Cambridge International School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	873/6042
Unique Reference Number	135184
Inspection number	320731
Inspection dates	6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Cambridge International School opened in Cambridge in September 2006 and admits pupils aged from 3 to 16. To accommodate the rapid rise in pupil numbers, the school moved to larger accommodation in September 2007. Currently there are 96 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils have parents who are bi-lingual, do not speak English as their first language or are internationally mobile. The school teaches a variety of languages from an early age. The school aims to provide pupils with opportunities to learn through small class sizes and a nurturing environment. The school makes use of facilities at the community sports centre, a local independent school and the University of Cambridge cricket ground. The neighbouring park is used for recreation activities. The school has recently become accredited by the University of Cambridge to become a Cambridge International Centre. This is the school's first full Ofsted inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Cambridge International School provides good education and an outstanding standard of care for its pupils. Teaching is good. The small number of pupils in classes and excellent relationships help pupils to make good progress. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is exceptionally good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they show kindness and consideration to each other and adults. The curriculum is satisfactory and, although it offers opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of activities, all schemes of work are not yet sufficiently detailed. The school meets all but one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum chosen for each key stage enables the school to provide relevant experiences for pupils of all ages in all areas of learning. It is based on a very practical approach to learning which reflects the school's ethos and values, particularly in relation to social inclusion. The subject matter, and the focus on practical tasks, interests and motivates pupils. This helps the school to overcome barriers to learning that may arise for pupils, especially those with English as an additional language. Although outline schemes of work for all subjects are in place, they are not yet detailed enough in all areas. This limits the

school in its ability to ensure continuity and progression in learning across the school. However, the decision to add detail to the schemes of work gradually and systematically is enabling the school to establish a well thought out rolling programme of study for each year group based on pupils' needs and aptitudes. Basic skills are covered effectively and several modern foreign languages are taught. An appropriate amount of time is dedicated to physical education (PE) and sporting activities, underpinning the school's work to promote healthy lifestyles. The school is aware that it does not provide appropriate careers guidance for secondary age pupils. The school's willingness to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each pupil is demonstrated by the flexibility shown in helping pupils maintain fluency in their first language.

Teaching and assessment are good. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons because they find them interesting and know that they make good progress. Because pupils feel safe and secure in the school, they are not afraid to attempt answers to questions even if they are unsure. This helps them to learn well and builds their confidence and self-esteem. A few of the lessons seen were outstanding. In these lessons pupils were highly motivated, their work was challenging and they were totally absorbed in their practical activities. Because class sizes are small, teachers are able to give a high level of individual attention to all pupils, especially those who require particular support. Because of this, pupils who enter school with limited skills in English often make exceptional progress in their language skills. Those pupils who find learning difficult or who have emotional problems receive additional help from the learning support assistants. This helps them make good and occasionally outstanding progress. Teachers are enthusiastic about their specialist subject areas and have good subject knowledge. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching well. She identifies when teaching does not provide well enough for the needs of the pupils and takes decisive action. Recent appointments have strengthened the quality of teaching and ensure that progress made by pupils is good.

Lesson planning is often thorough and detailed, but on some occasions it does not show in sufficient detail what pupils are expected to learn during the lesson. Consequently, in a small number of lessons, learning is not focused precisely enough on the needs of the pupils and they do not make as much progress as they could. Teachers use a wide range of tests and assessments to help them track pupils' progress and plan lessons. The school has recently implemented procedures for analysis of pupils' progress against national norms, but systems to use the information are not yet fully implemented. This is limiting the school's ability to compare progress made by their own pupils with that made by others nationally or internationally.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their attendance is good and they are eager to come to school. The family atmosphere and the respect shown by staff towards all pupils enable them to grow in confidence,

and to develop positive attitudes towards themselves, their backgrounds and their own particular talents. Their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are kind and considerate, showing a high level of respect and sensitivity towards the feelings of adults and children. They respond very well to the school's behaviour code and understand the need for a community to have rules. The school council is valued by pupils. They feel that they can use this platform to influence what happens in school and that their views will be carefully considered by staff. Relationships are very positive. Pupils respond particularly well to the trust placed in them and recognise that rewards must be earned. For example, they speak enthusiastically about non-uniform days and trips to local restaurants, recognising that these are treats but also that they help prepare them for life beyond school.

Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative. For example, older pupils are organising a 'giant' car boot sale and the proceeds will go to five charities. This business enterprise initiative and other fund-raising events successfully enable pupils to understand the world of commerce, how they can make a difference and how their actions can help those who are less fortunate than themselves. Their study of several modern foreign languages gives pupils a firm basis for their economic well-being in a global market.

The school's work on promoting cultural development is particularly noteworthy. The curriculum draws positively on pupils' own cultural backgrounds. Pupils are encouraged to share and value the traditions and customs associated with their own culture. For example, regular cookery events are used to promote understanding and celebrate the rich diversity of cultures and nationalities represented at the school. Pupils learn successfully about the cultures, beliefs and lifestyles of different people through lessons and topics that draw on pupils' own personal experiences. This is supported by a small but modern and up-to-date book stock that promotes racial harmony and tolerance. Pupils are very proud of the wide range of nationalities represented at the school and one child described the school as being *'one big happy family'.*

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The designated person for child protection has been trained appropriately and staff understand what to do if they are aware of a child protection issue. The first aid policy provides very good guidance for staff and detailed records are kept of accidents. Fire drills are routinely undertaken and risk assessments are thorough. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

The small number of pupils in each class means that pupils receive a very high level of attention and supervision. Staff have an exceptional knowledge of the pastoral needs of the pupils and treat them with great care and respect. One parent wrote that, during a time of distress at home, the staff went *'beyond the call of duty'* in making sure that her child was cared for and safe, at home and at school. Pupils say

that there is no bullying in school but are extremely confident that staff will deal with any problems that may arise. The school encourages a healthy lifestyle and routinely provides nutritious lunches. Students are encouraged to be physically active through the timetabled PE lessons, lunchtime activities at the park and in the wide range of after-school sports activities.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school checks all staff to ensure their suitability to work with pupils. A central staff register is kept which has been implemented in line with statutory requirements.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in a building which has been suitably adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and provides safe and effective accommodation for learning. The teaching areas are adequate for the number of pupils in each class and are in sound decorative order. The local park provides an area which is used well by the school and enables the students to engage in a variety of games and activities. Sports activities are accommodated well through use of the facilities at a local school, the community centre and the university cricket ground.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The prospectus provides parents and carers with all of the information required to meet the regulations. The website is attractively presented and a wide range of school information is made available to parents through this and letters sent home. A clear majority of those parents who returned the inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. However, although the annual reports to parents meet requirements, a significant number of parents say that they would like even more information about the progress their children are making. The school welcomes the views of parents about its effectiveness and uses the feedback to improve further.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a detailed and comprehensive complaints procedure which meets requirements. All parents are informed of the policy when their children are admitted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that appropriate careers guidance is provided for secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the recently introduced systems for analysis of pupils' progress against national norms are fully implemented and the information is used to compare pupils' progress and the performance of the school with other schools nationally and internationally

- implement its plans for adding detail to all schemes of work to provide continuity and progression of skills, knowledge and understanding across the school.

School details

Name of school	Cambridge International School		
DCSF number	873/6042		
Unique reference number	135184		
Type of school	Preparatory and Upper school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2006		
Age range of pupils	3-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 65	Girls: 30	Total: 95
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,650 – 9,150		
Address of school	Cherry Hinton Hall Cherry Hinton Road Cambridge CB1 8DW		
Telephone number	01223 305875		
Email address	sturdy@sturdy.demon.co.uk		
Headteacher	Dr Harriet Sturdy		
Proprietor	Dr Harriet Sturdy and Dr Daniel Sturdy		
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI		
Dates of inspection	6 March 2008		