



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	St George's International School			
Address	11 Rue des Peupliers Hamm L-2328 Luxembourg			
Telephone number	+352 423224			
Email address	reception@st-georges.lu			
Principal	Dr Christian Barkei			
Chair of governors	Mr Chris Cheesman			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of students on roll	762			
	Boys	398	Girls	364
	EYFS	137	Primary	372
	Secondary	194	Sixth Form	59
Inspection dates	5 to 8 February 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 St George's International School, Luxembourg, is a non-denominational day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 18. It operates as a not-for-profit trust and is located in the district of Hamm, about four kilometres from Luxembourg City. The school operates as a single entity, divided into primary, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and secondary, including a sixth form, each with its own head responsible to the overall principal. The governing body has up to 15 appointed members, including parents, drawn from Luxembourg and its international community.
- 1.2 The school opened in 1990 as a primary school. From 2003 onwards, its secondary school has gradually developed. The school moved to its current location in 2008 and has continued to expand. Since the previous inspection, a new building including a multi-purpose auditorium has been added to the self-contained purpose-built site.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to fulfil the potential of each individual student through challenge and care within a friendly, dynamic and supportive environment so that all students may lead purposeful, fulfilling and successful lives.

About the students

- 1.4 There are over 50 nationalities and cultures represented in the school, with students drawn from the professional, business, financial and diplomatic communities of Luxembourg. The students are typically above average in their abilities. The majority of students arrive with English as an additional language (EAL) and many of these are bilingual or trilingual. Of the 505 identified as having EAL, 100 receive support from the school. The school has identified 111 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and all of these receive specialist support for a range of learning and psychological needs including dyslexia, dyscalculia and attention deficit disorder. More able students are provided with additional challenges in class and through separate groups.

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. It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements.

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.

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 last inspection was in February 2015.

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 school's curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work and most effectively covers the required breadth of material from the EYFS onwards. The teaching motivates students of all ages, needs and abilities to make excellent progress, encompasses effective behaviour management, is supportive of fundamental British values, and is underpinned by educationally enriching resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of students' performance is in place.

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

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

2.5 The Standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] are met.

- 2.6 Principles and values, including fundamental British values, are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of students from the EYFS onwards as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens seeking harmony between the many different cultural traditions represented in the school and in Luxembourg. The students develop a firm understanding of the legal and political institutions of Luxembourg, Europe and England and are aware of the importance of achieving balanced views on political matters.

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of students

2.8 The Standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students by means that pay due regard to current guidance in England and in Luxembourg; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Students are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required in Luxembourg, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. The requirements of those with SEND are taken fully into account.

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

2.10 The Standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with students at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks, consonant with requirements of the Luxembourg government and noting the guidance of the DfE in England, to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors. A suitable central register of appointments is kept as required.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.12 The Standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

- 2.13 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for students and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The modern purpose-built premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play both within the school's grounds and at nearby facilities.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 The Standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] are met.

- 2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents and to inspectors. These include details about the governors, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with SEND or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 The Standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] are met.

- 2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are

communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The Standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] are met.

- 2.19 The governors ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met within the context of a British-oriented international school operating in Luxembourg, and they actively promote the well-being of the students.
- 2.20 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the students' learning, achievement and personal development.

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 students:

- the quality of the students' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the students' 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 students.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the students, 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 students' 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 students' learning and achievement is excellent.

- Students of all ages and needs demonstrate excellent communication skills.
- The vast majority of students have exemplary attitudes to learning promoted by most effective teaching and leadership.
- Students achieve excellent examination results at IGCSE, GCSE and A level.
- The students demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning from the EYFS onwards.

3.2 The quality of the students' personal development is excellent.

- The self-understanding of students is exceptionally well developed, underpinned by the encouragement to reflect intelligently upon their own work and that of others.
- Students demonstrate very high levels of respect for each other and for the wide diversity of cultures within their school community.
- The behaviour of the students is typically exemplary; they respond extremely well in almost all cases to the generally consistent praise and encouragement of the teachers and senior leadership.

