



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ACS HILLINGDON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## ACS Hillingdon International School

The lower school, middle school and high school were inspected at the same time.

Full Name of School	<b>ACS Hillingdon International School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>312/6060</b>		
Address	<b>ACS Hillingdon International School 108 Vine Lane Hillingdon Uxbridge Middlesex UB10 0BE</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01895 259771</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01895 818401</b>		
Email Address	<b>hillingdonadmissions@acs-schools.com</b>		
Head	<b>Mrs Ginger Apple</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr David Thomas</b>		
Age Range	<b>4 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>620</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (338 boys; 282 girls;)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-10: <b>150</b>
	4-5 (EYFS):	<b>12</b>	10-18: <b>458</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>0</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Michelle Eriksen</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>04 Oct 2011 to 05 Oct 2011</b>		
	<b>02 Nov 2011 to 04 Nov 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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 law.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>4</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	4
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management	10
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	11
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>12</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>14</b>

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The ACS Hillingdon International School endeavours to provide a quality education for a multinational community in the London area. The curriculum is international in flavour taking elements from the UK and USA, following the International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes in the middle and high schools as well as Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The pre-kindergarten class covers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1978 and occupies the Hillingdon Court Estate not far from Uxbridge town centre. The school consists of three sections, Lower, Middle and High schools, sharing a single campus with additional playing fields a few miles from the campus. The school is one of four in the ACS International School group. All schools are overseen by a managing director and the leadership team is composed of the heads of each ACS school, head of finance, head of human resources, and head of marketing and admissions.
- 1.3 The school aims to prepare young people to take their place in a changing world by providing a rich international experience, to promote excellence through learning and personal achievement, to foster a sense of community and global citizenship and to instil an appreciation, respect and understanding of cultural values. It seeks to do so through a rigorous and diverse educational programme and social, emotional and academic guidance. Since the previous inspection the school has introduced the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) as the framework of the curriculum for Grades 6 through 10.
- 1.4 There are 620 pupils at the school of whom 162 are in the Lower School, 232 in the Middle School and 226 in the High School. There are 338 boys and 282 girls. A total of 71 pupils receive support with English as an additional language (EAL) and 79 are receiving some form of support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school admits pupils with a broad range of abilities who come from families living in central London and as far afield as High Wycombe. Most parents are professionals. The overall ability of the pupils is average. There is a mixture of cultures and ethnicity that reflects the 45 nationalities represented, and 45 per cent of the pupils are from the USA. Many of the pupils join throughout the school year and stay for an average three years before they move on to other schools around the world or go to university.

- 1.5 Local nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The local year group nomenclature used by the school and its UK National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

	NC Year Group
<b><i>Lower School</i></b>	
Pre-Kindergarten	Reception
Kindergarten	Year 1
Grade 1	Year 2
Grade 2	Year 3
Grade 3	Year 4
Grade 4	Year 5
<b><i>Middle School</i></b>	
Grade 5	Year 6
Grade 6	Year 7
Grade 7	Year 8
Grade 8	Year 9
<b><i>High School</i></b>	
Grade 9	Year 10
Grade 10	Year 11
Grade 11	Year 12
Grade 12	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is good and effectively supports the school's core aim to inspire all to make a difference. Pupils have positive attitudes. They are articulate and logical thinkers; are creative and reflective and have well developed technological skills. Pupils are co-operative, forge excellent relationships with their peers and teachers and work well on collaborative tasks. Pupils demonstrate expansive knowledge and understanding across the curriculum, although on occasions they do not pursue rigour and depth. Educational technologies are not fully exploited to promote learning. Handwriting in the lower and middle schools and the presentation of routine work generally is often only adequate. Pupils make good progress relative to the averages for those of similar ability. Pupils with EAL and SEND make exceptional progress, but the more able sometimes progress less well than they could because not enough is demanded of them.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. The school succeeds well in its aim to foster a sense of belonging and of community; arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. A strongly apparent atmosphere of individual respect and mutual support pervades the school. The pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of different faiths. The multicultural environment influences the work and attitudes of the pupils and their appreciation of cultural diversity. The pupils have a secure sense of right and wrong clearly reflected in their considerate behaviour to all members of the community. The school needs few written rules and has clearly defined expectations for behaviour, anti-bullying, honesty and substances. The school takes seriously its responsibilities to safeguard its pupils.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is good. The board of directors successfully promotes the vision for the future of the school and provides effective guidance and support to help the school meet its aims. The board productively devolves responsibility to a number of leadership teams and committees which operate centrally across the four ACS schools. The centralised, collaborative work of these teams and committees is well organised. The quality of leadership and management are good. Leadership effectively fosters a sense of belonging and an appreciation, respect and understanding of others. The school has responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection by emphasising the use of assessment criteria in assignments to guide pupils and by carefully structuring the provision of homework. The quality and extent of pupils' handwriting and presentation remain areas to be fully developed. Parents' views as provided by the questionnaire demonstrate exceptionally high levels of satisfaction and, in particular, parents are pleased with the range of subjects and areas of experience offered. Pupils express great satisfaction with and pride in their school. There is no evidence to support the view expressed by a few pupils in the questionnaire that the school does not listen to them or that teachers do not treat all pupils equally or monitor their workloads.

