



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

St Catherine's British School

March 2023

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School's Details

School	St Catherine's British School			
Address	Sophocles Venizelou 77 141-23 Lykovrissi Athens Greece			
Telephone number	003 0 210 2829750			
Email address	pa@stcatherines.gr			
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Smith			
Chair of governors	Mr George Drimiotis			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1340			
	EYFS	107	Juniors	544
	Seniors	504	Sixth Form	185
Inspection dates	6 to 9 March 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Catherine's British School is a day school which was founded in 1956 as a preparatory school in the grounds of the British embassy in Athens. It moved to its present site in 1971, and now educates boys and girls from the ages of 3 to 18. The school is run as a charity, overseen by a board of trustees.
- 1.2 The school comprises two sections: a lower school which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and an upper school which includes a sixth form.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a new purpose-built upper school building with some whole-school facilities, opened in 2020. A new interim chair of governors was appointed in December 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's motto is *Excellence and Happiness*, and it aims to foster a love of learning through a challenging, broad and balanced curriculum. It seeks to develop fully pupils' intellectual, social, physical and creative potential so they grow into happy, sensitive, informed and capable citizens, prepared to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to their wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from professional families in over 50 countries. Around half of pupils are from Greek families, with around one in five coming from UK families. Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of both the lower and upper schools, including the sixth form, is above average for those taking similar tests. The school has identified 212 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 100 receive specialist learning support for specific learning difficulties, communication difficulties, and physical or sensory impairments. There are 117 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 110 receive additional support. Pupils who are academically gifted or who demonstrate specific talents are supported with appropriate provision.

2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

This is a COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas. The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in November 2016.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets all the Standards for British Schools Overseas and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

Part 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**
- 2.3 The curriculum in both the lower school and upper school is aligned to the National Curriculum for England, with the addition of lessons in Greek language and culture, and it reflects the aims of the school. It enables pupils to make good progress in the context of the standard.
- 2.4 In the Early Years, children follow a programme based on the English EYFS requirements. In the upper school, pupils are prepared for GCSE, IGCSE and International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations and to gain places at a wide range of universities around the world. The curriculum is broadened by a range of additional and co-curricular activities. Planning provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. It ensures successful acquisition across the curriculum of English for those pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). There is a suitable programme of careers education for older pupils. Appropriate arrangements are made for the teaching of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) in the lower school, and personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education (PSHCE) in the upper school which, along with other areas of the curriculum, actively promote British values and prepare pupils for life in British and European society.
- 2.5 Teaching meets the needs of all pupils including those with SEND, EAL and the more able. Pupils with SEND or EAL receive additional support, following appropriate identification of their individual needs. More able pupils are provided with a range of additional challenges. Teaching makes effective use of a wide range of resources including information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers assess pupils' work and provide feedback on how they can improve their learning. Teachers demonstrate extensive knowledge and understanding of their subjects and employ suitably motivating teaching methods, which lead to effective learning throughout the school.
- 2.6 There is a suitable framework in place to assess pupils' performance. From their entry to Early Years, and through Years 1 and 2, judgements are made by teachers about pupils' level of development, and their skills in the English language. Standardised ability testing is carried out from Year 3 onwards, using cognitive ability assessments. Pupils' performance and progress are tracked in the lower and upper schools, and this information is used to plan teaching in order to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- 2.7 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**
- 2.9 The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The school promotes equality for all, including those groups which fall under the protected characteristics of the Equality Act in the UK: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, to distinguish right from wrong, and to respect the civil and criminal law of England and the host country. The school encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, to show initiative, and to understand how they can

contribute positively to the lives of others. The school promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions and encourages pupils to have respect for other people.

