



COBIS | Council of British
International Schools

Accreditation and Compliance Report



School:

New School, Rome

Lead Improvement Partner:

Jason Porter

Head of Secondary, British School of Bucharest

The findings and next steps of this report reflect the work of the Lead Improvement Partner.

The Compliance visit took place between
13th – 16th November 2023.

Site visited: New School Rome campus - on site.

Student Numbers: 221

Compliance is valid for 5 years.

The next Compliance check is due in November 2028.

Contents

COBIS COMPLIANCE REPORT

1.0 SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT	4
2.0 STUDENT WELFARE	8
3.0 FACILITIES	14
4.0 GOVERNANCE	19
5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES	23
OVERALL OBSERVATIONS	27

COMPLIANCE REPORT

New School Rome has successfully met standards one to five of the COBIS Compliance system.

1.0 SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

The school places a high priority on the safeguarding of students and staff, including child protection, and the safe recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

1A

STANDARD

The school recruitment process is fair, thorough and transparent and applies to all appointments consistently

COMMENTARY

The school uses agencies and posts in the TES for recruitment. The process is equitable and follows the equal opportunities policy. There is a published job description and a clear process with a statement for the checks which are to be carried out, although more specific references to the detailed checks and the ICPC should be included. Interviewers have undergone safer recruitment training. Applicants are asked for police checks from their previous country / countries of residence and are required to obtain a police check from Italy. Not all local police checks are updated annually, which is being considered as a process development. Employees' identity is checked, and a copy of this document is put on staff files. There is a colour copy held on the electronic file and colour copies will be kept in the physical file moving forwards. Around 5% of staff files were checked during the visit in the first instance and then additional files including the DSL and the most recently appointed staff were also requested. All were in good order.

Two references are sought, and they are phone checked with details of the phone check recorded on the printed copy of the reference and details recorded on the SCR. Files of historical staff members are also retained. Staff turnover is very low and retention is very high so only three members of teaching staff have been recruited in the past five years. The SCR is up to date and contains all requisite information and references to documents which are kept on file and there are tabs and records of relevant checks for ancillary staff.

The kitchen staff are sourced through an external company, but checks carried out by the company are verified and the details of these staff members are recorded on the SCR.

At the time of the visit, no staff files or governor files contained an ICPC, which would mean non-compliance with COBIS standards. However, the school are rectifying this with immediate effect, including all Executive Council (EC) members as required, as discussed with the LIP and COBIS Director of Accreditation following the visit.

Since the visit the school identified problems with files for 11 staff and actively worked to plug all gaps including requesting ICPCs. Two staff are extremely long-term in the school and ACRO have advised that they are unable to provide ICPCs for them. In this case a risk assessment should take place (see Next Steps).

The school is well staffed and with currently 221 students on roll, staff-to-student ratios are well within compliant standards.

It was noted that the Equal Opportunities Policy had no review date, so it was unclear whether this is the most recent version of the policy. The same was true of some other school policies. It is important to review and update policies where necessary on a regular basis to ensure that they align with practice.

NEXT STEPS

For Compliance an ICPC must be gained for all staff and EC members who have lived and worked in the UK and a scan copy of the originals to be shared with the LIP. Where an ICPC is not available, the emails from ACRO should be printed in colour, stored on the staff member's file as part of the risk assessment for that staff member. This should also include a signed declaration that the staff member is suitable to work with children, signed by the staff member, dated and countersigned by the Headteacher or HR Manager. Additionally, the staff file should be checked for any records of concern. Finally, the school might consider whether it is appropriate to carry out a confidential and limited peer investigation of this staff member. An additional column should be added to the SCR to declare a risk assessment is present.

Moving forwards, retain colour copies of relevant documents in the staff files and continue to initial, sign and date on the document when the original had been seen and by whom.

A more comprehensive statement regarding the details of the checks to be

carried out should be included on the job advertisement.

The school will contact COBIS safeguarding moving forwards to request the prohibition checks for all new recruits.

Review and update the Equal Opportunities Policy where this hasn't yet been completed.

February 2024 update. In accordance with the next steps, all ICPCs have been gained for staff and EC members who have lived and worked in the UK. The remaining next steps will be followed up at the one-year review.

