

Children's International School, Lagos, Nigeria

ISQM Accreditation Report

October 19th-22nd 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 CfBT accreditation

The purpose of accreditation is to bring about school improvement. Although accredited status is often perceived as an end in itself, the process is underpinned by the principle that the school self-evaluation activities in which schools engage, are of equal importance. In this sense, accreditation serves two goals:

- To provide a means by which parents and students are assured that the school has been judged by independent evaluators to meet rigorous quality standards;
- To support the school's development through moderation of its own self-evaluation.

The school improvement plan is crucial in ensuring ongoing development. The accreditation provides recommendations for the school, which should be incorporated into the school improvement plan.

Principles underpinning the CfBT accreditation model

- Accreditation criteria are rooted in high standards; they relate to international standards and benchmarks, and to other inspection regimes (for example, Ofsted (England) and, in the case of Thailand, ONESQA from the Thai ministry)
- It is a cost effective means of providing quality assurance
- The model is developmental – it is grounded in self-evaluation with the school providing an evaluation of its own performance.

Grades awarded

Judgements are made on a four-point scale as:

Grade 1: Outstanding

Grade 2: Good

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Accreditation status

Gold accredited status is awarded when the school is given Grade 1 meaning **Outstanding judgements in all** of the following sections:

Standards and achievement

Teaching and learning

Leadership and management

Silver accredited status is awarded when the school is given at least Grade 2 or higher meaning **Good judgements or higher in all** of the following sections:

Standards and achievement

Teaching and learning

Leadership and management

Bronze accredited status is awarded when the school is given at least Grade 3 or higher meaning **Satisfactory judgements or higher in all** of the following sections:

Standards and achievement

Teaching and learning

Leadership and management

Evidence base

Introduction

This ISQM verification inspection was conducted by a team of four CfBT Education Trust inspectors. Over four days, the team visited 60 lessons and undertook two extended learning walks; four of these observations were jointly conducted by school leaders and inspectors. Inspectors held 36 meetings to interview staff, students, parents, and advisory board members. The team scrutinised students' work and school documents including the self-review document which reflected the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans, policies, assessment systems, and safeguarding procedures. They generally observed the school at work and followed up on any issues raised.

Team Members

Lead Inspector	Sally Lane
Team Inspector	Jim Alexander
Team Inspector	Paul James
Team Inspector	Kaushi Silva

2. School context

Children's International School (CIS) opened in September 2003 (Primary) and 2007 (Secondary). The school relocated to one self-owned permanent site in September 2013. It is situated at Plot 8 FunkeZainab, Usman Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Currently there are 572 students on roll aged between two and 16 years. Numbers fluctuate substantially due to the transient nature of families; hence few students spend their entire school career at CIS. The number of children in the early years is 74. There are 386 students in the primary phases of the school and 112 in the secondary phases, of whom only 33 are in Key Stage 4.

CIS is an international school with around 35 different nationalities, but the large majority of students are Nigerian. Eight per cent of students speak English as an additional language, however there are a large percentage of students who speak English fluently but also speak another language. The school currently makes special provision for 35 students who are identified as having special educational needs.

CIS is a privately owned, non selective, co-educational, English-speaking British international day school. Its mission is 'to provide a high-quality value added education using the English National Curriculum in a flexible, creative and challenging way matching the pupils' needs and abilities.'

The school follows the National Curriculum for England and the Nigerian Ministry of Education curriculum for African Studies. Children in the early years follow the National Curriculum Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). At the end of the secondary stage, students sit a range of International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations. A broad range of enrichment activities are incorporated into the curriculum.

Report summary

Accreditation status

Children's International School is recognised as having met the required standards for accreditation.

This report recommends to the CfBT Education Trust Accrediting Board that the school should be awarded the ISQM at **Silver level** which reflects the good judgements described within this report.

This accreditation is valid from **22 October 2015 to 22 October 2018**.

