



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **The English School Kuwait**

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011

*This inspection was conducted against the standards introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) for British schools overseas. These standards are based on those for independent schools in England.*

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<b>1. Context</b>	page
1.1 Key contextual factors	2
1.2 British nature of the school	4
<b>2. Quality of learning</b>	
2.1 How effective are learning and teaching?	5
2.2 How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?	7
2.3 How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?	8
2.4 How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?	9
2.5 How well does the school prepare pupils for future learning?	11
<b>3. Standards achieved by pupils</b>	
3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?	12
3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?	14
<b>4. Leadership and management of the school</b>	
4.1 How well is the school led and managed?	16
<b>5. Quality of provision</b>	
5.1 How good are the accommodation, the staffing levels and the resources?	17
<b>6. Overall effectiveness of the school</b>	
6.1 How successful is the school?	19
6.2 What the school does well	20
6.3 What should the school do to improve further?	21
6.4 Evidence sources	21

## 1. Context

### 1.1 What are the key contextual factors?

The English School is an international preparatory school for children aged 2+ to 13+. Founded under the auspices of the British Embassy in 1953, it is the only school of its type in Kuwait, and the only school in Kuwait to be a member of the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS). Its aim is to provide the best possible British education from the ages of 2+ to 13+ and enable the children of UK expatriates in Kuwait to make a seamless transition whether to UK State Maintained or Independent schools, schools in Kuwait or elsewhere in the world. It has strong ties to the UK, which support effectively the education of its children.

It has a pre-KG and then offers three form entry from KG to Year 5. Years 6 to 8 are two form entry. There are 18 children, 11 boys and 7 girls in pre-KG; 224 children, 121 boys and 103 girls in reception and Years 1 & 2; 249 children, 122 boys and 127 girls in Years 3 to 6; 60 children, 29 boys and 31 girls in Years 7 and 8.

The school roll is currently 35% British and 67% native English speaking. First priority is for the former group, followed by the latter. Despite this there are currently 37 nationalities represented in the school; most in small numbers. English is the prevailing language of the playground. The school is oversubscribed with waiting lists in most year groups.

Turnover is high at approximately 20%. Between 110 and 120 children leave at the end of each school year as employment contracts expire. A number also start and complete their education at the school throughout the year. The curriculum follows the English National Curriculum and the school undertakes SAT assessments, both statutory and non-statutory, each year. Children are enabled successfully to return to the UK to boarding schools, or to other British schools in Kuwait.

The school is legally required to have a Kuwaiti sponsor, having the same one since its foundation in 1953. In addition, it has continuous links with the British Embassy. Members of the governing body are appointed on individual skills based criteria. The chair of this body is historically a senior officer in the British Military Mission and usually the most senior officer commanding the British Army in Kuwait, as is currently the case.

All teachers are British nationals with British teaching qualifications. Only learning support assistants (LSAs) may be other than British. Staff turnover is around 20% to 25% per year, typically eight or nine leaving each year out of a total of forty-three. Though recruitment is not easy the school finds that retention overall is good. The headmaster has been in post for five years and the senior leadership team (SLT) for the past three years. This team consists of five members, all whom have discrete whole-school responsibilities; the bursar, deputy head and head of the preparatory phase, head of pre-preparatory and a director of studies.

The main barriers perceived by the school to providing high quality education are turnover of children, which has an impact on learning and teaching. In addition, Ministry requirements to teach National courses add pressure to a crowded timetable, reducing the time available to core subjects.

In order to renew its licence with the Ministry of Education it is a requirement that the school has an inspection by Ofsted. The most recent was dated 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, the school found to be complying with all the Ministry of Education requirements. There are also regular inspections by the Ministry itself.

