



**British Schools Overseas
School inspection report**

**St. George's School, Malaga
20 – 21 November 2012**

Issue and revision record

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by four inspectors. Two were from Cambridge Education's British Schools Overseas Inspectorate, and Ofsted accredited inspectors, and two were approved inspectors from the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS).

The inspectors visited 49 lessons and held meetings with staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' attainment over the past three years, at schemes of work, policies, the school improvement plan and the school's self-review.

The inspection team:

Brian Oppenheim	Lead inspector, Cambridge Education
Jo Curd	Team inspector, Cambridge Education
Gill Kaye	Team inspector, NABSS
Heather Muntaner	Team inspector, NABSS

Inspectors used the Department for Education standards for the inspection of British schools overseas aligned with the NABSS accreditation criteria. The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's owners on the overall effectiveness of the school and the standard of education. Cambridge Education reports to the Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for British schools overseas as follows:

- the quality of education provided by the school (curriculum, teaching and assessment)
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- the welfare, health and safety of the pupils
- the suitability of the proprietor and staff
- the premises and accommodation
- the provision of information for parents, carers and others
- the school's procedures for handling complaints
- leadership and management of the school.

Information about the school

St. George's School was founded in September 2000. It is an independent, co-educational school for 712 pupils between the ages of three and 18 years. Nearly all pupils are Spanish. They follow courses based on the English National Curriculum and recognised British examinations, in conjunction with required elements of the Spanish curriculum. Pupils study a wide range of subjects from the British curriculum and, in addition, Spanish language and humanities.

The school is authorised by the Andalusian Government to offer a British education to children of all nationalities and is an inspected and approved member of the National Association of British Schools in Spain.

Overall effectiveness

Pupils at St George's School in Malaga receive a good education overall: the provision for pupils' welfare, care and guidance is excellent. The school meets the requirements of the Spanish Ministry of Education; and the emphasis on teaching the National Curriculum for England, and preparing pupils for IGCSE, AS and A level examinations means that they experience an education that is British in character. Many pupils leave to study at UK universities.

Provision for Early Years is good. Staff have had training on the new EYFS framework and are beginning to implement this effectively. Children make good progress with their personal, social, emotional development and with their English. Children's attitudes are very good, they are keen, motivated and happy and develop good relationships with adults and their peers.

Pupils' achievements are good and some are outstanding. As most are native Spanish speakers they start school with only a limited grasp of English. However, they make good progress in developing their English language skills because of the very broad opportunities for learning, and the good routines and relationships. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 also make good progress although it is best in Key Stage 2 where the more able are stretched well. The data at Key Stages 1 and 2 show some wide variations between reading, writing and mathematics but as pupils move up the school these differences disappear: effective teaching overall ensures that all pupils make good progress and some very good. Again, supportive relationships and well-established routines promote a very positive climate for learning.

In Key Stage 3 and 4, pupils make similarly good progress to reach standards that are well above average in their academic studies. The data available suggest that attainment is high by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils' achievements in IGCSE examinations are consistently good with 95% of pupils achieving the highest grades in at least five subjects over the past three years. This is well above the average for all schools in England. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also achieve well because of the high quality of support they receive. Achievement in the sixth form is also above average although the school's self-review judges that the climate for learning in the sixth form is not always as positive as it might be. Teachers feel that students do not always meet the expectations that the school has of them.

Pupils' welfare and the way they are supported and cared for are outstanding. Teachers create a very positive climate for learning in which pupils feel respected. As a result, behaviour is exceptionally good, and pupils have excellent attitudes towards school and their work. They treat the buildings, each other and staff with the utmost respect. Pupils'

high quality personal skills have a strong impact on their achievements: they are keen and eager to learn, to persevere and to do well at school. They enjoy school a great deal and feel safe and well supported.

Teaching and learning are good. This is because most lessons are planned well with clear objectives and work that is varied and engaging. The basic skills of literacy (in both Spanish and English) and numeracy are promoted strongly. The majority of teaching is good or outstanding but there are some inconsistencies across the school which is why teaching is good and not yet outstanding overall. The use of the outdoor area in the Early Years could be improved. In both primary and secondary there are times when teachers talk too much, or expect pupils to copy from the board, which slows progress. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils effectively providing a wide range of academic and extra-curricular experiences.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is supported effectively by the senior leadership team and this provides a strong direction for the school, which is shared by staff. Sometimes roles and responsibilities are not as clear as they could be and lines of accountability become imprecise. There is a strong focus on self-review that ensures that the development plan identifies concise and accurate areas for improvement. For example, the school has pinpointed the need to implement a refined tracking and target-setting programme so that it can check pupils' progress more consistently. There is evidence that this is beginning to have an impact although there is still some way to go to ensure consistency. Senior leaders have a good understanding of what makes teaching effective although the monitoring process does not drive improvement strongly enough. However, the very good social, personal and academic outcomes show that the school has significant capacity to improve further.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