Overview of main strengths and areas for development

Report headlines

- School leaders at all levels have a clear sense of vision and purpose and the inclusive ethos is evident throughout the school staff, students and parents. It is what makes CIS the unique school it is.
- Due to the good progress students make, they are helped to reach high levels of attainment.
- As a result of the exceptionally well embedded foundation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within the broad, rich curriculum, students are helped to mature into reflective and caring young people.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- The highly committed staff foster good relationships of trust and security with students.
- The outstanding range of extracurricular activities that cater for the full range of students' interests.
- Parents appreciate the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, created through regular communication, which leads to a shared commitment to improve students' learning.
- The high-quality new buildings have been very effective in bringing together the whole school community.
- The headteacher's leadership, supported by other leaders within the school, have brought about improvements over time with plans to improve further.

Recommended areas for development

1. Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing robust systems to monitor and analyse students' progress and attainment from different starting points, in order to drive forward further improvements in the quality of teaching
 - using more effective initial skills' assessments in early years
 - improving expectations for the quality of presentation in books, including handwriting
 - addressing the weakness in attendance.

2. Increase consistency in the quality of teaching and learning so that teaching is more frequently judged to be outstanding by ensuring:
 - the information gained from assessing students' progress is used consistently to inform effective lesson planning to meet the needs of students of all abilities
 - the best practice that exists within the school is shared more widely
 - marking and feedback in books are consistent with the school's marking policy

- science lessons reflect scientific methodology, especially in primary and early years.

Standard 1: The standards reached by students in their work and the progress they make in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT

Highlights and recommendations

- Attainment of children in English and mathematics, at the end of the early years that exceeds international expectations.
- The quality of the activities planned to meet the requirements of the early years curriculum, including regular and free flow access to outdoor play areas and the good progress made by the children in their personal and social development.
- The lack of initial assessment information on entry to early years, except in English and mathematics, makes it difficult to identify the starting levels of attainment for all children and provide clarity regarding in which areas the children need greatest support.
- Attainment in English is above average and progress is good overall and above UK benchmarks at all key stages.
- The quality and variety of reading material provided to engage and encourage students to read for pleasure and for meaning.
- An increased emphasis on developing students' writing skills across the school is having a positive impact on their learning but the lack of a consistent approach to handwriting across the school routinely leads to poor presentation of students' work in their books.
- At all key stages, standards in mathematics are above UK averages and progress is at least good and some is outstanding.
- Students are able to use and apply what they know and understand of number skills in a range of investigational tasks.
- Students have little opportunity, particularly in early years and the primary phase, to use investigative skills in science.
- While provision for students identified with special educational needs is improving, some students are still not always given the right support or correctly levelled work, which continues to slow the progress they make in lessons.
- Most students make good progress in ICT so that, by the time they reach the end of their course, they achieve results in line with predictions or better.
- Students in the primary phase have opportunities to use ICT in the classroom, but only at a relatively basic level. The school does not yet have programming software to be able to effectively teach this aspect of the ICT curriculum.

The attainment of children on entry to the early years varies, as children come from a wide variety of settings. Currently, it is difficult for the school to ensure that they build on children's prior knowledge in a systematic way. This is because initial assessments are not rigorous, particularly in areas of learning other than English and

mathematics. Throughout the early years, staff keep accurate records of children's individual achievements and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all are working above expectations in mathematics and many are working well above expected levels in English. Attainment in science and ICT is average and progress is satisfactory.

Nursery-age children's speaking and listening skills develop well and almost all are able to engage in a conversation about their work. Most are able to hold a pencil correctly and are beginning to form letters accurately.

By the end of the early years, most children can write their names independently, spell simple three-letter words and some are able to create short sentences. In mathematics, most children can read and write numbers to 20 and can name simple shapes. Many are also able to use numbers and match them to a range of objects. In early years, the focus in science is on literacy, for example children identify and name fruits and animals, rather than asking questions about them, which would lead to scientific enquiry. There is limited use of technology to support the different areas of learning, but when they do use it, their understanding is in line with expectations.