## 1.2 British nature of the school

The school's name is unequivocal in establishing its identity and, on entering the main foyer area, a further indication of the school's identity is the bright red pillar box visitors have to pass. The school follows the full English National Curriculum, as well as, on request, preparing children for the Common Entrance examination for UK Independent schools. All teachers are required to be British nationals with British qualifications. Indicative of the school's status are the number of eminent British visitors over the years. These have included Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Princes Charles and Andrew, and Lady Margaret Thatcher. In common with most UK Independent schools, the school has a house system to support children and involve them in a range of activities, some competitive, throughout the school year. Children are allocated to one of four of these – Balmoral, Buckingham, Sandringham and Windsor.

Though there are no direct links or exchange visits with individual schools in the UK, the school mirrors educational developments in the UK, both curriculum and pastoral, in order to ensure the Britishness of the school is maintained. Most professional development courses are provided by UK teachers and trainers, some teachers attend courses in the UK, some follow distance learning packages from the UK and the headmaster attends the IAPS Annual Conferences. The school is also a member of a range of educational associations based in the UK. The bulk of resources to support the delivery of the curriculum are purchased in the UK.

Children, parents and teachers all recognize the Britishness of the school, which is oversubscribed and the number one choice for expatriate parents seeking a school for their children. Parents support the school further through fund raising events and the governing body is composed of a group of people with a wide range of expertise.

## 2. Quality of learning

### 2.1 How effective is learning?

Teaching and learning are good across the school and result in high standards and committed children. Recently increased opportunities for informal discussions within phases and year groups in order to share good practice are paying dividends. The school has developed its own lesson observation protocol and the leadership team are now involved in lesson observations of all staff.

Children in Years 6, 7 and 8, benefit from subject specialist teaching and specialists teach from Year 1 and up. Lessons are typically relaxed but purposeful and children concentrate well. Teachers know their subjects well.

Children show a strong commitment to their work, high levels of motivation and nearly all enjoy their activities and make the progress they are capable of in lessons. Their attitudes and behaviour are excellent throughout the age ranges. The strong relationships between children and staff result in a calm, happy and harmonious atmosphere in lessons, which typifies the school's ethos. Children are enthusiastic and responsive to challenging teaching. A well paced Year 6 music lesson drew very good responses from the children who enjoyed themselves and rose to the high expectations of the teacher. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, children enjoyed the activity and made good progress in their learning. This well planned and inclusive lesson was underpinned by high expectations and challenge, which is the key to improving teaching and learning even more across the school.

In a Year 7 English lesson, opportunities for children to be involved in discussions and the teacher's open questioning challenged the children to use and improve their inferential skills. In a Year 5 class focusing on 'concrete' poetry, the teacher continually prompted the children to use their expressive talents and share their thoughts with their peers, thereby improving listening skills. In addition, in this lesson, expected learning outcomes were written on the board and at the end of the lesson, a useful plenary session summed up what had been learned. In a Year 5 science lesson, learning outcomes were made clear at the start, thus they were aware fully as to what was expected of them. At the end, as a result of ongoing peer assessment and a useful plenary led by the teacher, children had a clear understanding of what progress they had made and what they had actually learned.

In order to ensure that teachers' planning and preparation provides for the full range of ability in the group, differentiation is included in the school improvement plan: all teachers are expected to include details in both their medium term plans and weekly plans. Some teachers plan very well and provide opportunities for independent learning and the application of critical and creative thinking by children. This provides extra challenge and keeps children on task throughout. Some teachers use ICT effectively to support teaching and learning. In a Year 3 class, children were skilfully combining text and graphics. However, in other lessons, teachers' use of ICT was less effective because they lacked confidence to use ICT.

The school tracks the progress made by children across the subjects, this information then being used to inform planning and future strategies. This has led the school to recently have a focus on improving children's higher level writing skills. It is recognized that there are challenges to tracking children when there is a transitory learning community. Children's work is usually marked, and is in general linked to curriculum targets or learning objectives. The school's policies on both the presentation of work and on the marking of pupils' work have recently been amended as a result of focus group discussions. There is now effective record-keeping by staff and improving use of homework diaries. Pupils are told what they need to do to improve their work and to move to the next steps in learning. Comments made by teachers are followed up effectively.