1B

STANDARD

All staff within the school including volunteers and supply staff meet high standards of child protection and the safeguarding of students

COMMENTARY

The safeguarding and child protection protocols and procedures and their practical application are secure and effective. There is a strong sense of duty of care for the children at the school which was observed and reported by students, teachers and parents. Kitchen staff are not school staff but are listed on the SCR, as is the one regular volunteer parent. All staff members irrespective of position and role within the school receive in-service training led by the DSL and Safeguarding Team. This is in English and, where appropriate in Italian, and all staff have carried out approved safeguarding and child protection courses. A record is kept of staff who have attended these sessions and all staff refresh their training annually. The DSL and Safeguarding Team members have undergone enhanced safeguarding and child protection courses within the last year. Safeguarding updates are sent to staff where relevant, and the DSL is a member of Safeguarding Pro to keep updated on the latest developments and best practice. The establishment of the wider safeguarding team ensures that they all have sufficient time to fulfil their duties. It is also a positive development that now that the Head has established this wider team, she is able to step back from the DSL role but remain as a further point of consultation as necessary. The Safeguarding Team is exploring the possible use of a secure online platform for managing safeguarding concerns and recording documentation through the EduLink add-on which has recently been purchased as part of SIMS. There is a secure

and working knowledge and means of contact between the relevant Italian authorities regarding child protection and police and there have been some instances where this has been enacted.

The student files are retained after the student has left the school and relevant and appropriate information is shared in confidence at Key Stage transition. and requests are made from students' previous schools to disclose safeguarding information. Students are confident in expressing who they would talk to if they are worried about themselves or someone else but appear to be insecure in the knowledge of the role of the Safeguarding Leads and who they are. There is some evidence of displays in the school of the Safeguarding Leads including their photos but this is not widespread. The sign in procedure at the school entrance is secure and thorough. Visitors are escorted while at school and safeguarding information and procedures for visitors are displayed on the rear of the visitor badge.

NEXT STEPS

The implementation of the secure online platform for managing safeguarding concerns would be a welcome addition to the safeguarding procedures at the school and should be initiated as soon as possible.

Communicate with the student body about the role of Safeguarding Leads, how to approach them and display the details and photos of the Safeguarding Leads in more frequent and prominent places around the school to raise safeguarding awareness across the school community.

The school provides a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

2A

STANDARD

The school provides a pastoral structure that meets the needs of all students and promotes their personal development

COMMENTARY

Given the size and operational features of the school, a flattened pastoral structure is in operation, where students' first point of contact for welfare and pastoral concerns and reporting is typically the form tutor, but equally students have reported that they feel they can speak to any staff member. Parents report that the duty of care and pastoral provision of the school is outstanding and commend the school for the personal approach to the students' wellbeing, how well the staff know the students and families and the high level of individualisation which happens at every level of the school. There is much evidence of this also from student reports and the planning and implementation of the timetable, options choices and response to students' needs generally. Student pastoral, welfare and academic matters are discussed and minuted at the student progress meetings led by the learning support, primary and secondary coordinators.

The add-on to SIMS, EduLink is used to support student academic and attendance tracking, although this is in the process of being embedded. Staff appear to be aware of what to do if they are concerned about a child. There is a school counsellor who is brought in from outside the school and staff members are being trained to be able to offer counselling support in-house. Students express clearly and confidently who they would speak to if they were concerned about an incident, although are less clear on the understanding of the role of Safeguarding Leads and which staff members these are and how they are to be contacted.

Pastoral concerns, serious incidents and bullying are logged, and issues are followed up swiftly and thoroughly as a pastoral team and by involving wider teams, such as the Head or SEN Lead and involving parents as required. Communication among the team and with parents enables an easy flow of information to enable a range of strategies to be deployed. As such, students report that they feel safe, supported, and express strongly the notion that with such a close community feel within the school, they can trust any adult to deal with an incident or concern professionally, correctly and sensitively.

Suspension and exclusion incidents are low across the school as a whole and behaviour management is handled with a measured and caring approach, and which appears to enact policy. Conversations with parents affirmed the view that this is a school where all children feel safe and cared for. Students were able to respond directly to questions about the behaviour policy, referring for example to the 'yellow book' in the art room.

COMMENDATION

The positive and caring approach of all staff who demonstrate that support for students is their first priority.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

2B

STANDARD

The school has provision for the physical and mental health, and safe supervision, of all students to allow them to flourish in the school environment

COMMENTARY

New School Rome school is compliant with Italian health and safety regulations. An audit of Health and Safety is carried out by an external consultant who has made a list of recommendations, which are either being actioned or in progress.

Food is delivered for lunch and break time snack which complies with local regulations and is served from a dining servery area observing food hygiene and preparation. Health and safety concerns and maintenance requests are reported during the staff meetings overseen by the relevant school coordinator or are emailed directly to the finance and health safety manager. This is acted upon and as deemed necessary, discussed further with the EC.

