



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT ON THE BRITISH SCHOOL CARACAS

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The British School Caracas

Full Name of School	The British School Caracas		
Address	Transversal 9 Este Av. Luis Roche Urbanizacion Altamira Caracas Venezuela		
Telephone Number	0058 21226 55870		
Fax Number	0058 21226 52141		
Email Address	info@tbscaracas.com		
Head	Mr Yasir Patel		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Cristina Tovar		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	300		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (173 boys; 127 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2:	0	5-11: 152
	3-5:	39	11-18: 109
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	300	
Inspection dates	9-10 February and 14 to 17 April 2015		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI Schedule* for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection consists of two parts: a preliminary two-day visit followed by a four-day (team) inspection. This was the first inspection of the school by ISI.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and overseas. As such, ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas and the *ISI Framework* requirements. ISI is also the agency responsible for the inspection of schools in membership of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC). Accordingly, ISI inspections of British schools overseas are required to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare;
- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- report to the DfE the extent to which schools comply with the published Standards for British Schools Overseas;
- where applicable, assure ISC Associations that their member schools maintain the quality of provision expected.

ISI inspection is for the benefit of the pupils in the schools and through public reporting makes the information available to parents, governments and the wider community.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. The major difference is that schools in England must comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, which do not apply with legal validity to schools outside the United Kingdom. However, the inspection of overseas schools takes account where possible of compliance with any local requirements and it judges the extent to which the schools comply with the British Government's Standards for British Schools Overseas. The range of these Standards is as follows.

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- **an exhaustive health and safety audit**
- **an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features**
- **an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures**

- **an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law.**

CONTENTS

	Page
1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with Standards requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
(a) The quality of governance	12
(b) The quality of leadership and management	12
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	14
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	16

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The British School Caracas is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from 3 to 18. It aims to provide its pupils with a world class British and international education within a caring, family environment. It also seeks to encourage them to aspire to become productive members and leaders in a dynamic and evolving world. The school community aims to foster attitudes that promote inter-cultural understanding and sustainable practices. In addition the school aims to foster a love of learning, encouraging them to behave respectfully and with integrity and leading them to become independent learners and creative thinkers. The school has a board of directors that consists of representatives of the school community. The board is elected at an annual general meeting and each family has the right to vote. The current head was appointed in August 2014.
- 1.2 Founded in 1950 for 37 primary-aged pupils, the school moved to its present location in the area of Altamira in 1954. Over the years, new buildings were added to the site and it was accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) in 2003. In 2009, the board decided to expand the school to pre-university levels and the first pupils completed their IGCSEs in 2013. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) shares the site with the primary and secondary sections of the school. The Nursery children are accommodated in a separate building with its own outdoor area, while the Reception class is housed in the primary section. The sixth form is a recent addition to the school and the first International Baccalaureate pupils are due to graduate in 2015. They have their own building, which has been recently refurbished. Some facilities are shared by both sections of the school.
- 1.3 There are currently 300 pupils on the school roll, 173 boys and 127 girls. Of these, 39 children are in the EYFS, 152 pupils are in the primary section of the school and 109 are in the secondary section. The school's own testing of ability indicates that the pupils' ability profile varies between different year groups but is overall above average. The inspection judgement is similar, and defines ability as slightly above average. The majority of the pupils are Venezuelan but a small proportion are of various ethnic origins and from a range of countries, including Britain, the Middle and Far East, and North and South America. Most pupils are from professional or business backgrounds.
- 1.4 The school has identified six pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and two pupils are receiving specialist learning support from the school. English is an additional language (EAL) for 289 pupils, of whom 43 receive support for their English.
- 1.5 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The only slight difference is that Nursery is called Pre-school and Reception is called Kinder.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The success of the school lies in the good quality of the pupils' achievements, particularly in the high standard of their proficiency in languages. From an early age, they are able to communicate both orally and in writing in at least two languages with confidence and fluency. The school's first two years of IGCSE results show that the pupils' linguistic achievements are good in comparison with other pupils internationally. The development of a sixth form studying for the International Baccalaureate (IB) adds strength to the school. The pupils' attitudes and willingness to learn are a strong factor in their success, as is good teaching. They are enthusiastic in their approach and interested in what they study. Their basic skills develop strongly. In pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils and their parents were overwhelmingly positive about the progress made in learning. A minority of parents were not happy with the provision for SEND and for the most able, and the inspection team found that the teaching does not fully meet the differing needs of pupils. The school is aware of this shortcoming and is addressing it. Achievement in non-academic areas is currently under-developed. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and extra-curricular provision for primary pupils is good but there is limited extra-curricular provision for secondary pupils. This shortage was noted in a minority of questionnaire responses by parents and pupils.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are confident, mature and courteous, with an engaging warmth that arises from their attitudes to others. They are willing to take responsibilities and express their views cogently while being respectful of others. In questionnaire responses, the vast majority of parents affirmed that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. Pupils generally enjoy very good relationships with each other and with their teachers. These strong relationships as well as opportunities to take responsibility help to promote their excellent personal development. A minority of pupils felt that teachers did not treat them equally and a few parents were not happy with the pastoral care their children received. Inspection evidence indicated that most teachers know their pupils very well and are committed to their care but transition from one year to the next is not carefully managed.
- 2.3 Good governance is forward-looking and plans carefully for the development of the school. The board has recently introduced a committee structure to increase the efficacy of its work and board members have a good oversight of the workings of the school. They are supportive to school leadership and have a clear understanding of their legal obligations. A new leadership team is providing an energetic drive to institute robust systems of management leading to school improvement. There has not been time for these systems to be fully embedded but a clear, ambitious vision is working towards the school's partially fulfilled aim to provide an outstanding international education.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas

(The range of the Standards for British Schools Overseas is given in the Preface)

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Standards for British Schools Overseas.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Increase the provision of extra-curricular opportunities in the secondary school.
2. Ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and the most able, are fully met.
3. Improve the consistency of teaching standards, including those in EYFS, to the quality of the best.
4. Co-ordinate the provision of pastoral care throughout the school to ensure that transition from one year to the next is well managed.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The quality of the pupil's achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. They become confident and articulate speakers. They listen well to one another and engage enthusiastically in discussions. Pupils throughout the school are keen to learn and approach their work with seriousness and maturity. They develop a good level of competence in using information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning across the curriculum. In many lessons in the secondary school, and particularly in theory of knowledge and English, pupils think logically and use their initiative. As a result, they become good independent learners. In art and music, pupils develop good creative skills, drawing and designing with precision and flair, and playing stringed instruments well in the orchestra. Throughout the school, pupils' numerical skills are good. Through regular physical education (PE) lessons, pupils develop a good level of physical skill, particularly in football and basketball.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able, make good progress according to their starting points. The older children express themselves confidently and have made a good start to reading and writing, especially in their knowledge of phonics. The youngest children happily make choices from a well-organised range of equipment and activities. They can recount a story in good English in response to picture cues and write phonically plausible sentences with confidence. They use early language effectively when interacting with each other. All children with EAL make excellent progress. Many enter with little or no English and quickly learn to communicate well and to read and order numbers up to ten, adding and subtracting with accuracy.
- 3.4 Teams of pupils regularly compete in Model United Nations (MUN) events in Venezuela and internationally and enjoy considerable success. A number of pupils achieve highly in activities such as music or equestrianism outside school but their achievements in non-academic areas within school are limited and relatively few examples of aesthetic or creative accomplishments were seen during the inspection outside curriculum time.
- 3.5 Many initiatives have been taken to fulfil the school's ambitious mission to provide a world-class British and international programme. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve excellent attainment in English and Spanish and primary school pupils also achieve well in science. Overall achievement in other subjects, however, varies according to the quality of the teaching.
- 3.6 The pupils' progress is judged to be good throughout the school. The school uses standardised tests to track pupil progress. The data demonstrates very good achievement from Year 6 to Year 9, particularly in mathematics and reading. The rate of progress is slightly lower at secondary level in all subjects tested. The school's own internal tracking also suggests that pupils are making good progress. In their questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of pupils report that they are making good progress and a similar proportion of parents are pleased with the progress their child is making.