Resources to support teaching and learning are excellent. Children have appropriate and good quality text books and learning is often extended by teachers' own worksheets and information taken from the Internet. Specialist teaching rooms for Years 6, 7 and 8 and a well-stocked library are also used to good effect in supporting learning. Displays in classrooms include children's work, which celebrates achievement, contributes to learning and is illustrative of high standards and expectations. Consequently, nearly all classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment.

Underpinning the quality of teaching and learning is the excellent behaviour of children and the strong working relationships between the children themselves and their teachers and other adults in the school. When given the opportunity, children work well independently or as small groups and enjoy their learning as a result, for example in a Year 7 design and technology lesson. They listen attentively to their teachers and to their peers, and readily absorb new ideas. The use of 'speaking partners' and the sharing of 'mind maps' helped Year 4 children process their ideas in their humanities lesson.

## 2.2 How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?

The school has an excellent ethos of care, guidance and support, which ensures the needs of all children, including those identified as having special educational needs or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented are met. Children are kept safe and guided well by individual teachers and by the school's effective pastoral system. The house system also enhances this aspect of the school's work by strengthening further the community spirit within the school. As a result, children say they enjoy school, feel safe and have great trust in their teachers and other adults in the school. They are happy in their work, try their best and are keen to succeed. Children attend well, have excellent attitudes to learning and are caring and considerate to one another.

Security at the school site is good. Ministry of Health and Fire department regulations are met fully. Effective procedures for registration of children and signing -in visitors to the school site means the school knows exactly who is present. Break times are well supervised, as is the start of the school day, and leaving at the end of day. A range of whole school policies and other documentation is indicative of the school's commitment to the health, safety and well-being of every child.

Children have a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy by taking regular exercise and eating healthily. The school nurse carries out an annual medical check and children are enabled to take part in regular physical exercise both as part of their studies and as part of the extra-curricular programme. Carbonated drinks, sweets and crisps are banned by the school and parents are actively encouraged to provide healthy food options in their children's packed lunch boxes. Teachers monitor this at break times, and healthy eating displays reinforce the message further.

The school's ethos ensures the individual achievements of children are valued and celebrated. Circle time helps develop attitudes of empathy and tolerance towards others. A high level of effective pastoral care is provided with each child assigned a class teacher or, in Years 6 to 8, a tutor. Children who are new to the school are assigned a 'buddy' whom they shadow for the first week or until they feel comfortable to become more independent. In classes, children are grouped in a variety of different ways so that they have the opportunity to work with other children apart from their friends. The school council provides opportunities for children to develop their citizenship skills and provides a forum for them to express their views and opinions. Children also recognize the needs of others less fortunate than themselves through regular charitable donations and activities.

The behaviour management policy is implemented fairly and consistently by teachers so that children have clear boundaries. 'Golden Time' operates as a celebration of both individual and collaborative effort. Children are involved in setting class rules and understand the consequences of these. Praise and reward systems encourage positive attitudes to all aspects of school life.

## 2.3 How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?

The curriculum is a significant strength and meets the needs and aspirations of all children particularly

well. The National Curriculum of England provides the framework for teaching and learning. This results in good teaching and enables children to attain high standards across all the subjects.

In EYFS, children are taught the English National Curriculum and assessed against the early learning goals. In the Key Stage 1 curriculum, class teachers teach literacy, numeracy, science and humanities and specialist teachers provide Arabic and Islamic Studies, art, design & technology, ICT, music and PE/swimming. The Key Stage 2 curriculum follows a similar pattern but also includes French. In Years 6, 7 and 8, subjects are taught by specialist teachers, which reflects the curriculum in secondary schools.

The school recognised that there had been problems with ICT provision, assessment and the use of ICT across all subjects. The steps taken to rectify this have been effective: the ICT coordinator has met with year groups to integrate ICT into termly plans and to improve cross curricular use. ICT staff have offered in-house training. Skilled users of interactive whiteboards share good practice with other staff during INSET. A support teacher has been identified in Foundation, and key stages 1 and 2, to support the coordinator.