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

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Extend the creative use of educational technologies to enhance the quality and variety of teaching.
  2. Raise expectations for the most able.
  3. Encourage an active interest in reading in the EYFS (Pre-Kindergarten).

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is good and effectively supports the school's core aim to inspire all to make a difference.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages are highly articulate and confidently express themselves irrespective of their home language. Pupils with EAL quickly learn to speak with intensifying fluency. For the most part, pupils are enthusiastic and positive, demonstrating good levels of reading and numeracy; they use information and communication technology (ICT) to good effect for word processing and internet research. Pupils are most often systematic, creative and logical thinkers, especially in the Middle and High Schools where, for example, they applied a thorough understanding of the scientific method or where the analysis and dramatisation of a complex text was clearly presented. Pupils demonstrate expansive knowledge and understanding across the curriculum although on occasions they do not pursue the rigour and depth of which they are capable. The pupils' handwriting in the Lower and Middle Schools, and the presentation of routine work generally, remain areas for development, as identified in the previous inspection report.
- 3.3 Meaningful extra-curricular activities encourage high levels of participation in competitive sports. The pupils consistently achieve well in the International Schools Sports Tournaments (ISST) and are positively engaged in programmes such as Community Action Service (CAS) of the IB diploma, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the scouts.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the UK national and international data for the years 2008-2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. The results at IB diploma level are good in relation to the international average and are in line with the higher UK average. The IB diploma results for 2011 are of a similar standard. The pupils' attainment below diploma level is not measured against UK national averages but the school uses a variety of measures which are compared with international and US standards. These indicate good and often high levels of attainment for all pupils. The pupils are transient and many stay for only a few years. They all move on successfully to a variety of schools across the world or to a variety of universities and colleges. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the averages for pupils of similar ability as shown by standardised measures and as observed in lessons and work. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress while those with EAL and SEND make exceptional progress because of the level of support they receive.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils show substantial independence and use rubrics and self-assessments effectively to reflect on their learning and to set goals for further improvement. Pupils are co-operative and forge tremendous relationships with their peers and teachers. They work well on collaborative tasks and appreciate the views of others.

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

- 3.6 The school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent and contributes significantly to the quality of learning and achievement in accordance with the aims of the school to educate the whole child.
- 3.7 The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs and is well planned to ensure continuity as pupils progress from Lower to Middle to High School. The variety of subjects and experiences provided ensures that the school is successful in fulfilling its aims to provide a challenging yet achievable academic programme that enables pupils to move on successfully to other schools or university at the end of their time at ACS Hillingdon.
- 3.8 Pupils benefit from the opportunity to study according to their ability rather than their age in mathematics, the sciences and languages, and the regular assignments offer them the opportunity to excel. The curriculum is tailored imaginatively to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of educational backgrounds on entry to the school and to ensure that each child has the opportunity and support to develop. This is particularly apparent for pupils whose home language is not English and those with SEND where provision is generous, highly effective and well-targeted. For these pupils, case managers prepare detailed individual support plans that are used perceptively by classroom teachers.
- 3.9 The curriculum is effectively supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities which includes an extensive programme of sport complemented by cultural and recreational activities such as music, drama, cooking and street dance. The pupils' educational experience is enriched further by artists in residence, visiting speakers and by a far-reaching programme of UK and international trips, visits and competitions to destinations such as the Museum of Childhood, The Cabinet War Rooms and The Hague. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is popular and successful; in the Lower School the character education classes are integrated effectively into the curriculum; in the Middle and High Schools the advisory programme provides comprehensive life skills lessons relevant to the age group. Pupils are involved in the Model United Nations and the National Honor Society. The native language enrichment programme successfully offers pupils the opportunity to develop the sophistication of their own language. As part of its planned programme, the school reaches out strongly to the local community through charity work and extensive community service in the Middle and High school. In the Lower School, pupils, staff and parents entertain the elderly residents of a nearby home with a musical performance and tea each December.
- 3.10 The school has addressed the recommendation made in the previous inspection report by implementing a homework policy and uses the school intranet (The Forum) to ensure that homework is set consistently and pupils and parents have ready access to it.