- 3.7 On the broad range of evidence currently available from on-site inspection, attainment is judged to be above average. The limited external evidence is from IGCSE examinations taken in 2013 and 2014. Results showed an improvement from one year to the next although the small number of entries suggests that comparisons may not be reliable. These past results were broadly similar to the worldwide average, with results in languages and geography being higher. In both years, candidates did not do as well in mathematics as in English, with most pupils achieving a C grade or below. Double science results remained below average.
- 3.8 The school has recently introduced a sixth form and implemented the IB programme, for which first entries are due in summer 2015. The introduction of the IB programme raises pupils' aspirations and helps them make analytical connections between individual subjects. As a result, the school is moving further towards its overall mission. Almost all of the first IB pupils have secured places at universities in the United States, including two at particularly prestigious colleges and one at a highly respected college of music.
- 3.9 Because there is little formal identification of the most able pupils and those with SEND, and little specific provision for them, the achievements of different groups of pupils are not as high as they might be. However, pupils benefit from small class sizes, and their own determination to do well means that those with additional needs achieve successful outcomes. Staff know their pupils well and respond to their needs, for example by enabling pupils to analyse a story by pictorial in addition to verbal means to aid understanding, or by encouraging the more able to extend their research when working on projects so that they achieve outcomes commensurate with their ability. However, the lack of formal screening prevents staff from gaining a fully accurate understanding of particular needs. A minority of parents in response to pre-inspection questionnaires commented that the school does not provide sufficient help regarding special educational needs and inspectors agreed with this opinion. The recently appointed co-ordinator for SEND is beginning to address the problem but provision is at an early stage. Almost all the pupils in the school have EAL and make very good progress.
- 3.10 Pupils enjoy their learning and approach their work with enthusiasm. They work diligently in class and co-operate productively with one another.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.11 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.12 The school provides a curriculum which covers the requisite areas of learning. In their questionnaire responses, the parents rate the curriculum highly. It broadly follows the English National Curriculum, which is amended to the school's context and linked to an international curriculum, IGCSE and IB. It supports the school's aims of enabling pupils to communicate effectively in at least two languages and of fostering a love of learning. Provision for EAL is excellent although provision for SEND is less good.
- 3.13 The EYFS setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the children who attend. The educational programmes are carefully planned around a central theme with a new topic each half term, which incorporates ideas adapted from a commercial scheme designed for international schools. Thorough planning ensures all areas of the EYFS are fully covered. Activities relating to family life, Venezuelan and international traditions and sustainability of the environment are also included in

the curriculum, thus ensuring it is highly relevant to the children in EYFS. This relevance encourages the children's involvement and enthusiasm for learning. There are many opportunities for outdoor play and activities. However, in some classes the outdoor areas are not suitable for incorporating continuous activities between the indoor and outdoor environments. As a result, outdoor learning for the children in these classes is limited.