Children not only make excellent progress in their academic work, but also in their personal development, including spiritual, social, moral and cultural aspects. One teacher is responsible for the development of the social emotional aspects of learning, and has conducted several workshops for staff. Additionally another teacher is developing a separate course on personal, social and health education in Years 7 and 8.

There is good provision for children with special needs or disabilities. This is led by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) with a focus on literacy and numeracy support from two part-time support teachers. LSAs work in classes with groups and individuals. Some children are timetabled to work with the SENCO in a designated classroom. Individual education plans (IEPs) for individual children offer a strategic focus from which teachers and those with a learning support brief can take a lead. The school also runs an Exceptional Child Programme to support those children identified as gifted and talented. Their IEPs identify work of a higher level in their areas of strength, mainly literacy and numeracy focused.

The breadth of the curriculum is enhanced by a well planned and varied programme of extra-curricular activities throughout the year. There are in excess of sixty after school clubs in which children can develop specific skills and learn about other interesting things. These have included Arabic for non-Arabic speakers, glass painting, healthy cookery, SATs booster classes and interactive music theory. A programme of competitive sporting activities, as well as more recreational activities, provides further opportunities for children to improve their physical development.

The school complies fully with the local requirements with regard to the teaching of Arabic, Islamic Studies and Kuwait Social Studies. These subjects are timetabled so that all children's entitlements are met. During the holy month of Ramadan, the timetabled day is shortened and local customs respected. The National anthem is played daily prior to lessons starting.

## 2.4 How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?

The school has an excellent, well deserved reputation with the parents and good links with the local community. It is oversubscribed and there is a continual demand for places by prospective parents. Notwithstanding this, the headmaster works tirelessly to involve parents in the life of the school and to improve the quality of learning and provision. His 'open door' policy and the information he provides for parents ensures all are up to date and as involved as they can be. Parent questionnaires have also been used in the past to solicit their views.

In discussion with members of the accreditation team, parents expressed their satisfaction with the school and described how the school then responds immediately and takes action to resolve concerns. One parent explained that each day his children wake up keen and eager to get to school. Another parent knew that a concern had been effectively dealt with because of the happy smiling face of his daughter when he met her at the end of the school day.

Parents receive excellent quality information about the school both in the form of a particularly useful handbook but also through access to the school's website. It has recently been updated and is a valuable source of information. All communication with home is electronic via this website, mailings taking place every Monday and Thursday. Parents have a password to enable them to access the site. Homework diaries are also used as an effective means of daily communication by both parents and teachers to share information.

Regular written reports are provided detailing the progress their children make and parents are invited to discuss this at twice-yearly parent meetings. Parents receive a range of information throughout the school year. A curriculum evening at the beginning of the autumn terms outlines the planned curriculum in each year group as well as the extra enrichment activities organised in the after school clubs. Formal reports are provided each term evaluating their children's progress towards their targets and a detailed report at the end of the school year reports on all areas of attainment, progress and achievements as well as personal development.

There is a thriving Parents' Association, a voluntary group, which creates opportunities to build a sense of community by arranging social events for parents, teachers and, especially the children. Funds raised have been used to provide extras such as team uniforms and costumes for the drama productions. The highlight of the year is the Annual Gala Fundraising Ball in the gardens of the British Embassy, courtesy of the British Ambassador. This is organized by a volunteer parents' committee and raises additional funding to supplement school monies for capital projects. The school values highly the parents' support and has designated a room for their use.

The school actively promotes links with other schools and the local community. It maintains links with other schools as part of formal association meetings, shares staff training opportunities with other schools and the headmaster attends regular meetings with heads of other British schools in Kuwait. The school's facilities are offered to local groups and sporting clubs. Recently the school used the expertise of the British military to design and build the fitness trail in the playground. Inter-school competitive sporting fixtures are held throughout the school year, which are much appreciated

by children, especially when they achieve well. School assemblies and school council fund raising initiatives promote and support local charities.

