



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT ON OPORTO BRITISH SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Oporto British School

Full Name of School	Oporto British School			
Address	Rua da Cerca, 326/350			
	4150-201			
	Porto			
	4150-201			
	Portugal			
Telephone Number	00 351 226 166 660			
Fax Number	00 351 226 166 668			
Email Address	school@obs.edu.pt			
Head Master	Mr Michael Clack			
Chairman of Governors	Dr Philip Brebner			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Total Number of Pupils	414			
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (207 boys; 207 girls)			
Numbers by Age	0-2:	0	5-11:	178
	3-5:	47	11-18:	189
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	414		
Inspection dates	04 Mar 2013 to 07 Mar 2013			

PREFACE

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

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and overseas. As such, ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas and the *ISI Framework* requirements. ISI is also the agency responsible for the inspection of schools in membership of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC). Accordingly, ISI inspections of British schools overseas are required to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare;
- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- report to the DfE the extent to which schools comply with the published Standards for British Schools Overseas;
- where applicable, assure ISC Associations that their member schools maintain the quality of provision expected.

ISI inspection is for the benefit of the pupils in the schools and through public reporting makes the information available to parents, governments and the wider community.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. The major difference is that schools in England must comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, which do not apply with legal validity to schools outside the United Kingdom. However, the inspection of overseas schools takes account where possible of compliance with any local requirements and it judges the extent to which the schools comply with the British Government's Standards for British Schools Overseas. The range of these Standards is as follows.

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit**
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features**
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures**

(iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with Standards requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(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
4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
(a) The quality of governance	12
(b) The quality of leadership and management	12
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	13
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	15

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Oporto British School is an independent, British day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 18. It opened in 1894 as a preparatory school for eleven British boys. Non-British boys were accepted for the first time in 1902 and girls in 1914. In the mid-1950s, GCE courses were introduced, and in the early 1990s a sixth form was created. The school now educates in excess of 400 boys and girls, the great majority of whom are from Portuguese families, with one in twenty British and one in ten from other backgrounds. The school is a non-profit, private educational association, of unlimited duration, whose members are almost all parents of present or past pupils and whose trustees are the school's governors.
- 1.2 The school seeks to embrace all that is best in British education, alongside a strong commitment to nurturing international awareness and special recognition of its operation in a Portuguese environment. Curricular provision is based on the English National Curriculum. Parallel courses are offered in Portuguese language and history. The school aims to foster creativity, independence of thought and an enduring love of learning. Striving to achieve excellence, it puts the individual's needs and fulfilment of potential at its core, aiming to raise self-esteem and inculcate strong moral values.
- 1.3 The school roll numbers 414 pupils, 207 boys and 207 girls. Of these, 178 (94 boys and 84 girls) are in the primary section, with an additional 47 (26 boys and 21 girls) in the Early Years. In the secondary section, there are 189 pupils (87 boys and 102 girls). Of these, 42 are in the sixth form (25 boys and 17 girls). The great majority of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). Ten receive discrete support. Thirty-three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and difficulties or disabilities (SEND). All but one receive in-class learning support, with eighteen receiving discrete tuition. Year groups follow the Portuguese pattern. The overall ability profile of pupils in the primary section is below the UK average. In the secondary section, including the sixth form, it is slightly above the UK average.
- 1.4 Significant changes in the last three years include the appointment of a new head master and new heads of the primary and secondary sections. Extensive campus developments include a new sports hall and a new secondary building.
- 1.5 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years

School	NC name
Prep	Nursery/Reception
Reception	Reception/Year 1

Primary Section

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 2
Form 2	Year 3
Form 3	Year 4
Form 4	Year 5
Form 5	Year 6

