

# International School of London

139 Gunnersbury Avenue, London W3 8LG

**Inspection dates** 8–10 March 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school's principal and UK director are highly ambitious. They have a clear vision for the school and are well supported by the staff.
- Pupils start school with varying levels of knowledge and skill in English. They receive effective teaching, learning and assessment, and make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years provision. A good range of activities motivates children to learn.
- The school has made effective arrangements to ensure that pupils retain and develop their home languages.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted and pupils are well aware of fundamental British values.
- The international curriculum meets pupils' needs effectively; it develops and supports their critical thinking skills well. Visits to places within the UK and abroad further enrich learning.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and know how to keep safe, especially from radicalisation or extremist views.
- The provision for the sixth form is outstanding. Learners study a wide range of subjects and they attain standards that are above the average for the International Baccalaureate.
- Leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently set work at the appropriate level so that most-able pupils make the best possible progress.
- Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that teachers know what they need to do to improve so that pupils make rapid progress.
- Priorities in the school improvement plan do not consistently and clearly link to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Assessments at the end of the Reception Year are not consistently accurate.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and accurately pinpoints what teachers need to improve further, so that pupils make rapid progress
  - teachers consistently set work at the appropriate level so that most-able pupils make the best possible progress
  - assessments of children’s learning at the end of the Reception Year are accurate
  - priorities in the school improvement plan closely link to improved outcomes for pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal and UK director, both of whom are new to the school, share an aspirational vision for the school to become an outstanding educational institution. They aim to develop pupils' capacity to adapt to different societies effectively and be successful wherever they decide to reside. In this quest, they are well supported by the other senior leaders.
- The principal, within two terms of taking up his post, has systematically monitored the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. While middle leaders are well established and support the work of the school, their monitoring of teaching and outcomes for pupils is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Although the arrangements for managing the performance of staff are developing well, they are not rigorous enough to accurately pinpoint what teachers need to do further to improve the quality of their teaching so that pupils make the best possible progress. Nonetheless, leaders do not hesitate in taking tough decisions whenever needed to ensure that pupils' learning is not compromised.
- The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is effective. Parents are informed, almost on a daily basis through the school's 'managebac' system, about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing. Regular meetings between members of staff check the progress of all pupils and additional support is provided for those who need it.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is highly effective and these pupils make good progress. Those who learn English as an additional language make good progress because of the effective support they receive. However, teachers do not match activities closely enough to the needs of most-able pupils. Sometimes these pupils are given work which is too easy; they then sit and wait for others to complete the task. This slows pupils' progress.
- The school is rightly proud of its work to help pupils to retain and develop their home language skills. Approximately 30 teachers teach pupils in their home languages, including Ukrainian, Japanese, German, Nepalese and Arabic. Pupils who are English speakers have opportunities to learn other languages. In the early years class, a group of children were observed learning French enthusiastically.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of its pupils. It covers all of the areas of learning required by the independent school standards. The curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to be reflective of their own learning and follow the areas that interest them within a set topic. This highly motivates and engages pupils in their learning. The curriculum is enriched extremely well through after-school clubs, visits to places of interest, and by visitors who come to school to talk about their life experiences.
- The school effectively promotes fundamental British values through its aims to 'develop in each pupil a global outlook which seeks to understand and appreciate the attitudes and cultures of others'. A student council is elected, pupils visit the Houses of Parliament and they learn about democratic values. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic communities; they work and play harmoniously together. Friendships across ethnicities and religions are strong.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted within all areas of the curriculum and through assemblies. Pupils are given many opportunities to celebrate different religious festivals, such as Eid, Guru Nanak's birthday and Christmas. Pupils have lessons in 'mindfulness' that help them to reflect and meditate.
- Pupils learn how to help others through 'service learning', as was seen in a design and technology lesson. One pupil designed a picture to give to a friend who was having a rough time and another pupil made a soft toy to give to an autistic child. This sense of care and community awareness prepares pupils highly effectively to become good citizens.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work. The staff are happy to work in the school.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met for leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The proprietor is highly involved in the school's work and holds a teleconference each week with the UK director to review school issues and identify priorities. He knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, and understands the need to allow the new leaders time to become established. He is very supportive and knows how to hold the school leaders to account.
  - The proprietor has a very good understanding of the curriculum and the finances. He has enlarged the existing premises and acquired new ones for the sixth form. He understands the school's strengths and is aware of what needs to be done to improve further.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The welfare, safety and security of pupils are a priority. All policies and procedures are effectively implemented to ensure that the provision is of high quality. These policies take account of the most recent statutory guidance. Policies and procedures are well communicated to parents via the school's website. All staff have received appropriate training in child protection and the 'Prevent' duty, including the designated leads for safeguarding.
- Leaders ensure that all the required checks are made on staff before they start work at the school.
- Fire checks and emergency evacuations are completed termly and an appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid. Details of pupils who join and leave the school are accurately recorded.
- Risk assessments are carried out and implemented for all activities and visits to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders employ health and safety advisers to check that the site is safe and secure.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan activities that keep pupils focused in lessons. They encourage pupils to use their literacy skills across subjects, for example in a mathematics lesson where pupils enjoyed writing poems using mathematical vocabulary.
- Teachers use skilful questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. This encourages pupils to reflect on what they have learned and think deeply about their responses. Teachers know their pupils well and understand the level they are working at. They use this knowledge to plan lessons that are interesting. However, sometimes teachers miss opportunities to provide more challenging activities for the most-able pupils and, as a result, their progress slows.
- Teachers assess pupils' work and provide feedback to them regularly. As a result, they know both what they can do, and the next steps in their learning. However, teachers' assessment of pupils' work does not consistently indicate what they need to do to improve because the advice given is not always specific. Sometimes, pupils' presentation of work is not neat enough and teachers accept careless and poorly presented work.
- The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is effective. Reading is taught well, both in pupils' home language and English. Pupils are taught phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) at the appropriate stage and use these skills effectively to extend their reading and writing skills. Mathematics is planned appropriately to meet pupils' learning needs. Home language teaching is very good. All teachers follow the same learning objectives and activities.
- In key stages 1 and 2, teaching is linked to topics and lessons are carefully planned to give pupils opportunities to explore their individual interests. This was seen in one art lesson, where pupils sketched a picture of a jungle; one pupil decided to explore the animals who lived in the jungle while another decided to write poems about the sketch. Another planned to make a video using the picture.
- In key stages 3 and 4, teachers have good subject knowledge and a wide range of curriculum expectations are well met. Teaching and learning in art and design are strengths, with many pupils producing high-quality work to be exhibited.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities is very good. Teachers assess pupils' needs and additional trained staff are deployed to support them effectively. As a result, pupils make good progress. Teachers provide good support for pupils learning English as an additional language; they make good and, in some cases, rapid progress.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and this results in pupils having positive attitudes to learning. They focus well on their tasks and lessons proceed without any disruptions.
- Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards in this area are met.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive. They are confident and self-assured pupils who reflect on their own learning. They follow their interests within the topic they are studying and are confident to tell teachers what help they need to further improve their knowledge and skills.

