior school curriculum.
- 5.7 A staff appraisal scheme operates annually. Staff frequently visit each other's classes to observe lessons and exchange ideas to further extend good practice. "Learning walks" take place and peer observations complement the appraisal process.
- 5.8 Parental responses to the questionnaire indicated overwhelming satisfaction with the management of the school.

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

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is good. The school fosters highly constructive and positive relationships with parents through its effective communication systems, and the many and varied opportunities to be involved in school life. The strong partnership that is developed with the parents of the youngest children, is encouraged as pupils progress through the school.
- 5.10 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents were highly supportive of almost all aspects of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the progress their children make, the high standards of behaviour expected and the worthwhile attitudes and views the school promotes. A very small minority of parents responding to the questionnaire, however, were dissatisfied with a lack of helpful communication, and difficulties experienced when communicating with the school. Inspectors found that senior leaders have addressed these issues in various ways, including putting further social and digital communications systems in place. The quality of reports, and the lack of clear information about progress concerned a few parents. Inspection evidence supports this concern. The quality of reports, especially in the senior school, is inconsistent. In the EYFS reports are comprehensive and provide clear guidelines to enable parents to support their child's learning. In Years 1 to 6, reports are not detailed, and offer less guidance on how children can further improve. In the secondary school, comments are limited to English, mathematics, science and humanities, as a result of which several subjects

are not reported on at all. Levels of pupils' achievement and ways in which they can further improve are unclear.

- 5.11 At the beginning and end of each day staff are readily available to those parents who transport their children to and from school. Staff can also be contacted by email and they endeavour to respond promptly. This allows the vast majority of queries or concerns to be dealt with swiftly and informally. The very small number of concerns raised by parents are handled efficiently in accordance with the school's published complaints policy.
- 5.12 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Daily contact books and parent planners for the younger children ensure beneficial communication between home and school. Parents are invited to workshops on topics such as phonics, and they are encouraged to join lessons to gain greater insight into the teaching and learning. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about all that is going on in school. Parents are encouraged to support a variety of activities, including sports days, class assemblies, and prize giving. They assist on outings and come into school to listen to children read. They are invited to share their expertise on the topic of careers.
- 5.13 The comprehensive website, school prospectus and parents' handbooks provide current and prospective parents with detailed and relevant information. In addition to termly reports there are regular communications with parents to keep them well-informed of progress and the ways they can further support their child's learning.
- 5.14 The school and parents together organise enjoyable social events, including a Christmas dinner and occasional quiz nights, fostering a real sense of community.

## 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

Mr John Dunston	Reporting inspector
Mrs Patricia Griffin	Junior Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school, UK)
Mr Umeshchandra Raja	Junior Team Inspector (Head, ISA prep school, UK)
Mr Timothy Roberts	Senior Team Inspector (Former Head, COBIS school, Czech Republic)