- 3.14 In the primary school there is strong curriculum coverage in English, mathematics and a commercial scheme designed for international schools, with a good amount of work on science and scientific investigations. In the secondary school, curriculum choices are limited but viable for the small number of pupils, and they cover all the requisite areas. They enable the pupils to undertake the IB successfully, though some pupils find it challenging to move from co-ordinated science at IGCSE to the more rigorous demands of single science subjects on the IB programme. Language provision is a strength, enabling pupils to gain fluency in at least two languages so that they are able to take both Spanish and English Literature and language at IGCSE. They converse and discuss freely in both languages. In interviews, pupils said that they are happy with the options available.
- 3.15 The curriculum is supported by a programme of visiting speakers, including ambassadors, journalists, writers and artists. Topics covered include a talk on bullying and workshops on painting and empathy. The school also arranges a number of trips and outings to enrich the curriculum, ranging from a visit to the local fire station for the EYFS children to residential overseas trips for older pupils or visits to the rain forest.
- 3.16 In the primary school, a good range of extra-curricular activities includes separate sports for both boys and girls, orchestra, opportunities to perform in musical events, MUN and a number of clubs, such as arts and crafts, spelling and calligraphy. Pupils compete against other schools in sports such as football and basketball.
- 3.17 Extra-curricular provision in the secondary school is limited. However, there are opportunities to perform in musical events and the string orchestra performs twice a year. An annual exhibition of pupils' art is held for the local community, and the school has a well-developed programme of visits to local schools, hospitals and orphanages. Once a week before the school day begins, a number of pupils are involved in organising and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) classes for pupils from a local school. An enrichment week, with visits to various parts of Venezuela and other countries, takes place annually in June. There is, however, little sports provision or organised clubs and activities for secondary pupils. A minority of pupils and parents indicated in pre-inspection questionnaires that the school does not provide a good range of extra-curricular activities and inspectors agreed that this is the case in the secondary school, even though in interviews pupils reported that the school would provide activities if they really wanted them.
- 3.18 In the sixth form, the IB theory of knowledge course helps develop pupils' general knowledge and understanding of global issues. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme in the primary school is wide-ranging and incorporated effectively into many lessons. In the secondary school, PSHE is provided in several subjects in the curriculum and, along with pastoral care and staff encouragement, effectively supports the personal development of the pupils. Pupils receive informative help and guidance about their choices of subjects and university destinations.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.20 In the EYFS, staff plan activities which engage and motivate the children. Specialist teaching in Spanish, music and PE adds depth and breadth to the children's learning. There is also a wide variety of enjoyable after-school activities available for the older children. Children are taken on stimulating trips and visits such as those to the fire station and the theatre.
- 3.21 Regular assessments identify the next steps in the children's learning, skills and understanding. However, a few staff are not fully familiar with the EYFS Framework and the recommended ways to respond to each child's emerging needs and interests. For example, they may spend too long in a static activity so that the children's attention is lost. Children with EAL make excellent progress because staff model language extremely well and ensure the children understand: for example, in a 'show and tell' session, skilful questioning and encouragement gives the children confidence to speak in front of the class. Highly effective individual support is provided for children entering the school with no English.
- 3.22 The majority of the teaching observed in the primary and secondary schools during the inspection was good, contributing to the pupils' effective progress. In lessons where the most successful teaching took place there were high expectations, clear goals, an excellent pace, active learning and appropriate challenge for all the pupils, which motivated and inspired them. In a minority of less successful lessons, learning tended to be passive and lacking in enthusiasm, with teaching offering no significant pace or challenge for the more able. Through its leadership and management, the school is working hard to overcome this inconsistency by means of a recently introduced staff appraisal system, which focuses sharply on the quality of teaching. The sharing of good practice, such as peer-led sessions on the effective use of technology, is also something that has been introduced across both the primary and the secondary school. This is a positive step leading to the realisation of the school's aim to give pupils the curriculum best suited to their individual needs.
- 3.23 Teaching supports the aims of the school, particularly in developing international mindedness and the pupils' personal development. Where teaching was excellent, it embraced challenge to maximise the pupils' potential and encouraged them to become creative and critical thinkers. Such teaching offers pupils many opportunities to contribute to the lesson, makes effective use of relevantly directed pair work, encourages debate and fosters pupils' powers of analysis.
- 3.24 Teachers are well qualified in their subject areas and their subject knowledge is good. Teachers know their pupils and respond to their needs, although strategies for assisting those with SEND are not sufficiently defined or shared. The best lessons were appropriately planned, with clear objectives, often including activities which involved active learning from the pupils. Questioning of the pupils was seen as a strength throughout the school. In the majority of lessons, the teaching assistants provided good learning support, helping pupils who needed help with tasks. Recent appointments of lead teaching assistants is further improving this support.
- 3.25 Teaching encourages independent learning throughout the school with research activities and debating of subjects. In responses to the pupils' questionnaire, the overwhelming majority think they are encouraged to do things for themselves and be

independent. The independent work supports the school's aim of the pupils becoming self-reliant learners who are critical thinkers with the capacity to solve problems, for example by considering whether a particular political leader had acted in the best interests of his country or how best to design a surrealist shoe so that it can be made in pottery. The use of a variety of learning strategies, such as questioning, pair work, debate and experiment, makes a stimulating learning environment.