There is a maintenance staff member who ensures the site is maintained, free from leaves and actions maintenance requests. Health and Safety meetings

are minuted and there is a designated health and safety EC member.

There are first aid boxes around the school which are checked for contents based on a list stored within the medical box. The names of staff first aiders who are qualified and experienced are displayed around the medical boxes and in the science laboratories and a map is displayed clearly showing the location of the medical boxes. Should it be required, a room adjacent to the school office is used as a medical room. It has a folding bed and offers privacy and easy access to the main entrance in the event a student needs to leave. The school may wish to consider appointing a qualified nurse to develop provision for staff and students, to provide first aid training and liaise with local hospitals as necessary.

A visible staff presence at break and lunch times provides effective levels of supervision around the site and some staff members are present at break and lunch eating with the students. There is also a designated site break and lunchtime supervisor. This is important as the site consists of smaller play and garden areas, many of which are on different levels and accessible by paths and steps leading to classrooms and play areas.

During arrival and departure times at school, students are supervised safely so that they enter and leave the classrooms. The drop-off area in the morning is managed safely with cars entering the site in a turning circle arrangement for students' parents in EYFS – Year 2, and with secondary school students entering by one side gate which is supervised by staff or the security team.

Cyber safety is dealt with in PSHE lessons, as well as through whole-school initiatives and during computer science lessons. Students report that they feel secure in the knowledge of cyber safety and incidents are very rare. There is a robust firewall for the internet network in school. This is incorporated in the PSHE programme, as are sessions on healthy eating and positive mental and physical health.

Staff undergo GDPR training annually with a presentation from the Head and the level of staff application of knowledge is assessed via a questionnaire. The Head is the DPO.

NEXT STEPS

The school should consider the appointment of a trained nurse, to consolidate the first aid training and provision, to develop the current medical room facilities and liaise with local hospitals for emergency situations.

STANDARD

The school ensures that through positive behaviour management students are supported in their learning and safety

COMMENTARY

There is an undeniably productive and harmonious sense pervading the school, as children move around the campus, use the spaces at break and lunchtime and interact with visitors and staff. The students appreciate these positive relationships which they declare openly help them to achieve and create a supportive environment for learning and enjoyment. There is an overriding sense of mutual respect. This was also emphasised by parents, some of whom have stated that they chose NS Rome for this reason and for the principles of the foundation of the school. As such, the necessity to implement sanctions is diminished, however students report any sanctions which do occur are handled in line with policy.

There is a reward system which is valued by students and the new online platform Edulink is being trialled to support this. Students have planners where homework is recorded and notes to parents regarding minor concerns and parents are expected to sign the diary and acknowledge. School information, study guides and general expectations are set out in the student planners also. The anti-bullying policy is clear and seems to be enacted where appropriate. Students report very low levels of behaviour which they may consider to be bullying related to any cyber incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. At the time of the visit, there were some inconsistencies in the application of the mobile phone policy, but this is currently being debated and open to reform via the Academic Council (AC), awaiting a vote and possible policy change.

Students, staff and parents all report a very high level of dedication to personal development for the students, flourishing and individualisation. The students have a very strong sense of affinity with and loyalty towards their community and this is palpable around the school site during lesson and break times and after and before school. Students value the level of participation they have in the decision-making process for their school, mainly through the work of the AC. They feel strongly that they have a voice in determining decisions and the future of their school, alongside the voices of the academic staff. There are many examples recorded and cited by students where they have produced a proposal and presented to the AC, which comprises all staff and a group of students who represent each year group and are appointed via a voting system. The proposals have been discussed and then a vote taken with staff and students, resulting in a tangible outcome. At the time of the visit, there

was a debate and a vote regarding the use of mobile phones in school which was productive, well marshalled and curated and gave students and staff a chance to express their views openly. There was a genuine sense of mutual respect and recognition that all opinions would be taken into account.

Registration procedures are thorough and well managed, as are students who arrive late and are registered by the office administrator on the system after passing through the security gate.

Students commend highly the teachers on their level of academic and pastoral support. Especially in key stage 4 and 5, they report high levels of academic support and feel that they have a number of staff to turn to for pastoral support and also for guidance with revision, study skills or where they are struggling with a task. Individualisation in all areas is strong and commended highly by all members of the community. This has included an example where a PE GCSE course was opened in the Key Stage 4 option blocks and a Spanish class was run after school to enable some Year 10 students to continue to study towards their GCSEs.

