

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

MOUGINS SCHOOL

by the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

On

12th - 15th March, 2007

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Mougins School

Full Name of the School	Mougins School
DfES Number	N/A
Registered Charity Number	N/A
Address	615 Avenue Dr Maurice Donat, Font de l'Orme, B.P. 401, 06251 Mougins Cedex, France.
Telephone Number	00 33 (0)4 93 90 15 47
Fax Number	00 33 (0)4 93 75 31 40
Email Address	information@mougins-school.com
Headmaster	Mr Brian Hickmore
Owners and Governors	Mr Georg Rafael, Mr Frank Seyfert
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	12th – 15th March, 2007

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The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Mougins School is a non-selective independent international day school for pupils from 3 to 18 years of age. It is situated on a large wooded site on the outskirts of Mougins in the South of France. The school was established in 1982 as a small Anglo-American School, a non-profit making organization under French Law, in which all parents were members of the Association. It moved to its present site in 1987. In the early 1990s three parent benefactors took the decision to support the school. The name was changed to Mougins School in 1992 with a new head and new Board of directors. In 2001 the school became a limited company.
- 1.2 The school is a member of The Council of British Internal Independent Schools in European Communities (COBISEC). Mougins is the only school on the Côte d'Azur teaching a mainly British curriculum and entering pupils for General Certificate of Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE), and Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS-Level) and Advanced Level (A-level) examinations.
- 1.3 Currently the school has 447 pupils attending full-time and 15 attending part-time (264 boys and 198 girls). The school is divided into two sections: the primary school and the secondary school. In the primary school, the Foundation Stage contains 21 full-time and 15 part-time pupils. Forty-four pupils attend in Years 1 and 2 and 108 in Years 3 to 6. In the secondary school, 113 attend in Years 7 to 9 with 88 in Years 10 and 11. Seventy-one pupils are in the sixth form. Pupils are taught in one class in each year up to Year 6 where pupils are split into two classes. Pupils are organised into two classes in each of the secondary school years.
- 1.4 The school caters for a very wide range of abilities. Standardised tests indicate that the overall ability profile is above the national average in England. Consequently, if pupils are performing in line with their ability, results in English national tests and examinations are likely to be above the average for all English maintained schools. The IGCSE results are likely to be above the world average.
- 1.5 Mougins School is an International School that enjoys a wide cultural mix with pupils from France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and several other European Community Countries, in addition to a number of non-European countries: over thirty nationalities in all. The majority of families live in the local area, although some travel from Monaco and the Var. More rarely, students have been placed with host families. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds. Some parents work in the local technology park, a number run their own businesses, either in France or abroad, and some are retired. Most of the French parents have professional backgrounds.
- 1.6 Approximately two hundred and thirty pupils do not speak English as their first language. The principal language of tuition is English. A programme of support for pupils who are still at an early stage of their acquisition of English is designed for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are not generally admitted into the secondary school without a good competence in English, although support for written English remains where necessary. Pupils with the lowest level of English in Years 10 and 11 sit GCSE Second Language English before moving to English First Language the following year. Forty-two pupils are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities and receive support for their work at no extra charge. Six pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