- 3.26 The teachers have worked well to ensure the learning environment is one where pupils feel able to ask questions and take risks. The relationship between teachers and their pupils is excellent. Pupils were complimentary about their teachers during the interviews with inspectors and the majority of pupils express the view through their questionnaires that teachers help them to learn and give them individual help where needed, although a small minority feel that the work they do outside class does not help them to learn. Inspectors found, however, that most homework gave suitable opportunities for consolidation or research.
- 3.27 Teaching in the primary school does not always make good use of the resources available. Interactive whiteboards are provided but are rarely used to their full potential. However, the use of resources in the secondary school is a strength across subjects.
- 3.28 The use of specialist staff in some subjects, such as PE, music and Spanish in the primary school enriches the pupils' experience. The support given by teaching for the needs of the many pupils with EAL, especially in their acquisition of the English language, is excellent throughout the school. However, specific support given to SEND as well as the most able pupils is not informed by specialist guidance. Rather, small class sizes enable teachers to give attention to these pupils and much of the help that they give is effective in ensuring progress. The school has identified this weakness and has recently recruited a special educational needs co-ordinator.
- 3.29 In the most effective lessons, pupils are assessed regularly by questioning. All pupils are assessed using standardised testing. The results are used to track progress but a more thorough analysis of the available data could better inform planning as well as identify weaknesses.
- 3.30 In some subjects, such as English, marking of the pupils' work provides constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement, asking helpful questions. However, this practice is not consistent across all subjects.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 They are friendly, courteous, self-confident and aware of the needs of others. From the early years on, they know and understand personal learning goals, appreciating the qualities which they are developing and deepening their understanding as they get older. From Year 1 they learn to describe and understand feelings so that they acquire a vocabulary which enables them to explore their own consciousness and that of others. In the early years, the children work constructively together, share and take turns, communicate confidently and play imaginatively. In the primary school, pupils regularly present assemblies to the rest of their age group and to their parents, adding to their feelings of self-esteem. Pupils in the secondary school are kind to one another and reflective about the issues which they consider in classes, such as the nature of Caliban in *The Tempest*, the role of gender in modern society or the consequences of the Gulf War. All pupils greet and welcome visitors to the school in an open and smiling manner.
- 4.3 The pupils have an excellent moral sense and they fulfil the school's aim that they should be respectful and behave with integrity. From the early years on, they behave well, understanding that they are part of a community to which they contribute by observing the rules and creating a positive ethos. They take pride in their school and are interested in moral and ethical issues, enjoying the debate and discussion which strengthen their sense of the importance of integrity. Junior school pupils respond positively to the responsible behaviour policy and, in the secondary school, they enjoy debating ethical issues in history or geography. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, the vast majority of parents said that the school promoted high standards of behaviour and worthwhile views, and the inspection team observed the pupils demonstrating these standards.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. They are willing to take responsibility even at an early age when each child has a class job to do each day, such as tidying up. In the school council, pupils exercise the responsibility of representing others and they consider seriously ideas which others put forward and discuss them in a democratic way. Pupils raise funds to support council projects and recently purchased clocks for classrooms so that everyone in the school would benefit from being able to see the time. Pupils throughout the school take responsibility within one of the four school houses and are eager to earn house points which contribute to awards. As well as their social responsibilities within the school, pupils feel concern for their local community and the world beyond. They are active in raising money for charities and particularly those which help other children who are in need. Care for the environment is evident in posters created by primary school pupils, celebrating the beauty of the Avila, in the recycling programmes throughout the school and in a sixth-form debate about the difficulties of protecting the environment against the pressures of economic development.
- 4.3 The pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. They form an inclusive community and respect the diversity of other cultures. They value their own culture, and primary school pupils sang the Venezuelan national anthem at the start of an assembly. As pupils at a British school, they are aware of fundamental British values and of British traditions. They understand the importance of respecting the rule of law, of respect and tolerance. Some pupils are learning the British national anthem to sing at the embassy at the Queen's birthday celebrations, and their ability to speak in at least