It was noted that a number of policies lack either a review date or appear not to have been reviewed in line with the review schedule. For example, from the website alone, the Health and Safety policy states that it has been reviewed in 2023 but lacks a date when it was reviewed and when the policy is due for renewal. The Data Protection Policy states it was reviewed in July 2023, but lacks a review date, as is the case with the Attendance Policy. The Communication Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy and Complaints Procedure appear to have no review date or to have been reviewed. The Safeguarding Policy seems to not have an active link on the website. The Financial Regulations Policy is dated as being from 2021-22 and the Primary Behaviour policy states that it is due to be reviewed in 2022.

COMMENDATION

The school should be proud of how it has developed student voice and involvement in policy and procedures to an extent seldom seen in other international school settings.

NEXT STEPS

Ensure that policies are updated in accordance with the published and agreed schedule and that the reviewers and review dates are added to the policies.

STANDARD

The school ensures that off-site activities are appropriate and safe

COMMENTARY

For day trips, offsite PE lessons and residential and overseas trips, detailed trip proposals and risk assessments are in place and are compliant with policies which are implemented consistently.

Police checks are sought and gained for all instructors at the offsite PE facility.

Although there is not a designated member of staff responsible for trips, there is a staff member, also the Duke of Edinburgh Award coordinator, who is trained in educational trips and visits and consults with staff on best practice for trip organisation and risk assessing. The Head takes ultimate responsibility for quality assuring the processes and risk assessments and signs off trips. Adequate staffing ratios are in place, as are pre-trip and on-trip medical procedures and preparations.

Risk assessments are in place for offsite sports fixtures and associated journeys and all trips depart with a medical bag, an emergency school phone, a designated contact person and relevant and appropriate student lists. A variety of trips run at the school, such as local visits, a recent football tournament trip to Verona, a Year 6 trip to the airforce museum, a trip to Bracciano castle near a local lake. There have also been two junior football tournaments, art galleries and a GCSE geography field trip. There is also a residential trips week in June to a variety of destinations within Italy and abroad. For these visits a designated member of SLT is assigned and contacts the trip leader through a school mobile.

Whilst there is not a formal work experience programme, there are opportunities offered to students via the parent body on a more informal basis.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

The school provides all students with access to an environment conducive to learning and that keeps them safe.

3A

STANDARD

Accommodation supports the learning needs of all students

COMMENTARY

Although the buildings and site are not purpose-built, the classrooms are bright and with adequate space, with some newer classrooms being added to the site over the course of several years. Movement between lessons is calm and given the lower student numbers at the school and that the classrooms are spread across several buildings across the site, there are no areas of crowding.

Temperature and brightness from the sun are regulated with air conditioning and blinds and soundproofing enables a variety of learning activities to take place without disturbance to other classes. Classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards, projectors and whiteboards, as well as sound equipment where necessary. Students further benefit from many break out and smaller spaces in the buildings, used for meetings or study areas and outside and there are store sheds where there is play equipment for use during break times. There are a number of lessons which make use of the grounds through outdoor learning opportunities.

The library offers quiet and purposeful work and learning spaces with a wide range of books which can be borrowed using a computer-based loan system. The library is also used to host exams.

There are dedicated EAL and SEND spaces for students and staff to teach and work.

Classrooms in Early Years are airy and spacious and have a dedicated play area and terrace-balcony area which is covered and contains play equipment. There is ample provision of drinking water coolers and taps around the site and toilets, which are marked for adults and children, are clean and well-maintained, respect children's privacy and are age appropriate. The hot water conforms to the requisite temperature norms.

There are plans in place by the EC for a progressive renovation of some areas of the school, such as the toilets and redecoration of some classrooms and which occurs on an ongoing basis.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

3B

STANDARD

The site provides a secure environment for students, staff and visitors

COMMENTARY

A sense of care is evident across the school community, which is nurtured and cultivated. Emergency exits are clearly marked where appropriate, and a dedicated fire escape has been installed on the top floor of the main building via a metal staircase to the rear of the building.

There is a ready and articulated awareness from students of emergency drills which are conducted for fire and lockdown. Logs are kept for all emergency drills showing the nature of the drill, the date, time, the evacuation time and feedback. Fire drills are conducted termly, with lockdown less frequently. The school produced a 'continuity plan' document for procedures during the pandemic period as part of a wider policy. It would be strongly recommended that this be reviewed and updated and also to include critical incidents and lockdown procedures.

