



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT ON

SIR JAMES HENDERSON BRITISH SCHOOL OF MILAN

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Sir James Henderson British School of Milan

Full Name of School	Sir James Henderson British School of Milan		
Address	Via Pisani Dossi 16 Milano 20134 ITALY 20134		
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Email Address	info@sjhschool.com		
Principal	Dr Carlo Ferrario		
Chair of Governors	Mr Nick Lasagna		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	654		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (320 boys; 334 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5:	65	5-11: 257
	11-18:	332	
Inspection dates	18 Nov to 21 Nov 2013		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI Schedule* for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection consists of two parts: a preliminary two-day visit followed by a four-day (team) inspection. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2007.

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 Sir James Henderson British School of Milan, known as SJHS, is a day school for boys and girls from the ages of three to eighteen. It was founded in 1969 by a group of parents aiming to serve the needs of the British and international communities by providing a British education for their children. The school was named after a prominent British businessman in the Milan community. It has occupied its present accommodation in a residential area in the east of Milan since 1996. The school is divided into two sections: the Lower School, which includes children from the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) up to Year 6, and the Upper School for pupils from Years 7 to 13. Since the previous inspection, the school began delivering the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme at sixth-form level in 2008, with the first examinations in 2010.
- 1.2 The school is a not-for-profit organisation whose sole shareholder is the SJHS Association, a body consisting of all parents with children currently attending the school. The Association has a board of governors, whose structure has changed since the previous inspection. It currently consists of twelve governors, eight of whom are elected by the Association members for a period of between three and four years. In addition, there are three ex-officio governors and one independent governor, the latter nominated by the board, all with full voting rights. There is provision for a further two independent governors. The current principal was appointed in September 2011.
- 1.3 The school's over-arching mission is to ensure that its pupils reach their full potential as independent learners in a caring British and international community, uniting the best of British educational tradition with the values, practices and beliefs of the IB.
- 1.4 Pupils come mainly from the centre and east of the city. At the time of the inspection, there were 654 pupils on roll, 320 boys and 334 girls. The Lower School has 322 pupils, of whom 65 are in the Foundation Stage, and the Upper School has 332 pupils, including 78 in the sixth form. More than 40 nationalities are represented in the school. Just under two-thirds of the pupils are Italian, a significantly higher proportion than at the time of the previous inspection. As an international school, with parents often on short-term contracts, the SJHS has a higher than usual turnover of pupils, including some who arrive or leave during the school year.
- 1.5 Four-fifths of the pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom sixty receive support for their language needs. Seventy-seven pupils have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom forty-nine receive targeted support. The ability profile of the school is above the UK national average, but with a wide spread of abilities.
- 1.6 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 and learning is excellent. Children make a good start on basic skills in the Foundation Stage. Older pupils develop fluent literacy skills, good mathematical skills and an appreciation of the world around them, and show excellent creative skills. They obtain good results at GCSE, International GCSE (IGCSE) and IB examinations. The pupils are articulate and hard working, with excellent attitudes to learning. The curriculum is good, although in Years 10 and 11 the number of GCSE options is affected by the timetable constraints imposed by the pre-IB programme. The curriculum is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The pupils' progress is supported by excellent teaching. The best lessons are well planned, have a fast pace and clear focus, and provide creative opportunities for pupils to develop independence and confidence in their learning. A small minority of teaching lacks consistently focused planning, with work not always matched to the full range of abilities. Marking is good and helps the pupils to improve their work.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development and the pastoral care that supports this are excellent throughout. From the Foundation Stage onwards, the pupils demonstrate high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their behaviour is excellent and they show respect to each other and the adults around them. They are proud of their school and feel that it provides them with a very good education. Pupils from many different cultures work together well and they feel that cultural diversity is a particularly strong feature of the school. The pupils receive excellent support and guidance. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Procedures for safeguarding and welfare, including staff training, are appropriate. The great majority of the pupils were positive about their experiences at school in discussions with inspectors. A minority raised concerns in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires about bullying and about being treated fairly. Inspection evidence indicated that their concerns were not well founded.
- 2.3 Arrangements for governance are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. There is a strong commitment to delivering high quality education and a growing understanding of how to achieve this. Excellent leadership and management reflect the successful achievement of the school's aims and the excellent quality of education, personal development and pastoral care. However, there are some inconsistencies in middle management and in the role of subject co-ordinators. The school has good links with parents, who were positive about many aspects of the provision in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses. The school's aim to promote positive partnerships with parents, however, is not yet fully realised with regard to helping them to gain a greater understanding of its strengths as well as its areas for improvement. A small minority of parents raised concerns about the information provided on their children's progress, the help provided for pupils with SEND and extra-curricular provision. The inspectors examined the evidence in these areas closely and found no evidence to support these views.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas

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

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Provide teachers across the school with more opportunities to identify and share good practice in planning to meet the needs of all pupils.
2. Explore ways to develop further the range of GCSE options available in Years 10 and 11.
3. Improve communications so that parents more fully understand what the school does well and where it is striving to improve.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The pupils' achievements throughout the school are excellent, in line with the school's aims to encourage them to develop the skills necessary for independent learning, successful problem solving and compassionate, critical thinking.
- 3.2 In the Foundation Stage, children make excellent progress with their learning and personal development. They make rapid progress with their English language skills, particularly in speaking. The youngest children recognise letters and count to ten with increasing confidence. They express themselves creatively, for example in drumming and singing. The older children show well-developed numeracy and literacy skills and meet or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception, responding well to the high expectations of staff.
- 3.3 In the Lower School, pupils develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy necessary for progress through the curriculum. Those coming to the school as beginners in English are quickly able to take part in the curriculum as a result of the excellent support provided. In the Upper School, pupils continue to develop their capacity to learn and to understand how the subjects they are studying prepare them for the next stage of their lives.
- 3.4 Pupils throughout the school develop particularly good speaking and listening skills and are ready to express their opinions and listen respectfully to those of others. Standards in reading are high. Pupils write well, reflecting the increasingly successful implementation of the school's efforts to raise standards in this area. They increasingly understand imagery in literature and develop excellent creative skills, with large numbers of pupils performing to a very high standard in music, art and drama. They have good numerical skills and apply them effectively in a variety of situations. Across the school, information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed, with children in the Nursery, for example, learning how to use a computer mouse to make a jack-in-the-box jump. Older pupils show good levels of logical and independent thinking and consider it natural to reflect on their work and how they can improve it. They enjoy practical and sporting activities and perform with confidence.
- 3.5 Pupils do not undertake English national tests in the Lower School and so their attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed English national norm. On the evidence available from lesson observations, work scrutiny and interviews with pupils, their attainment is judged to be above English national expectations, with pupils making good progress overall relative to their starting points. In some areas, such as literacy and the creative subjects, progress is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability.
- 3.6 In the Upper School, the following analysis uses data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative data is currently available. Performance at GCSE has been above the national average for English maintained schools and similar to national averages for maintained selective schools. Performance in the International GCSE (IGCSE) has been higher than world averages. The GCSE and IGCSE results in 2013 showed an improvement in the proportion of top grades, with just over half at grades A* or A. Italian pupils achieve well in the Italian state examinations. The IB results have been above the average for schools worldwide and similar to averages for schools in England.

These levels of attainment represent good, and sometimes high, levels of progress. Considering that the great majority of pupils joining the school have EAL, their long-term progress is particularly strong. Those pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 11 progress successfully to a range of sixth-form courses, including at selective English boarding schools, with several securing scholarships. In 2013, all Year 13 pupils gained places in higher education.

- 3.7 Pupils with SEND make good progress, for example in reading and speaking, as a result of carefully planned support both within the class and in small groups. Those pupils who are able, gifted and talented make good progress generally, although they are not always given sufficient opportunity to extend fully their knowledge and understanding.
- 3.8 Pupils achieve success in a range of activities outside the classroom, particularly in the creative arena. Music, art and drama feature very strongly in school life and promote high levels of creative achievement. Pupils' GCSE and IB artwork, for example, is exhibited annually in an internationally renowned auction house in Milan. Large numbers of pupils take instrumental examinations and achieve excellent standards. Pupils travel widely in Europe to compete in sporting events against international schools.
- 3.9 Pupils have an extremely positive attitude to learning and show great enthusiasm in their lessons. They persevere and apply themselves extremely well and begin to work independently from a young age. In the sixth form, pupils show considerable initiative as they accelerate their learning and apply their knowledge. Sixth-form pupils are reflective thinkers and articulate speakers who are able to consider and then argue clearly a range of issues. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils of all ages work constructively in groups. They produce a good volume of work that is generally neatly presented, reflecting pride and care. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils said that they make good progress and find the work interesting, and this was borne out during the inspection.