- 1.7 The school's aims are to:
- encourage pupils to develop morally, emotionally, culturally, intellectually and physically;
 - create a way of life characterised by caring, tolerance, security, praise and high expectations;
 - enable pupils to learn best by being encouraged, valued, trusted and respected;
 - help pupils develop continuously by providing conditions and experiences that sustain and encourage this development.
- 1.8 A review of the school was undertaken by a group of professional education consultants in 2002. Since then, the number on role has increased significantly and the site has been enhanced by an expansion to the classrooms and specialist teaching areas, a new gymnasium and all-weather sporting facilities, and a new outdoor play area for pupils in the Foundation Stage. The timetable has changed and, in line with French schools, Mougins School closes on Wednesday afternoons for pupils to undertake sports or creative activities within the local community.
- 1.9 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 Mougins School provides a successful all-round education which is consistent with the school's aim to encourage pupils to develop intellectually and physically within an international environment. The broad and mostly well-balanced curriculum is well suited to the needs of all its pupils, whatever their ability or background. The responses from the pre-inspection questionnaire for parents indicate that generally they are happy with the subjects taught, although a small proportion of responses in the secondary school showed concern about the range of subjects. Since the review in 2002, improvements have been made to the balance of subjects and the timetable.
- 2.2 The education contributes effectively to linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative and technological development. It successfully enables pupils to acquire the skills of speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. However, practical skills of investigation, problem-solving exploration and decision-making are not always systematically developed as pupils move through the school. The curriculum is broadly in line with the English National Curriculum with a number of additional worthwhile activities.
- 2.3 In the Foundation Stage, appropriate emphasis is placed on helping young children achieve the Six Early Learning Goals (English targets which pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year): personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development. Their experiences are enhanced by the inclusion of French. The school is particularly successful in planning its educational experience to foster children's personal development and enable them to communicate and think and learn creatively.
- 2.4 In Years 1 to 6 all subjects in the English National Curriculum are taught, with the exception of design and technology (DT). Information and communications technology (ICT) is not taught separately until Year 6 but, from the Foundation Years, pupils practise their technological skills as tools for learning. The strong focus on speaking and listening, and numeracy promotes excellent communication skills and pupils calculate with confidence. Other strengths are found in French, physical education (PE) and music, and human and social skills are effectively promoted through topics which include history and geography.
- 2.5 The secondary school continues to develop pupils' skills and knowledge through a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum. All National Curriculum subjects are taught up to Year 9, with the exception of design technology (DT). Religious education (RE) is also not taught as a separate subject. Science, in Year 10, previously taught as a single subject, becomes biology, chemistry and physics taught separately. However, the opportunities for pupils to learn practical scientific skills vary from subject to subject. Drama further extends pupils' creative skills in Year 7 and again in Years 10 and 11, with the option of theatre studies. In Years 7 to 13, strengths in art, English, French, PE and music are further developed, and Spanish extends the pupils' linguistic skills well. German is also an additional language, although its use as an option is less popular with students. The range of subjects available for GCSE, IGCSE and A level is appropriate. Pupils study English, mathematics, science (double award), French, and PE and may also take English literature as well as English language, plus a further choice of three options from a range of subjects. A-Level course options have been improved since the earlier review and now include English literature, French, German and Spanish, mathematics, sciences, art and design, geography, music and

- PE. Pupils successfully pursue an ICT course up to Year 11, when business studies and computing are introduced. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are taught in Years 7 to 9 and Year 11, providing good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development.
- 2.6 The provision for extra-curricular activities is appropriate. Not all staff offer activities for pupils but a small number of hard-working and committed staff provide a range of regular activities in chess, computers, music, drama and art, and sports such as tag rugby, football and athletics. However, the choice is limited particularly in the primary school. Pupils participate in a number of additional activities in school and in the local area each Wednesday afternoon. The weekly football match between older students and teachers is well attended and very popular. Activities are successfully complemented by a variety of trips and educational visits in both sections of the school to extend pupils' learning in subjects such as art, geography and Spanish. Pupils benefit from a range of residential visits, which enable them to learn additional skills and knowledge of living together in a community as well as personal and social skills. A trip to Barcelona proved very popular with pupils learning Spanish and the geography field trip to the Cevennes provided an opportunity to develop practical skills. Pupils in Year 5 have just returned from a snow trip, which they have thoroughly enjoyed, in spite of a limited covering of snow on the lower slopes of the mountains. Volunteer service programmes are undertaken by some pupils. Three students have been accepted on to the Raleigh programme and are currently raising money to fund their trips to Africa and Central South America.
- 2.7 Throughout the school, the pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education. In the Foundation Stage, children are prepared well for the programmes of study in Years 1 and 2. An increase in specialist teaching in Year 6 and special days to familiarise pupils with the facilities in Year 7 prepare pupils well for their work in the secondary school. The established procedures for careers guidance and support with decisions about higher education are very helpful. Useful support for pupils choosing options takes place in PSHE lessons in Years 7, 8, 9, and 11. Helpful advice for applications and interviews for university and college places is given to Year 12 students by form tutors and the secondary school librarian.
- 2.8 The curriculum is appropriately planned and promotes participation for all in a wide range of activities. Planning ensures that pupils gain a broad base of knowledge. However, it is not always clear in some schemes of work how skills will be developed progressively as pupils move through the school. This sometimes leads to an over-emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge at the expense of the systematic application of practical skills. Examples of good progression in skills are found in music and PE. The school keeps the options available to secondary pupils under review. The current arrangement for options in modern languages limits opportunities for pupils who do not get their first choice of Spanish and are placed to learn German. The school is continually seeking ways of maintaining German as a subject, while still enabling pupils to extend their skills in Spanish, and keeps the options available to secondary pupils under review.
- 2.9 All pupils experience a full curriculum. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and for those who have special educational needs identified in a statement of need is successful overall. Excellent specialist support within an effective curriculum is provided for pupils in the learning support department throughout the school. This marks a significant improvement since the review in 2002. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage, and very carefully constructed individual education plans (IEPs) are produced by the learning support department. However, these high quality plans are not always taken into account by teachers in class lessons, and frequently, pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities

undertake the same work as others in the class when this is not appropriate. Good examples of well-focused provision for high attaining pupils were observed where different work was planned to extend their experiences, but this is not a consistent feature of work in all departments.