Entry and exit into and out of the school site is regulated by a security team and site entry procedures adhere to safeguarding standards for visitors. There are two controlled entry points: one for entry on foot and one via a gate for vehicular access. The school does not have a sign displaying its name on the street and the buses are not named for security reasons. There are clear protocols for secure site access for parents and effective procedures are in place for students' arrival and departure from the campus either on foot or by vehicle.

The school site is built on a large hillside with a gentle slope to one side and a steeper incline towards the rear of the school. The grounds have been landscaped into terraces, upon which are built classrooms and play areas. As such, these areas are accessed by steps and sloping paths. The grass play areas, frequent flower and shrub beds and paved surfaces are well maintained, and some pathways have recently been replaced with nonslip paving to replace mossy stones. There are handrails to aid access and safe movement on the steps and the numerous items of playground equipment are clean, well maintained and situated on recently replaced rubber matting. There is a pond area which contains fish, and which is used by science and other academic subjects. This area is gated and fenced but during the visit it was observed that there was no lock on the gate which clearly posed a potential threat to safety of the student body. There was also a shower room that is used by staff which

did not have a lock fitted, posing a security risk for staff and students.

Since the visit took place, the school has shared photographs to show that there are now locks fitted to the pond gate and the shower room.

Students have the full use of the resurfaced volleyball pitch which has also benefited from padding around the fence to prevent injury, as well as an all-weather football pitch used at break and lunch times and for sports training. There are many shaded and sheltered areas across the school grounds, including the dedicated and gated area for EYFS. There are also a number of named and dedicated spaces which are enjoyed by students and mentioned by them in and around school, such as an amphitheatre area, known as the 'red circle' and the 'fairy' and 'oasis' gardens. There is also a 'friendship bench' where students who feel lonely or are looking for someone to play with can sit and are then approached for support by older students.

The dining area is a combination of indoor and outdoor awning style accommodation and is clean and well ventilated. The students treat their school environment with care and respect and the equipment and grounds are free from litter and damage.

NEXT STEPS

Fit a lock to a shower room external door which is currently used by staff. The shower is not to be used until the lock is fitted. **Completed since the visit took place.**

Add a lock to the gate leading to the pond for the security of students and staff. **Completed since the visit took place.**

Review and update any policies that refer to pandemic and/or critical incidents ensuring that this includes lockdown preparedness. Additionally ensure that lockdown drills are practised in parity with fire drill occurrence.

3C

STANDARD

The fabric of the school provides an effective and safe working environment

COMMENTARY

The furniture is age-appropriate and comfortable. Flooring and fittings are well maintained and there are plans to carry out renovations to the toilets and to some classrooms. The classrooms and school environment, including toilets, are cleaned

daily and at lunchtime. The art room was carefully managed to ensure that nothing that could potentially be dangerous was left out.

The laboratory has a gas cut off tap, as well as an alarm system, first aid boxes and an eye wash and safety measures are in place for students, such as goggles and lab coats. The prep room displays relevant and appropriate signage to warn of hazardous and flammable chemicals and students cannot access the prep rooms or laboratories without staff members being present. The prep room door was noted to be consistently locked.

The food preparation areas are clean and hygienic with appropriate food hygiene and preparation protocols. A range of healthy eating options are available at the canteen, including vegetarian options. All students have lunch provided.

Risk assessments are in place and updated for key areas of the school.

At the time of the visit, it was noted that there are some classrooms where there were neither windows, nor glass panels in doors to give sight into the rooms. This is a significant concern from a safeguarding point of view and should be immediately prioritised to meet the standards required for compliance with COBIS requirements. The school immediately provided a temporary solution to this by removing the doors in those rooms to allow sight into them. In the long-term though this doesn't provide a solution as it adds risk to fire or lockdown situations. The school is actively putting windows into the doors and should share evidence of this when completed.

NEXT STEPS

For Compliance and to support both students and staff from a safeguarding perspective, the situation where it isn't possible to see inside some classrooms from outside must be given immediate attention and a viable long-term solution (windows or at least doors with glass panels) found.

February 2024 update - Windows have since been installed in all classroom doors where they were previously not present in accordance with the recommendations of the LIP and COBIS Director of Accreditation.

Overall facilities meet the needs of all students, including those with additional educational needs and/or a physical disability

COMMENTARY

The changing and toilet facilities are age appropriate and adequately adapted for privacy. The access to areas of the site is challenging because of the incline of the hillside, however attempts have been made to make steps on the slopes shallow and install handrails.