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

- 3.10 The quality of curricular provision throughout the school is good and makes a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements, in support of the school's aim to provide learning experiences that are appropriate to a child's age and stage of development.
- 3.11 The curriculum meets the needs of the wide range of pupils in the school and covers all the required elements. Transition between the Lower School and Upper School has improved since the previous inspection, enabling the pupils to move more smoothly to the next stage of their education. The creative curriculum is particularly strong. All Year 7 pupils, for example, take external music theory examinations.
- 3.12 In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum largely follows the English Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Detailed planning supports the children in reaching their expected levels of development. It fully covers all seven areas of learning. Physical education (PE) and music are taught by specialists from the Nursery onwards. English language teaching pervades all activities, enabling the children to make rapid progress in communication and language.
- 3.13 The curriculum in the Lower School provides a suitably broad range of subjects, and meets the needs of all pupils. It is well supported by educational visits in the local

area, special events and a comprehensive assembly programme. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the Upper School curriculum. The removal of the Italian national programme from the main curriculum and the introduction of IGCSEs and the IB have broadened the educational provision, reflecting the values and international aims of the IB programme for all ages. As pupils advance through the school, a flexible range of choices allows them to focus on their strengths but still maintain a breadth of study. However, the number of GCSEs or IGCSEs that pupils can take in Years 10 and 11 is limited.

- 3.14 A strong feature of the curriculum is its support for independent learning. This is evident from the Nursery onwards, with its emphasis on child-initiated play, right up to the IB programme through its focus on enquiry-based learning.
- 3.15 A well-embedded personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme supports the school's aim of developing independent, compassionate and reflective young people well. The PSHE curriculum in the Lower School is designed around values, such as happiness and responsibility, and has good links with different subject areas. An excellent Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) programme in the sixth form contributes strongly to the pupils' personal development.
- 3.16 Italian pupils are able to follow the Italian national programme until the end of Year 9 after school and may choose to sit public examinations. Non-Italian pupils are well served by the programmes based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. A notable strength of the school is its excellent linguistic provision for all ages, which enables pupils to develop fluency in two or more languages.
- 3.17 The new computer suite has improved provision for ICT, including its use in other areas of the curriculum in the Lower School. The introduction of interactive whiteboards has enabled teachers to use a wider range of multi-media resources in the classroom to support and enhance learning.
- 3.18 Careers advice is good, supporting pupils as they move from one stage of their education to the next. Helpful advice, which is much valued by sixth-form pupils, supports and guides their applications to universities in Italy, the UK and other countries.
- 3.19 A small number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were critical about the school's provision for pupils with SEND. Inspection evidence did not support these views and indicated that pupils with SEND are provided for effectively. Those who are able, gifted and talented are appropriately challenged in most lessons to develop their skills through carefully matching the level of challenge to their individual capabilities. This careful attention to each pupil is aided by the small size of classes. Provision for pupils with EAL is excellent, including for those who join during the school year. Support is effectively focused on meeting individual needs and, as a result, pupils rapidly gain confidence and skill in speaking, reading and writing English.
- 3.20 A recently expanded extra-curricular programme is led well by a group of committed and enthusiastic teachers. Pupils take part in the thriving group in pursuit of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award at bronze, silver and gold levels, and sailing has recently been added to the range of activities. Creative opportunities are excellent. There are several high quality musical groups, for example, including choirs, orchestras and a jazz band. Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and visits, including a Year 9 visit to London and a Year 7 trip to Venice. Sporting opportunities are good, although participation rates are sometimes limited because

of the Italian tradition for children to join local rather than school clubs. A small number of parents were critical about what they felt to be a lack of sporting opportunities. Inspectors found that the school is an increasingly active member of the International Schools Sports Tournament and a founder member of the Northern International School Sports Association and, as a result, the number of sporting fixtures is increasing.