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

- 3.11 Teaching is good overall and successfully supports the aims of the school to provide meaningful learning experiences in a diverse educational environment that enables pupils to develop skills and critical thought and to educate the whole child. It enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability.
- 3.12 The significant amount of excellent and good teaching demonstrates pace, variety and energy. It stretches and challenges the pupils through skilful questioning and encourages creativity, critical thinking, analysis and synthesis. Imaginative use of interactive technology promotes engagement and enthusiastic learning. Some teaching lacks these qualities and restricts the opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and use their skills and therefore limits their progress, particularly for the most able.
- 3.13 Much teaching encourages pupils to work independently and in co-operation with others; pupils are set goals and are enabled to think and learn for themselves. Teachers know the characteristics and needs of their pupils well and the detailed, individual support for pupils with SEND and EAL is exemplary. Opportunities are taken frequently to capitalise on the school's global community, drawing on the rich vein of the pupils' experiences such as when discussing American literature. On the whole, teachers are knowledgeable and expert; the planning and implementation of programmes of study are rigorous and carefully tailored to the needs of each individual. Relationships between teachers and pupils are nearly always warm, encouraging and respectful.
- 3.14 Most often, the thorough assessment of the frequent, standardised assignments enables pupils to reflect easily on their attainment, learning and progress. Pupils know and use the assessment rubrics well and the best marking gives clear guidance on their next steps. However, the quality of written marking in assignments is variable, with the least effective providing only brief congratulatory remarks or none at all. Frequent oral feedback in lessons is often instructive, affirmative, encouraging and supportive. Assignment data are used meticulously to monitor overall and individual standards in a thorough and successful manner.
- 3.15 Well-developed, co-ordinated schemes of work ensure that the pupils show secure academic development as they move through the school, and the quality of teaching is greatly enhanced when the excellent resources for teaching, which include ICT suites, banks of laptops and libraries, are generally well used. However, sometimes the technological resources such as the interactive whiteboards are not used to imaginatively aid learning. The extensive and attractive grounds have been well-developed to support teaching. In particular, the new play area for the younger pupils is a valuable teaching resource that is much enjoyed.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and a strength of the school. The school succeeds very well in its aim to foster a sense of belonging and a sense of community.
- 4.2 A strong atmosphere of individual respect and mutual support pervades the school, irrespective of race, age, religion, background, ability or disability. The pupils are well rounded, happy and self-assured with a strong sense of who they are. All pupils are encouraged to develop their own personality and to applaud the values and beliefs of others. Generally, they participate well in class and are confident, reflective and articulate. The pupils are respectful and caring towards each other irrespective of age, for example, when they travel to and from school together in the minibuses. Older pupils act as mentors; they initiate and lead charitable work and have successfully raised the profile of environmental issues amongst the pupils.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral awareness is outstanding. The pupils have a secure sense of right and wrong clearly reflected in their considerate behaviour of all members of the community without the need for an imposed set of rules. The pupils demonstrate their concern for those less fortunate than themselves by comprehensive charity work including fund-raising events supporting local, national and international causes, for example, Medecins Sans Frontieres. The pupils are given the opportunity to choose a charity to support at the student council meetings.
- 4.4 The pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of different faiths through assemblies and interaction. There was a clear demonstration of the Hindu Festival of Lights by both parents and pupils during a High School assembly which included rituals, food and dancing. A video presentation from a member of the High School describing her five week cultural trip through Spain and Peru provided a thorough insight into cultural similarities and differences and its impact on her.
- 4.5 The multicultural environment influences the work and attitudes of the pupils and their appreciation of cultural diversity. The pupils show a highly developed understanding of different cultures and look forward to and enjoy the annual whole school International Holiday Treats celebration. The language of the month in the lower school, Hindi and French during the inspection, helps young pupils to recognise other cultures and promotes inclusivity. An extensive programme of cultural visits and trips caters for all age groups and gives the pupils real insights into the wider world and global issues.

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

- 4.6 The school is successful in meeting its aims of fostering a sense of belonging and community, and arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.7 Pupils are effectively supported and guided through well-resourced, professional counselling services. Three counsellors, one in each of the schools, provide secure care and there is strong higher education guidance for pupils applying to university. Frequent and valuable Student Support Team meetings assemble relevant staff to monitor the care provided to individual pupils and to work with parents. Most pupils feel they have an adult to turn to as the need arises; mentoring by senior pupils offers further support. The developing use of The Forum has addressed the

concerns raised by some pupils in the pre-questionnaire about the school taking steps to monitor their workload.