There is no specific adapted access for students who have additional physical needs, however, at the time of the visit, there were no students on roll who have an on-going additional physical need. With the exception of one classroom located on the school site and the upper three classrooms in the main building, all classrooms have step-free access to the exterior. Where students need to access these classrooms, either the class is re-roomed or the student works in the supervised study area and the teacher provides catch up work later. A reference to this procedure in the SEN policy would be useful.

During the visit, one student was noted to be using crutches and one student recovering from a lower limb injury. With the help of fellow students to carry bags and check-ins from staff, they appeared able to access the classrooms using a crutch and stairs, where handrails are fitted. It was also noted that one to one catch up sessions with the students were scheduled in the ground floor study room and timetable rooming adaptations are made frequently.

NEXT STEPS

Include a reference in the SEN policy to adaptations made for students with additional physical needs.

4.0 GOVERNANCE

The school's governors work to support students and to provide

strategic direction for the school.

4A

STANDARD

All governors / proprietors meet all the requirements for adults with access to young people reinforcing the importance of safeguarding within the school

COMMENTARY

The EC and the profiles of the members are available through the school website and can be contacted as such.

The EC has a grasp of Health and Safety for the school, as well as safeguarding and personal development and wellbeing for staff and students and these are standing items on EC agendas and minutes and are regularly discussed with any outcomes for upgrades and changes as a result or actions on safeguarding which are minuted. There is a Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) and a Health and Safety Governor, who are not the same person, nor are they staff members. The EC members are often at the school, meeting formally and informally and play an active role. The EC members sign an acknowledgement of a list of relevant policies which have been read and understood and this record is kept on their file and includes the COBIS Code of Good Governance. At the time of the visit, there were no ICPCs on the EC members' files where they had lived or worked in the UK, but this was also actioned during the visit. The DSG meets very regularly with the DSL.

At the time of the visit, it was noted that one member of the EC was eligible for an ICPC but this had not yet been requested.

NEXT STEPS

ICPCs to be gained for all relevant EC members to be Compliant. **February 2024 update** - this has now been acquired.

4B

STANDARD

Measures are in place for governors to register interests and to manage any conflicts of interest

COMMENTARY

The EC has a clearly articulated Conflict of Interest procedure, and the EC members have an awareness of this eventuality and how it would be managed. The EC members have all signed the relevant agreements and these are kept on the EC members' files. This is particularly relevant as the EC is made up of three parent representatives (elected), two staff members (elected), the Chair of the Academic Council (which is the Head) and one co-opted further parent representative. In this sense, there can be times when sensitive topics are discussed, and this is managed through declarations of Conflicts of Interest and openness and according to the guidelines set out in the COBIS Good Governance handbook.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

4C

STANDARD

There are written procedures / protocols for the remit of the work of the governing body

COMMENTARY

The role, scope and outcomes of the work of the EC are clearly documented in detail in a constitutional document based on the inception of the school in 1972, with updates since. The 'constitution' declares that New School Rome will offer the educational provision 'in a manner which is similar to the programmes on offer in Great Britain, but incorporated into the international environment'. The constitution goes on to detail the membership of the EC, how they are to be selected, their duties and any eventual loss of membership status, as well as conflicts of interest. The role of the Chairperson is also set out and EC members have a specific area of responsibility, such as Health and Safety and Designated Safeguarding Governor and the process for appointing EC members is transparent and followed.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

4D**STANDARD**

There is appropriate support for new governors

COMMENTARY

New EC members undergo a short induction process which is reviewed and updated at EC meetings, and they receive training on safer recruitment as required. The school may wish to look now at how they can enhance governance induction to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of their roles.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

4E**STANDARD**

Governors have a commitment to their own training and development

COMMENTARY

All EC members have undergone safeguarding training with the Chair of the EC and the DSG having training to Level 3. The EC have expressed an interest to seek out further ways in which to develop their skills through COBIS courses on effective governance. Currently the EC members are not involved in recruitment but will be taking the safer recruitment training as the need arises.

NEXT STEPS

EduCare safer recruitment training recommended ahead of any recruitment involving EC members although this would usually only be for the most senior academic positions in the school.

Continue to seek further ways to enhance the EC members' skills through COBIS or other courses.

4F

STANDARD

The governors provide records of meetings and decisions which show evidence of active and committed governance

The profiles and contact details for the governors are available to parents along with key policies

COMMENTARY

The EC meet regularly, and meetings have an agenda and minutes with subsequent action points where required. Safeguarding and Health and Safety are standing agenda items. There is open, free and regular communication between the EC and the Head. The EC profiles and contact information is posted on the website. The EC have a strategic oversight of financial management and prudence for the school, to secure its future development and for business continuity. It is clear that the governors play an active role in the life of the school and that they are genuinely engaged with the community. During the visit governors attended an open morning and were also seen around school at other times.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES

The school has an evident British educational ethos, is outward-looking and promotes international mindedness.