- 3.21 The school enjoys excellent links with the wider community, for example with schools in Kenya and Burkina Faso, the provision by IB pupils of English language support in local primary schools and support for the SOS Villaggio Dai Bambini.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.22 The quality of teaching is excellent across the school and effectively supports its aims. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in interviews with pupils, the vast majority agreed that the teachers help them to learn.

- 3.23 Teaching in the Foundation Stage shows a good understanding of the children's needs. The learning environment created by teachers enables children to grow in confidence and make rapid progress, particularly in language. A wide range of planned indoor and outdoor activities gives children some exciting experiences across the areas of learning.

- 3.24 Throughout the school, the teaching is effective in enabling successful learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and the use of specialist staff, for example in music and PE, in the Lower School, enriches the experiences of the younger pupils. The staff know their pupils well and relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and supportive. Teachers generate a safe learning environment where pupils are not afraid to take risks with their learning or to discuss their strengths and areas for improvement. Most lessons have a fast pace, with a brisk sequence of different learning activities, ensuring that the pupils' attention is engaged and interest sustained. In the Foundation Stage, staff exhibit the independent thinking and creative approach that they seek to generate in the children. The teaching makes very good use of a wide range of learning resources within the constraints of the limited accommodation.

- 3.25 Support for the many pupils with EAL is a particularly strong feature of the school. Beginners are given intensive tuition, involving withdrawal from lessons and in-class support, according to their needs. As a result of this excellent provision, pupils quickly gain confidence and fluency in the language and are able to access the curriculum with ease.

- 3.26 Teachers manage the behaviour of their pupils well, and this begins with the youngest children in the Nursery, enabling the focus to remain on learning. A perception of unfairness and unequal treatment in some pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire was strongly contradicted by those pupils interviewed and by inspectors' observations.

- 3.27 In the great majority of lessons, the teaching is very well planned, identifies clear learning objectives and provides many opportunities for the pupils to develop their thinking and express their opinions. There is a balance of teacher and pupil involvement, which enables all pupils to be actively engaged in learning. Pupils with SEND are well supported and, in most lessons, are enabled to make good progress, particularly in their literacy skills. Occasionally, however, work is not pitched at an appropriate level to their needs and, when this happens, they do not gain as much in thinking for themselves or working independently. The school has identified a need

for continued training for staff in awareness of and support for pupils with SEND. Pupils who are able, gifted and talented are encouraged and supported by teachers in the classroom through the provision of more challenging work. However, this is not consistently provided.

- 3.28 Assessment is regular and thorough, characterised by detailed record keeping and analysis of the progress made by pupils. Assessments of children's progress in the Foundation Stage are regularly evaluated and recorded clearly. Marking is thorough and the pupils report that it is helpful and informative, contributing to their understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Sixth-form pupils have good opportunities to discuss progress at regular 'drop-in' sessions with their teachers.
- 3.29 Self-assessment by pupils occurs at all levels and often leads to extensive reflection on how work might be improved.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The excellent personal development of the pupils reflects the school's aims to foster a caring and safe environment that stimulates curiosity, freedom of expression, co-operation, and fairness and respect for others.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. They have high levels of self-awareness and self-esteem, and develop excellent relationships with one another and with their teachers. They are open-minded and curious about different faiths and beliefs, responding well to their religious studies lessons in the Lower School and benefiting from well-structured PSHE lessons and a comprehensive assembly programme across the whole school.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils make a commitment to following the school rules, for example through classroom contracts in the Lower School. They learn to make judicious choices, supported by the school's effective rewards and sanctions procedures. Pupils across the school care for and support one another. Those in Years 10 and 11 help children in the Nursery with their learning, as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. Older pupils in the Upper School help those in Years 7 to 9 in a mathematics club or with languages such as Spanish. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility towards the community and are actively engaged in supporting charities, for example raising funds for schools in Kenya or supporting a local playground in Milan. Pupils throughout the school show respect for their environment, for example through a litter patrol and a recycling initiative, or through the recent Year 2 ecology-themed performance.
- 4.4 Social development is excellent. Pupils are sociable, articulate and well mannered. The youngest children form secure friendships, which give them the confidence to explore and experiment independently. They approach tasks such as clearing up with enthusiasm. They show a good understanding of how to keep safe and are beginning to understand the school rules. They listen well, take turns and are beginning to share toys sensibly. Pupils throughout the school enjoy co-operation, healthy competition and a sense of belonging through the school's house system. They show emerging leadership skills as house captains and playground monitors in the Lower School, or as prefects and heads of house in the Upper School. Older pupils take good advantage of the opportunities to develop a wide range of personal skills as participants in The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award scheme, the Model United Nations and the CAS programmes. A small number of pupils in pre-inspection questionnaire responses raised concerns about lack of opportunities to take responsibility. Inspection found that opportunities are wide ranging and appropriate.
- 4.5 Cultural development is excellent. Pupils show respect for and curiosity about different cultures and believe that the school's international community is a particularly strong feature of the school. Those arriving from other cultures say that they instantly feel welcomed by the whole school. Pupils are knowledgeable about public institutions and life in Britain through, for example, visits to London or the celebration of events such as the Eisteddfod. Pupils across the school show an excellent appreciation for and understanding of music, art and drama in lessons and activities, and through trips and special events.