Across the early years, children make good progress in their personal and social development through the opportunities to make choices about how they spend their time. Many are able to initiate imaginative role-play situations without adult support. In one class, a group of children set up a hairdressing salon independently and spent a long time designing the best hairstyle for their party. As they move through the early years, children's confidence in themselves, their decisions and their ability to make and support their friends, increases.

The curriculum, based upon the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a range of activities and opportunities for all children. Outdoor play spaces are used well and provide children with varied opportunities to develop their gross motor skills. The range of tasks planned enables children to create an awareness of the world around them.

When children start the early years, teachers make an accurate assessment of their starting points in English, which are above those typical for their age. By the end of the early years, most children's attainment in English is well above expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, all students achieve at expected levels and a few achieve above expectation in reading skills. By the end of Key Stage 2, a good proportion of students achieve well above expected levels. In I/GCSE examinations, students' performance is above UK national averages. Most students make good progress across all key stages but there are variations between classes due to the disparities in the quality of teaching.

Across the school, students' speaking and listening skills are well developed through opportunities to lead classroom activities, speak in assemblies and make presentations. For example, in one less able Year 6 group, students were able to confidently challenge others' views about the plot of a story using reasoned arguments.

Students' fluency and confidence in reading grow exponentially as they move through the school. They are well supported in the selection of age appropriate books, in a range of genres, which further motivates them to read for pleasure. A few face challenges in developing a deeper understanding of the author's perspective. There are early signs that the newly introduced e-learning package for reading for meaning is supporting students' comprehension skills.

There has been a great emphasis placed on grammar, punctuation and spelling patterns. By the end of Year 2, students are able to use capital letters and full stops accurately. The additional focus of personal and extended writing at Key Stage 2 and on developing students' understanding of poetic structures and figurative language in Key Stage 4, are having a positive impact on their attainment in writing. The quality of students' handwriting is inconsistent due to the lack of handwriting practice and is not supported by the lack of clarity and expectation about presentation, handwriting styles and writing tools the school expects students to use.

When children start the early years, their number skills can vary quite considerably. Staff make accurate assessments of their individual starting points and children are helped to settle quickly, soon making good progress. As a result, their attainment at the end of Reception is well above that expected for their age and they are well prepared to start Year 1.

Students continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1, developing their mathematical skills. They are able to use and apply these skills in a range of problem-solving tasks and activities. As a result, the proportion of students who reach standards that are above those expected for their age is higher than average. This good progress continues through Key Stage 2 so that, by the age of 11, the very large majority of students achieve age-related expectations in mathematics and a large proportion do even better. By the time students leave the CIS, they attain well above the UK average in mathematics. In 2015, all students achieved A* to B in mathematics I/GCSE, representing good progress from their individual starting points.

The school's recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) ensures the students identified as have special education needs are receiving the right support and work that is increasingly challenging. This helps these students make increasingly good progress from their individual starting points, although some variation remains. School leaders have reorganised the way mathematics is taught to students in Key Stage 2. This helps the most able students to receive bespoke lessons, which better meet their needs.

In response to below average attainment and less than expected progress in science by the end of Key Stage 2, there is a need for students in the primary classes to acquire skills of scientific enquiry. Year 1 students can name and describe amphibians. In Year 2, students make simple predictions about animals and plants and begin to explore the stages of enquiry. Through Key Stage 2, the focus is on students acquiring knowledge by recall rather than developing enquiry skills. This limits their attainment and progress by the end of the key stage.

Year 3 students have acquired facts about skeletal bones, identifying bones as 'flat', 'long' or 'short' rather than asking and answering big questions such as, 'Are all bones the same?' Year 4 students construct food chains, again by recall, even using scientific terms such as 'producers', 'herbivores' and 'detritivores', but with no analysis or critical thinking. Year 5 students name the planets, recalling facts from research and Year 6 students apply analysis and critical thinking through devising mythical animals, adapted to hostile environments. These disparate skills of scientific enquiry are not systematically applied, leading to a noticeable anomaly in science attainment and progress alongside other core subjects.