- 2.10 A significant proportion of pupils enter the primary school using English as a second or third language. The strong emphasis on the English language as the principal medium of tuition is very effective. Very successful support is provided for pupils in both the primary school and in the secondary school for written English where needed. The school supports pupils who are less confident with the language by enabling them to sit the IGCSE for English as a second language first and then take IGCSE First English at a later stage.

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.11 Throughout the school, pupils learn effectively and achieve well in relation to their ages and abilities. Pupils are well educated by the time they leave. The school successfully meets its aims. Pupils have well-developed skills and attitudes for work and study, and thoroughly enjoy their work and play. The standards identified by the review in 2002 have been maintained. Parents are happy with their children's' progress.
- 2.12 Pupils' progress in acquiring skills and acquiring knowledge is good. Achievement in both sections of the school is particularly good in view of the fact that much of their learning is in English, which is not the native language of a significant proportion of the pupils. Very little difference in attainment relative to ability is apparent between boys and girls or between pupils of different abilities or pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve very well in lessons specifically designed to meet their needs with the specialist teacher. However, their progress slows in lessons when teachers do not take account of their IEPs or plan work to meet their individual needs.
- 2.13 Achievement is good overall at each stage in relation to pupils' abilities. Children at the Foundation Stage become well grounded in the knowledge, skills and understanding in the six areas of learning. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals. Children can apply their skills. For example, Reception children were learning about road safety by playing a traffic game, responding to traffic lights and pedestrian crossings.
- 2.14 In the primary school, pupils are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding at each stage in the subjects and activities provided. When given the opportunity they can apply these skills and think and act critically and creatively. For example, in science in Year 1, pupils were experimenting with objects to make sounds with varying pitch and volume. High achievement and rapid progress were observed in lessons in music, PE, English and French. At times in Years 4 to 6, too many work sheets leave limited time for pupils to apply their skills in practical ways.
- 2.15 High achievement and rapid progress was observed in English, art, French, Spanish and music in the secondary school. At times, pupils have too few opportunities to explore ideas, investigate and solve problems, which inhibit the rate they develop their critical and practical skills. For example, pupils' progress slows when they have to spend time watching the teacher undertake an experiment in science rather than practise the skills of investigation and problem-solving for themselves. When given the opportunity, pupils can apply their skills confidently and think creatively and critically. Good examples of critical thinking were found in a Year 13 history lesson, which revised the causes of war and discussed ideologies of conflict that can lead to war. Pupils debated sensitively, challenging each other's ideas. In chemistry in Year 10, pupils very successfully applied what they knew about electrolysis to explain their observations when electrolysis copper sulphate solution.

- 2.16 Overall, pupils' perform well in public tests and examinations in English and mathematics. The English national tests for pupils in Year 6 are marked internally. Results at the expected level 4 are above the average of all maintained United Kingdom primary schools and are satisfactory in relation to pupils' ability overall. Fewer pupils than the United Kingdom national average attain the higher Level 5. Overall, GCSE and results at A level are above the average of all maintained United Kingdom schools and are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' ability. IGCSE results compare favourably to other international schools overall but with significant differences between subjects. Results in French and Spanish are high. The school is smaller than many schools and non-selective; all pupils take examinations at IGCSE level. Some pupils with learning difficulties have been highly successful at IGCSE level in relation to their ability. Results have improved over the last three years. Pupils are successful in gaining places at universities and colleges of their choice, which is mainly in the United Kingdom or other European countries.
- 2.17 Individual pupils and teams achieve success in a variety of activities. Individual pupils have been highly successful at international show jumping, skiing and cycling. They have learned a great deal about competing at a high level. Some pupils enjoy a reputation as composers locally and in the United Kingdom. Pupils are enthusiastic about their wins in orienteering nationally and internationally, and in a range of other sports; the choir has a high reputation in the local area. Members of sports teams and the choir are proud to represent the school and learn to be successful team players. These successes increase pupils' confidence and inspire pride in the school.
- 2.18 Throughout the school, pupils develop essential skills very well, and their attitudes to work and study are positive. They persevere in class and are outstanding ambassadors for the school. Parents' responses to the questionnaire indicate that they are happy with the attitudes the school promotes. Throughout the school pupils are motivated to learn. Literacy, numeracy and technological skills are effectively developed.
- 2.19 From the Foundation Stage, children listen carefully and express themselves well. By the time they leave the school, pupils are articulate, listen attentively to others and build on each others' comments in helpful ways. For example in a Year 10 French lesson, high quality debate and critical thinking was demonstrated through the complexity and subtlety in the pupils' testimony in a mock trial based on a short story by Victor Hugo. From an early age, pupils enjoy reading. As they get older, they read widely for pleasure and research. Pupils write accurately and fluently. Excellent examples of writing were observed in French in Year 9 when pupils were writing about Molière and pupils' individual studies in history in Year 13 on the USSR. Presentation of work is usually neat although some of the older pupils are more careless about the presentation and organisation of work than others.
- 2.20 At each stage pupils have an appropriate grasp of mathematics. They are able to apply their understanding and knowledge of mathematics effectively when given the opportunity. For example, in the reception class children applied their recognition of numbers in a wide range of practical ways using all their senses. However, the over-reliance on working through the current text and worksheets in the primary school diminishes the range of strategies pupils use to solve number problems. Throughout the secondary school when given the opportunity, pupils apply their numerical skills appropriately. For example, pupils persevered with their mathematics when completing work on spreadsheets in ICT. In a mathematics lesson in Year 13, pupils used their numeracy skills to good effect when solving equations using complex numbers.
- 2.21 In ICT lessons, pupils' are skilled at using computers and their competence is clear. They apply ICT effectively in subjects when they have an opportunity. Pupils make appropriate use of computer technology and have developed a wide range of skills within the ICT

