

Scandinavian School of Madrid

Camino Ancho 14, 28109, Alcobendas, Madrid

School's regional authorisation number: 28076265

Date of Inspection: 11th November 2022

Inspection Team:

Andrew Beavon (Lead Inspector)

Alan Thornton (Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

To evaluate the school for authorisation as British for pupils from Reception age to Year 13.

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from Reception to Year 13 for a period of 4 years for 325 students.

The next inspection is due in November 2026.

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N.B. A NABSS inspection does not infer membership of the Association. Authorised schools may apply for NABSS membership.

History and Context of the School

The Scandinavian School of Madrid is situated in the residential district of La Moraleja, Alcobendas on the northern outskirts of Madrid. Opened 75 years ago to cater for children from the Nordic community, the international section (which follows the British curriculum) was opened in 2005.

At the time of inspection, 248 students were on roll; 80% are Spanish, 15% are Scandinavian with various other nationalities making up the rest of the student community. The school is non-profit making and is owned and managed by an association of parents and teachers.

Accommodation and Resources

The British and Scandinavian schools share the buildings and facilities onsite, but each has its own resources and designated areas. The buildings provide a good standard of accommodation for students.

All classrooms are welcoming and stimulating, suitably furnished and well-resourced. They are equipped with projectors and screens which are used well to support teaching and learning.

There are specialist facilities for art, music and science. The music studio features a wide range of acoustic and electronic instruments, and the art room has extensive craft resources. There is a large gymnasium which is used for sports and performance activities. The primary library is well-stocked. Currently, secondary library books are stored in classrooms but plans are in place for the creation of a dedicated secondary library.

Staff facilities are appropriate for the number of teachers in the school. The number of toilets for students is suitable for a school of this size.

Printed, digital and practical resources throughout the school support the delivery of the curriculum and are used imaginatively by teachers. The resources for computing include four trolleys with laptops (two each for primary and secondary classes) which can be booked for lessons. From Year 7 upwards, students are encouraged to bring their own devices to school.

The outside areas of the school are extensive and include a sports pitch, a wooded area, playgrounds and a large sand pit. The school makes use of external facilities nearby for sports activities such as swimming and athletics. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classrooms have direct access to a stimulating and well-planned outside space.

There is a separate dining room with meals cooked onsite by an external catering company. Students comment that the quality of school meals has improved over the last two years. The dining room is also used to host a student-parent breakfast club every morning.

Health, Safety and Welfare

The site is secure and access is controlled, although procedures for signing in visitors are inconsistent. The school provides a safe environment for staff and students. Key policies are in place for curriculum, health and safety, anti-bullying, child protection and safeguarding.

Students state that they feel safe and they trust the staff to deal appropriately with any concerns or problems they have. They find staff very approachable and supportive, and this is one of the strengths of the school. The school counsellor offers pastoral support for students experiencing social and emotional problems.

Fire and evacuation procedures are displayed around the school but not clearly in every room. This requires attention. Evacuation drills take place once a term. All staff are first aid trained, and accidents or illness are recorded appropriately.

Criminal record checks from Spain have been obtained for all staff.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and clearly based on the EYFS framework and English National Curriculum. Appropriate time is allocated to the teaching of subjects enabling students to learn and make progress. Suitable weight is given to English subjects and Spanish. The principal language of instruction is English.

The school's curriculum policy is clear and planning is consistent across the school. Schemes of work are appropriate. Tasks are differentiated to cater for the range of different abilities in a class.

Students with a special educational need are identified and supported. The Health Team, comprising the head of school, special educational needs co-ordinator and school counsellor, works together with teachers to assist targeted students inside and outside the classroom. Detailed information in the form of an individual educational plan is provided to help teachers support students where required.

Topic-based learning for the humanities subjects is well planned for primary students. These lessons are stimulating and engaging, and they help develop students' speaking and listening, questioning and thinking skills.

Students are offered two option choices at Key Stage 4, in addition to seven compulsory GCSE subjects. A good range of subjects is offered in Year 12 and Year 13, with most students studying three or four A levels.

Career and university guidance are well catered for by the heads of the international secondary department. The school participates in regular university fairs and organises a programme of university and careers advice based on the requirements of each individual student.

Educational visits are organised throughout the year and usually linked to the curriculum, with residential trips at the end of the school year offered to students from Year 5 upwards.

Staffing

Staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the EYFS programmes of study and the National Curriculum. Teachers are effectively deployed in their areas of specialism.