Key Stage 3 students engage imaginatively in ways to support their knowledge, but the focus, even in Years 8 and 9, remains on assisting recall for examination success, rather than ensuring facts are retained by hypothesising, discovery and experimentation. In this way, Year 7 students describe characteristics of states of matter and Year 8 students illustrate the effects of conduction through matter. Acknowledging I/GCSE is traditionally focused on knowledge, students in Years 10 and 11 apply some enquiry skills to real situations such as why road tankers carrying flammable substances need to be earthed. However, they should be posing the questions, rather than just applying what they know.

Students' attainment in ICT is at expected levels and progress is good. Students are competent in using technology and use it as an essential tool for learning, particularly in Key Stage 2 where development of ICT skills is embedded in the curriculum. In Key Stage 1, students have discrete lessons with a specialist teacher where they are introduced to basic typing keys. They learn different techniques to create and edit documents. Programming has not yet been added to the Primary curriculum. Year 1 students are able to log on relatively quickly and, with instruction from the teacher, create name labels with different colours and fonts. In Key Stage 2, students use technology in the classroom, using their own laptops. They use different ICT applications in all aspects of their work, but this is not necessarily developed in a systematic way.

In the secondary phase, students once again have discrete lessons, using a project-based learning approach. This allows students to work at their own pace, independently, and receive online feedback with suggestions for improvement. In Year 8, students confidently discuss internet safety, particularly regarding phishing and pharming. They can explain the difference between the two and research ways to avoid this happening. Students' attainment in IGCSE ICT examinations is similar to students in the UK. They achieve results that are in line with expectations and a few achieve beyond expectations.

Students use a virtual learning platform which allows them to submit work online and access teachers' resources. This is helpful in allowing students to work independently. Across the school, students use an online assessment tool, for homework tasks in mathematics, allowing the teacher to check individual progress, the levels they are achieving and where they are struggling, in order to intervene appropriately to ensure rapid progress. Primary and Secondary students use an e-learning package for reading for meaning. They use this programme with ease, and

evaluation shows this is having a positive impact on improving their literacy comprehension skills.

As well as achieving success in the core subjects of the curriculum, students' attainment in other subjects is above average and progress is also good. Almost all subjects have very small numbers of students taking examinations at I/GCSE, making trends and any statistical comparison unreliable. In the primary phase, students are taught many non-core subjects by specialist teachers, where they make good progress and are well prepared for transition to the secondary phase.

Standard 2: Students' personal development

Highlights and recommendations

- The school is highly inclusive. There is a strong sense of multiculturalism and students have significant awareness of social issues due to their outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- Student/teacher relationships and communication between school and parents are particular strengths.
- Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary and students have a very positive attitude to learning.
- Attendance is an issue that must be addressed by the school with the support of parents.

Students' personal development is exceptionally good. However, their attendance is an issue to be addressed jointly with parents. It is clear that attendance and punctuality difficulties are not a reflection of the students' attitudes to learning, but rather external factors. Lagos traffic and rainstorms impact on punctuality. The school makes first day calls and sends e-mails to parents to check that absent students are safe and well, but it is not yet successful in raising awareness of the negative impact on learning of students' extended absence for family events.

There is no disruptive behaviour in or out of the classroom. As a result of students' strong personal development and the anti-bullying policy, students report that there is virtually no bullying and even low-level bullying is dealt with swiftly. New students at all ages have a buddy, enabling them to integrate swiftly. There is a strong sense of multiculturalism. Students also have extensive understanding of various religions, values and beliefs. All students participate enthusiastically in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities after school.

