

International School of London

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The International School of London, founded in Camden in 1972 and now located in west London, is an independent co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of three and 18 years. The school offers an international curriculum through the three International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes, leading to the IB Diploma. It serves the needs of the international community in London, and aims to 'maximise the achievement of its pupils throughout the curriculum, and in their personal and social development. Drawing on the rich variety of cultures present in the school, it aims to develop in each pupil a global outlook which seeks to understand and appreciate the attitudes and values of others. Within the school community, all are valued and treated equally.' There are currently 330 pupils on roll and most are at various stages of learning English as an additional language. There are no pupils with a statement of educational needs. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are six children aged between three and four years and 12 children aged between four and five years, none of whom is in receipt of public funding under the nursery voucher scheme. Pupils attend the school for an average of three years. The school is fully accredited by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) and is an IB World School, authorised to offer the Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programmes. It was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2007 and by the ECIS in November 2008.

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL

The International School of London provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. Pupils make good progress as a result of the good curriculum, teaching and assessment. The senior leaders are clearly focused on continuously improving the provision, which has outstanding features. In particular, parents and pupils appreciate the excellent provision for learning in various mother tongues, the focus on developing pupils' inquiry skills and a global outlook from the early years, and the

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

good provision for pupils' personal development centred on service to the community. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children achieve a good level of development by the age of five years. Robust safeguarding arrangements contribute to the good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has maintained its good provision since the last inspection and continues to comply with all of the regulations for independent schools.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good, underpinned by a good curriculum that has very strong features. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum leads towards the IB Diploma. Its breadth encompasses the full Primary and Middle Years Programmes and six strands at IB Diploma level. The curriculum is balanced carefully to help pupils develop a wide range of skills that prepare them well for their future. One of the main strengths of the curriculum, much valued by parents and pupils, is the excellent provision for learning in a wide range of mother tongues that prepares pupils well for their return to their home countries. The provision for the varying needs of pupils who have English as an additional language is outstanding and enables the pupils to make rapid progress and promptly access the rest of the curriculum taught in English. There is a good system to support pupils who have learning difficulties. The curriculum is enhanced effectively, and often exceptionally well, by specialist teaching from the earliest years. The programme of inquiry is a very strong feature in the primary classes, as noted by parents. Strong cross-curricular links, extended since the last inspection, make pupils' learning a more coherent experience while developing their thinking and creative skills very effectively. However, as recognised by the school's self-review, cross-curricular links are not planned with the same consistency throughout the school. Other outstanding features of the curriculum are the provision for languages and for art, reflected in work of a very high standard. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) reflects the ethos of the school and contributes greatly to pupils' personal development. Pupils receive good careers advice to help them make decisions for their future. A broad range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum well. However, the older pupils report that they only have a choice of three sports clubs and one language club. The planning of the curriculum has been thoroughly reviewed recently, resulting in timetabling improvements for next academic year and in the identification of improvements to be made in each stage to ensure that the best existing features are established consistently throughout the school.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teaching groups are small and teachers know their pupils well and establish good working relationships, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the Diploma programme. Good teaching is characterised by good to excellent knowledge of the subject and of pupils' prior attainments, and by the use of a wide range of methods that stimulates and challenges pupils. Where the

teaching is outstanding, a consistent level of challenge is sustained throughout the lesson and the lesson is conducted at a fast pace, resulting in pupils making outstanding progress. There is a well-structured assessment framework in place that places a great emphasis on teaching pupils to reflect on their performance against specific success criteria. Occasionally, teaching is only satisfactory when verbal or written feedback is not sufficiently sharply focused on success criteria and so does not meet the needs of pupils sufficiently closely. In such cases, pupils cannot progress at the rate of which they are capable. Nevertheless, there are examples of excellent marking practice in the school, in which teachers' comments show pupils exactly what to do to improve. Teaching and learning are supported by an adequate range of resources. However, as identified by the school and pupils, technology is not used consistently throughout the school.

Pupils make good progress in their learning, as a result of the good curriculum and teaching. By the end of the Reception class, children achieve most of the expected goals and some exceed them. Results in the IB Diploma examinations indicate that Year 13 pupils achieve the highest in languages.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUPILS

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils say that they enjoy school, and levels of attendance are very high. This is a truly international school and even the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are proud of their cultural identity. Pupils appreciate the multicultural environment and the strong sense of community fostered by the school. The curriculum and programme of enrichment activities provide many opportunities for multicultural education. Pupils learn about the main world religions mainly through humanities and the celebration of festivals. Most develop a good understanding of diversity through their interaction with other pupils. Pupils learn about institutions within an international context, making comparisons between British institutions and those of other countries.