Secondary Section

Form 6	Year 7
Form 7	Year 8
Form 8	Year 9
Form 9	Year 10
Form 10	Year 11
Form 11	Year 12
Form 12	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. They make good and sometimes excellent progress in their learning, because of their extremely positive attitudes to study, good teaching, some of which is inspiring, and a challenging curriculum. Results in external examinations improved markedly in 2012. Pupils with EAL and those with SEND make good progress, because of supportive provision, but able, gifted and talented (AG&T) pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Tracking of the pupils' progress is particularly strong in the secondary section. Exceptional progress in the acquisition of English language skills by the predominantly EAL pupil body is successfully established in the Early Years and continues throughout the school. The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into both teaching methods and the pupils' learning is variable, despite good resources. The curriculum is enriched by some excellent extra-curricular activities, with a good range available in the primary section, but rather more limited provision in the secondary section. Outstanding among these are the sixth-form community service trips overseas.
- 2.2 The school is an inclusive, caring community, in which pupils develop excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Excellent pastoral care ensures pupils feel safe and well supported and gain strongly in self-esteem. Most relationships are excellent. Secure, comprehensive policies and procedures, implemented effectively, safeguard the pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 The excellence of the senior leadership team and the high quality of governance and most management are vital factors in enabling the pupils to succeed and develop, in line with school aims. The board of governors and the senior leadership team work very closely together. The new leadership already provides clear educational direction. Links with parents are excellent.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas

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

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Identify and share current outstanding practice in teaching and learning, so that all pupils are consistently challenged.
2. Make the use of ICT resources an integral feature of teaching and of the pupils' learning.
3. Develop a wider range of extra-curricular activities throughout the school.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

Whole school

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and of their learning, attitudes and skills is good.

Primary section

- 3.2 The pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. They make extremely rapid progress in learning English and quickly become bilingual learners. Early Years pupils develop particularly well in speaking and listening and exhibit strong creativity. In Years 2 to 6, pupils develop good literacy and numeracy skills and considerable maturity of thought. They confidently undertake individual research and use mathematical and ICT skills effectively. Their good physical skills result from a high take-up of sporting activities. Pupils with EAL, the very great majority of the section, and those with SEND make rapid progress, thanks to tailored support. The achievement of AG&T pupils is restricted by a lack of challenging provision. Pupils achieve significant success in a good range of extra-curricular activities, whether in karate and judo, in music and drama, or in inter-school football and basketball tournaments and karting at international level.
- 3.3 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against English national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to English national age-related expectations. Pupils follow a broad curriculum and nearly all continue into the secondary section. Inspection evidence, including consideration of the levels at which pupils are working in relation to national targets, confirms this judgment. Given that more than nine out of every ten pupils have EAL, this level of attainment, as judged, indicates that they make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.4 The pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and involvement in activities. They approach their tasks with enthusiasm, enjoy working collaboratively and possess a natural curiosity.

Secondary section

- 3.5 The pupils achieve well, in accordance with the school's aims. Their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills are well developed and they demonstrate good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill across the curriculum. They are highly articulate. Sophisticated discussions observed across the curriculum demonstrated high levels of intellectual curiosity and emotional engagement. Critical thinking skills expected of university students were observed in essays by Year 13 history pupils. Pupils with SEND achieve well because of highly effective provision, as do those EAL, who continue to make exceptional progress in their acquisition of English language skills. Academic distinctions include the top student in Portugal in 2011 and a maximum score of 45 points in the IB diploma in 2012. Pupils exhibit strong debating skills in Model United Nations (MUN) conferences and gain awards in the Prémio Infante Dom Henrique, the Portuguese equivalent to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Others achieve representation at national level in kick-boxing, golf, music, show-jumping and football.

- 3.6 The following analysis uses the worldwide averages for the years 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in IGCSE have been good, above the worldwide averages, with four out of every ten grades awarded being A* or A. In 2012, this proportion rose to nearly six out of every ten. In IB, results have been similar to the worldwide average overall; with an average points score of 30.7. In 2012, the average points score rose to 33.1. These results, interpreted in the light of inspection evidence of a high proportion of effective teaching, a significant amount of which was excellent, and the pupils' positive attitudes, indicate that pupils in Years 7 to 11 make consistently good progress in relation to others of similar ability. Pupils in Years 12 and 13, having made appropriate progress in 2010 and 2011, have improved markedly and are now making similarly good progress.
- 3.7 The pupils demonstrate an excellent attitude to their learning. Highly motivated, they engage equally well in active learning, lively discussion and reflective thinking. They work well collaboratively, concentrate and persevere.

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

Whole school

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision, including community links of benefit to pupils, is good.