The school proactively develops students' emotional intelligence through an holistic approach. Twelve emotional themes are interwoven with the English National Curriculum topics in the primary phase and are reflected in Life Skills and Learning for Life lessons, and the Student Leadership Programme in both the primary and secondary phases. Students describe anyone who behaves unpleasantly towards others as 'someone who did not make a choice in line with our school's values'.

Primary students hold class meetings each week to discuss successes and areas for improvement. Individuals place entries in the 'Oops, I made a poor choice' book and they post their personal reflections on classroom noticeboards, ensuring early on that students distinguish right from wrong. These procedures lead to the development of self-knowledge, self-awareness and build self-esteem.

Students keenly adopt many leadership roles, ranging from the 'fruit checker' in primary classes to primary and secondary phase prefects. One Voice, the student council, has membership from Year 3 to Year 11. These democratically elected representatives not only speak for the students but also lead innovations and initiatives. Several fundraising events are held, including Crazy Socks Day, all initiated by One Voice. Recently, with the VOLT (Volunteers) Club, student council members visited three local orphanages. Students describe their experiences as 'harrowing but humbling'.

Standard 3: Teaching and learning

Highlights and recommendations

- Teachers develop positive relationships within their classes.
- In lessons, students want to achieve well, they are supportive of their peers and encourage one another to try their best. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful learning environments.
- Teachers encourage students across the school to develop a good ability to verbalise what they understand and where they find difficulties. This helps adults to offer the right help at the right time, helping students make increasingly good progress in lessons. This is a particularly strong feature in mathematics lessons.
- Primary students are regularly taught in ability groups; this helps teachers plan work that best meets students' needs and abilities.
- Share best teaching and learning practice which is clearly evident across the school to further improve consistency in the quality of teaching so that all students make at least good progress in every lesson.
- Make sure the quality of guidance and feedback in students' books is consistent with the school's marking policy, including for the quality of presentation and handwriting.
- Make sure that teachers are provided with increasingly robust information about the attainment and progress of the different groups of students in their class so they can plan accordingly.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good. Class sizes are small and teachers know their students well. This helps them to use what they know of students' abilities and interests to plan relevant work. However, very small numbers in some I/GCSE groups inhibit collaborative learning. Students have also been helped to develop very positive attitudes to their work, which makes a significant contribution to the good progress they make in lessons and over time.

Students have been encouraged to explain what they know and understand and also what they find difficult in their work. This helps teachers, particularly in mathematics, to provide guidance at the right level to help students move ahead quickly with their learning. Many teachers are skilled at using ongoing assessment throughout lessons; they know when to step in and support students and when to step back and allow them to work things out for themselves. This helps to foster students' resilience to press on 'even when learning gets tough'.

The marking of students' work and the feedback given are not consistent across the school. However, most teachers respond positively to the training they receive. Systems to track students' progress and measure their attainment are currently being reviewed in line with the new National Curriculum requirements. Teachers are using this assessment information increasingly well to plan work that meets students' interests and needs, although some inconsistency remains. At the start of this academic year, school leaders also rightly identified that the deployment and effectiveness of support staff could be even better. The school has now reviewed the way in which learning support assistants are deployed in classes and many now make a significant contribution to the good progress students make in lessons. Teachers make sure that classrooms are neat, tidy and well organised to support effective learning.

In 2014, leaders identified that while the quality of teaching in the early years was satisfactory, it was not good. This was because expectations of what children could achieve in some lessons were not high enough and the use of learning support assistants was not consistently good in every class. Leaders and staff have taken effective strides to improve provision and outcomes for children, which are now good, although some variation remains.

Teachers have a good understanding of the range of abilities within their classes. The support provided for disabled students or those who have special educational needs has improved further this year. Teachers are providing for a small minority of students who speak English as an additional language increasingly well through, for example, the support of an experienced English as an additional language (EAL) teacher. Teachers are now focusing their attention on helping the most able students to make the best possible progress. The recent initiative to group students in Key Stage 2 according to their ability in English and mathematics is already having positive results.

