

Halcyon London International School

33 Seymour Place, London, W1H 5AU

Inspection dates 14–16 January 2014

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	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students make good progress and achieve well as a result of good and some outstanding teaching.
- The International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum prepares students well for life in the 21st century, giving them a well-rounded and mature attitude to learning.
- Students behave well and the strong programme of enrichment activities promotes their social and cultural development well. The school helps the international students to feel welcome and make friends.
- There is good provision for students' welfare, health and safety, including for safeguarding.
- The school is well led and managed. The founders and senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and performance and a clear direction for future development.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching and achievement are good.

It is not yet outstanding because

- As the school has been only open for a very short time leaders have still to fully implement all the planned developments, including plans to monitor and raise the quality of all teaching and learning.
- There is limited planned provision for students to visit the local park during the school day.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets 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.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 10 lessons, most accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector examined the students' work and assessment records. Meetings were held with the students, the proprietors and headteacher. A range of documentation was examined, including policies, records, curriculum and teachers' plans and risk assessments. The views expressed by 14 members of staff in survey questionnaires were considered.
- The response of 54 parents and carers was available from Parent View.

Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Halcyon London International School (Halcyon) was registered as an independent co-educational international day school in February 2013 for up to 60 students aged from 11 to 15 years of age. It opened in September 2013. It is held in part of the West London Synagogue, which is close to Marble Arch, London. It makes use of a nearby leisure centre for physical education and a park for recreation. The school has no religious affiliation.
- There are currently 43 students on roll, aged from 11 to 15 years. No student has a statement of special educational needs. The school teaches the International Baccalaureate (IB).
- The main target student community for Halcyon is internationally-minded families, who are based in or are transferring to London. Halcyon has students from all around the world, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Halcyon reflects the aims of the IB which is: 'to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect'.
- The school had submitted a material change request to the Department for Education (DfE) to approve the use of additional teaching areas on the premises, to increase the age range from 11 to 15 years of age to 11 to 16 years and to increase the registered number from 60 to 75 students as part of the inspection.
- This is the school's first Ofsted inspection following its registration.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully implement the planned actions in the school development plan which include systems to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of the school.
- Provide more planned opportunities during the school day for students to engage in recreational activities by visiting the local park.
- Support students to improve their handwriting skills.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good, due to good teaching and a curriculum which meets the needs of the international students. The students are assessed in October after entry using International Schools Assessment tests in English and mathematics. These tests are designed especially for students in international schools and can be used as a comparison to other educational systems worldwide. This helps to inform the school of students' progress in various subject areas and to compare it to other similar international schools. The majority of the students' achievement is good in English and mathematics and across the curriculum, according to their various starting points and the short time that the school has been open. Some students have only been in the school for a short time. No students have as yet taken any external examinations. Any students who find learning more difficult are well supported. All students study an additional language and many speak several languages. Those given additional support in learning English as an additional language are doing very well and they quickly pick up the spoken language. Parents and carers are given access to their children's progress files using the electronic data systems used in the IB. This means that parents and carers can immediately support their child and help them to improve their work. The students take part successfully in competitive football games with other independent schools.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. The students are enthusiastic about the school and arrive at their lessons well prepared. Their attendance is very good. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere at the school and students confirm that they feel very safe and happy and have made many new friends. They are adamant that there is no bullying. Students commented that the staff make learning fun and they look forward to coming to school. The students mix very well together and have devised their own school rules which focus on team work and respect for others. One notable feature is the students' growing self-confidence as shown in discussions both in class and around the school and also their ability to take initiative. This was demonstrated very well in a mathematics presentation where students had devised their own technological presentations on their tablet devices to present before their class. The students led the session extremely well, correcting other students' misconceptions and using assessment information to check the students' learning and achievement, showing them how they could gain additional marks.

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the ethos of the school, its international make-up of students and the planned personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) provision. This carefully structured programme plays an important role in helping the students to adapt to new situations and to work together as a school community. A whole-school session on cyber-bullying during the inspection demonstrated that the students are considerate towards others, are willing to listen to others' opinions and are confident to give their own views. The school encourages visitors to come to the school and during the inspection two experts working in television came to share their experiences with the students who were studying the media. The curricular enrichment programme and extra-curricular activities strongly support the students in developing very good social and cultural awareness. It helps them to acquire a wide knowledge of British customs and services. Opportunities for charitable fund raising help to give students an awareness of the local community and other sections of British society. The school has no political affiliation and leaders ensure that when controversial and political issues are considered, steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views. Racial harmony is very effectively promoted.

Quality of teaching**Good**

The quality of teaching is consistently good with some outstanding teaching seen, and has enabled the students to make good progress in the short time the school has been open. Consistently good quality planning using the IB electronic systems and well-prepared lessons incorporating the very effective use of technology ensure all students can very competently and confidently use electronic devices to follow the lesson plan, look up relevant material and record their findings. A brisk pace in lessons and a strong focus on learning ensure they remain engaged. Relationships are very positive and new students are warmly welcomed and quickly assimilated into the groups. Students are motivated to learn, concentrate in lessons and make many verbal contributions, which are carefully considered by teachers, who are very respectful of students and their opinions. The well-qualified teachers demonstrate very good IB subject knowledge and use a variety of techniques to enthuse their students, including using technology, which is a very strong feature of the IB programme. For example, in an English lesson students had to solve problems in small groups, aided by their own electronic tablet devices to find additional information, but also through discussion and using their analytical skills. The opportunity for student discussion is a very strong feature in most lessons, with staff helping students to use the correct vocabulary, to reshape their thoughts and develop good debating skills. Most students are sufficiently well challenged in lessons to achieve their potential and those needing additional help, for example with English, are well supported.