## 2.5 How well does the school prepare pupils for future learning?

Transition is planned for at each phase through the school. Parents of children joining the school comment on both the frequency and the high quality of electronic communication prior to admission. Those already resident in Kuwait are invited to meet with teachers and spend time in classrooms. The 'Handbook for Parents', updated annually and issued on induction, is a comprehensive and highly informative document. Induction in pre-KG and KG is closely monitored to ensure that children and parents have a positive introduction to school. A parents' waiting area is provided and timings are flexible to allow children to settle and reduce the anxiety caused by separation.

At the end of the school year prior to transition, children visit their new teacher and their new classrooms. A curriculum overview is produced for the whole school and made available for all parents. Programmes of study for each year group are also provided for parents at the beginning of each year. Year group curriculum information presentations give parents the opportunity to meet with the new class teacher. These are well attended. Parents appreciate the curriculum workshops led by teachers throughout the year, which provide useful information on teaching methodology and ideas as to how to support their own child at home. The recent phonics workshop was judged by one parent as being very informative.

At each transition point, work samples are passed to the next teacher in the core subjects, including a 'levelled' writing record, which accompanies a child through the school. Teachers meet regularly to discuss children on an individual basis and share information on academic progress and pastoral matters.

In the EYFS, the head of phase has initiated joint planning in order to have an overview of topics and themes covered. This ensures consistency and progression. Elements of good EYFS practice, including role play, are being introduced to aid transition for children moving to Key Stage 1.

Older children acknowledge that there is consistency in expectation from teachers regarding standards of behaviour and presentation of work. They are positive regarding their experiences of transition between year groups, citing that it is a seamless process for them. At the end of their time at TES, children are successful in gaining entry to UK independent and state schools, schools in their home country or schools in Kuwait. The school celebrates the success of its children and maintains records of destinations. At present, however, any further contact with children is on a personal basis only. Data on their further achievements is not collected.

### 3. Standards achieved by pupils

#### 3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?

Academic assessment data from the school is compared to UK standards based on the English National Curriculum levelling criteria and testing – both statutory and non-statutory. The school does not compare itself to other schools in Kuwait as there are no comparable schools or data available. Overall standards are high, with many children performing well above the UK expected levels and producing a greater percentage of higher levels, despite the transient nature of children throughout the year. The school's track record shows that standards have been maintained, and in some cases improved, over the last three years.

In EYFS, ongoing teacher assessment of last year's cohort showed that levels of attainment were above the expected levels for children in the UK. At Key Stage 1, standards in reading and mathematics are well above UK expected levels, including level 3s. However, though many children are achieving the expected UK levels in writing, the school is performing less well in terms of higher level 3s in writing. To address this, the school has in place a programme to increase this number (and also higher level 5s). Moderation takes place after each piece of assessed writing across year groups. Work is also moderated on a regular basis, between the year group above/below. Whole school moderation of writing is now done annually and children are being set more extended writing tasks. This is led by literacy coordinators. A recent training course on 'Big Write' has been effective.

At Key Stage 2, results are above the expected UK levels in English, mathematics and science. Higher level 5 is up to 30% higher than in the UK. Non-statutory SATs results in Years 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 show a similar picture in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as in art, design & technology, French, geography, history, ICT, music and PE. There are no significant differences between the year cohorts, except in ICT. Children also successfully obtained passes and merits in the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music exams in 2009.

Tracking achievement over time is difficult because of the transient nature of children at the school. There has been no year group that has been deemed to be particularly weak or strong academically. Last year the school identified a number of Year 6 children who were working below the expected levels, particularly in literacy. However, as a result of the extra support they were given, the majority made significant progress with only a few at level 3. The school is well aware that in ICT children have not been achieving the levels expected of them. Staffing issues have now been resolved and there is to be a greater focus on assessing children's use of ICT across the curriculum, as well as in ICT lessons.