Recommendations

3.3 In the context of excellent outcomes overall, the school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Ensure that the positive attitudes of students to their learning are further encouraged by actively supporting the transition between the EYFS and primary school of those few younger children who may not be ready for more formal styles of learning.

- Ensure that students experience greater consistency from the teachers when rewards are given and sanctions are imposed.

The quality of the students' learning and achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the students' learning and achievement is excellent.
- 3.5 The students enjoy much academic success. GCSE performances are significantly above those for maintained schools and comparable to selective schools in England. The similarly high levels of A-level achievement enable the school's students to proceed to competitive universities in the UK and elsewhere. There have been a number of notable successes including the school's chemistry students representing in each of the last two years the three Benelux countries in the Royal Society of Chemists *Top of the Bench* competition; and several students have achieved gold awards from the UK Mathematics Trust for their achievements in the Intermediate Mathematics Challenge.
- 3.6 The majority of students join the school with EAL. These students typically make excellent progress in English and in language-based subjects. Regular testing and assessment, supported by most effective tracking and monitoring by the senior leadership, indicate that students make good or better progress in mathematics. Students with SEND often make exceptional progress from their individual starting points and, by the time they take public examinations, perform just as well as other students in the school. Almost all parents, in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, expressed satisfaction with the progress made by their children; and the vast majority of students said that they are making good progress in their work. This strong focus upon academic as well as upon wider success is underpinned by the continuing encouragement of the senior leadership and the governors.
- 3.7 The students demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning, as noted for example in EYFS classes in numeracy and measurement, primary students exhibiting a clear understanding of scientific, linguistic and mathematical ideas during an investigation into the solubility times for different types of sugars, and a GCSE psychology class showing a perceptive grasp of the development of the concept of aggression.
- 3.8 The students also demonstrate extremely well-developed skills. In a literacy class for younger primary students, the imaginative use of adjectives was noted, helping them to bring to life a story about Egypt. Older primary students demonstrated a wide range of cookery skills when preparing the ingredients for and then baking cup cakes. Students in the senior part of the school demonstrated accomplished ICT skills during a French lesson enabling them to make rapid individual progress. The students are highly effective in applying their skills from one area of learning to another. This is especially evident in thematic topic work in the primary part of the school and in project work done in history by older students bringing together social, linguistic and creative aspects of the personal impact of war.
- 3.9 Students readily accept the positive and critical feedback given by their teachers, both in class and through marked work, in order to develop their skills and understanding. Almost all of the teaching observed promoted most effective learning and was often inspirational, thereby meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection. The vast majority of students agreed that the teachers help them to learn.
- 3.10 Students of all abilities and ages display outstanding communication skills. Their written work is of a very high quality and demonstrates considerable analytical capacities. After arrival in the school, students develop fluency in spoken and written English rapidly. They relish discussion, debate and public speaking through assemblies and in competitions. Primary students were observed reading quietly and confidently books of their choice in the library; they were able to use both a thesaurus and word lists most effectively when choosing the words and phrases needed to start a story. Their listening skills are especially strong, arising in part from the need of students with a variety of linguistic backgrounds to listen carefully to the explanations and narratives of others.