Primary section

- 3.9 In the primary years, the curriculum is broad and balanced, with a strong emphasis on languages. The Early Years curriculum makes excellent provision for the seven areas of learning and development indicated in the English Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. Good use is made of indoor and outdoor activities. In Years 2 to 6, the core subjects of the English National Curriculum are largely taught by class teachers, with specialist teaching in French, music, Portuguese and Portuguese history. Provision for pupils with EAL is effectively integrated into the mainstream curriculum, with strong input from well-trained teaching assistants. Discrete support is provided for pupils with SEND and also for those pupils with EAL who need it. Clear target setting promotes progress, but the use of individual education plans (IEP) is not yet widespread. Some focused provision is made for AG&T pupils, but this offers limited challenge. An accelerated reading programme is being used to good effect.
- 3.10 The pupils' experience is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, ranging from cookery and gardening to music and mandarin and including extensive sports provision, including karate and judo. Football, basketball and cross-country running teams represent the school. A variety of trips and educational visits, for example to museums, local farms and industry, and charity fund-raising and links with a local orphanage broaden the pupils' learning.

Secondary section

- 3.11 The challenging secondary curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' achievement. It is well planned and resourced, covers all the required areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. In Years 7 to 11, the subjects of the English National Curriculum provide good continuity of progression from the primary section. Particular strengths include modern foreign languages, coordinated science, and English provision for a largely EAL cohort. All pupils study

compulsory Portuguese language up to the end of Year 11 and Portuguese history up to the end of Year 10. Year 10 and 11 pupils follow an IGCSE programme, taking eleven subjects and also a mandatory critical thinking course. In Years 12 and 13, pupils take up the IB diploma programme, covering a choice of six subjects, plus the theory of knowledge, an extended essay and the creativity, action and service (CAS) programme. This broad provision reflects extremely well the school's educational aims and is well suited to the needs of sixth-form pupils. Pertinent careers advice helps pupils make wise choices for higher education.

- 3.12 Pupils with SEND are identified early and discrete learning support is provided. The AG&T programme is in its infancy. However, some pupils begin their IGCSE studies early; other initiatives include entering an online university accelerated mathematics course and corresponding in Italian with a published author. Most pupils with EAL are supported extremely well in mainstream lessons; a small number are withdrawn for discrete focused provision.
- 3.13 The curriculum is enriched by numerous trips and visits and by some extra-curricular activities of excellent quality, such as the MUN and the Prémio Infante Dom Henrique, but the range of extra-curricular activities in the secondary section is somewhat limited. Sporting provision in Years 7, 8 and 9 attracts high participation rates. Several pupils excel in music and sport in the local conservatoire and sports clubs. The school views these activities as a partnership and facilitates pupils attending practices, rehearsals and events. Pupils support local orphanages and visit a local hospital, but the outstanding feature of extra-curricular provision is the programme of annual CAS trips, focusing on community service in areas such as Tanzania, Nepal and, next year, Mozambique, chosen because of its historic links with Portugal.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

Whole school

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is good.

Primary section

- 3.15 Teaching is effective in promoting the pupils' progress. Some teaching is excellent, but a small amount is unsatisfactory. Most teaching motivates and interests pupils. In the Early Years, an excellent combination of adult-led activities and opportunities for child-initiated learning, making use of structured play, indoors and out, engages children's interest and ensures progress.
- 3.16 Throughout the section, the staff know their pupils extremely well and show good awareness of their needs. Lessons are generally well prepared to focus on those needs, although the most able pupils are not yet consistently extended in their learning. The teachers' subject knowledge is largely secure. The use of specialist staff in some subjects enriches the pupils' experience. Highly effective support is provided for pupils with SEND, with clear targeting of their needs. The support for the needs of the many pupils with EAL, especially in their acquisition of the English language, is a strength of the school. At its best, teaching has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they are challenged to think for themselves. Independent learning is encouraged, for example in the setting of project work. However, some teaching of limited pace and challenge fails to engage all pupils, thus limiting their learning. Interactive whiteboards are not fully utilised, missing opportunities to enable more rapid progress.

- 3.17 Pupils are effectively assessed using a variety of tests. Results are used to track progress, identify particular needs and inform future planning. Some marking of the pupils' work advises on how it might be improved, but, overall, the quality of marking varies.