Standard 4: The curriculum

Highlights and recommendations

- The curriculum fosters students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.

- Students have the opportunity to extend their learning by taking part in a wide range of educational visits, for example, by joining the many cultural overseas visits.
- Students are also offered an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities.
- The curriculum enables students to be well prepared to transfer to other international schools or into the education system in the United Kingdom.
- Make sure that improvements to provision for disabled students or those who have special educational needs are having the desired impact in raising standards and accelerating progress further still.
- Further embed the work to challenge the most able students to make the best possible progress.

The good curriculum meets well the needs of students of all ages. The curriculum the school follows is the National Curriculum for England. The school's curriculum policy and provision are well planned and students benefit from a wide variety of subjects: for example, African Studies are taught across all Primary year groups. In the early years, children are provided with an increasingly good curriculum, which allows them, for example, to choose whether to work inside or outdoors.

The primary phase curriculum is good and built around 12 themes over a two-year cycle. These themes include, for example, inclusiveness, empathy, freedom and leadership. Effective promotion of these values helps students to develop into caring and respectful young people. The school facilitates the provision of laptops for students and these are used to support homework activities and opportunities to read online books for enjoyment at home. In the secondary phase, students build upon their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and mature into hardworking and caring individuals. This encourages them to develop very positive attitudes to learning, helping them to make good progress as they move through the secondary phase.

The primary phase provides a planned programme of personal, social and health education taught by class teachers and in assemblies. In the secondary phase, students are encouraged to consider a range of issues including, for example, cultural values, leadership and ethics. This year, leaders rightly identified that the most able students needed more challenging work to help them achieve their full potential. As a result, leaders are developing a new way of working, which is designed to help students move ahead more quickly. While this at an early stage of implementation, the benefits are already obvious.

Partnership with the Association of International School Educators in Nigeria enables the school to provide, for example, sporting events, debates and art competitions. The school also encourages a large number of students to take part in an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The list includes art, music, sporting and academic pursuits. Students do particularly well at swimming and have just achieved very well in a swimming gala. A small

number of students also have the opportunity to work towards gaining the Duke of Edinburgh Award; this year students visited Derbyshire, England as part of that qualification. The recently appointed SENCO has wasted no time in understanding what is working well with provision for students who have special educational needs and what could be even better.

Standard 5: The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources

Highlights and recommendations

- The high quality new buildings have been very effective in bringing together the whole school community.
- Highly efficient and robust systems ensure the security of students and their families as well as the staff.
- High quality resources support all areas of the curriculum.
- Staff are well qualified and demonstrate great commitment to their professional development.

The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources are good. The buildings are spacious, well maintained and provide a wide range of specialist rooms to promote students' learning in all areas of the curriculum. Well-equipped learning areas enable children in the early years to make active choices about in which area of learning they want to participate. This helps to promote their decision making, as well as their gross and fine motor skills.

The school has appointed several, highly qualified, dedicated teachers, learning assistants and support staff. They work together to plan effective lessons and appropriate interventions, and have a positive impact on students' learning. Newly appointed English as an additional language support teachers and assistants are beginning to identify and support the complex needs of students who speak English as an additional language. Recruitment of qualified staff has been a key priority for the school and it has been effective in retaining many well-qualified teachers who are committed to school improvement.

A highly trained team of security staff patrol the school several times a day to ensure the safety of all students and staff at all times. Evacuation procedures are robust and well rehearsed to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency situation.

Resources are varied, plentiful and of high quality. All classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards and there is a range of e-learning packages and learning resources made available to improve students' learning. There are two well-stocked libraries that provide fiction and non-fiction material to engage students in reading and research. Displays in communal areas of the school provide examples of students' high quality work and celebrate significant achievements by students.

