

Instituto Espanol Canada Blanch

317 Portobello Road, London, W10 5SY

Inspection dates 26–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils make good progress and reach a good standard in end-of-year assessments. The achievement by students in the sixth form is outstanding.
- The teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and use a range of techniques that motivate and engage pupils so they give their best in most lessons.
- Without exception the pupils say they are safe at school. They enjoy school and make many good friendships.
- Pupils learn to speak English and other languages they are taught very well. Lessons are enriched by an excellent range of visits covering aspects of European and British culture.
- The director has a clear vision of what she wants of the school and this is supported by staff. She has implemented positive changes to ensure teaching and achievement continues to improve.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The progress and achievement of pupils in written English could be better.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to promote their physical well-being.
- There are a number of deficiencies in the premises and accommodation that have not been tackled with enough urgency by managers.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected with one day's notice.
- Eighteen part lessons were observed taught by 16 teachers. None of these were observed jointly with the school's leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the school's adviser from the Spanish Embassy, two Spanish Education ministry school inspectors, and teachers. Inspector held discussions with pupils representing all year groups. The inspectors considered 47 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents. These included information on pupils' progress, policies and guidance for teaching the Spanish Curriculum, and moral and citizenship education.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Una Maria Stevens

Additional Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- Vicente Canada Blanche Spanish School is a mixed independent day school which is owned by the Spanish government and managed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain. The school follows the Spanish Education curriculum.
- The school is housed in a former Dominican convent in Kensington, London and caters for pupils aged from five to 19 years. There are currently 530 pupils on roll.
- Pupils are either bilingual in English and Spanish, multilingual or at various stages of learning English or Spanish as an additional language. The proportions leaving and entering the school at times other than at the start of the academic year are high.
- There are no pupils with disabilities or special educational needs.
- The aims of the school are to provide pupils with a comprehensive view of Spanish and British culture, within a curriculum, in which special attention is given to ensure pupils 'develop linguistic competence in Spanish and in English so as to enable their complete integration as citizens in the United Kingdom and in Spain'.
- The annual inspection by the Spanish inspectorate took place at the same time as this inspection. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2010. The current headteacher took up post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school must meet the following independent school standards. The proprietor must ensure that:
 - suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c))
 - suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical examination and treatment of pupils (paragraph 23B(1)(a))
 - there is a room for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 23B(1)(b))
 - the school building and facilities are maintained to a sufficient standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils, as far as is reasonably practical (paragraph 23C).
- Develop and improve pupils' achievement in written English by providing more experiences in writing longer pieces in the primary and secondary English lessons.
- Consider ways to extend the pupils experiences for physical education.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that they understand what they have to do to improve
 - using well-judged teaching strategies that match individual needs accurately
 - ensuring that subject-specific vocabulary is available in those lessons taught in English.
- Ensure that school leaders and managers take action to rectify defects in the condition of the building.
- Improve the behaviour in the dining hall by ensuring the school's behaviour and rewards policy is implemented consistently.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good as a result of good teaching and a good curriculum. All pupils achieve well in the Spanish curriculum. Internal and external assessments show pupils to make good progress overall. Almost no pupils fail to reach the expected standard in the end of year tests, and so progress to the next year. Achievement is outstanding in the sixth form, because of the high quality of teaching and excellent support they receive from their tutors. Very nearly all the students go on to enter Spanish or English universities.

Pupils are proficient in a number of languages. They are articulate and express themselves confidently in Spanish and English. Pupils entering the school with very little spoken English make rapid progress in developing their speaking skills and knowledge of English vocabulary. Teachers' specialist skills in language teaching are used effectively across the school to develop pupils' grammatical, reading and comprehension skills in engaging and meaningful ways. Pupils' written English is adequate but does not reflect the extensive oral vocabulary most pupils have acquired by the end of Year 11. Despite a generous allocation of time within the curriculum given to using English, the quality of pupils' written work, including their grammar and punctuation, is not as high as in their oral skills. The schemes of work for English are consistent with those set for all Spanish schools. There is a lack of development of key writing skills across a range of genres and purposes. As a consequence, only a small proportion of pupils gain the higher grades in the GCSE English paper.