programme of study. In the primary school, pupils are enthusiastic and demonstrate a clear ability to discuss the use of programs, and explain operations and procedures to be used in order to undertake a specific task. They applied their skills very effectively when using a presentation to produce a poster for Red Nose Day. In the secondary school, pupils become increasingly successful at using spreadsheets, and good examples of work in ICT were found in English in Year 8 in a leaflet about animal rights and in a geography project about Japan in Year 9.

- 2.22 Throughout the school, pupils work very well independently and co-operate effectively in groups. They organise themselves efficiently and demonstrate tolerance and patience, and the ability to share ideas and equipment. They generally work very hard and produce a large amount of work, persevering conscientiously to overcome problems and difficulties. A good example of this was in a PE lesson in Year 7, when pupils were learning high jump skills. Note-taking is effective and files are generally well-kept and organised. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent overall, although a small number of older pupils are casual about punctuality, and the presentation and organisation of their work is sometimes haphazard. Pupils are enthusiastic, have high levels of enjoyment, and take pride in their work and activities.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.23 At all ages the pupils demonstrate outstandingly well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school, which permeates all that it does, together with the quality of relationships in the harmonious community, make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development. The school is highly successful in meeting its aims to encourage pupils to develop morally, emotionally culturally, intellectually and physically. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a prominent feature in all aspects of school life and underpins its values and philosophy.
- 2.24 The pupils are helped to develop outstanding spiritual awareness through the friendliness of all staff and pupils, and the strong sense of community and ethos based on what pupils feel is a family atmosphere. School assemblies in the primary and secondary school successfully celebrate individual strengths and focus pupils' attention on the needs of others. For example, in one assembly a thought-provoking presentation from Year 7 captivated staff and pupils and prepared the whole school very well for the wide range of fund-raising events for Red Nose Day. The school celebrates achievements through merit awards and commendations presented in assembly. Teachers praise pupils' successes and respect their views. Consequently, pupils feel happy, safe and valued, which boosts their self-esteem and confidence. In many lessons, pupils are helped to appreciate the world around them, not least the beauty of the school site. In a music lesson in Year 6, pupils listened admiringly to their classmates' wide-ranging musical skills. Tolerance of religious beliefs is sensitively taught through examination of world religions in the secondary school PSHE programme and in the celebration of different festivals such as Hanukkah, in the primary school.
- 2.25 Pupils throughout the school have a highly developed moral sense and, from an early age, are able to distinguish right from wrong. This is largely due to the value the school puts on community life, and the strong and positive ethos. Discipline is based on respect for each other and for property, and the majority of pupils regard the rules as fair. Pupils understand the school's high expectations of their behaviour reflected in the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Pupils' moral awareness is successfully reinforced by group work called circle time in the primary school. PSHE lessons in the secondary school look at challenging moral issues such as racism, drugs, sex education, refugees and asylum seekers, and the environment. The gendarmerie provides lectures on drug addiction, cycling proficiency and

dangers outside the school. Throughout the school, much of the work within the curriculum helps pupils examine moral issues such as the moral dilemmas facing characters in *Romeo and Juliet* in a very successful Year 10 English lesson, or the question of personal freedom when examining historical documentation relating to the Cold War in a Year 13 history lesson. Pupils demonstrate care for each other, are kind, courteous and tolerant. Their behaviour is excellent.