- 3.11 Students show a strong grasp of mathematical concepts and methods. They are confident mathematicians; and they are not afraid of exploring new ideas and applying their skills in other parts of the curriculum. Students enjoy using mathematical techniques to solve a wide range of problems: from comparing the lengths of footprints in the EYFS, to work on gravitational problems in physics, to the analysis of supply and demand curves in business studies.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, the students' use of ICT during lessons is well developed. Children in the EYFS demonstrated great confidence in using interactive whiteboards to explore ideas and problems, for example when searching for answers to simple sums. Primary students made effective use of computer coding, for example when creating a digital maze. Students in the senior parts of the school worked most effectively on computer-based tasks in French which allowed them to proceed at their own pace.
- 3.13 Students have achieved much success in sport, music, art and the performing arts through, for example: representing Belgium and Luxembourg in sports such as squash, swimming, and basketball; participating in an international jazz festival in Singapore and singing at the annual Luxembourg Christmas market; displaying artwork in public exhibitions in Luxembourg; and gaining distinctions in externally accredited speech and drama qualifications.
- 3.14 Other notable achievements include five gold awards for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in 2017, winning the Benelux primary schools quiz competition for the last two years, and the secondary school debating team's success in winning COBIS's plate competition in Mexico. Younger students from the senior part of the school were chosen to perform a version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at a theatre in London before a public audience. The addition of the Zinnen building since the previous inspection has allowed the school to expand and develop a wide range of activities, shows and musical performances for the whole school. The range of activities available to older students has been extended since the previous inspection, thereby meeting the second recommendation of that inspection.
- 3.15 Students have very high aspirations, and this is a key factor in their approach to work throughout the school. Through their co-operative work they support one another most effectively with ease and enjoyment. They feel that they can express ideas freely: students take a keen interest in what their peers say. They are eager to celebrate each other's achievements in and beyond the classroom. They are keen to assist other students in their learning. The students are extremely proud of their school – and the great majority of them say they are happy to be there.

The quality of the students' personal development

- 3.16 The quality of the students' personal development is excellent.
- 3.17 Students feel positive about themselves and their places in the school community aided by the strong partnership which the school has with the British embassy and the local community groups. As a result, there is a definite sense of a community school in which the students are firmly embedded – based in Luxembourg, drawing on British standards and traditions, and firmly globally orientated.
- 3.18 The students are self-confident and are determined to give their best in all situations. Self-reflection and peer assessment are exceptionally strong features of class work throughout the school, with students developing a clear awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement. They show great self-esteem and discuss their own strengths and weaknesses in front of their classmates without feeling self-conscious. Empathy with and encouragement for others are marked. In an EYFS music class, children showed tremendous self-confidence, participating enthusiastically and without unnecessary inhibitions. They listened carefully to the assessments of their contributions and, as a result, improved the quality of their performance during the lesson. Similarly, in a Latin dance activity, primary school students confidently discussed how collectively they might improve their parts in a complex piece representing rainfall being prepared for public performance. Older students too

respond positively to assessments of their work, as demonstrated in an art class developing techniques in weaving. Sixth-form students said how the appraisal of their work in drama has helped them build their overall self-confidence.

- 3.19 A common theme with students in all parts of the school is the credit given to the small class sizes which they say enable them to engage directly and continuously with teachers and further develop their self-confidence. The students also appreciate the regular and helpful marking provided by teachers; as noted in the work scrutinised, this provides a firm basis for their clear awareness of how well they are performing.
- 3.20 Students understand that the decisions they make may reflect both on themselves and upon the community of which they are a part. They make well-informed choices both in and beyond classes. Students demonstrate clear awareness that the decisions they make affect their success at the school and for their futures. They are not afraid to encourage others to make sensible decisions, as seen in the activities of the eco-club, which fearlessly reminds staff of the need to turn off lights and computers with emails being sent to miscreants. Older students said that they felt in a strong position to make decisions about higher education and careers following the helpful and clear guidance given to them. Students elect their own primary school council and secondary school parliament. During these elections, students say that they value qualities such as fairness, confidence, understanding, politeness, friendship and leadership. Those representing the students in these two bodies help to promote an understanding of decision-making processes, involving the students in debate and decisions about initiatives in their school. Students have presented their proposals, including that for a new gymnasium, directly to the governors as well as to the senior leadership.
- 3.21 Although religious education is not part of the school curriculum, the students develop a firm spiritual awareness exemplified in particular through their appreciation of the musical, aesthetic and philosophical aspects of life. They develop an awareness of the rich tapestry of faiths and beliefs within the school through the celebration of festivals such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year and Diwali. An emphasis upon spirituality emerges through many of the lessons. Younger primary students were inspired by the links between seasonal songs and the emotions created by the sight of the snow lying outside the school, which stimulated their feelings of awe and wonder about the natural world. Older primary students develop insights into complex aesthetic concepts, for example when they studied the life and work of a Japanese artist. The work of senior students showed them grappling most effectively with wider philosophical issues including the personal consequences of killing in war. As part of their performing arts course, sixth-form students created a highly nuanced improvisation about teenage pregnancy resulting in the loss of the baby, exploring most effectively the emotion of grief.
- 3.22 The students have learned to respect others, to give them the space to express their own ideas and opinions and then to respond positively and supportively to their peers, with a deeply kind and caring spirit. An excellent example of this was observed when an older student during a learning support activity spoke with both understanding and sensitivity to a younger student with SEND about the moral issues arising from concentration camps and ghettos in the Second World War.
- 3.23 Students have a very clear sense of right and wrong and of the importance of rules and laws, helped by the very clear boundaries set by staff and the senior leadership and by the exceptionally strong relationships within and across the school community. Students demonstrate very real strengths of personal integrity. The school provides many opportunities for students of all ages to take on responsibilities, both within the classroom and across the entire school. Praise and encouragement rather than the threat of sanctions are a hallmark of the school's approach. However, a small minority of students said in their questionnaire responses that teachers were not always fair in the way they give rewards and punishments and that not all students were treated equally. During interviews, students said that, although the majority of teachers were in their view fair, a small number were not.