Secondary section

- 3.18 Teaching in the secondary section makes an important contribution to the pupils' progress and to their enjoyment of learning, in accordance with the school's aims. Much teaching is excellent. Hardly any unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All teachers are well qualified in their subject areas. They know their pupils well and show good awareness of their needs in their lesson planning, although provision for AG&T pupils is variable. The support of pupils with SEND and EAL, both in lessons and discretely, is highly effective.
- 3.19 In the most successful teaching, high expectations, clear goals and appropriate challenge are the norm. Teaching makes effective use of a wide range of resources and methods and of the teacher's knowledge and passion for the subject, to excite the pupils' intellectual curiosity. It actively engages the pupils and fosters their enjoyment of learning, as, for example, in the use of role play in biology to simulate synaptic transmission. Lively discussion and collaborative group work stimulate independent thinking. The non-acceptance of glib or shallow answers generates high levels of articulacy linked to insightful understanding. In some less successful teaching, the pace is slow, approaches lack variety and pupils struggle to remain focused. The overwhelming emphasis on examination syllabi in some lessons limits learning, especially for the AG&T pupils. Use of ICT is variable. Subject workshops offered by all departments outside the timetable improve many pupils' understanding.
- 3.20 Highly effective tracking of the pupils' progress and use of external assessment data together enable form teachers to offer pupils focused advice and set appropriate targets to accelerate their progress. Most marking of the pupils' work also offers constructive advice and encouragement, but quality is variable.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent throughout the school.
- 4.2 The pupils' outstanding levels of self-awareness and self-worth are promoted by the exceptional care shown for them by a highly dedicated staff. In the secure learning environment created, they successfully personalise the values of tolerance and mutual support, which are constantly reinforced in assemblies and PSHE lessons, and become mature, courteous, unpretentious young people. In the Early Years, children acquire a sense of wonderment about their world, for example, exploring with magnifying glasses in the garden. Increased self-confidence comes from their rapidly growing ability to speak and communicate effectively in English. Secondary pupils are able to present and sustain an argument to an audience with ease. Their spiritual awareness is increased by the singing of hymns in church at Harvest or Christmas, by sharing in different faith celebrations, and by reflecting on religious beliefs in religious education lessons. Their awareness of the immaterial is strikingly demonstrated in the variety of artwork on display, some produced after having been instructed to 'seek inspiration from within'.
- 4.3 The pupils have a highly developed moral sense. In the Early Years, they develop a good understanding of what constitutes right and wrong behaviour and act upon it. Primary pupils are able to give reasoned moral judgments. High levels of moral awareness enable pupils at all levels to empathise with people in very different situations to their own, whether in discussions or by accepting the responsibility to do something to help. Primary pupils raise money for homeless children, whilst secondary pupils visit local hospitals and orphanages and undertake community service in underprivileged areas of the world.
- 4.4 The pupils' social awareness is extremely well developed. Early Years pupils considered the care of a sick baby doll on their visit to the local teaching hospital. At all ages, pupils take on responsibility willingly, for example, as members of the pupils' council. Year 6 monitors rise to the responsibility of helping to take care of the younger children at the beginning of the day and during wet playtimes. More senior pupils clean up beaches on Eco Day, join organisations to help prisoners of conscience and organise primary football and basketball tournaments. They readily grasp opportunities to hone their leadership and teamwork skills, whether in team sports, music ensembles and plays, the Prémio Infante Dom Enrique, or as monitors. The pupils' awareness of democratic processes is greatly enhanced through involvement in the election for secondary head boy and head girl.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is very good. Their understanding of and respect for their own culture and for that of others is strengthened through sharing in festivals of different faiths and through daily contacts in a multi-national community. Colourful artwork on display in the primary section encapsulates the pupils' individual response to the work of famous artists, such as Miró and Matisse. Through study of the play *Absent Friends*, IGCSE pupils considered what it is to be British and brought their considerable understanding alive through acting out various scenes and improvising reactions in character. Sixth-form historians debated the impact of past wars and revolutions on the society of today effectively. Their knowledge of other cultures is extended to excellent effect through volunteer community service activities on overseas CAS trips.