- 2.26 Pupils' social development is excellent and is promoted very successfully by the school. Pupils help one another; senior pupils spontaneously encourage younger pupils. PSHE lessons examine issues related to social skills. The code of conduct strongly emphasises self-discipline and respect for others. The school successfully helps pupils develop responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. Pupils insist that bullying is virtually non-existent. Work experience outside school is very limited, but pupils in the secondary school participate in the school council, take turns to do duties and help with reading, ICT and art in the primary school. Citizenship is taught through the PSHE programme, and pupils learn about local and national French laws and how communes work, through a local studies programme. Pupils participate in activities in the local community; for example, the choir sings at weddings. The school provides a wide variety of very popular social events which contribute significantly to pupils' social development. Numerous charitable fund-raising activities during the year, such as the sale of bracelets and key-rings for the AIDS charity SIDACTION, make pupils aware of poverty, the need for education and what they can do to help eradicate disease in the Third World. The school is very conscious of environmental issues and has an effective programme of re-cycling. Pupils are proud of their environment and take a responsibility for keeping the school site tidy.
- 2.27 A major strength of the school is its international dimension, which encourages tolerance, awareness and understanding of different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs. Pupils believe that this also helps to develop their maturity. They show real respect for the many different nationalities represented in the school. An exciting Year 7 local studies programme of studies and visits introduces pupils to the history and culture of France. This is complemented by cinema visits and a French cultural evening. The curriculum provides many opportunities to develop and extend cultural awareness; for example, an exploration of racial discrimination under apartheid in South Africa was observed in the study of Athol Fugard's play 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' in a Year 12 English lesson and in Maya Angelou's poem 'Woman Work' with Year 11. In the primary school, pupils study a range of world religions and can compare life in Ancient Egyptian times with life in Egypt today. Modern languages students thoroughly enjoyed their trips to Germany and Spain.

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.28 Throughout the school, generally good teaching and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils promote the school's aims for the pupils to learn best by being encouraged, valued, trusted and respected. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all lessons. Some examples of outstanding teaching were observed in both the primary and the secondary school that had a significant impact on pupils' learning and achievement. The good teaching identified by the previous review has been maintained.
- 2.29 Overall, teaching enables pupils of all abilities to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop new skills. The best teaching demonstrates a good understanding of pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment. A key feature of the most successful teaching was work set at the right levels for different abilities. A good example of this was observed in science in Year 1. Different work was planned at just the right level for the different groups of pupils, and the teacher encouraged

further progress through challenging questioning. In geography in Year 8, pupils were supported by a good balance of class teaching and individual discussion, which challenged the most able and guided the least able. Teachers in the primary school do not always give appropriate consideration to the IEPs for pupils who need support for their learning nor provide additional challenging work to extend the high attaining pupils. Throughout the school, specialist teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and for pupils for whom English is an additional language is highly successful.

- 2.30 Overall, teaching fosters interest, enjoyment and intellectual and creative effort. This is a particular feature of many lessons in the secondary school. The most successful and inspirational teaching, which made pupils think and learn for themselves, was found in art, English, French, Spanish, chemistry, history, PE and music. For example, in a Reception lesson on the reception class who were examining road safety, a lively discussion about road accidents was followed by the children thoroughly enjoying practising keeping safe on a pedestrian crossing and stopping when the traffic lights changed to red. In a Year 10 French lesson, pupils took a role in a mock trial. The lesson had variety and pace as the teacher challenged the pupils and was rigorous about pronunciation. In a few lessons, where teaching was less successful, pupils had to sit and listen for long periods of time, the pace of lessons was slow, or questioning was insufficiently rigorous to capture the pupils' interest and enthusiasm for what they had learned.
- 2.31 Teaching is generally well planned and methods are effective overall. Planning is based on a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. In PE lessons in Years 4, 6, 9 and 13, highly successful subject knowledge was used to intervene just at the right time with strong teaching points that had a significant impact on pupils' physical skills and understanding. In IGCSE music in Year 11, excellent rigorous and analytical feedback about individual performances inspired confidence and increased concentration on finer points to improve performance. Pupils were fired by the enthusiasm of the teacher. On some occasions teachers talked or demonstrated too much, which inhibited the pupils from extending their own practical skills. In some lessons in the primary school, too much emphasis on completing work sheets meant that pupils did not consolidate their knowledge and skills by applying what they had learned in more practical ways. Teachers make effective use of the resources available. A good example was found in the reception class. A tambourine was very successfully used to help children count the number of beats to match the number of units in a numeracy lesson.
- 2.32 Overall, lessons are calm and positive, and expectations that pupils will behave are made very clear. Teaching encourages good behaviour and enables pupils to work together cooperatively. On a few occasions, teachers in both sections of the school talk over pupils who become excited and 'chatty' and do not maintain the full attention of all the class. However, pupils are generally attentive and behave very well. Teachers value the contributions pupils make and treat older pupils with a high degree of respect. The highly effective work ethic fostered by teaching engenders positive and enthusiastic co-operation within the classroom.
- 2.33 Overall, the quality and usefulness of assessment are variable throughout the school. Some procedures are very thorough, but procedures are inconsistently applied. Assessment is not sufficiently analytical and lacks rigour. The school is aware of this and has identified assessment as an area for major development. Marking is inconsistent in quality and quantity. Some work is marked with ticks. Other marking offers clear guidance for improvement, allowing pupils to reflect upon what has been learned and consider what they need to do to improve their work in future. Assessment for pupils with learning difficulties

or disabilities is very thorough in the learning support department but is less rigorous in some classes in the primary school.