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

- 4.6 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent, making a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. Excellent support is provided to nurture and develop the pupils who, as a result, feel safe and highly valued. Pupils are well known by the staff and good systems of communication mean that care is well co-ordinated. Pupils say that teachers are kind and encouraging, and are always willing to offer advice and support. A strong sense of community exists within a family atmosphere, and staff work hard to create excellent relationships with pupils and amongst pupils themselves.
- 4.7 Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who understand what is expected of them. Pupils are courteous and well mannered, and show consideration for others. The school's behaviour policy is well established, is judged by the pupils to be fair and, in consequence, is reflected in their conduct. The anti-bullying policy sets out clear procedures for dealing with any incidents. Displays around the school and in PSHE work make clear what constitutes bullying and what can be done about it. Recent work has focused particularly on cyber bullying. A small minority of the pupils raised concerns in pre-inspection questionnaire responses about bullying and about being treated equally and fairly. During interviews with pupils, however, they maintained that bullying is rare and that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They felt that, in almost all cases, pupils will report bullying although occasionally some might feel that it is braver not to tell an adult. In such situations, they felt that older pupils would help. Pupils also claimed in discussions that teachers are fair and treat pupils equally. Sanctions and rewards applied are in line with the standards for British schools overseas. Appropriate records are kept of any incidents that occur.
- 4.8 The school has excellent procedures for the pupils' welfare. It has an effective safeguarding policy which is implemented appropriately. Procedures are known to staff and are monitored and reviewed regularly. All staff are trained in child protection, with training given in Italian for those who need it. An accurate single central register of appointments shows that appropriate checks on the suitability of staff are carried out. The school has good facilities for pupils who are ill. A sizeable proportion of the staff has undergone first-aid training, some at a high level, and there is a full-time qualified nurse on site. Accidents are suitably recorded. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. All appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. School records indicate that they satisfy all Italian legal requirements. Health and safety policies and procedures are extremely thorough, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life, including trips off site.
- 4.9 Pupils, including the youngest children, understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and take regular physical exercise. They are helped to develop good hygiene practices from the earliest stage, for example Nursery children learning to wash hands thoroughly. School meals are nutritious and freshly cooked. Lunch for the Foundation Stage takes place in a happy social setting where the children show excellent table manners and independence.
- 4.10 The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained and absences are quickly followed up.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good. The structure of the board has improved significantly since the previous inspection, with increased representation from outside the parent body and a greater range of skills and experience evident. The working structure is now much more clearly defined, with appropriate committees to oversee the work of the school and to review policies and their implementation. The number of meetings has been reduced and is now more manageable, allowing governors to devote adequate time to their roles. These changes have enabled the governing body to play a much more active role in school development while allowing school leaders to concentrate on operational requirements. Governors have undergone recent training and this has increased their insight into the working of the school. They are also beginning to visit the school regularly, and to receive regular presentations during meetings on various aspects of school life, enabling them to gain first-hand insight into its needs. The governing body discharges its responsibilities well in relation to legal requirements. A recently appointed governor with responsibility for child protection ensures that safeguarding arrangements are reviewed and discussed appropriately by the governing body annually.
- 5.2 Investment in school facilities and in human and material resources is prudent and meets the school's needs well.
- 5.3 The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires are happy with the school's governance but a small minority raised concerns about the way in which it works. Inspection evidence shows clear improvement in the way in which the governing body attends to its duties.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent and contributes significantly to the success enjoyed by the pupils. The senior leadership team provides strong support for the school and its staff. It affirms the school's purpose in ensuring that its diverse pupil body grows to its full potential, so that pupils become independent learners in a caring British and international community, uniting the best of British educational tradition with the values, practices and beliefs of the IB. Staff work together closely for the good of the pupils and show high levels of commitment to the school.
- 5.5 Key priorities have been identified at a strategic level; whole-school development planning has improved since the previous inspection, clearly identifying the priorities and the means to address them. Recently, performance management and appraisal have been helping to ensure that staff are both supported and accountable for the work they are doing. Arrangements for professional development are good.
- 5.6 Pastoral management is strong and shows a high level of commitment to the welfare of the pupils. The transition of children from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 is well organised, effectively preparing them for the next stage of their education.
- 5.7 Staff have leadership roles that they undertake conscientiously. Co-ordinators monitor the planning for subjects, although systems are used more effectively in some areas than others. Lesson observation is encouraged, although there are limited opportunities to share the best practice within the school.