Children's progress is carefully monitored by the school, particularly in Years 1 to 6 using a commercial tracking package. Progress in ICT is highlighted as an area for concern, but in other subjects progress is good overall. Progress is particularly strong in literacy and numeracy. Across the

school, children's use of English is a real strength, in particular high order skills are used with confidence and articulated very well. Children also read competently and confidently. This supports their achievements in all the subjects of the English National Curriculum. Children also make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in data collection and analysis in science.

### 3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

Children's attitudes, behaviour and aspirations are exemplary throughout the school. This is as a result of their response to the high expectations and standards of behaviour set by the headmaster and all staff. Smiling faces, both at the start and end of the school day, are indicative of their enjoyment of the education they receive.

Attendance and punctuality are good and the school has an effective system in place to monitor absences. Overall attendance during the academic year was 94%, the lower attendance in pre-KG skewing the overall figure. Despite transport difficulties, particularly the volume of traffic close by because of other schools, punctuality is also good.

Children are keen to learn and improve their academic standards and their personal and social skills. A telling example of this is a Year 8 child who explained that when he was in Year 4 he had set his own targets to improve his attainment in English, become a prefect and a member of the school council, all of which he has achieved. In nearly all lessons, children concentrate well, are motivated and are keen and eager to contribute. In some lessons, even though they are not sufficiently challenged or given extension tasks that match their ability, children remain on task and produce work to the best of their ability. They are happy, friendly, polite and confident, and know and trust teachers and other adults in the school. Children were particularly welcoming to the accreditation team, their comments reflecting their loyalty to the school and pride in their achievements.

When given the opportunity to work independently or in collaboration with a partner, children flourish and make excellent progress. This was clearly evident in a Year 7 French lesson when children used listening, watching and acting skills to learn and remember a long list of instructions before sharing them with their partner and then the whole class. They derive much enjoyment from this kind of activity and as a result display positive attitudes to learning, and make excellent progress. In lessons, children listen carefully to one another's views and opinions, respecting feelings and values. The learning environment and a range of excellent resources in EYFS, facilitate independent learning and social interaction well, including making choices as to what activities to be involved in.

Behaviour is excellent in classrooms and around the school. Children cooperate well with one another and teachers and other adults in the school. This results in a calm atmosphere around the school and a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. Older children move to subject specialist classrooms calmly and sensibly, though sometimes there is a lack of urgency to get to the next lesson. At break times children sit together whilst eating their lunch, chatting to one another in English – the 'language' of the playground'. They take great pride in their school and look after their environment, all litter being placed in the bins provided. The end of the school day is well organised and the children leave school in a safe and sensible way.

Members of the School Council eagerly shared their views of the school with the accreditation team. They explained their responsibilities as being an important link with the teachers. At weekly meetings with the deputy head teacher, they reported they felt confident that their views are listened

to and acted upon when possible. Children appreciate the improvements to the school's facilities and the enhanced learning opportunities that they now benefit from. One member of the school council expressed the view that the school has given him a range of personal skills and improved confidence in socialising. In addition, he had improved his understanding of different cultures, respect for different points of view and how to be a good team member.

Children have a good sense of social justice, understand that there are other children less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for children's charities in Tibet and Ethiopia. Regular circle time lessons for younger children have improved their personal and social skills particularly well. 'Golden Rules' are displayed in each classroom and the school house system rewards individual achievements, as well as encouraging children to earn team house points. The children's sense of well being, happiness and love of learning was summed up succinctly by one member of the school council who would 'stay into Year 9 if I could.'

## 4. Leadership and management of the school

### 4.1 How well is the school led and managed?

The leadership of the headmaster has been pivotal in setting a clear vision and direction for the school. He is a reflective practitioner who seeks to provide the best quality education in order to ease children's transition to the next stage of their education. Working closely with his well-established senior leadership team (SLT) to ensure the vision and direction are realized, the headmaster continues to drive improvement. Overall, leadership and management is a significant strength of the school.