two languages gives them an insight into those cultures. In their studies of art and music, they show appreciation of European and South American traditions. In their response to pre-inspection questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of pupils indicated that they like being at the school.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.4 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.5 The school meets its aim of providing a caring, family environment for the pupils which allows them to flourish, and greatly assists their personal development. They enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and with one another. The school places great emphasis on mutual respect and kindness, values which the pupils absorb. The school has effective procedures for encouraging good behaviour and for guarding against harassment and bullying. In interview, pupils reported that bullying was rare and, if it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. They appreciated a recent anti-bullying week during which outside speakers considered the dangers of bullying in the workplace as well as in schools. A few pupils suggested in their questionnaire responses that the school did not deal with bullying. However, inspectors found that the school records carefully the few incidents that do occur and takes appropriate action.
- 4.6 In their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, a minority of pupils indicated that staff were not fair in their awarding of rewards and sanctions and that they did not treat pupils equally. However, in interview pupils spoke approvingly of the help that their teachers give them, and inspection evidence found from school records that hardly any serious sanctions are given. In the secondary school detentions are given for minor offences but inspectors found no evidence of unfairness. In the primary school the responsible behaviour policy encourages pupils to reflect on any unacceptable behaviour and to understand its effects on others. Parents are involved in the implementation of this policy. In pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the pastoral care given to their children. The inspection team found that class teachers know their pupils very well and do much to help them but the transfer of information from one tutor to the next is not systematically managed.
- 4.7 The school has worked hard to create and implement an effective safeguarding policy. Venezuelan requirements differ from British ones in that there is no equivalent structure of outside agencies. The school has therefore devised a policy which meets with local legal requirements and defines appropriate procedures for dealing with safeguarding problems. In cases where any criminal activity has taken place, the school would report to the police. In other cases the school will work with parents, the school nurse and counsellor. Medical services can be consulted as necessary. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a group of child protection officers have been trained for their roles and, in turn, have trained the rest of the staff. Safeguarding training forms part of the induction process for all new staff. It is delivered by the DSL and uses a training pack provided by the NSPCC.
- 4.8 School buildings are well maintained and kept clean and orderly. Regular risk assessments are carried out for all areas of the school, and any dangers or hazards are quickly rectified. The buildings have been recently reinforced against earthquake and local fire service laws ensure that fire safety equipment is well serviced. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for educational trips or visits. In all aspects of school life, the safety and security of the pupils are given a high priority. There is a qualified post dedicated to overseeing the health and well-being

of the pupils. A bright, attractive medical room ensures that a sick or injured pupil can be cared for in appropriate surroundings. All pupils take part in physical exercise and healthy eating is encouraged so that from EYFS on pupils understand what constitutes a healthy diet. In assemblies, the whole school is addressed about the importance of a sensible diet.