Standard 6: How well the school cares for and supports its students

Highlights and recommendations

- Child safeguarding procedures are particularly robust.
- Designated staff support students and their parents to ensure they are safe in school and at home.
- Students have very good relationships with staff and all have someone to turn to.
- All health and safety policies are in place.
- Attendance is an issue, but first day calls to parents are followed by e-mail contact to confirm that absent students are safe.

Measures to care for and support students are good. Students feel part of a secure, inclusive community. Each new student has a buddy to ensure their integration.

Child safeguarding procedures are robust in practice. The designated staff support students and their parents to ensure they are safe in school and at home. Students report that they have very good relationships with staff and all have someone to turn to. Designated safeguarding leaders are available, with the nurse, to support students' counselling or other emotional needs. Attendance is an issue, but first day calls to parents are followed by e-mail contact to confirm that absent students are safe. Teachers and designated safeguarding leaders undertake regular training and the school has invested in an online provision to maintain this awareness.

Adult supervision during breaks is extensive and prefects monitor students' movements in both phases of the school. Leadership roles are a strength of the school. One Voice, the student council, ensures that students' views are valued and acted upon.

The qualified nurse provides medical care for students, and supports their parents. She maintains robust records of existing conditions, contact details, interventions and incidents, which are shared with relevant staff. Personal medication is overseen or administered by the nurse according to the students' age. The school has clear agreement with parents for emergency transfer to a preferred clinic. The nurse provides first aid, along with many other trained members of staff.

The catering provision is adequate. Healthier options are constantly under review, in response to input from parental questionnaires and students themselves. Appropriate food hygiene certificates have been gained and caterers are subject to regular medical checks.

All health and safety policies are in place. Chemicals, hazardous substances and electrical items are held securely. Play equipment is surrounded by soft landing areas and its condition is checked regularly. Logs are kept, including pool safety, fire equipment checks and evacuation drills. An electrician responds to issues of concern about circuitry or devices.

Security is maintained by a full-time contracted team who challenge and screen parents as well as visitors. The system ensures that students are released only to the correct person whether parent, driver or nanny. Security is enhanced by a lock down policy in the event of an intruder on the premises. Students are fully aware of their responsibility within this procedure. Comprehensive risk assessments for excursions are in place. School transport is well maintained and logged, and drivers are subject to regular checks and three-yearly licence renewal.

7.0 The school's partnership with parents and the community

Highlights and recommendations

- The atmosphere of mutual trust and respect created through regular communication, which leads to a shared commitment to improving students' learning.
- The high quality written reports which share essential information about every student's attainment, effort and attitudes to learning, but some do not reflect targets for improvement.

The school's partnership with the parents and the local community is good. The school has developed effective systems for keeping parents informed about all aspects of its work. The senior leadership team ensures that parents have up-to-date, accurate and timely information, including information about the overall attainment of Key Stage 4 students.

There are regular opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's academic progress: termly face-to-face meetings, online discussions and via the homework diary. A new initiative, the Open Classroom meeting, encourages students to take their parent on a planned journey through their work before they meet with the teacher to discuss their attainment and progress. This allows students the opportunity to take a leadership role in the partnership between home and school. Many reports provide clear targets and guidance about how students can improve their work. In some cases, this information is not sufficiently detailed to enable parents to support their child's learning at home.

Parents have regular opportunities to contribute to records of their children's achievements through the newly developed learning journals in early years classes which celebrate 'wow' moments of significant achievement noticed by

teachers and parents. These are displayed publically to celebrate children's achievements.

The school has met with parents or surveyed them on their views on a number of different issues, including the school canteen and the use of the virtual learning platform. In all cases, parents' views are taken on board and provision adapted as a result of these findings. During discussion with inspectors, parents commented that they felt supported by the senior leadership team of the school and reported that any concerns they had shared with the school had been dealt with efficiently and with care and sensitivity. The newly formed Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is aiming to build closer partnership between parents and the school's senior leaders and managers so that the views of both parties can jointly support students' learning and personal development, including appropriate work experience undertaken by Year 10 and the use of school facilities by parents – The CIS Parents Club.