- 2.34 A range of internal and national tests, examinations and assessments has been introduced but arrangements are unsystematic. Teachers know pupils well, and individual results in subjects are recorded in the secondary school. However, results are not always analysed to seek ways of improving performance in subjects or the school as a whole. The secondary school is currently examining ways of using information from assessment to help raise attainment but this is at an early stage of development. In the primary school, results from assessment and tests are not rigorously analysed. Information from assessment does not always inform planning or the next stages of pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is not always monitored and tracked with sufficient rigour to predict future levels of attainment and raise achievement.

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The pastoral arrangements are of high quality throughout the school. The welfare, health and safety of pupils are considered to be paramount. The necessary measures to promote pupils' wellbeing and safety are consistently implemented. The school meets its aim to create a way of life characterised by caring, tolerance, security, praise and high expectations. The staff interact positively with and support pupils at all ages. This area has strengthened since the review in 2002.
- 3.2 Teaching and non-teaching staff provide valuable support and guidance. The care given to pupils in every year group is one of the school's strengths and underpins the strong and positive ethos. The headmaster and staff know the pupils and their families well. Pupils trust them to sort out the problems they have. Form tutors in the senior school and class teachers in the primary school play an important role in care and support. Very effective communication between subject departments and tutors in the senior school provides a cohesive approach to care. Pupils are happy and feel that teachers know them well and that the headmaster cares about their education and welfare. Arrangements to help pupils prepare for university and higher education are successful, and the guidance with application forms and interviews is valued by the students.
- 3.3 Pastoral arrangements work very well. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage are comfortable with each day's regular routines. Consequently, even those pupils who speak very little English are happy and secure within the school environment. Pupils at all levels in the school know the procedures and are encouraged to perform well by the system of rewards. Awards for effort, work and good behaviour are frequently celebrated in assemblies. The special prize giving when pupils leave the primary school and the graduation ceremony when students leave the school for higher education or work, make a significant contribution to pupils self-esteem and wellbeing. Information slips for poor behaviour and incomplete work are a deterrent, and most pupils felt it would be embarrassing for their parents to be informed. Procedures are underpinned by a broad range of clear policies, which provide guidance for teachers, pupils and parents. The anti-bullying policy is explicit, and pupils feel that the school deals fairly with the very rare cases of bullying.
- 3.4 Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and based on respect and trust. At each stage, the staff provide very effective role models for pupils because they are relaxed, kind and work harmoniously together. The PSHE programme in the senior school, taught by a specialist, deals successfully with sensitive issues, such as drugs and sex education. Throughout the school, staff are ready to discuss issues such as racism and bullying sensitive and positive ways. Pupils of all ages feel they are able to talk to the headmaster and staff about matters that concern them. Teaching and non-teaching staff are friendly and polite to pupils, and pupils respond courteously. One of the significant strengths of the school is the respect and pride the pupils have in the school. This is a happy school where pupils readily support each other. Relationships between pupils of all nationalities are excellent.
- 3.5 Measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and safety are effective, clearly documented and implemented throughout the school. These responsibilities are taken very seriously. Comprehensive measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken; fire practices are held regularly and carefully recorded. The school complies with strict French laws. Chemicals are properly stored and 'CLEAPSS' and HAZCARDS' are used to help ensure safety in laboratories. Attendance registers and the admissions register

are properly maintained. Accident records are thorough and the number of trained staff, which includes the school nurse, is appropriate. Child protection procedures are secure and staff are appropriately trained. Arrangements for health and safety are effective and carefully monitored. The chef and his catering team support the school's work by maintaining a healthy diet. Hygiene arrangements are excellent and the food is of high quality, with a good choice of healthy and nutritious options. Pupils know how to promote a healthy and safe environment.