Underpinning this, is the highly effective and experienced governing body, which acts successful as a supportive and critical friend, setting a clear strategic direction for the school. They are kept suitably informed about the school through the headmaster's regular reports and through an organised programme of visits. They are particularly effective in overseeing the school's finances and planning for capital spending to improve further the quality of accommodation and resources.

The SLT, which includes the school bursar, have clearly defined roles and responsibilities as well as clear expectations in terms of accountability. This helps ensure effective management of the school. Staff too are involved in school development through regular meetings and the use of focus groups. Priorities and actions are then identified in the school improvement action plan. A recent external report suggested that although there is excellent classroom practice, middle leaders have yet to raise expectations amongst their teachers to ensure that all teaching and learning matches that of the best. As a result, a training course was run for subject coordinators. The school is pleased with the increasingly important role they now play.

Self-evaluation by the headmaster and SLT is accurate overall and identifies appropriate areas for school improvement. An appraisal system is in place, which supports teachers' professional development well. Relevant clear and concise policies are in place and are reviewed bi-annually. Excellent quality staff and parents handbooks give clear guidance and information. This is enhanced further by the school's website, where all information, newsletters and other notices are published. Regular meetings are held so that day to day issues can be raised and addressed by staff and management.

## 5. Quality of provision

### 5.1 How good are the accommodation, the staffing levels and the resources?

Good quality premises and accommodation ensures children have full access to the curriculum and makes a positive contribution to their education, personal development and welfare. Strengths include dedicated science, design and technology, art, music, and ICT rooms; an extensive, well-equipped and well-resourced library; athletics sprint track, a fitness trail, games courts, gymnasium, a 25m swimming pool providing for all ages and abilities; and a recently opened 400 seat performing arts centre. Classrooms have computer workstations and interactive whiteboards. Many have good quality displays including examples of children's work to celebrate their achievements. Some work is also displayed around public areas and corridors, which serves to enhance the ambience for learning even further. There are sufficient subject specialist rooms for children in Years 6, 7 and 8, as well as a number of smaller rooms for individual and/or small group support work.

The performing arts centre opened in February 2011, following a seven month renovation of the existing assembly hall. A theatre manager was appointed from amongst the teaching staff on a reduced teaching timetable and a number of successful school productions have taken place. Plans are well advanced for a full refurbishment of the gymnasium, replacement of the outdoor sports surfaces including the athletics track, football pitches and tennis court.

Washroom facilities for staff and children are sufficient in number and are regularly cleaned throughout the school day. The site and buildings are well maintained and clean. The medical room is suitable for its purpose. A spacious and enclosed dining room has been a recent addition and modification to the building on the first floor. In addition, there are also several designated outdoor areas for children to enjoy their meals.

The size of the site enables members of the school community to move around safely and, in most cases, within the many shaded areas. There are also separate playgrounds for the different age groups, and well resourced and dedicated outdoor areas for pre-KG, KG and reception children. The school has benefitted from an ongoing programme of capital investments, which has enhanced the overall quality of the premises and accommodation.

Overall, the quality and quantity of resources are very good. Books, equipment and materials provide very good support for the curriculum and are used effectively to promote learning and attainment. In order to improve the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across all subjects, the school identified a room to convert to a second ICT suite for cross-curricular use – this opened in January 2011 and is already being well utilised. It is encouraging greater integrated use of ICT across the curriculum. The recent purchase of digital cameras (and staff training in their use) is proving effective.

The quality of teaching and non-teaching staff, including administrative staff, is very good – all making a considerable contribution to the quality of education provided. Despite the high turnover of teachers, common in many international schools, a sense of cohesion and common purpose is

pronounced. The school is well aware of the need to take important precautions when appointing staff, and is improving its effectiveness in this area of its work.