Pupils make good progress in lessons. They are attentive to their teachers and keen to learn. Those who join the school with gaps in their skills and understanding, along with those who fall behind, are given additional lessons after school. This is effective in ensuring they catch up quickly. Staff have high expectations of their pupils and an excellent knowledge of the subjects they teach, ensuring they attain levels in numeracy and social sciences at the higher end of those expected for their year.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance is well above the average of mainstream schools. Pupils behave well in lessons and have a very positive attitude towards their learning. The pupils know that any incidents of bullying or racist behaviour are dealt with swiftly. They help other pupils learn well through taking part in discussions sensibly, get down to their work quickly and avoid distractions. The pupils are polite and respectful towards visitors. They move calmly around the school between lessons and when travelling up and down the narrow stairs. This good behaviour however does not extend to their behaviour in the dining hall. The implementation of the behaviour policy varies at lunchtimes. The primary-aged pupils are very noisy at lunchtime and do not observe the school rules not to run out of the hall. This behaviour shows a disregard for their personal safety and that of others.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils develop an understanding of world religions through lessons and visits to local places of worship. They have well-developed social skills. They help each other in all sorts of ways, such as with duties in the classroom as well as representing their class on the school council and the school board. In those lessons taught in English the more-able English speakers are very quick to help those who struggle to understand. They develop their self-esteem and confidence because their views are valued by the teachers and they all feel they can contribute in lessons.

A rich programme of trips and visits helps pupils gain a broad knowledge of public institutions and services in England and British values. There are extensive and well-established links with other

European schools and international schools in London. These add depth to the pupils' appreciation of difference, which adds greatly to their confidence and the respect they show to others. Staff take appropriate steps to ensure that pupils are presented with balanced views when considering political issues and when they receive visitors from a variety of institutions and organisations.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers quickly get to know their pupils because they meet regularly to discuss with the tutors how well they are learning in different subjects. Lessons are well planned because teachers have good subject knowledge. The expectations of what is to be learnt are clearly set out and teachers follow their plans diligently. The pace and timings of the lesson are well maintained. There is clear identification of what is to be assessed and this enables the teachers to keep a careful track of those exceeding or falling behind their targets.

The lessons engage pupils' interest and this encourages them to explore a great deal for themselves. For example, in a good science lesson the pupils were sufficiently interested by the learning of parallel and series circuits to set about making a model of a car's wiring circuit. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. The pupils are encouraged by the opportunities to work together on group tasks. This helps those less articulate than others to learn well.

Less effective lessons were typified by a poor match of activities to the pupils' abilities. As a consequence, the pupils 'switched off' and became restless. This sometimes occurred in English lessons in the primary phase where pupils' understanding of English language structure was more advanced than the teacher gave them credit for. Pupils were not challenged, and so did not make the progress they were capable of.

Reading is taught well, and teachers place a good emphasis on the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. Pupils receive feedback on their work, and the rewards for good work motivate them to do better. There were some good examples of effective marking in English lessons that helped pupils to revisit the structure of their writing but this was not a consistent practice from one class to another. In some lessons taught in English, such as science, the technical vocabulary was not always available and this limited how fluently pupils could explain their thinking.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to achieve well. Pupils experience a Spanish curriculum appropriate to their age and ability. There is considerable emphasis given to delivering the curriculum in English as well as Spanish, although this remains a Spanish curriculum in its elements. As a consequence there are elements of the English language that are not developed with the same degree of depth, namely writing for different purposes. Pupils benefit from regular lessons in French from Year 1 and can also select a number of other European languages including Galician as part of their optional routes in the secondary stage. The preparation for those pupils wishing to return to Spain to continue with their Spanish education is excellent.

There is an excellent match of the curriculum to the needs of the pupils in the sixth form. They receive good advice about work placements and independently attend English university open days.