- 4.9 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained. In accordance with Venezuelan law, the attendance register is taken once rather than twice a day but registers show if a pupil is likely to be absent in the afternoon for any reason. Attendance is closely monitored and any unexplained absence is quickly followed up.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body shows great commitment to the school and to undertaking its responsibilities with diligence and care. It supports the aims of the school in working towards providing a world-class education. It has recently benefited from professional training and, as a result, is in the process of compiling a handbook for governors to assist them in achieving continuity and consistency in their role. It has recently created a committee structure to facilitate more detailed consideration of aspects of governance. Terms of reference have been carefully considered and these committees report to the full board. They have already proved effective in their work by monitoring the work of the school and by their financial management. In consultation with the head of school and with input from all members of staff, the board has approved a five-year strategic plan to assist the school in working towards its aims. Careful financial planning has enabled the school to invest in staff and resources as well as in planning for the development of facilities.
- 5.3 The board provides thorough support for the head and has introduced an appraisal system for him. Regular meetings and frequent communication between the chair and the head ensure that the board is kept informed about the school's educational standards and the workings of the school. A termly report from the head of school adds to the board's detailed information about the school's progress. Stimulus and challenge for the head and the school come from measuring that progress against the strategic plan, for example by evaluating the success of the introduction of the IB or in the recruitment of high quality staff.
- 5.4 Governance supports leadership and management in meeting the EYFS regulatory requirements. Many of the governors are parents or former parents of pupils in the school and have specific knowledge and understanding of the EYFS. A named governor with responsibility for EYFS could enhance progress in this area.
- 5.5 The board discharges its responsibilities for welfare, health and safety and safeguarding throughout the school. It has oversight of the policies and procedures concerned with safeguarding and with safer recruitment. The policies are approved and signed off by them but minutes of board meetings do not indicate that the whole board has discussed the efficiency with which the policies and procedures are carried out. As the school has extended its provision in recent years, the board has monitored suitable accommodation and facilities for IGCSE and IB through its infrastructure committee.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good. It promotes the aims of the school by recruiting and professionally developing well-qualified local and overseas teachers, by communicating effectively with the school community and by putting in place structures which assist the pupils to develop diverse and transferable skills and attributes.
- 5.7 The leadership of the school provides clear educational direction at all levels. This is clearly reflected in the detailed five-year school development plan, which has

mapped out improvements across all aspects of the school. The leadership has made a good start to fulfilling the plan with the development of many recent initiatives to help the school move forwards. Examples of initiatives have been the development of a staff appraisal system, sharing of good teaching practice, the introduction of an international schools assessment scheme and the growth of a clear leadership structure. Such initiatives are moving the school towards the fulfilment of its aims and are receiving wide support, since the entire staff have had an input into the development plan through staff meetings and self-evaluation feedback. The pupils are benefiting from the training undertaken by staff, for example IB training on the visual arts course, the extended essay course and the world conference, which enable them to work confidently towards graduation in 2015. Staff training in assessment is helping pupils and their parents to gain a more accurate picture of their own attainment and progress. The personal development of the pupils is considerably enhanced by the introduction of the school council, which enables them to take responsibility as well as to put forward their views to the staff.

- 5.8 There is a good, positive relationship between the head, the senior leadership team (SLT) and the school's governing body as well as with the teaching staff and parents. Members of the SLT know all the pupils by name and they are seen regularly around the school during the day speaking with pupils. The care and safety of pupils is a priority and strength of the leadership. They set the tone by leading assemblies both in the primary and in the secondary school. They take a lead in the start and end-of-day arrangements for pupils. In responses to the pupils' questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils showed that they think the school is well run, and this opinion is shared by parents.
- 5.9 A clear leadership structure across the school has been recently established with each leader having a job description and defined role. In the primary school, there are subject co-ordinators and leaders for the different stages of education, while in the secondary school there are heads of department covering all subjects. This structure is ensuring that the pupils benefit from a more carefully planned and delivered curriculum. Communication is good between the staff and the various leadership teams in the primary and secondary schools, as well as at SLT level. All leadership and staff meetings are minuted and the minutes are shared with the staff through the school portal.
- 5.10 The recently formed leadership and management of the EYFS has set a clear agenda for improvement. There is a thorough and challenging plan for the setting, which is part of the whole-school strategic plan. Staff are appraised but supervision of staff is informal and is not recorded. Staff who are not familiar with the EYFS have begun in-house training. There is a full induction programme for the whole school but it does not include training specific to the EYFS. The school has productive partnerships with parents and with external professionals such as speech therapists, so that children receive any support they need.
- 5.11 Work is at a preliminary stage to improve links between the primary and secondary schools to improve the transition of pupils. Work is also starting to align the curriculum across the primary and secondary schools to ensure a smooth transition of learning styles, knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 5.12 Venezuela has many challenges that do not help in the recruitment of quality staff. There has been a large staff turnover during the past four years and there have been frequent changes of head. The head and SLT have worked hard in securing staff for the school and there is now a growing feeling amongst the staff and parents that the school is entering a period of stability.