- Pupils who are newly arrived in this country receive high-quality support from the school. This helps them to settle well and develop confidence in coping with new situations. Pupils soon learn to adapt to change, and lessons such as 'mindfulness' help them to learn to relax and face challenges calmly.
- Pastoral care is also extended to families. The school's staff understand the loneliness new families are likely to feel and, therefore, they invite parents to school to socialise and develop their friendships with other families. During the inspection, parents from different ethnic communities were observed learning to cook a Japanese meal taught by two Japanese parents.
- Pupils' relationships with adults and other pupils in the school are based on mutual respect. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. They work collaboratively in lessons and play amicably during break times. Friendships across religions and ethnic backgrounds are strong. At lunchtimes, pupils sit together to share a healthy meal cooked on the premises. They chat sociably in a calm and peaceful environment, which encourages the development of social skills.
- Pupils know how to keep safe from any type of bullying, including cyber bullying. They know about e-safety and are fully aware of the dangers of drug misuse. Pupils are knowledgeable about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The school's leaders have ensured that all the independent standards for pupils' welfare, health and safety are met.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school sets high expectations for behaviour. As a result, pupils know what is expected from them and they respond exceptionally well. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and disruption in lessons is rare.
- In the playground, some pupils indulge in physical activities and play ball games co-operatively, negotiating space carefully. Others congregate in groups, enjoying social time.
- Pupils state that there is no bullying but that they know what to do if it were to happen. The school's records indicate that there have been no instances of bullying. Pupils know how to be safe on the very busy road adjacent to the school.
- Pupils receive very good impartial careers guidance, including work experience. The school has an extensive range of policies in place, which are highly effectively implemented to ensure that pupils are not subject to any partisan or extremist views.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school but attendance for the current year is lower than in the previous year. This is because the school's monitoring of absence has not been rigorous enough. Leaders are aware of this and are taking steps to rectify the situation.
- All the independent school standards are met.

### Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement is good across all subjects and in all classes. Pupils make good progress in the primary-aged classes. There is a good focus on reading and writing, and this helps pupils to make good progress across other subjects. In mathematics, pupils make good progress. However, achievement is not yet outstanding as most-able pupils are not always given work that appropriately meets their needs. In lessons, most-able pupils finish their tasks and have to wait for others to finish. This slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their verbal communication skills. They express their views and opinions clearly, and some do so eloquently.
- Pupils achieve well in other subjects as they have many opportunities to develop their artistic skills, linking them very effectively with subjects such as science, English, history and geography. Pupils develop their swimming and sporting skills through many opportunities in physical education lessons. For example, pupils persevered and made good progress in developing their skills when using a tennis racquet to aim the ball at a target.
- In key stages 3 and 4, pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects because the teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and bring their own enthusiasm to the subject being taught. This is particularly evident in art, design and technology, science, mathematics and English. Pupils' achievement in history and geography is good. This is because the curriculum is well designed to link subjects effectively while being able to give opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests.

- The school's current performance information indicates that pupils achieve well and this is also evidenced in pupils' books. Pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities make good progress and achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, including during the short time some stay at the school.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and this stands them in good stead when they travel to different countries. They become confident and self-assured, and have positive attitudes towards people from different minority ethnic communities and of different religious backgrounds. They have the capacity to become well-rounded global citizens.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- Children begin school with varying levels of knowledge and skill in English. A good focus on teaching phonics helps children to improve their reading and writing skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to speak and listen that promote their verbal communication skills successfully.
- Teachers match activities to their children's needs effectively and this supports good progress in all areas of learning. Children are encouraged to choose activities independently and they work amicably with their classmates. They are learning to behave well, to take turns and to share resources with each other. This effectively promotes children's personal development.
- There is a good balance between staff-led activities and those chosen by the children independently. Staff engage in play when children choose activities, and use these opportunities to assess and extend children's learning.
- Support staff are well deployed and they assess and extend learning effectively. They ask children questions and encourage them to answer using appropriate vocabulary. Many children are in the early stages of learning English. Staff support the development of their vocabulary and encourage them to speak words or sentences, depending on their ability.
- Children's work in their books shows that they are making good progress in reading, writing and number work. By the end of the early years, the majority of children have made good progress in all areas. The proportion achieving a good level of development is broadly similar to the national average. The school's focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills prepares children well to meet the higher challenges in Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the provision are good. Children's progress is measured and tracked effectively to ensure that all children make good progress from when they start school. However, assessments are sometimes inflated and show unrealistically high attainment at the end of the Reception Year.
- The school's leaders ensure that all the requirements for the early years provision are met.

## Sixth form provision

**is outstanding**

- The acting sixth form principal, who is also the UK director, is highly passionate about developing provision and standards even further. Learners are well settled in their new premises and enjoy good facilities for art and science.
- Learners make outstanding progress because their teachers have outstanding subject knowledge and plan lessons that highly motivate them.
- Exceptionally skilful questioning by teachers encourages learners to recall what they have learned previously and connect it to the topic being studied. This was clearly evident during an economics lesson.
- Nearly three quarters of learners in the sixth form are learning English as an additional language. Despite this, the school's results have been above the International Baccalaureate average scores. Learners make substantial progress and catch up during their time in the school. The current cohort of learners is on course to get similar results.
- Learners have very positive attitudes to education. They take responsibility for their own learning and work exceptionally well with their classmates. This enables them to learn from each other and make outstanding progress. Their behaviour is impeccable, whether in lessons or out of lessons.
- Learners feel safe and know how to keep safe and healthy. They have many opportunities to visit places of educational interest locally, nationally and internationally. They come from a range of minority ethnic communities and understand lifestyles of different societies, including life in Britain.
- Learners have a good understanding of how democracy works, as they elect their own student council.