5A

STANDARD

British educational ethos and values are at the heart of a holistic approach to learning and to the development of learner qualities

COMMENTARY

The school curriculum meets the standard with schemes of work in place and which are underpinned with the philosophy and practice of a British international education. There is an understanding to cater for the needs of students with SEND and who require instruction in EAL, whether this is during class time or in withdrawal groups. Further SEND training may further develop provision for children's learning with identified SEND in line with further developments in support learning already being considered across the school. G&T students receive stretch and challenge and there is evidence of differentiation. Students report this level of support and academic challenge. Students and parents report that homework is set on a regular basis.

To further support students' learning and track progress the GL Assessment CAT4 tests are implemented at Year 7 and 10. The data from these reports appears to be partially used, although there is intent to further develop these data and the implementation of them to further enhance student learning. Student pastoral and wellbeing questionnaires have been used and the intention is to continue with this initiative either in house or possibly to explore the use of commercially produced packages to run alongside and support the GL CAT4. The school is investigating possible assessment approaches for Year 12 also.

As more data are gathered within the school and learning, academic and pastoral strategies develop and emerge, it may become necessary to consider other roles within the school staff.

The school promotes holistic education through a balanced curriculum and there is freedom of choice for the Key Stage 4 and 5 options across a range of subjects. There has been some recent reform in the approach to options to enable students to focus on a comparatively fewer number of subjects, rather than begin subjects only to drop out of them at some point, to opt for independent study lessons. These are supervised by staff and in some instances, students visit EYFS to read with younger children. The school is recognised under the framework for Italian education and offers Italian language modules in Years 12 and 13, the 'maturita' and which enables students to apply for direct entry into Italian universities and with the potential to one day work for the Italian government. NS Rome is the only

school in Rome which offers this possibility.

Given the size of the school and capacity within the teaching staff, the range of subjects on offer is broad. Students benefit from tailored advice on their options choices and later express how they value the university and careers guidance from staff and the recent expansion of the use of UniFrog to support this process. Students also attend university guidance fairs and events from Year 10, some of which are organised internally. There are plans to invite Year 9 in the future. Parents have affirmed this appreciative view as well. The Alumni network of former students have also visited the school to host careers talks and presentations.

The 'learner profile' was launched in 2019 but was sidelined during the COVID years. There are plans to revive this, along with a new set of school values and changes to the House system as set out in the SIP. British values prevail throughout the school, and this is evident in policies, the manner in which incidents are dealt with and the common language and positive and respectful behavioural norms which are commonplace around the school.

Common UK models of assessment and reporting are used. Exams are conducted in accordance with Cambridge or JCQ regulations and mock examinations are conducted in January for Years 11 -13. There is also cross-moderation with other international schools where there may be one teacher for a subject.

The teaching staff are predominantly English native speaker and UK qualified, with the exception of one Italian teacher, and the school is compliant with local employment regulations in the context of Italy. A range of teaching styles and learning activities are evident across the school, involving indoor and outdoor learning, enquiry and discovery, as well as deployment of technology via Chromebooks and laptops which remain stored in the classrooms.

A staff in-service training programme runs after school which offers professional development and includes health and safety and safeguarding training and updates.

There is a thriving extra-curricular programme which is broad for the size of the school and is supported by student voice and cross-school leadership programmes and initiatives, which increase as students' progress through the school. Students take part in sports match training and have the opportunity to compete against other schools.

In school there are a number of charitable initiatives running, such as the Harvest Festival collection for a local community food bank, an annual Water Aid initiative,

Royal British Legion poppy appeal, alongside other charitable initiatives or programmes based on response to current issues or crises. This has included Race for the Cure, second-hand book sales, clothes and food donation initiatives for children and earthquake relief for Turkey.

NEXT STEPS

The school may wish to consider providing additional SEND training to supplement support already given to develop greater provision for students with identified additional educational needs.

5B

STANDARD

The school has an outward-looking perspective promoting its values via a wide curriculum and through opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures and global issues as far as this is permissible within the host country

COMMENTARY

The ethos of international mindedness is evident and embedded in the school culture. During the visit, the EYFS class was learning about Diwali and there are references in and around the school to its internationalism, such as the summer fair and Hanuka, King's Day, Chinese New Year and Christmas. Parental buy in and involvement in this area is strong.