- 5.8 The induction programme for new teachers is effective. Leadership is successful in recruiting and supporting good quality staff, who are committed and hard working, and who make a significant impact on the pupils' achievements and their personal development. Staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Secure safeguarding procedures are implemented and the necessary checks are recorded in the central register and in individual files.
- 5.9 Accommodation, although tight, is maintained in a safe, bright and welcoming way that provides the pupils with good resources and a stimulating environment in which to grow and thrive. The highly effective administrative staff make a key contribution to the smooth running of the school. Support staff make a significant contribution to the school's caring ethos.

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

- 5.10 Links with parents are good overall. The majority of parents are pleased with the progress their children make, especially those with EAL, and consider that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views, and that there is an appropriate range of subjects taught. Parents have numerous opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, for example through helping with reading or on school trips, or attendance at monthly concerts and school plays.
- 5.11 The school listens carefully to parents' concerns. Complaints and concerns are dealt with effectively, in line with the school's clear and accessible procedure.
- 5.12 A small minority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires were not happy with the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspection evidence showed that parents are given sufficient information for them to be well informed. Detailed reports are sent home once a year and these include useful targets for improvement. In the terms where no report is sent, parents are provided with target sheets or grade cards. There are parents' evenings once a term in the Lower School and once a year in the Upper School for all year groups, with Years 7, 10 and 12 having an additional parents' evening or review day.
- 5.13 Parents receive regular and informative newsletters and benefit from information on the website and from the 'open door' policy. Parents' views are regularly sought, for example through a recent parent consultation exercise and the IB five-year review. Parents have been consulted with regard to the appraisal of the principal and about changes to uniform, school lunches and the website. Regular curriculum and information evenings are held. Parents of children in the Nursery attend an induction afternoon.
- 5.14 Although the school has developed positive partnerships with parents in many aspects of its work, it is not always successful in communicating to them the results of its self-evaluation on its particular strengths and areas for improvement. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that parents are concerned about the help given to pupils who are able, gifted and talented or who have SEND, and consider that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited. Inspectors judged that in a small minority of lessons, work does not fully meet the needs of all the pupils, and that extra-curricular opportunities are good overall and excellent in terms of creative provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff, and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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

Dr Lynn Bappa	Reporting inspector
Mrs Rebecca Layton-Short	Head of Junior School, COBIS school, UAE
Mrs Ann Stranack	Former Head, ISA school, UK
Mr Peter de Voil	Former Head, HMC/COBIS school, Czech Republic
Dr Nicholas England	Former Head, HMC school, UK