Councillors take many responsibilities within the school and within the local community to organise fund-raising events for local charities. They also attend parents' meetings to help organise a summer fair. They have banned the use of plastic containers and cups in the sixth form accommodation, and have decided to use mugs and reusable cups to be more environmentally friendly.

- Learners receive high-quality impartial careers advice, which encourages them to be ambitious but realistic. They benefit from a range of experiences, such as a former learner, who is now an architect, visiting to talk to them about his profession. Excellent careers guidance prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment, wherever in the world it may be. Parents are also given guidance to help their children.
- Learners prepare their curricula vitae and job applications, as seen in one personal, social and health lesson. The school is highly successful in placing learners in high-quality university provision. All learners are planning to go to universities of their choice in Britain or abroad.
- Leaders have made sure that all the independent schools standards are met.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102550
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008546
<b>DfE registration number</b>	313/6063

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	All-age international day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	407
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	76
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	International Community College Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Nadim Makarem
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew Mitchell
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£18,000–£24,600
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8992 5823
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.islschools.org">www.islschools.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:mail@isllondon.org">mail@isllondon.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	June 2010

## Information about this school

- The International School of London is an independent co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of three and 18 years. It opened in 1972 in Camden before moving to West London. There are currently 407 pupils on roll and most are at various stages of learning English as an additional language.
- There are 23 children in the early years provision. None of them are in receipt of public funding under the nursery voucher scheme. The school follows the early years foundation stage framework.
- There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school is fully accredited by the European Council of International Schools and is an IB World School. The school offers an international programme of education: the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, the International Baccalaureate Middle Years programme and the International Baccalaureate Diploma.
- The school serves the international community in London. It aims to maximise pupils' achievement and promote their personal and social development.
- The school draws on a rich variety of cultures and aims to 'develop in each pupil a global outlook which seeks to understand and appreciate the attitudes and values of others'.

- Pupils' movement in and out of the school is high. Pupils attend the school for an average of three years. The school teaches its entire curriculum in English, but provides additional teaching in pupils' home languages. Currently, over three quarters of learners in the sixth form speak English as an additional language.
- A material change inspection was conducted by Ofsted on 15 December 2015 when the school's application to increase the maximum number of pupils to 600 and register its use of additional premises was considered. The material change was recommended to the Department for Education, the registration authority for independent schools.
- The principal joined the school in August 2015 and the UK director took up his post in April 2015.
- The school is on two sites. One site houses the early years, primary and secondary pupils. The new site, opened in September 2014, houses the sixth form. It is approximately one mile away from the main school.

## Information about this inspection

- Discussions took place with the principal, head of early years, head of primary, head of secondary and the acting principal of the sixth form who is also the school's UK director. The lead inspector also held a teleconference with the chair of the proprietorial company.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, looked at the school's welfare and safety arrangements, and toured the premises at both of the sites.
- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, all jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also made some shorter visits to classes, mainly in the early years and in the sixth form, accompanied by senior leaders. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books.
- Meetings were held with primary and secondary pupils and opportunities were taken to speak to sixth form learners. The minutes of the sixth form student council were examined.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation available on the school's website and through hard copies presented in the school. This also included reviewing the school's information on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and notes of meetings and documents related to safeguarding. The lead inspector analysed the school's 'managebac' system of giving pupils and parents information on the curriculum being taught and how pupils can submit their work to be marked.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through 69 responses to Ofsted's online survey. Views expressed in 81 responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed throughout the inspection. The records of pupils' behaviour were examined.

## Inspection team

Kanwaljit Singh, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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