Students can make use of the adjacent Pakistani embassy to pray via an agreement and cultural and religious awareness is demonstrated in other areas of the school, such as an alternative meal being provided for a student based on their religion. The PSHE curriculum demonstrates a variety of age-appropriate themes which are reflective of British educational values. These lessons are delivered during an individual and dedicated lesson once per week across the whole school. The curriculum delivers themes respecting the local and school's diverse culture and parents have the right to withdraw their child from lessons, should they wish. The themes are followed up also by Form Tutors.

Links with local international schools are strong, with NS Rome being part of the Rome International Schools Association. The school regularly takes part in local events, sports tournaments and fixtures.

There are many areas where student leadership is developed. This includes evidence of reading programmes with EYFS and Year 1, the EPQ, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Y12 and Y11 tutor mentors for Years 9 and KS2 students, sports coaching across the younger year groups in the school and students on reduced timetables who spend time with EYFS, tutoring in the lunch area. The

students speak highly of these opportunities they are afforded. The student voice is extremely strong in the school with an active Student Council. The clarity and strength of student voice and the seriousness with which adults in the school engage with them is a real strength. Students from year 7 to 13 are able to sit alongside teachers on the Academic Council where they have equal voting rights.

COMMENDATION

Student representation and active participation in the decision-making process in the school is extremely strong.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

5C

STANDARD

The school teaches the majority of subjects through the medium of English

COMMENTARY

With the exception of Modern Foreign Languages and the Italian lessons, which are compulsory for all students whether at beginner or native speaker level, lessons are delivered in English and there is support for students with EAL. This is based on assessed needs and involves in-class or withdrawn support and is in operation across the whole school. Local culture and festivals are respected.

NEXT STEPS

None noted at this time.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

Last year, in 2022, New School Rome celebrated its 50-year anniversary with events and the publication of a booklet setting out the founding principles of the school. These principles underpin much of the operational culture of the school today from its

foundation in 1972, namely those being referred to in the founding literature viewed during the visit as: 'liberal educational principles', 'small classes; individual attention' and a spirit of democracy and mutual affiliation. These values are borne out in the relationships within the school, the participative functioning of the introduction of change and the power of student voice. With nearly 1,000 members, the Alumni group is a thriving and vibrant group and is a testament to the affinity the students have with their school.

Given the founding principles, the nature of the site and the student numbers on roll, all with the backdrop of staffing ratios and the educational offering being as broad as possible, the leadership of the school is not without challenge. The EC are confident in their vision for the school, developments which can take place and where necessary, a prudent approach to ensure steady progression.

The flattened structures at the school have very clear strengths in ensuring a participative and shared leadership approach. This cascades to the staff and students and appears to further engender their affiliation with the school. The recommendations and 'next steps' serve to ensure firstly, compliance with the COBIS standards, but also to support the school in its endeavours to ensure that procedures and initiatives are embedded and operationalised to underpin the school culture and to assist in further developments in supporting student learning, flourishing and safeguarding, whilst allowing the best aspects of the distinctive culture to thrive for the benefit of all.

PRIORITY NEXT STEPS

There are a number of important measures that need to take place to ensure that student safeguarding is as strong as it possibly can be. These will be agreed with the LIP and COBIS Director of Accreditation. Successful completion of these required actions will enable the school to achieve Compliance status. The most urgent of these are listed below.

- It is **essential** that the removal of doors, installation of windows in classrooms or of doors with glass panels where this was not the case at the start of the visit, takes place with immediate effect.
- ICPC to be **urgently** requested for all staff and EC members who have lived and worked in the UK and a scan copy of the originals to be shared with the LIP.

Ensure that all policies are reviewed and updated in accordance with the published and agreed schedule and that the reviewers and review dates are added to the policies.

Conduct more frequent lockdown drills and evaluate their effectiveness in parity with fire drill occurrence.

Continue to seek further ways to enhance the EC members' skills through additional training opportunities, for example through COBIS.

All of these priority next steps have been addressed by February 2024 and the school is now in a position to focus on the remaining target areas which will be verified at the one-year review. The school engaged immediately with all these priorities and worked diligently to ensure that the outstanding areas needed for Compliance were completed.

Recommendation to COBIS Director of Accreditation:

As of February 2024, all action points that had prevented the school from gaining Compliance have been addressed and it is recommended that The New School Rome should now gain Member School (Compliance) status.