The school's links with the community are well developed and help to enhance students' understanding of the world in which they live. There are many opportunities for students to learn about the multicultural and multi-faith world in which they live. Parents are also involved in sharing their skills with children in the school: as classroom readers and providing careers' guidance with students as part of the newly arranged Speaker Series of talks for students in Key Stages 3 and 4.

Standard 8: Leadership and management

Highlights and recommendations

- School leaders at all levels have a clear sense of vision and purpose and the inclusive ethos is evident throughout the school staff, students and parents. It is what makes CIS the unique school it is.
- The advisory board plays an important role in supporting and challenging the owner and senior academic staff in developing and improving the school.
- The leadership's determination to promote high quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school, both within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities.
- The focus on distributed leadership development indicates a good capacity to improve further.
- Self-evaluation is robust and the school improvement plan is appropriate in ensuring continual improvement.
- School day-to-day routines are well established and there is a settled, ordered environment.
- The school is successful in recruiting and retaining good quality staff.
- Financial, legal & safeguarding regulations are fully met.
- Ensure the best practice that is evident across the school is shared more widely to improve consistency across all areas of the curriculum and phases and to address the small minority of teaching, which is not yet good enough.

- Ensure the information gained from assessing students' progress from their starting points is understood, and used more consistently in lessons to improve further the quality of teaching.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is highly effective in giving the school its purposeful direction, ensuring it maintains its clear vision and inclusive ethos. This excellent ethos permeates all aspects of the school from the advisory board right through to parents and students, who, as a result, are helped to mature into caring and reflective young people with excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Senior leaders work well together, and leadership is good at almost all levels in the school because all are committed to improvement. Senior leaders have high expectations and set the tone for all to follow; they ensure responsibility is effectively devolved so that all play their part in creating an environment where students are happy and learn well. Indeed, all staff and students are exceptionally respectful and greeted inspectors with enthusiasm and confidence. The leadership and management of the early years are at an early stage of development; new initiatives have been successfully introduced recently, but these have yet to show sustained impact on children's learning.

Self-evaluation is robust. All staff are involved in reviewing aspects of the school's performance and initiatives and are able to contribute their ideas and suggestions for improvement and change. One such example is when the school moved away from National Curriculum levels in line with the UK and developed its own points-based system. However, after a period of time, the leadership realised this was not sufficiently accurate and was too cumbersome, so decided to move back to using 'levels' which parents clearly understood. While transition to the next phase is much improved as a result of new initiatives, the tracking of progress across the school to provide information about, for example, trends across different groups of students, is in its infancy. Middle leaders are not yet fully held to account for ensuring their teams understand and use assessment data consistently in lesson planning to meet the needs of all groups of students.

The cycle for reviewing the performance of teachers is fully in place, with regular reviews and evaluation of the targets set. Support through mentoring, peer observation and professional development is useful in improving the performance of some teachers. However, the good practice that exists within the school's teaching team is not yet shared more widely to establish consistent practices across subjects and key stages. Teachers appreciate the opportunities to carry out professional development in the UK and elsewhere to improve their practice. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining staff. A majority of staff with key responsibilities have taught in UK schools and can confidently teach the National Curriculum for England, I/GCSE and BTEC.

The advisory board is good. The team of professionals picked by the owner to support her in an advisory role know the school well, provide good support and are successful in holding the senior leadership team to account. Members of the

board work closely with the senior team to meet challenges and bring about improvement. Clear financial management underpins the school's development.

School leaders, at all levels, are excellent role models for students. The headteacher, in particular, has a strong presence around the school and is always available at the start of the day to welcome students to school. Students readily converse with adults in a mature and confident way, and they clearly enjoy their school experience. School routines and the day-to-day running of school are calm and purposeful, so learning can take place in an ordered environment where students feel safe. Security arrangements are very strong and safeguarding vigilant.



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