St George's School, Malaga meets the requirements for British schools overseas, as laid down by the UK Department for Education, in full. The school promotes a British education for its pupils well through its teaching, climate, the focus on IGCSE and AS/A Level examinations and links with independent schools in Britain. Many pupils move successfully to British universities when they leave St George's.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Improve teaching further by:
 - ensuring that questioning is used systematically to draw all pupils in the class into the discussion rather than focusing on just those who put their hands up

- encouraging pupils to be independent learners and be involved actively in their learning, for example through greater use of group work and peer assessment
 - using the knowledge of pupils' achievements to set work that challenges all pupils and meets their individual needs.
- Continue to drive the develop leadership and management by:
- developing robust ways to track achievement over time so that the progress of individual pupils can be monitored regularly and well timed interventions made where necessary
 - ensuring that teaching is monitored regularly, with a clear focus on learning and progress, and that feedback to teachers is effective and well focused
 - improving the coherence and consistency of the senior team to avoid overlap of role and responsibility.
- Improve the curriculum further by:
- developing the use of the outdoors in the Early Years
 - monitoring the impact of the new Key Stage 1 reading scheme on pupils' achievements.

The quality of education provided by the school

The curriculum

The good curriculum covers the subjects of the English National Curriculum, and the Spanish requirements, and meets the needs of all pupils effectively. It is planned well so that it is broad and provides a balance of subjects to give pupils a good range of experiences including creative, scientific, technological, linguistic, physical and social knowledge, understanding and skills. In the Early Years the curriculum provides a very wide range of activities for children indoors, although the outdoor curriculum is underdeveloped. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum is generally good ensuring that pupils make good progress with their learning. A new reading scheme has been introduced in Key Stage 1 to tackle the discrepancy between reading and writing standards although it is still too early to see the full impact of this on pupils' achievements.

The curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. It is based around the English National Curriculum and a good range of IGCSE courses and, in addition, Spanish language and humanities. As a result, the curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced "bicultural" education, which prepares them effectively for further study in either system and for the demands of everyday life. There are some imaginative and effective opportunities for learning such as work experience in Year 11.

After school activities in primary and secondary include a range of sports, arts workshops, music, poetry, drama, and science clubs. Individual music tuition is provided through the music school. Visiting writers from the UK enhance further the range of experiences available to pupils, as does the Summer School. For the last two years pupils from Year 9 have had the opportunity to exchange with students from the High School of Dundee.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The majority of the teaching is good or outstanding and, although there is still some that is only satisfactory, it is good overall. As a result, pupils make good progress with their learning. The best teaching and learning is characterised by lessons that are planned carefully to give pupils work that is varied and engaging. High expectations and very good feedback to pupils about their work and how to improve it add significantly to learning. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 literacy lesson, challenging questions, high expectations and immediate feedback to pupils resulted in excellent progress. Similarly, pupils achieved very well in a Year 10 art lesson: high expectations, very good feedback and well-timed interventions by the teacher had a strong impact on pupils' learning and outcomes.

Other characteristics that contribute to effective teaching and learning include strong organisation and activities that allow pupils to acquire new skills and knowledge. This was exemplified in physical education lessons in Years 5 and 9 where the brisk pace ensured that little time was wasted and maintained pupils' motivation very effectively. In many lessons teachers use their strong subject knowledge effectively to make learning interesting and to motivate pupils. This was seen in an effective Year 10 French lesson where the task motivated pupils well. They consolidated their use of the French language effectively and made good progress.

Although teaching is good overall there are some inconsistencies across the school. Where teaching is less effective and only satisfactory it is because teachers talk too much or expect pupils to copy from textbooks or the white board especially in the secondary years. In satisfactory lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, the work is not always suitable for all pupils in the class, particularly those that are more able. The result of these features is that pupils are not stretched as much as they could be and thus make too little progress with their learning.