Pupils develop positive relationships from the Nursery onwards and work and play harmoniously together. Their behaviour is good, and often outstanding, in lessons. They develop a sense of personal and social responsibility, which is a great strength of the provision. Pupils have numerous well-planned opportunities to reflect on their performance, their attitudes to learning, their learning styles, their moral character and their intellectual abilities. Self-knowledge makes them self-confident and self-assured, which, coupled with the good basic skills which they develop and an excellent transition programme, prepares them well for the next stage of their education and their future economic well-being. They are keen communicators, express their views readily, and expect to be listened to. They make a wide range of contributions to their school, local and global communities through their class roles, the pupil council and the Creativity, Action and Service programme. However, the pupil council is not sufficiently engaged in representing pupils' views and being

directly involved in improving school life. Consequently, some of the older pupils feel that they are not heard sufficiently and that they do not have sufficient responsibilities, which was also noted during the last inspection.

SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the welfare requirements are met. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place. The staff receive the appropriate level of training in child protection at the required intervals and the child protection policy is up to date. Procedures for recruiting staff are thorough and ensure that all the required checks are carried out on staff, volunteers and the proprietor to establish their suitability to work with children prior to confirmation of their employment. These checks are recorded in a central register as necessary. All the essential policies aimed at minimising risks in all circumstances and promoting pupils' welfare comply with the current guidance and the vast majority are implemented rigorously. Pupils' welfare is enhanced by access to a counsellor. Consequently, most pupils feel safe and well cared for. Instances of bullying are rare and recorded appropriately. Careful risk assessments are made of the premises and activities and before educational visits. However, while the school has a satisfactory level of fire safety reflected in its procedures, fire alarm checks are not always properly recorded. While most parents express satisfaction with the school's work, not all feel sufficiently consulted on ways to improve the provision.

Pupils gain an awareness of safe and healthy lifestyles through various areas of the curriculum, including the programme of PSHCE and the provision for physical education and sports activities. However, pupils report that the choice of sports clubs is restricted for the upper year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the primary classes are only allowed healthy snacks, including fruit and vegetables, and the school provides well-balanced meals.

The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall effectiveness and outcomes of the setting are good. Children make good progress towards the expected goals in most areas of learning in relation to their starting points. Many enter with no English and make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Each child is treated as an individual and known very well by all staff. Relationships are very positive and foster children's social skills and emotional well-being very effectively. All children play well on their own and with others, behave well and demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and

healthy. Staff promote positive attitudes to learning and children enjoy their school day.

The provision is good. Robust safeguarding arrangements ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Staff effectively combine the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and the primary IB curriculum to develop enquiring minds. Planning is detailed, covering all areas of learning with a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led opportunities that meet children's individual needs effectively because they are based on regular assessments of their development and learning. The small outdoor play area is used well but has no shelter from inclement weather and has an uneven surface. Parents feel well informed about their children's activities and progress.

Leadership and management are good. Staff work closely together to secure good outcomes for all children, on the basis of accurate self-review and shared priorities for improvement.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

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 all pupils gain an accurate understanding of how to improve their work through marking and verbal feedback sharply focused on specific success criteria
- support the pupil council in shouldering more responsibilities so that pupils' views are fairly represented and translated into concrete improvements to school life, and support parents in contributing to improving the provision
- ensure that all fire safety checks are always recorded appropriately
- in the Early Years Foundation Stage, improve the outdoor area by providing an all-weather shelter and an even surface.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		✓		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		✓		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		✓		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		✓		

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school	International School of London		
DCSF number	313/6063		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	102550		
Type of school	All-age international day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1972		
Age range of pupils	3–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 182	Girls: 148	Total: 330
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees	£13,500 for children under 5; £14,950 to £18,950 depending on year groups		
Address of school	139 Gunnersbury Avenue London W3 8LG		
Telephone number	020 8992 5823		
Fax number	020 8993 7012		
Email address	mail@islondon.com		
Head of School	Mr Huw Davies		
Proprietor	International Community College Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi		
Date of inspection	17 June 2010		