Assessment procedures are thorough. All students' work is assessed regularly using the IB electronic assessment system, which evaluates students' performance against both school-based and international norms. The school follows the assessment policy and procedures required for successful delivery of the IB Middle Years Programme. Assessment practice is consistent and regular and information gathered is recorded and tracked through the IB electronic recording system. Each IB subject is assessed according to the IB criteria and recorded electronically. This enables staff to effectively track individual students' progress immediately and enables parents and carers to also be very well informed as they have access to the electronic system. Some students' written work reflects their very varied educational backgrounds and some younger students' hand writing is less well developed for their age. The school plans to identify and support these students to raise the quality of their handwriting skills.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good and ensures students can make good progress. It is based on the International Baccalaureate, Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) for students in Grades 6 to 9, who are aged from 11 to 15 years. The school plans to add one subsequent Grade level annually through to Grade 12 in September 2016; the school will then offer the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) for students in Grades 11 and 12 (UK Sixth Form/Years 12 and 13). The school is subject to authorisation by the IB organisation. In the IBMYP students study eight subject areas, which include all the required areas of learning for independent schools. It is specifically planned for students seeking greater proficiency in the English language and for bilingual/multilingual learners as all students study an additional language. The IB has a clear focus on preparation for later life through equipping students with skills which will help prepare them for their next steps in education. Careers guidance is effectively provided through an international schools' planned programme. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively with all students using their own electronic tablet devices in lessons. Halcyon uses an electronic IB specific curriculum and assessment system to record, track and develop its IBMYP schemes of work and unit planners. This electronic system is also used to track and record students' attendance, progress, assessments and achievements. Parents and carers have three reports annually, which are compiled using the electronic data; these reports show detailed subject assessment criteria and final grades.

Students have weekly timetabled PSHEE lessons. Some physical education lessons are held on site,

such as modern dance, with the main physical education lessons held at a local leisure centre, with some taught by sports specialists. The curriculum is enhanced with a range of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school with, currently, sports, string quartet, choir and global issues network, as part of the wide choice available. Students have also been on a large number of curricular-related visits to museums, galleries and places of worship. The school makes effective use of its central London location.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The school's provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good and meets all the independent school standards. There are clear and detailed school policies and procedures, which are implemented effectively and consistently by staff and include procedures for tackling and eliminating bullying. An annual review of school policies and procedures is included in the school's management plan. All staff have received training at the appropriate level in safeguarding, child protection, fire safety and first aid. Recruitment procedures are suitable and meet requirements. All staff have been checked for their suitability to work with young people and the information is held on the required single central record of staff appointments. There is good attention given to the health and safety and security of the students. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken for activities both on and off site. The admission and attendance registers meet the regulations. Students are encouraged to take regular exercise through the planned physical education programme and to eat healthily. They commented very positively, for example, on the wholesome vegetarian lunches.

Leadership and management

Good

The leadership and management of the school are good and leaders have ensured that students achieve well. The proprietors have ensured that all the requirements of the independent school standards are met. There are robust policies and procedures in place to safeguard students' welfare, health and safety. The quality of the curriculum and teaching has enabled students to make good progress in the short time they have been at the school. The school was founded by four very committed international parents whose children had been in IB schools around the world. They have a clear vision for how they wish it to develop and can incorporate lifelong skills such as the use of technology and 'building up resilience' for life in the modern world. These founders take an active role in the school and have a well-devised development plan to expand and move the school forward.

The head of the school is an experienced leader in both international and United Kingdom schools and has been involved with the IB international programme for many years. He has been instrumental in getting the school running smoothly in a short time. As the school population is still small, the number of teachers is limited and posts of responsibility are planned to increase as the school grows. The headteacher has begun a planned process of monitoring teaching and learning and there are plans to appraise staff at the end of each academic year. Parents and carers are very committed and supportive towards the school as shown in their very positive responses in Parent View. Staff are all very positive in their responses to the questionnaire.

The premises and accommodation are suitable and safe for learning and have been upgraded to a very high standard. Students use a nearby very large park as an outside space and have expressed the wish that the use of the park is made more regular. The school provides through its website all the information required by the independent school standards and there is an appropriate complaints procedure.

The school's application to change the age range from 11 to 15 years of age to 11 to 16 years, to expand the number of students who can be admitted up to 75 and to increase the use of additional rooms was approved by the DfE during the inspection.

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	139415
Inspection number	422864
DfE registration number	213/6001

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	International school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–15 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Halcyon London International School
Chair	Pamela Sears
Headteacher	Terry Hedger
Date of previous school inspection	First inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,950
Telephone number	020 72581169
Email address	hello@halcyonschool.com

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