- 5.13 The leadership team appointed in September has made an excellent start in developing policies and systems to improve the school. Recent initiatives, such as the new staff appraisal system, which involves lesson observation, work scrutiny, self-evaluation and pupil interviews, have helped to support and develop quality staff. Other initiatives, such as the use of a new assessment system, are giving staff detailed data to help increase the pupils' learning. The leadership team have consulted staff on a number of key decisions, such as creating a checklist to judge teaching in formal observations. Staff feel valued and there is trust between them, the head and the SLT.
- 5.14 There has been a range of helpful professional development opportunities this academic year across the entire school, including in-school, online and out-of-school training. Courses covered have included such areas as IB training, safeguarding, early years, dyslexia and technology, all of which are helping the school to raise standards of academic and pastoral care so that the pupils are stimulated by an environment in which the staff are also learning. A particular strength of the school is the sharing of good practice, which is done each month in the primary and secondary schools. A professional development allowance is available to all staff so that they can access training on-line or abroad.
- 5.15 School leadership has been effective in developing procedures for the safeguarding of the pupils. All staff have been trained in their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Thorough procedures for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors have been established and are rigorously followed. A single central register of appointments is maintained, showing that the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers is checked. There are some historical gaps in the records and the school is working hard to ensure that they are filled.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.16 Links with parents are excellent. The school maintains highly constructive relationships with parents. In responses to parental questionnaires, the vast majority of parents indicated they were pleased with the education provided for their children and with the progress they are making. They also appreciated the ease of communication with the school and the school's quick responses to their questions.
- 5.17 Parents are kept well informed about their children's work and progress. Helpful reports are issued three times a year, which give parents a comprehensive indication of their children's progress, achievements and future targets. There are two parents' meetings each year and further meetings can be arranged as necessary. Parents of EYFS children indicated that they would appreciate information on their children's level of achievement, in comparison to age-related expectations, at the end of the EYFS, including sharing their children's EYFS profile results. In interview, parents praised the school's quick response to e-mail, which is the main form of communication. Regular contact with parents is also maintained through 'pupil planners' in the secondary school and notebooks in the primary school.
- 5.18 Parents and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school. An extremely thorough handbook for parents gives details of procedures, policies and many other aspects of the school. The school arranges information for parents' sessions to explain various aspects of the curriculum and assessment across the age ranges. It recently held an information session for parents of primary school pupils on the responsible behaviour programme. Information is available on the school website and on social media

sites. A highly informative weekly bulletin gives details and photographs of events and achievements, such as pictures of the highly successful show 'TBSC's Got Talent', details of educational sessions for parents or photographs of the work of the early years children.

- 5.19 The school has an appropriate complaints policy for parents so that any concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- 5.20 There is an active parent-teacher association, which organises social and fundraising events, such as the Spring Fair and Christmas Bazaar. Recently funds raised have been used to support ICT in the primary school and the building of a new science laboratory in the secondary school. The primary school has a system of class representatives who act as a link between parents and the school. Parents are also encouraged to support the school on trips and visits. The primary aim of the association is to encourage a feeling of community and good will within the school and in interviews it was evident that the parents feel it is highly successful.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Deborah Forbes	Reporting inspector
Mr John Bagust	Junior Team Inspector (Head of School (Prep), COBIS)
Mrs Susan Rix	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head of School (Prep), SHMIS)
Mr Stuart Higgins	Senior Team Inspector (Head, SHMIS/COBIS)