Personal, social and health education is well planned and there is strong focus on preparing pupils for different destinations through the citizenship and work-experience programme. The tutorial programme is a significant factor in maintaining pupils' motivation through regular appraisals of

their performance in their broad programme of lessons. Since the last inspection the headteacher has encouraged a greater range of experiences outside of the curriculum, including links with European and English schools and regular visits to exhibitions, museums and theatres. These experiences have broadened pupils' awareness of British and European culture. The school is careful to ensure British values are considered, particularly in history and philosophy.

While the physical education programme is adequate there are limits to the provision largely imposed by the building and the schemes of work. For example, there are very few opportunities for gymnastics or athletics in the programme. The playtimes in the infant school have been improved with the introduction of small equipment. However, the larger playground lacks equipment that provides an active challenge for pupils during playtimes who do not want to play football. More recently sixth form students have combined with local schools to extend their physical education experiences.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate. The school has made good progress in ensuring that all the regulations are now met under this standard. There are a few concerns about the quality of the premises and buildings that prevent welfare and health from being better than adequate. The school's welfare policies meet requirements.

Pupils agree that they are kept safe. The adults care for and understand the pupils. The school's anti-bullying policy sets clear expectations of staff and pupils and raises pupils' awareness of the many ways they can feel threatened or harassed. All the regulations relating to child protection are met and the school is diligent in providing the required training for all staff at the mandatory intervals. Recruitment procedures are thoroughly undertaken by the Spanish Ministry of Education and ensure that only suitable people are employed to work at the school. There is a robust approach to meeting fire requirements. There are routine checks and servicing checks, and the remedial action following the fire officers' inspection report has been undertaken.

The school is inclusive and ensures all pupils are able to achieve. Individual induction and transition programmes are prepared and carried out for pupils. This ensures a smooth transition for each pupil at different points in their education.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership and management are adequate overall but have ensured that teaching and achievement are good. The school does not meet all the regulations in this standard. There is a planned programme of refurbishment to improve the premises and accommodation. However, there are a number of minor health and safety issues with the premises which have been brought to the attention of school managers by the staff and the pupils' council that have not been acted upon with enough urgency. The pupils have raised issues about sanitary conditions in the school. While some toilets have been improved through the redecoration programme, there are still shortcomings in others such as broken locks on doors and writing on the walls. The toilets are not adequately supervised. Bins quickly become full and are not emptied promptly. The boys' and girls' changing rooms lack showers as these have been disconnected, and there is no quiet or private area for pupils who become unwell during the school day. Pupils share the inspectors concerns that the uneven playground surface and too many ball games going on at the same time cause accidents. Some areas of flooring in the school also pose a potential hazard.

There is a strong commitment from the director to improve the quality of communication between subject departments that has resulted in better progress for pupils across a range of subjects. This has also improved the ease with which new teachers and pupils are integrated into the school. Subject leaders are more involved in evaluating the success of the school through monitoring pupils' successes and checking the quality of learning. Staff performance management is thorough

and the headteacher gives good support to staff who are required to improve. Staff feel that they are well supported by this process as well as challenged to improve their skills through access to training.

The headteacher, working with the Spanish Council of Education, has forged more links with local schools and colleges to improve the pathways for secondary pupils. Communication between the school and parents and carers has also improved since the last inspection. The website, along with a termly magazine and progress reports, provides parents, carers and others with a good understanding of what is going on in school. There are a number of parents and carers who remain unconvinced that the independent catering contract is well managed, and this has created some tensions between parents and carers and the school managers. A complaints procedure is in place and was used on seven occasions last year.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	100532
Inspection number	420175
DfE registration number	207/6305

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	All-age day school
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	530
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Spanish government
Chair	Dr M Isabel Martínez López
Director	Dr M Isabel Martínez López
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 January 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	Spanish nationals £250 and non-Spanish nationals pay £3,125 (Pre-School and Primary Education) and £3,875 (Secondary School and Bacallaureate)
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