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.6 The links with parents are very successful, and the school has positive links with the community. The school fulfils its aims in these respects. The strengths identified in the review have been maintained.
- 3.7 The responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire showed that the vast majority of parents are very happy with the school. In both primary and secondary schools they particularly like the way teaching helps their child to make progress. Parents like the way the school encourages them to be involved, and they support the attitudes and views the school promotes. They are happy with the opportunities to discuss their child's work and, in the primary school, parents approve of the high standard of behaviour. In both sections of the school, a small minority of parents was concerned about extra-curricular activities, some aspects of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and how the school handles concerns. In the secondary school a few parents were concerned about the range of subjects, homework and the standard of behaviour. The inspectors judge the provision for special educational needs to be very successful in the learning support unit, but teachers do not always use the well-constructed IEPs to plan work. They judge the extra-curricular activities to be appropriate but pupils do not have a broad enough range of choices of activities because only a small number of staff are involved. The school handles concerns sensitively. The range of subjects and homework is judged to be appropriate and inspectors found the pupils' behaviour to be excellent throughout the school.
- 3.8 Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school in many ways. They play an important part in supporting sporting and musical events, and class assemblies in the primary school. Parents are invited to become 'book borrowers' in the library. They are regularly invited into school to monitor their children's choices of lunch and help to teach them good dietary habits. The school has an 'open door' policy and welcomes parents. Non-teaching staff are very helpful in supporting parents who are new to France. The relationship between parents and staff is very friendly and open. Parents can book meetings with staff at any time, in addition to the twice-yearly formal meetings.
- 3.9 The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is active and hardworking. It is instrumental in fund-raising for the school, and for a range of local and international charities, and in organising social activities for parents. Coffee mornings with guest speakers are arranged as well as 'Faces to names' picnics, which welcome new families. Concerts, car boot sales and cultural events are also organised and involve the local community. Occasional meetings are organised to discuss aspects of interest to parents, which recently included a lecture on the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse given by the Juvenile Delinquency Agency in conjunction with the local gendarmerie.
- 3.10 Parents are provided with a comprehensive range of good quality information about the school. Clear, informative and well-illustrated newsletters keep parents well informed throughout the year, in a distinct and succinct format that offers direct and helpful communication. Parents receive clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress. Most reports are informative and encouraging and, in the main, offer strategies for

improvement, including targets. However, the quality of reports is variable. Excellent clear evaluations of progress were observed in some reports but, in others, comments were not consistent with the grades. Homework books are used effectively and provide a helpful channel of communication between school and home. In both primary and secondary schools, parents receive helpful booklets about the curriculum, and the school's expectations, practices and procedures.

- 3.11 Links with the local community are positive. Successful sporting links through the extra-curricular programme and strong links with art and music enhance the pupils' experiences. For example, the choir is well known in the local area and performs in a variety of churches as well as at local weddings. The school maintains successful links through fund raising for local and national charitable organisations such as La Federation Des Maladies Orphelines (rare illnesses) as well as 'Walkathons' and 'Readathons', in addition to supporting causes such as the Guide Dogs for the Blind training programme in Biot and support for sick hospitalised children. In the primary school flowers and fruit from the Harvest Festival celebration are distributed to a local home for senior citizens. The Red Cross provide first aid courses, which are helpful to staff and pupils.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school is well governed by the board of directors. The board delegates management arrangements to the headmaster but retains a clear oversight of the school's work through clear lines of responsibility. This enables them to keep the benefactors informed about the school's work. The board meets regularly and keeps informed through comprehensive reports from the headmaster and the insights of directors who work in the school. The school is run as a successful, expanding business. Marketing is influenced by excellent local knowledge so that the school's strengths are promoted very effectively.
- 4.2 The board is fully committed to the school and aware of what is needed to keep the school improving. They have a clear insight into educational development and financial planning through the business manager and headmaster. Significant investment in the accommodation and resources and additions to the team of specialist staff has significantly enhanced the provision. Relationships between the board and the staff are excellent and this further supports the directors' understanding of the school. Two of the six board members work at senior level in the school, providing specialist legal support and the right level of challenge to the school. The board has high regard for the teaching and non-staff, and show their appreciation at a popular annual dinner.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.3 The quality of leadership and management by the headmaster, senior leadership and others with responsibilities is effective overall. It fulfils the school aims and ethos, and promotes a good quality of education, highly successful care and excellent behaviour. Good improvement has been made since the previous review in 2002, and the recommendations of the consultants have been addressed. The senior management team has been expanded to include the post of director of studies and a well-experienced deputy head has been appointed. This has had an important impact on the structure and organisation of the school.
- 4.4 The headmaster has developed a strong and positive ethos, which values the individual strengths of the pupils and staff, and underpins school development. Clear and influential leadership is helping the school through a significant period of change and development, and inspires the confidence of the staff team. The determination for pupils' to do well is promoted by this strong leadership, which is very well supported by the deputy head and primary school co-ordinator, who form the senior management team. The post of director of studies is currently vacant, which has deprived the team of strong leadership in relation to the curriculum. This important post is to be filled in the next few months.
- 4.5 Subject co-ordinators provide appropriate management overall: some departments, for example learning support, are managed very successfully. The co-ordination of subjects is underpinned by an appropriate range of meetings that ensure the staff are kept informed. However, not all co-ordinators are clear about their roles or how they can influence subject improvement, raise levels of achievement and develop teaching.
- 4.6 The school knows what it needs to do to improve. For example, assessment and monitoring are identified as areas for improvement in the school development plan. Priorities are set and decisions are put into practice appropriately. Development planning in subjects complements the school development plan. However, the plans are not always based on information from a cohesive programme of monitoring and evaluation. The analysis of the impact of teaching

on achievements and how standards can be raised is at an early stage of development, but is not yet securely embedded into the work of the school. A full range of policies and procedures is in place and these have recently been reviewed and updated. However, the impact of the policies and changes such as improved use of IEPs and training on different learning styles have not yet been evaluated for effectiveness.