Assessment is good overall. There are examples of good practice where pupils are given helpful feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work, for example in art in secondary years and literacy in Key Stage 2. Some teachers use peer assessment effectively to encourage pupils to improve their work further. There are also examples of good marking and when asked pupils said that they know the levels at which they are working. Assessment is not outstanding because the school has yet to develop a system to monitor the progress of individual pupils over time.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have extremely positive attitudes to school and to their learning and this is demonstrated by their keenness to do well, their excellent behaviour and the contribution they make to the school. It is very noticeable how polite and courteous they are to others. As they move through the school, pupils gain a strong sense of themselves. They are self-confident, take responsibility for their behaviour and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to the school: for example through supporting charities and pupils say that helping those in need is part of the school's culture.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite, considerate and friendly. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and respond well to the school's behaviour management strategies. The schools' very positive climate for learning has a strong impact on pupils' personal development.

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are promoted very effectively. Staff work together well as a team to provide excellent care and guidance and the school supports pupils well in both their academic progress and personal development. The school psychologist, who acts as the special needs coordinator, is responsible for the screening tests in Years 1, 4 and 7. These are used to identify pupils with learning needs including those who may be gifted and talented. High quality guidance is given to assist pupils in making appropriate choices for university courses and complete UCAS forms, including personal statements, and careers advice is good.

The school's very positive climate for learning contributes significantly to pupils' achievement. Attendance and punctuality are good. When asked pupils said that there was a little bullying but that they were confident it would be dealt with effectively. Pupils said that if they had a particular problem they would be happy to talk to any teacher. Pupils in Key Stage 2 told inspectors, "This is the best school in the world" and that "teachers are good and kind".

There is a full range of policies and strategies that help to ensure pupils' safety, progress and happiness. Appropriate regulatory systems and processes are well established and health and safety procedures meet local requirements including those for fire safety.

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor ensures that all teaching, supply and other members of staff are subject to all the required local or UK checks for suitability to work with children. Where appropriate, the UK's CRB enhanced disclosure is used to check the suitability of teaching staff.

Records are recorded properly and stored securely. Procedures meet the requirements for British schools overseas.

The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation support the curriculum effectively and are safe and suitable for the number of pupils: this contributes well to pupils' achievements. There is suitably specialist accommodation for the teaching of science, art, and ICT and a sufficient range of resources available for teaching. Displays in classrooms and corridors are good. The accommodation is very well maintained and pupils show care for the building and its environs. Overall, the premises and accommodation have a strong impact on pupils' learning and on the school's ethos. Local regulations are met in full.

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is good. There is some useful information in the school's website and a booklet which describes explicitly school policies, the curriculum and school life. Reports about pupils' achievements and progress are provided regularly and parents receive newsletters and information about events. The provision of information meets the requirements for British schools overseas.

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements for British schools overseas for handling complaints.

Leadership and management of the school

The school is well led and skilfully managed. The headteacher provides clear strategic leadership and in the 12 years the school has been open it has made good progress to provide an effective education for its pupils. Senior staff have developed their roles very successfully to become stronger leaders and there is a shared commitment to continuous improvement. Sometimes the focus on individual roles and responsibilities means that there is not enough time for leaders to work together or ensure that all tasks are covered. For example, the time given to Early Years and Key Stage 1 has been uneven. However, the strong focus on self-review, the accurate identification of priorities for improvement and the concise development plan ensures that leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of what makes teaching effective and teachers report that opportunities for professional development are good and linked to the development plan. There is a programme of lesson observations but this is not always systematic and the feedback given to teachers is not always robust enough to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Sometimes, too much emphasis is placed on teaching rather than learning.

Other staff with leadership responsibilities also support the school's aims and vision well. All staff are unwavering in their commitment to the drive to move the school forward and this is illustrated by the very small number of teachers leaving and joining the school each year.

The school uses data appropriately to understand overall trends, identify pupils who need additional support and to set achievement targets. For example, AS/A Level predictions are based on IGCSE results. However, the school recognises the need to improve its use of data further, particularly in understanding progress over time. As a result, it has taken the decision to use an external organisation to analyse its data and help teachers understand the value that teaching adds to pupils' learning. Being clear about pupils' starting points will be an important part of this work so that teachers can track progress term by term.

Glossary of terms

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

Inspection judgements

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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Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent, day		
Type of school	All through, 3 – 18 years		
Date school opened	2000		
Age range of pupils	3 - 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 360	Girls: 352	Total: 712
Annual fees (day pupils)			
Address of school	Avda Centaurea, nº 8 (Urb.Cerrado de Calderón) 29018 - Málaga		
Telephone number	952 290 149		
Fax number	952 200 903		
Email address	admin.malaga@stgeorge.es		
Headteacher	James Shalcross, MBE		
Proprietor	St. George's Schools Group.		