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

- 4.6 The quality of pastoral care and of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent throughout the school.
- 4.7 The excellent pastoral care throughout the school comes from a strong combination of outstanding pastoral leadership and a whole staff commitment to pastoral issues, as a result of which a supportive, caring environment is created, in which pupils flourish. Pupils commented that they felt “valued and special” to their form tutor. The relatively small classes enable them to get to know their pupils very well and create a homely atmosphere. In the Early Years, daily contact with parents reinforces the opportunity for a partnership of care, which in most cases carries on until the pupil leaves the school. On-site supervision extends beyond school hours. Excellent PSHE programmes in both sections cover topics such as personal identity, relationships and children’s rights.
- 4.8 Relationships are generally excellent between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves. The caring ethos fosters exemplary behaviour and empowers the friendly, naturally ebullient pupils to develop tolerance and, in many cases, maturity in their dealings with others. Good behaviour is celebrated. It is underpinned by a secure policy, familiar to all pupils, which provides for a positive balance between rewards and sanctions. However, a majority of the pupils responding to the pupils’ questionnaire said that some teachers do not treat all pupils equally and are unfair in their use of rewards and sanctions. Inspectors found some inconsistency in the teachers’ approach to discipline, but noted that the school had already identified the need for greater consistency in the promotion of good behaviour and dealing with poor behaviour. As a result, an excellent traffic light behaviour system has been instituted throughout the primary section. A minority of pupil respondents felt their views were not listened to. Inspection evidence does not support this view. In addition to the existing pupils’ council, a suggestions box has been provided for pupils to express their opinions anonymously.
- 4.9 Pupils were able to name, without hesitation, staff they could approach for support. They commented that they felt safe in school, as the school took bullying very seriously, as evidenced by the ‘Stand up to Bullying’ week, and that it dealt well with the rare incidents of bullying which occurred. The school employs effective anti-bullying measures. Regular training of staff is regarded by the senior leadership team (SLT) as paramount. Teachers on duty outside wear fluorescent jackets, allowing pupils with limited English to find an appropriate adult quickly, when needed. A small minority of questionnaire respondents expressed the opinion that, despite the school’s best efforts, some bullying occasionally remained undetected or unresolved. Inspectors found no evidence. They were repeatedly confronted by striking examples of the friendly, mutually supportive nature of the school community, of which those pupils interviewed were rightly proud.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, secure, comprehensive policies and procedures for safeguarding the pupils’ welfare, health and safety, including safer recruitment, are implemented highly effectively. All staff have received appropriate safeguarding training; those with specific responsibilities have been trained in both safeguarding and safer recruitment. Since 2010, Portuguese law has required criminal record checks for all those working with children and the school has complied with this. Since the appointment of the present head master, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks have also been obtained for new appointments, where appropriate. Regular external audits of health and safety are carried out and these indicate that high standards are being maintained, covering fire safety, the kitchens

and site surveillance. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. The fire and health and safety officer is fully trained and maintains a comprehensive fire risk assessment. Risk assessments cover all aspects of school life, including trips off site. Medical care is good. All teaching and administration staff are qualified first aiders, with eleven holding paediatric first aid certificates. Pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and take regular physical exercise. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The good academic achievements of the pupils and their strong personal development are testimony to the governors' successful oversight of the school in line with its mission to aim for excellence. They discharge their responsibilities for financial planning and do not flinch from taking difficult decisions in the interest of the school. They invest wisely in staff, accommodation and resources and work closely with the senior leadership team in implementing a shared vision for the school. An effective committee structure, underpinned by regular meetings, ensures they remain abreast of the school's needs.
- 5.3 The governors, some being parents of present or past pupils, have an excellent insight into the workings of the school. They provide a strategic vision for the school and work closely with the SLT in planning its implementation, sharing an away day together as part of an ongoing training process. Outside expertise has been sought to help monitor leadership performance. Governors have undertaken training in governance, child protection and safer recruitment. The board carries out an annual review of its safeguarding, welfare, health and safety policies and procedures and their effective implementation. The employment of outside agencies to audit all areas of health and safety and the use of experts to provide legal advice, ensure compliance with Portuguese law, as well as monitoring that the school meets the British government's standards for British schools overseas.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good.
- 5.5 Exemplary, firm but sensitive leadership is steering the school through change and laying strong foundations to enable the school to fulfil its aim to strive for excellence. Whilst discussing with governors the details of a new strategic plan, the head master and his SLT evaluate the school's immediate needs highly effectively and set priorities accordingly. Emphasis in planning is on raising standards of teaching and learning, whilst retaining the warm, safe and supportive learning environment, which is the school's trademark, thanks to the dedicated commitment of most staff. Initiatives have also been taken to instigate regular expert audits of the school's health and safety procedures, the recommendations from which are duly followed up, further development of its safeguarding policies and their implementation, and the improvement of the school's physical and learning environment.
- 5.6 Now that the IB diploma programme is successfully embedded in the culture of the school, in line with the school's educational aims, clear educational direction provides focus on performance in the classroom. The SLT recognizes the fundamental importance of continuing to nurture and develop innovative approaches. The extended leadership teams (ELT) in the primary and secondary sections are implementing agreed procedures with varying success. Heads of department have been trained in lesson observation, staff review and behaviour management. Some peer review, lesson drop-ins and scrutiny of the pupils' work have taken place effectively, but the excellent practice seen in some teaching is not yet shared within departments and across all subject areas. Many heads of department and coordinators implement agreed monitoring procedures extremely