- 4.7 Management is successful in securing and supporting good quality staff. Appropriate checks are made on all visiting tutors, teaching and non-teaching staff. Professional development is provided appropriately and the school is keen to do more-when resources become available. Currently, training covers mainly whole school issues. Some staff have benefited from visits to other schools to observe provision, and in-house training by the learning support co-ordinator was appreciated by teachers. Appraisal is at an early stage of development and is not yet clearly linked to school improvement and professional development. Plans are in place to enhance appraisal and professional development.
- 4.8 Induction is informal but new staff feel well supported because teaching and non-teaching staff are friendly and helpful. Induction into a new country is successful and the support of the administrative staff is highly valued by teachers new to the school. Appropriate support and mentoring for newly qualified teachers is embedded in school practice, but the school has no written policy.
- 4.9 Finances are well-managed to support the aims of the school and the pupils' needs. The school is under-going a period of positive change and updating. The good range and quality of resources available to support teaching are well used. Appropriate funds are allocated to subjects and are well-managed. Accommodation is excellent. Marketing is very successful in raising the profile of the school locally. Administration is highly effective and the school runs smoothly.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 This is a happy school with a strong and positive ethos that values pupils' individual strengths. It fully meets its aims and philosophy. Pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education and very well prepared for adult life through good quality education, effective teaching, excellent care and very successful links with parents. Attainment overall is good in relation to pupils' abilities. The quality of learning is good and pupils have well-developed literacy and numeracy skills. Sometimes pupils' progress is reduced by a lack of opportunity to investigate, explore and solve problems in practical ways. Work does not always match the needs of higher attaining pupils and those who need support for their learning. The quality of most teaching is good, and teaching staff know their pupils well. Assessment procedures are not clear or consistent in different year groups. The school is successfully managed, although monitoring and evaluation are not yet systematic. Assessment and monitoring form part of the school development plan. The headmaster is an influential leader who is well respected by teachers, pupils and parents. School management in a period of significant change is effective, and staff morale is high. The very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils promotes the outstanding relationships between those of different nationality and cultural backgrounds. The school is highly successful as an international school. Teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and pupils are proud of their school's achievements.
- 5.2 The school has made significant improvement since the review by education consultants in 2002. The strengths have been maintained and many aspects have improved, including the breadth of the curriculum, the timetable, pupils' achievement, behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and pastoral care. Significant improvements have been made to governance and management, including the expansion of the senior management team. A broad range of good quality resources supports teaching, and the extended accommodation is now excellent.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has no major weaknesses but to further improve its educational provision it should give attention to the following:
1. Establish a systematic approach to raising levels of attainment and improving teaching and learning by:
 - reviewing and improving the effectiveness and quality of assessment;
 - ensuring that information from assessment informs lesson plans and subject development;
 - analysing the results of tests and examinations for individuals and groups of pupils, and the school as a whole;
 - establishing a systematic approach to monitoring, evaluation and analysis of all aspects of the school by senior management;
 - clarifying the roles of co-ordinators to include monitoring, evaluation and analysis within subjects and departments;
 2. Ensure that teaching consistently recognises the needs of different groups of pupils by:
 - using the existing good teaching in the school as models for other staff;
 - employing a variety of teaching methods rather than one preferred methodology;
 - planning to meet the needs of all pupils and recognising the targets in the IEPs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities;
 - planning to challenge and extend the learning of high attaining pupils;
 3. Enable the pupils to develop their practical, problem-solving, investigative, and decision-making skills progressively in each subject as pupils move through the school by:
 - reviewing the schemes of work to ensure that skills are identified;
 - agreeing which skills will be taught to which level in each part of the school;
 - planning good quality, challenging practical activities;
 - reducing the use of work sheets in the primary school.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from March 12th to March 15th 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Jennie Willcock-Bates	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Barbara Gibbs	Former Headteacher HMC and COBISEC school
Mr Bill Burn	Deputy Head, HMC school
Ms Diane Perry	Headteacher, COBISEC school
Mr Peter Mulhern	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mr Peter de Voil	Headteacher, HMC and COBISEC school
Mr Len Green	Head of Faculty, HMC school