- 4.8 Pupils and staff share excellent relationships within a caring, cooperative environment. The international character of the school is cherished symbolically and personally via Graduation flags, International Day and monthly assemblies. The buddy system provides a warm welcome to new arrivals. Positive relationships can be seen in homerooms, in lessons, trips and extra-curricular activities. Pupils agree that teachers show care and concern for them and there is a high level of pupil satisfaction with the school. The active student council promotes significant pupil participation across the school and effective links exist with the parents', teachers' and students' association (PTSA). Inspectors found no evidence to support the view, expressed by some in the pre-inspection questionnaire, that pupils are not listened to.
- 4.9 The school needs few written rules and has clearly defined expectations for good behaviour, anti-bullying, honesty and substance abuse. The school successfully promotes good behaviour with a range of positive rewards and appropriate procedures for addressing infractions. There is a constructive approach to anti-bullying with clearly outlined procedures. The emphasis on positive behaviour is seen throughout the school; for example, in the Middle School core qualities are developed through personal achievement awards displayed publicly on an IB learner profile tree, added to each month. There is no evidence to support the view that pupils are not treated fairly or equally.
- 4.10 The school takes seriously its responsibilities to safeguard its pupils. While some policies needed the updating of terminology before the end of the initial visit, procedures and training for child protection are effective and implemented appropriately. The school has well developed systems and procedures for reducing risks from fire.
- 4.11 The school has excellent medical provision with a designated specialist area, staffed by a full-time nurse who is trusted by pupils and is used by them as an informal counsellor. Documentation is meticulous. There is an effective system of communication with parents and staff and a good exchange of medical information. There is a plan to improve access for those with disabilities.
- 4.12 A strong emphasis on healthy eating exists with clear guidelines; catering is healthy, varied and of a good standard. Exercise is promoted throughout the school, with a high proportion of pupils taking a regular sports activity.
- 4.13 The admissions process is well managed and administered; attendance registers are maintained and stored efficiently and the administration supporting these processes is excellent.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good. The board of directors successfully promotes the vision for the future of the school and provides effective guidance and support to help the school meet its aims.
- 5.2 The board, consisting of both executive and non-executive members, provide strong business skills and experience for the oversight of the school. They have considered and implemented most of the findings of a detailed independent review of their governance structures and operation. A culture of frequent self-evaluation provides insight into the needs of the school to provide clear strategic planning. The board successfully devolves responsibility to a number of leadership teams and committees which operate centrally across the four schools for financial management, investment in buildings and resources, policies and legal procedures, employment matters, and health and safety. The centralised, collaborative work of these teams and committees is well organized in these areas and provides essential information to the board to govern effectively. The board provides good support for the head in developing a collective, strategic plan for the school and is active in evaluating its effectiveness. Communication between the school and the board is good. Board members are well informed about the working of the school although they do not have a high profile or involvement with pupils, staff and parents. At this more local level, whilst they are aware of their legal obligations and give appropriate attention to matters of child protection, welfare and health and safety, the detailed monitoring of key policies and their implementation, and of educational progress, has not always been done sufficiently well. Board members undergo training in their responsibilities, including child protection and safeguarding, and ensure training is maintained to a high standard for members of the leadership teams and their sub-committees.
- 5.3 They have addressed all but one of the recommendations of the previous inspection; the quality of handwriting and presentation remains an area for development.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management are good. Overall and in the lower, middle and high schools, a clear, coordinated and energetic lead is given which promotes the core aim of the school of excellence through learning and personal achievement and effectively fosters a sense of belonging and an appreciation, respect and understanding of others.
- 5.5 Administration and management across the school are meticulous, from bussing arrangements to the provision of appropriate resources for teaching and learning. Policies are carefully and effectively implemented and in most areas there is a successful, systematic programme of review and evaluation which is incorporated into a valuable and efficient planning cycle covering all aspects of the school.
- 5.6 The development and co-ordination of the curriculum is carefully conducted and led; this is part of a simple and clear development plan to which all staff contribute. Staff know what is expected of them.

- 5.7 Some policies had not been fully updated at the start of the initial visit but, nonetheless, procedures for safeguarding are appropriately and effectively implemented including effective partnership with the proper local authorities. There are effective arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety matters.
- 5.8 The school has responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection by emphasising the use of assessment criteria in assignments to guide pupils and by carefully structuring the provision and publication of homework. The quality and extent of pupils' handwriting and presentation remain areas to be fully developed.

