



The Scandinavian School, Madrid

International Section

Camino Ancho 14, La Moraleja 28169
Alcobendas, MADRID

Date of Inspection:

Friday 20th March 2015

Inspection Team:

Fiona Jacobs (Lead)
Amie Gibbs (Team)

Overall Recommendation:

- The school is recommended for full authorisation for a period of two years for 200 pupils from Reception (4/5 years) to Year 11 (15/16 years) or until a buildings inspection is required

Reason for the Inspection

The school was inspected on the 20th January 2014 as it had opened an International section which required authorisation as a British school in Spain. The school received temporary authorisation, after submitting an action plan, and this inspection is to review progress with a view to full authorisation.

Full Report:

History of the School

1:1 The Scandinavian school was opened 70 years ago. In 2005 the English section was opened due to parental demand. This has since changed name to the International section. The school is in the residential area of La Moraleja, Madrid, near many other British schools.

1:2 The International section shares the site and buildings with the Scandinavian section. It follows the Cambridge International Curriculum for English, English as an Additional Language, science and mathematics. The UK National Curriculum has been introduced for all foundation subjects. Spanish and Scandinavian languages are also taught in order to comply with the relevant bodies.

1:3 The original one storey building has been converted into a two storey building, adding a significant, spacious floor for the anticipated growth into the secondary age range. In addition there is a gym, dining room, administration area, science laboratories and temporary cabins for music, art, design & technology and language. The original classrooms have been adapted to create more suitably sized working areas.

1:4 The school has 130 students on roll. The majority are Spanish although there are Swedish, English and other nationalities.

Accommodation & Resources

2:1 The ground floor houses Reception to Year 6 pupils and the new library. The first floor houses Years 7 and 8. Both floors have a mix of English speaking classrooms and Scandinavian ones in an attempt to integrate the students.

2:2 The library is an excellent addition. It is light and spacious and has an ample selection of both fiction and non-fiction books to support learning. A parent helps the younger students to select appropriate books.

2:3 The ground floor classrooms are generally of a good size and contain age appropriate furniture. The second floor has fitted lockers in the main corridor and very spacious classrooms. It is very modern and clean. Currently, due to the newness of the building, it lacks display boards. This leaves the secondary floor feeling bare.

2:4 Some classrooms have excellent displays which follow school policy by having examples of students work, interactive stimuli for learning or are used well as a resource. In one classroom, there is a display of “amazing adjectives” to support student descriptions of super heroes. In another, the whole classroom has been transformed into the interior of a pyramid, complete with a crawl- through tunnel from the outside. Another has distinct areas for modelling, reading and role play as well as photographs of students proudly holding up their work. Students in these three classrooms use the displays well. They are motivated by them and prompted to move forward in their learning by using them. Other classrooms lack any purposeful display.

2:5 The outside areas are now well supervised and play is varied, including teacher-led skipping, football, ping pong and creative play. There are still no adjoining class specific outdoor areas, although there is space, which makes the British outdoor activities for younger children impossible.

2:6 Dining facilities are well organised, spacious and clean. A teacher sits at each table to both supervise and encourage good manners and table talk. This is very successful. School meals are healthy and balanced. Those who bring their lunch from home have independent access to fridges and microwaves which they use very responsibly.

2:7 The laboratory, gym and music room are extremely well resourced for the current age range. Children are highly motivated in learning music with the range of electric guitars, keyboards, and many more instruments that are on offer. The energy of the music teacher is a key feature here. However, students have insufficient access to the specialist equipment in the science laboratory as currently many science lessons take place in the classroom. Further investment in chemicals and resources will be required here to ensure that the IGCSE science curriculum can be taught effectively

2:8 The administration area, which also acts as the main reception, does not reflect the “British” nature of the school. Notices are in Swedish and it is not a bright, welcoming hub of the school.

Health and Safety

3:1 Health and safety policies are in place and are very full in their coverage. There is an excellent emergency plan. Emergency procedures are practised regularly although routes and procedures are not posted in each room. There are fire extinguishers at regular intervals and all are maintained up to date, including those on the new floor.

3:2 Most staff have received First Aid training. There are First Aid kits in each room and one is kept centrally in the administration area.

3:3 There is access for the disabled. Plans to pave this access by September 2015 will allow full and safe access.

Curriculum

4:1 For Reception pupils, the curriculum is clearly based on the Early Years Foundation Stage programme. Recent changes ensure that primary and Key Stage 3 students follow the UK National Curriculum for Foundation subjects and the Cambridge International Curriculum for the Core subjects. Plans are afoot to implement IGCSE courses that will follow on seamlessly from this base. New resources, especially books, support the curriculum and motivate the students.

4:2 Although there is a clear written policy on how to plan for learning, it is not followed. Each teacher plans in their own way and in some classes no formal planning is evident although all lessons observed had a clear purpose for learning. However, only some activities are adjusted to support all students’ needs and assessment is not systematically incorporated into the day to day routines. The result is that both the more and the less able do not make as much progress as they could.

