



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection Report**

# **International Rural School, Barcelona**

## **Spain**

Date 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
Inspection number 20210610

10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

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## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, all teachers were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the senior staff, the management teams, a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils.

The lead inspector, present at the school, was Ciaran Cunningham. The team member was Dr Mark Evans (working remotely).

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## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The International Rural School, Barcelona, Spain (IRS) meets the standards for British Schools Overseas.

## 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

### 3.1 What the school does well

IRS has many strengths, including:

- An inspirational team of Headteacher/proprietor and Promoter;
- Caring and supportive family ethos;
- Stimulating learning environment;
- Dedicated and conscientious members of staff;
- Individualised teaching and learning and support;
- Progress in English language acquisition and usage throughout the school;
- Resourceful use of local facilities and support agencies.

### 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Expanding HR registers to record and monitor staff professional learning, training and evaluations;
- ii. Design and implement a formal whole school pastoral programme;
- iii. Further develop use of student academic data to include analysis of subjects and school stages and use it to monitor individual, group and whole school progress and achievements.

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### 3.3 Recommendation(s)

1. For IRS to admit students to enter the Sixth Form for Year 12 and Year 13 for the commencement of A level education.
2. Authorisation to increase the number of students on roll to 100.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school	International Rural School				
Address	Disseminat 13 Can Ribó 08450 Llinars del Vallès				
Telephone Number/s	+34 607 924 572				
Website Address	www.internationalruralschool.com				
Key Email Address/s	internationalruralschool@gmail.com				
Headteacher/Principal	Maria Bellmunt Borràs				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Maria Bellmunt Borràs				
Age Range	3-16 years				
Total number of students	51	Boys	23	Girls	28
Numbers by age	0-2 years		0	12-16 years	
	3-5 years		7	17-18 years	
	6-11 years		28	18+ years	
Total number of part-time children	0				

The number of students enrolled at the school has increased from 34 students in 2018 to 51 at the time of this inspection. The purpose of this inspection is to assess an increase in the school's provision to include post 16 students into Years 12 and 13, from September 2021.

The International Rural School (IRS) was founded in 2017 in the town of Llinars del Vallès, Barcelona. The school moved to new premises on the outskirts of the town before the start of the 2020/21 academic year. The new school is on the site of an old

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private family residence. The main building is 600m<sup>2</sup> and the surrounding land is 15,000m<sup>2</sup>.

Following assessment, the Inspector for Cambridge Education has granted authorisation to teach Cambridge International syllabuses and to conduct their examinations. IRS is authorised to offer the following qualifications: Cambridge Lower Secondary with Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint; Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE); Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level (AS/A Level).

The school promotes the acquisition of skills and competencies in subjects across the full English National Curriculum. Music is a core link throughout education at IRS. The Headteacher's philosophy is that the theoretical and practical study of music forms a foundation for other subjects to follow; the school's curriculum follows a style of structured theoretical learning and routine practice.

Learning takes place in a range of different environments: in the classrooms, around the school campus and within regularly scheduled use of the facilities in the nearby town. IRS encourages children to learn through a variety of experiences and environments.

## Requirement 1: Child protection, health and welfare

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and the overall welfare, health and safety of the children at IRS is a strength. Students and staff at IRS are safe and happy and refer to the close family ethos of the school. The permeating culture and values of IRS is clearly evident and pupils can confidently explain the positive effect that this has on their learning and development. The Headteacher is inspirational in her vision for the school and the care she takes in leading all members of the school community.

The Headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and is effective in this role. It is clear to students, staff and parents how to voice concerns and how child protection procedures would work if there was an issue. All members of staff have appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks or equivalent. Records of staff qualifications and training are kept and updated regularly, including first aid trained staff lists.

The building is secure, providing a safe environment for pupils and staff. The school is surrounded by secure fencing and access through the main gate is controlled appropriately. The outdoor space is well maintained and is in a continuous state of development. Pupils are routinely supervised by school staff: effective arrangements are in place for the supervision of pupils before the school day begins, throughout the school day and after school finishes. Form tutors routinely take their student groups to be collected by parents at the end of school.

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School policies, including safeguarding, are present and clearly defined, effectively implemented and monitored appropriately. An external company manages matters of health and safety and policies and procedures, including risk assessments, are regularly formed, reviewed and updated. Secondary students bring their own devices from home and there has been an increase in staff training and student awareness of online safety. Staff and students receive specific training from the local police on internet safety and parents are invited in for school training sessions.