- 3.24 The students are determined to take responsibility for their own actions and have a keen awareness of the potential impact of how they behave upon others. When they do things wrong, they know they have done wrong and readily admit it. Exemplary behaviour was noted in almost all classes and the vast majority of parents maintained in their questionnaire responses that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. Even so, some younger boys in the EYFS and first years of the primary part of the school, who may not have been ready for formal school lessons, appeared to have difficulty in concentrating on the tasks given to them and were prone to misbehave.
- 3.25 Students enjoy working with each other. This is evident not only in the classes and activities observed but also when older students mentor and guide younger students as seen in learning support in the library's reading café and in a range of sporting and physical activities. The students demonstrate a strong sense of the school as a whole community – within and across year groups and parts of the school. Students say they make friendships easily across year groups. They are excellent citizens within their own community and have developed the capacities to make positive contributions to the wider world. They are involved in a range of charitable initiatives, from fund-raising activities within the school to work in the wider community such as in charity shops and centres for the elderly. The supportive and outward-looking senior leadership and governors are keen to exploit such links between the school and the wider community in Luxembourg.
- 3.26 Children in the EYFS were observed counting to ten in French, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Chinese, reflecting the range of cultures in the class. Relationships between students are characterised by kindness and sensitivity, underpinned by the enriching cultural and linguistic mix in the school. They show tremendous respect for one another and, whatever their cultural or religious background, when they join the school they feel welcomed as an integral part of the community. They see themselves as part of a cohesive school family. Even so, the students talk proudly of their lives outside school, including the different experiences of families from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Observations of the children and students at play indicated that they are inclusive of those from backgrounds different to their own, mixing readily with students of other nationalities, backgrounds and beliefs. The students learn about other cultures in assembly through student presentations, such as a talk about the conflict and fighting in Afghanistan.
- 3.27 Students understand the importance of staying safe, including when online. They understand what is needed to keep themselves healthy, are ready to make the right choices, even if they succumb occasionally to the wrong ones, and appreciate the fruit provided by the Ministry of Education to the students of St George's along with all other schools in Luxembourg. Almost all parents agreed in their questionnaire responses that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and values.

4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured students, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting inspector
Mrs Mary Allen	Team inspector (Head of international middle school, HMC school, England)
Miss Nicola Fortune	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS and COBIS school, Switzerland)
Mr Jonathan Liddell	Team inspector (Head of upper school, COBIS school, Thailand)
Mr Kieron Peacock	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS and COBIS school, Kuwait)
Mr Umeshchandra Raja	Team inspector (Headteacher, ISA school, England)
Mrs Fiona Rhodes	Team inspector (Assistant principal, COBIS school, Norway)