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

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is outstanding and in accordance with the school's aim to build and maintain constructive relationships. The strength of this area is even more significant given the transient nature of many of the families served by the school.
- 5.10 Relationships with parents are open, constructive and co-operative; parents work genuinely in partnership with all those involved with their children's education. Of particular note is that parents new to the school are extremely well supported on arrival and are immediately encouraged to engage fully in the life of the school through a buddy scheme that links families of a similar culture wherever possible with children in the same grade and living in the same area.
- 5.11 Parents are well informed about the school and their children's progress and their concerns are handled with care. They receive regular and informative bulletins, benefit from extensive and helpful information on the website and The Forum and generally have easy access to teachers and administrators through both face to face meetings and email. Parents are able to express their views either directly or through the PTSA which meets each month with the head. The school conducts a popular, annual survey of parents' views. The head and the managing director present the findings of the survey and their response at a well-attended meeting each November, during which parents are able to seek clarification. The school provides all the required information to parents and prospective parents. There is a clear complaints procedure which is carefully followed.
- 5.12 The PTSA is intricately involved in the life of the school in a constructive and supportive manner which successfully helps to foster a sense of belonging and community. Parents help on field trips, volunteer in school and organise social and fund-raising events. The successful promotion of intercultural activities such as coffee mornings unites the school community and promotes mutual appreciation, respect and understanding.
- 5.13 Parents' views expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire show extremely high levels of satisfaction. Parents are especially pleased with the range of subjects and areas of experience offered, the information they receive about the school and the ease of communication. There were no significant areas of concern.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. It fulfils the aims of the school and meets the needs of each child through delivery of an international Early Childhood programme of individualised learning. The staff plan meticulously. Their clear understanding of differing requirements and abilities of the children leads to significant progress. The cultures and backgrounds of the children are constantly celebrated. They are happy, secure, valued and safe within a carefully considered environment, with procedures which successfully promote their welfare. Leadership and management are outstanding, encouraging staff to be reflective and constantly seeking to improve each child's experience. Evidence of this is the excellent new outdoor play area much enjoyed by the pupils.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.2 Leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. They provide a clear vision for the future. Scrupulous and regular review enables the assigning of priorities. Policies, including those seeking to promote equality and combat discrimination, procedures and risk assessments meet requirements and are regularly monitored. They ensure that all children's needs are met. Appointment checks ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. Resources are used effectively although access to books is limited to a weekly visit to the main library. The committed staff monitor progress daily, entering evidence into pupil profiles supported by photographs. This careful observation and assessment benefits the children's learning. There is opportunity for training and good use is made of collaborative discussion with other ACS schools. Good relationships enable staff to work with parents as evidenced by the Learning Journal booklets filled in each week.

### **6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. At first sight, activities appear to be wholly child-initiated but carefully planned programmes of study, developed through thorough knowledge and careful observation of each child, underpin playful learning experiences. While oral communication is well developed, the international programme followed provides less rapid progress in reading and writing. The class teacher is the key person who identifies and provides well for additional learning or development needs. Learning is further enriched by partnerships with specialist teachers and the excellent use made of the school counsellor. The children's welfare is strongly promoted. Healthy morning and afternoon snacks, provided by home, are encouraged, and school lunches always include fresh fruit. Pupils understand the importance of hygiene. Staffing arrangements provide caring supervision at all times.

**6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 6.4 Outcomes are outstanding. The children thoroughly enjoy school and show considerable pride in their environment. The children are well prepared for future school life. Planning ensures secure coverage of the six areas of learning with the exception of some aspects of literacy. They are increasingly articulate and self-confident. They understand the benefits of exercise and make excellent use of the new wide range of outdoor climbing equipment. Developing classroom displays illustrate a variety of creative skills. Relationships between children and with adults are outstanding; the happy, multicultural mix and gender integration are a great strength. Children have the scope to become independent, inquisitive learners who enjoy sharing and helping each other. They fully understand the class rules and behave considerately to adults and to each other.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the Directors, 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 regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Michael Buchanan	Reporting Inspector; Head, HMC School
Mrs Seona Rivett	Head, HMC Junior School
Mrs Denise Hammersley	Vice-Principal, ISA School
Mrs Annabelle Hancock	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector
Mr Simon O'Grady	Principal, COBIS School
Mrs Anne Howells	Principal, COBIS School