well, enabling consistently effective teaching and learning, although practice is not yet consistent across all departments. The integration of pupils into the Early Years setting is managed particularly well, giving them the confidence as well as the skills for later success. However, differing philosophies in the secondary section concerning the balance between teaching with an overwhelming emphasis on examination syllabi on the one hand and teaching which is sufficiently varied to stimulate all pupils, including the most able, enriched by the provision of a wide range of activities on the other, have not yet been resolved.

- 5.7 Leadership and management are successful in attracting and motivating high quality staff, and comprehensive induction procedures ease their integration into school life. The new appraisal scheme is complemented by constructive professional development. Secure procedures safeguard the pupils' welfare, which include ensuring appropriate checks are made on the suitability of all staff. Appropriate staff training in safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is provided for all staff, including for support staff, who make an important contribution to the success of the school.

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

- 5.8 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent.
- 5.9 The school maintains a highly constructive relationship with parents and the pupils' families in accordance with its aims. The great majority of parents are happy with their child's progress, the range of subjects offered, progress in learning English, information about the school, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes, governance, leadership and management. The pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that a minority of parents are unhappy with the provision for the most able pupils and with the range of extra-curricular activities offered. The inspectors agree that able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Inspection evidence shows that insufficient extra-curricular activities are offered in the secondary section, especially in Years 10 to 13, but that there is a good range of activities in the primary section.
- 5.10 Parents have good opportunities for involvement in the life of the school. In addition to attending parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress, they are invited to other information and consultation evenings and are welcomed at all performances, sports fixtures and sports days. In the primary section they come in to speak to pupils about their professional or business life and help on school trips and visits. In the secondary section they are involved in the CAS trips.
- 5.11 Parents feel that the teachers are approachable and accessible. Informal communications between primary section parents and teachers occur at the beginning and end of each school day. Parents have free access to the school at any time and ready contact via email, telephone or through the home/school planner. Parents can make appointments to see staff, including the school counsellor, at mutually convenient times.
- 5.12 Parents and prospective parents of pupils are provided with clear, appropriate information about the school. Such documents are available electronically or in hard copy. Newsletters give advance notice of school, year group and class activities, many of which are reported on in the colourful school magazine. Translations are available on request.
- 5.13 Parents are well informed about their children's work and progress through twice yearly full reports and interim grade sheets, which record effort and attainment, and at formal consultations. In the primary section, reports give clear information about

achievement and indicate targets for improvement in the core subjects, with suggestions of how parents may help at home. In the secondary section, targets are set after all tests, using teachers' predictions and predictions based on nationally standardised measures of progress. The full reports are thorough and detailed, including suggestions for improvement.

- 5.14 The school communicates promptly with parents about school issues. Parental concerns are handled with care and in a timely fashion, in accordance with the school's clear, secure complaints policy and procedures.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and two other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr John Sugden	Reporting inspector
Mrs Kathleen Silvester	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head of School (Prep), ISA school, UK)
Ms Christine Williams	Junior Team Inspector (Head of School (Prep), HMC/COBIS school, Italy)
Mrs Fiona Rhodes	Senior Team Inspector (Senior Manager, COBIS school, Norway)
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