Staff recruitment and retention are well managed. There is a core of staff who have worked at the school for several years. This has ensured continuity.

There are good staff-to-student ratios in all classes, with a maximum of 22 students per class. Support staff are timetabled to work with specific classes in the primary department or to work with targeted students in the rest of the school as required.

Teaching staff demonstrate good subject knowledge and practice, and this is supported by a programme of in-service training in school and online throughout the year. For example, the impact of recent training is evident in the quality of questioning by teachers in many of the classes.

Staff meetings are held weekly. These provide opportunities for staff to share expertise and good practice which directly relate to teaching and learning. Teachers are extremely positive about the school and enthusiastic about their work.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching ranges from very good to outstanding. Overall, it is very good. Lessons are generally well-structured, have clear learning objectives and are interactive and engaging. Teachers, assistants and students have excellent relationships and this contributes to purposeful learning.

Students are very confident when talking about what they are doing and what they are learning, and they make good progress in most lessons. Spoken English is insisted on and the quality of written English is good.

Teachers know their subjects and tailor learning to the needs of their students. The use of questioning by teachers to enhance understanding is a strength. In a Year 3 lesson about proper nouns, the teacher ensured students understood the task by redirecting student questions to other students who then had to think, explain and apply their knowledge. During a class discussion in a Year 6 science lesson about reversible and irreversible change, the teacher carefully phrased questions to help students better understand how to plan an appropriate experiment to explore this topic.

Across the school, lessons are well-paced and structured, and have explicit learning objectives. Teachers make clear links to previous learning. In most

lessons, teachers build on students' knowledge and interest. During an A level physics lesson, students' understanding of the concept of momentum and velocity was challenged when they had to explain how it related to video footage of people engaging in parkour. This creative start to the lesson engaged the students and gave them the opportunity to apply their learning to a real-life situation.

There are a number of attractive, stimulating displays celebrating EYFS and primary students' work in classrooms and corridors. These are less evident in the secondary classrooms and communal areas.

Assessment

The school's systems for assessment are effective. Student progress is tracked and monitored by teachers and the leadership team. They use this data to inform planning and, where required, to determine support and early intervention.

Since the previous inspection, the use of marking and written feedback to drive improvement in students' work has itself improved, but this still requires further development. There is still not enough consistency in how this is applied by teachers across year groups in the primary department or within subjects in the secondary department.

Parents receive a progress report twice a year which details the student's achievement against curriculum objectives. Parent conferences are held twice a year with parents and students present.

Standardised summative tests are used to gauge students' attainment and the results are used alongside class assessment data to inform planning and teaching. Student achievement is effectively tracked against National Curriculum objectives.

The results from external examinations indicate that student achievement is broadly in line with expectations.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is prioritised by the school. A well-planned, whole school approach to personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education helps students leave well prepared for adult life.

The school follows an anti-bullying scheme with material covered during PSHE lessons. This year, it has also introduced a new programme which teaches students to understand how the brain works. Students and staff talk positively about the impact this is having in school in helping children better understand and manage their own wellbeing.

Both inside and outside the classroom, behaviour is outstanding. Students are well-mannered, positive and motivated. They enjoy coming to school. The members of the student council feel that they are listened to and able to propose changes in the school, even though they do not meet regularly.

The school has a clear ethos and set of values. These are reinforced through the positive language used by teaching staff and visually through displays in class and around the school.

Leadership and Management

The head of school and the leadership team have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and its future direction. Good leadership and management are evident in the consistency of expectations across the school, notably in the quality of teaching and learning, teacher-student relationships and behaviour. These areas are strengths of the school.

There are weekly leadership meetings to discuss and plan the school's priorities and review progress. School development planning, which involves the school's governing body, is thorough, and there is an extensive school self-review process to evaluate its success.

The school's appraisal programme encourages a professional dialogue between the leadership team and staff. As part of this process, the quality of teaching and learning is monitored. This includes peer observations as well as observations by members of the leadership team. The guidance and assessment of teacher performance has played an effective part in maintaining the high standard of teaching since the previous inspection.

Response to the previous inspection reports

Timetabling has been improved to ensure there is more appropriate provision for the teaching of geography and computing. The resources and support for teachers in the sixth form are now of a good standard. The consistency and quality of feedback to students has improved but still remain a priority.

Recommendations

The school should:

- continue to develop greater consistency in teachers' marking and written feedback within subjects and departments; and
- maintain the high standards already achieved in teaching and learning, and in the students' behaviour and attitudes to learning.