Teachers are deployed effectively. With approximately 600 children on roll, the child-teacher ratio of 1:13 is generous and the time spent directly teaching is favourable, allowing a good degree of individual attention. The maximum class size is 25, with an average class size of 21 children. Classes up to and including Year 2 have a full time LSA to support learning. Currently, there are 43 teachers who have a wide range of experience. Many are recruited from the UK, this being their first taste of teaching overseas, others are seasoned international educators with experience in several countries, and some have previously worked in other schools in Kuwait. There are a number of specialist subject teachers who make a strong contribution to the standards and breadth of the curriculum, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

A number of children with special educational needs and or disabilities receive 1:1 support from LSAs, which is coordinated by the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). The school also employs classroom assistants. Though they make a sound contribution to children's progress in lessons, they are not always effectively deployed by teachers to provide maximum impact.

## 6. Overall effectiveness of the school

### 6.1 How successful is the school?

The English School, Kuwait, meets fully its aim of providing the best possible British education, primarily for the children of UK expatriates in Kuwait, from the ages of 2+ to 13 + in order to allow those children to make a seamless transition whether to State Maintained or Independent Schools in the UK, schools in Kuwait or elsewhere in the world.

The school has many significant strengths, including a distinct British ethos underpinned by the delivery of the English National Curriculum. It is a harmonious community, enabling children and staff from widely ranging backgrounds, cultures and communities to live and work together successfully. The caring and supportive ethos of the school ensures that every child really does matter. Children's standards are high in comparison to their peers in mainstream schools in the United Kingdom. Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are exemplary, as is the quality of their personal development.

The school's shortcomings are few in number. Teaching and learning overall are good, and the leadership team now observe all teaching staff. Lesson observations follow an agreed format in place since September 2010. Newly qualified teachers and other young staff are offered a choice of an experienced teacher mentor during their first year with at the school.

The school is held in high regard by parents. It is oversubscribed and there is a continual demand for places by prospective parents. Parents respond willingly throughout the year to the many opportunities they have to involve themselves in activities to support the school. Children too are highly supportive and enthusiastic about the school. As a result, both those who leave before the end of Year 8 and those who complete their education at the school, transfer seamlessly to the next stage of their education.

## 6.2 What the school does well

**The English School, Kuwait meets all the standards for British Schools overseas, as published by the DfE.**

Overall, the school provides an excellent quality of education and has a strong track record of high standards across the subjects in the English National Curriculum.

The school has strengths in important areas.

- The headmaster leads the school particularly well and is ably supported by his experienced senior leadership team.
- The governing body is highly effective in its role as a supportive and critical friend of the school.
- Successful teaching and children's positive attitudes to learning result in excellent progress across the school.
- The caring and supportive ethos of the school, which ensures excellent care, guidance and support for every child.
- The curriculum meets fully the needs and aspirations of all children and promotes their academic and personal development particularly well.
- The school has very strong partnerships with parents which contribute extensively to children's achievements.
- Children are prepared extremely well for the next stage of their education, both within the school as well as for other schools when they leave.
- Standards across the school are high.
- Children are well prepared for return or change to other English curriculum schools, including those in the UK.
- Children's attitudes, values, behaviour and aspirations are exemplary.
- Excellent quality accommodation and resources underpin the excellent quality of education provided by the school.

### 6.3 What should the school do to improve further?

Among the school's many strengths, the following are matters for development:

- a) Increase the monitoring of the programme of professional development, to ensure it improves the quality of teaching and learning further, to that of the best in the school.
- b) Continue to develop teachers' competencies and confidence in the use of ICT, to support better teaching and learning across all subjects.
- c) Ensure the capacity of middle leadership continues to raise expectations for the quality of teaching and learning.

The headmaster and his senior leadership team have very good capacity to make these improvements. The issues here have already been identified in the school improvement action plan.

#### **Evidence source/s**

During the inspection visit, 28 lessons were observed, school documentation and policies were analysed, as were samples of children's work from each Year group. Formal discussions were held with the head teacher, chair of the governing body, senior staff and a group of older children. Other teachers, children and parents were consulted informally. Lunchtime and after school activities were seen. Members of the accreditation team were also present for the arrival of children, at break times and departure at the end of the day. Two whole school days were monitored.