School procedural safety is good. Emergency exit plans are displayed appropriately around the school, fire exits are clearly marked and there are a sufficient amount of fire extinguishers and safety equipment in place. Fire drills are carried out regularly and are logged and reviewed appropriately. There is an appropriate policy on health and safety and an external company takes care of it comprehensively, including all aspects of risk assessment work and chemical storage. Children are appropriately supervised at all times, including during break times and on trips and visits. The school has clear procedures for taking students out of school, student registers are regularly kept, including for after-school clubs. Student and teacher absences are managed well.

Children feel safe and secure at school. Each student changes into their choice of comfortable footwear to wear inside the school buildings. There is good access to water and staff give due consideration to supporting pupils' personal hygiene. Emergency contacts are maintained and there is information available to staff on children of concern, as needed.

## Requirement 2: Accommodation and facilities

The school is located close to the town of Llinars del Vallès, which is a close commute for children and staff. The main building has sufficient classrooms to accommodate the students, with office space, a kitchen, staff room and reception area. When possible, meals are served and eaten outside.

Classrooms are furnished and the building lets in an appropriate amount of natural light, whilst remaining cool in the day. Lessons take place inside the main building and at designated areas around the school site. Currently the school has a Science building, swimming pool, an allotment, sensory area, newly constructed sports space and numerous purposely designed outdoor learning environments. Staff make very good use of all space available, providing pupils with a wide range of learning experiences. Children help look after the school's chickens and the incubation of eggs provides a great deal of interest, as well as scientific focus.

The Headteacher has ambitious plans for utilising the school site and of maximising the educational development of students and staff. Staff are trained in outdoor learning and other

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practically useful skills, including horticulture. Work has started on converting a garage into a music practice and performance area.

The school also makes good use of the facilities in the nearby town. Students take regular trips to the library and they make full use of the town's sporting facilities. There is a strong emphasis on Drama, public speaking and performance art. This is facilitated through regular trips to the town's theatre for lessons and for school performances. At the end of the school year, students perform for a parent audience; this year performances of Peter Pan and The Sound of Music are scheduled for the end of the summer term.

The school is adequately resourced to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Reading is encouraged at IRS and it has a scheme to support its teaching throughout the school. Pupils' work is displayed in classrooms on internal walls and students contribute their work to the school's diverse monthly magazine.

## Requirement 3: Curriculum

IRS follows the English National Curriculum and has adapted it to meet the specific needs of its pupils. Teachers plan lessons across a rich and balanced curriculum. There is evidence of departmental schemes of work and resources are stored electronically and physically. The core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science have appropriate curriculum time, as well as other national and regional curriculum requirements. Students receive lessons in Chinese, Spanish, Catalan, Art, Music, Geography, History, Religious Studies, PE, Drama and IT, including Computer Science and Robotics.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Due to the low numbers of students in year groups, classes are frequently merged. Pupils have twice daily tutor sessions and these opportunities are used to form homogeneous form groups. There is a strong family ethos at the school and children form close relationships with staff and each other. Class sizes are small and pupils routinely receive close attention and support from teachers and support staff; students and parents value this as a significant school strength.

Professional learning time is routinely scheduled for staff, to facilitate training and collaborative work. The school hosts a Summer Camp each year and this time is used for staff to plan for the next school year and complete handover of classes. Incoming members of staff are expected to start school during this time.



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## Requirement 4: Staffing

All IRS teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. The school employs a majority of full time teachers, some part time staff and also volunteers. Sufficient numbers of teachers provide the teaching of a broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers in EYFS and Primary are supported appropriately by qualified teaching assistants. The school employs specialist teachers for English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Drama, IT, Chinese, Spanish and Catalan. Teachers frequently assist each other in lessons to provide additional staff and student support.

Residential and non-residential volunteers assist in a variety of roles around the school, during school hours, at weekends and during holidays. Parents of school children also volunteer at IRS and are used appropriately to enrich the provision offered by the school.

## Requirement 5: Quality of learning

The quality of learning is generally good. The level of English throughout the school is good and it is clear that teachers make a concerted effort to maintain that English is the principal language of the school.

Teachers work hard at planning and delivering engaging lessons. Teaching and learning is tailored to suit the age range, levels of academic attainment and personalities of the students. The staff are successful in creating and maintaining environments, attitudes and behaviours that are conducive to impactful teaching and learning. This is a strength of the school.

Teachers use Google G Suite platform effectively for planning and delivery of lessons. Secondary students bring their own devices into school and blended learning is used to good effect.

## Evidence

The inspection took place over one full day, with time before and after for preparation and writing. The inspector in school was Mr. Ciaran Cunningham-Watson. A range of formal and informal discussions with staff, parents and students took place, as well as a series of lesson observations and learning walks. School documentation was read and analysed. During the time of the inspection, the school was subject to national and regional Covid-19 restrictions; all health and safety regulations were fully and appropriately adhered to.