4:3 There is a large amount of curriculum time given to English: six hours a week plus other sessions including handwriting, phonics and reading. It is due to this time allocation and the support given to second language students in the immersion class that results are so good in the Year 6 exams. Support here is carefully tailored to individual and group needs. At times, however, the wider curriculum suffers from being given less time. The results, however, speak for themselves and there is evidence of cross curricular work in many classrooms.

4:4 The Information Communications Technology (ICT) curriculum is the class teacher’s responsibility. This results in weak coverage which varies in quality across the classes. Plans are in place for September 2015 to address this shortcoming, by giving subject responsibility and time to one class teacher.

4:5 Curriculum time is not always well balanced, particularly in Key Stage 3 and in the proposed curriculum for Key Stage 4. For example, art and design & technology are given much more time than ICT. Without revision there will be insufficient time for some options.

Teaching and Learning

5:1 The standard of teaching is mostly satisfactory. There are also examples of good teaching and one teacher shows many outstanding features. In this class, the room reflects the high level of achievement with all students being able to communicate fluidly in English. The displays are outstanding as are the different activities chosen to match the learners' needs. One group retrieved letters from a sand tray, matching them with simple word cards. They were completely engaged. A second group was working alongside the teacher on a writing task for which the teacher had carefully planned the resources. The teacher questioned her group effectively, prompting them to remember previous learning and apply it. Good progress was clearly evident.

5:2 Since the last inspection, the teaching has improved although it remains too varied. Staff turnover and lack of direction, as there is no head teacher in place, contribute to this weakness. The acting head teacher is aware of the situation and is doing as good a job as possible in the amount of time she has been allocated.

The lack of a middle management structure has resulted in individual teachers working in their own way without sufficient coordination.

5:3 The level of spoken English and reading is exceptional from Reception upwards. The Cambridge Checkpoint exam results from 2014 are very good and the students achieve good levels in English, mathematics and science.

5:4 Behaviour is now generally excellent both in class and around the school. Most students are extremely respectful and open, exhibiting a great willingness to talk about their learning. The new behaviour policy has had a positive effect. Teachers reinforce good behaviour positively, calmly and consistently.

5:5 The new marking policy is sound, but not being followed. Some teachers are using ticks without comments; others are doing better in setting targets with a clear indication of how to move forward. The latter students show an awareness of their learning and what is needed to be worked on to improve.

5:6 There is no formal tracking system although individual teachers keep and use their own records. Inconsistencies in use of tracking and assessment criteria do not support progression in learning throughout the school.

5:7 Information to parents is fairly full including termly parent meetings, reports with objectives, grades and comments, the website and newsletters. Not all of the information is in English, in contradiction with English being the language of instruction.

5:8 Parents and students have been involved in a survey which has been fully analysed. Many of the comments have since been worked on and consequent improvements have been made. Examples are the successful use of a new catering company, the establishment of a care team to address bullying and the formulation of plans for an ICT policy.

Staffing

6:1 Class sizes are small and students enjoy learning.

6:2 The majority of staff are qualified and have experience in teaching the British National Curriculum, though few teachers have sufficient knowledge of GCSE work to develop Key Stage 4 courses appropriately. Staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children.

6:3 Due to the unsettled situation recently, staff meetings have been mainly concerned with organisational matters. Little time is given to professional development and there is no clear system of staff appraisal. The current teachers are motivated and have an excellent rapport with the students. The teachers have the necessary skills and knowledge but lack direction and consistency in their teaching. An exception is the Infant team where the three teachers communicate effectively and view themselves as a team.

Management

7:1 There is a real weakness in leadership due to the lack of a head teacher. The school has appointed the deputy head of the whole school as the acting head teacher. She is very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and will be a huge support to the incoming head teacher. Plans for future development, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning, give a sound base for the incoming Head teacher to work on. The school is currently interviewing possible replacements.

Response to the last report

- A full action plan was submitted and has been worked on. Unfortunately progress has been limited due to the unsettled situation in the international section
- Most teachers who have been contracted since the last inspection have appropriate UK qualifications and experience
- The UK National Curriculum is now used for all foundation subjects
- Key policies have been written. The behaviour policy has resulted in greatly improved behaviour. The marking policy is being implemented, but inconsistently.

Specific Recommendations

- Appoint a head teacher with UK experience as soon as possible, who will give a strong lead in teaching and learning, and implement the school's plan for improvement
- Give more time and resources to ICT and improve its teaching
- Improve the quality and consistency of lesson planning so that work can be better adapted to the needs of all pupils whatever their abilities
- Improve the appraisal of the quality of teaching so that teachers are further motivated and developed
- Develop a set of shared criteria for assessing and tracking students' achievement and progress, and implement assessment consistently.