- 2.10 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, taking account of both statutory guidance from the UK and local requirements, including in the EYFS. The school has a suitable safeguarding policy and implements it effectively, including protecting pupils from the dangers of extremism. A regular programme of safeguarding training at the appropriate level is carried out and recorded for all staff, including those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in both the upper and lower schools maintain detailed records of any safeguarding concerns, which allow effective monitoring of any patterns or trends. Any pupil identified as potentially vulnerable is monitored carefully. This is especially important since the school does not have access to local safeguarding partners or children's social services, as they do not operate in the host country in the same way as they do in the UK. There is effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements by governors, including regular review of policy and safeguarding reports which are presented by the DSL.
- 2.13 The school has a suitable behaviour policy which reflects non-statutory guidance from the UK. A system of rewards celebrates pupils' successes, and suitable sanctions are applied when they are needed. Records are kept of behavioural incidents, so the school can identify any patterns. The school rejects corporal punishment, and a log of serious sanctions is maintained. Pupils say they have adults to whom they can talk if they have any concerns, and they are confident that the school will act on them. Pupils say there is very little bullying, including cyber-bullying, and that the school would deal with it effectively if it happened. This is confirmed by school records.
- 2.14 The school has a rigorous and systematic approach to health and safety. The health and safety policy meets local requirements and is implemented effectively. Suitable records and logs are kept on the maintenance of all equipment related to health and safety. The school co-operates fully with the regular health and safety checks carried out by local officials.
- 2.15 The school has suitable arrangements to protect staff and pupils from the risk of fire. There is a suitable fire risk assessment policy. Fire equipment is regularly maintained and tested, and records are kept. Fire drills are held regularly, and pupils confirm that they know what to do in the event of fire.
- 2.16 The school's first-aid policy is appropriate and is implemented effectively. First-aid and medical matters are managed by suitably trained personnel, and detailed records are kept. Sufficient first-aid kits are located around the school. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid, including those with paediatric qualifications in the EYFS. Medicines are stored securely and administered appropriately, with suitable records kept.
- 2.17 Pupils are supervised effectively at all times of the school day, including before and after school, at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The school maintains attendance registers appropriately, with any unknown absences being followed up promptly. A register of admissions is kept as required which includes all the required information. All registers are maintained and backed up for a period of at least three years.
- 2.18 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy that reflects the nature of the school site and the range of activities that take place there. Suitable risk assessments are carried out for potentially hazardous areas such as science laboratories, sports facilities and the swimming pool. Staff are well trained in the assessment of risk. Suitable risk assessments are in place for all trips and visits.

Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.19 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.20 The school carries out appropriate checks on staff, governors and volunteers to ensure their suitability to work with children. These include barred list, prohibition, identity, medical fitness, right to work, qualifications and criminal records checks. The school does not employ agency supply staff. All checks are suitably recorded on a single central register of appointments.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.21 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.22 Suitable toilet, washing and changing facilities are provided for pupils of all ages. These are well maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Appropriate accommodation and facilities are provided for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. The buildings are well maintained in good condition and are regularly checked in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all users. Acoustic and lighting conditions are suitable, and appropriate drinking water facilities are provided. The school carries out regular checks on the temperature of hot water at the point of use. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and for outdoor play.

Part 6 – Provision of information

- 2.23 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**
- 2.24 The required range of information is provided or made available to parents, including contact details for the school, the headteacher and chair of governors, a statement of the school's ethos, and details of the school's curriculum. Policies and procedures related to safeguarding, admissions, health and safety, first aid, the promotion of good behaviour, the preventing of bullying and the provision for pupils with SEND and EAL are all posted on the school's website, as is the school's complaints procedure and the number of formal complaints received in the previous year. The school's results in public examinations are published on the school's website. Parents receive regular reports on their children's progress and attainment.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.25 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**
- 2.26 The school has an appropriate complaints procedure which is published on the school website. It provides for a three-stage process with clear timescales, including an informal first stage. If concerns are not resolved informally, parents can proceed to a formal written stage. If concerns remain unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel which includes at least one person independent of the management and running of the school which parents may attend, accompanied if they wish. The panel will then make findings and recommendations. A confidential record is kept of all complaints and findings, including action taken by the school whether or not the complaint is upheld. The school's records indicate prompt responses to any complaints received, almost all of which are resolved informally.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.27 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

2.28 The leadership and management of the school, including governors, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities so that the standards for British Schools Overseas are met consistently, and the well-being of pupils is promoted.

2.29 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the pupils' learning, achievement and personal development.

3. Inspection of Educational Quality

Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development;

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

The report refers to year groups in accordance with the system most commonly used in England.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

Recommendations

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school should consider:

- making sure that pupils in the upper school are clear on how they can improve their work in all subjects;
- enabling pupils in the upper school always to feel confident when making important decisions about their future courses and destinations;
- improving the understanding of pupils of all ages of the non-material aspects of life such as art, music, literature, world religions, philosophy and the natural world.

The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.

3.5 Pupils' progress over time is excellent. In the lower school, many pupils join the EYFS with low levels of proficiency in English. They make rapid progress because they are immersed in the English language, and targeted EAL support is provided where necessary, which continues throughout the lower school. By the end of the Reception Year, most pupils have achieved the early learning goals. Pupils continue to make excellent progress through the lower school and, by the end of Year 6, achieve well above world average levels in standardised tests in English and mathematics. These results are confirmed by observations of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Pupils with SEND make strong progress throughout the school because they receive effective support. There is little difference in the

achievement of boys and girls. In response to the questionnaire, the very large majority of parents said the school's teaching enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future.

- 3.6 In the upper school, pupils continue to make rapid progress, and achieve excellent results at IGCSE. In 2018 and 2019, around six out of ten results achieved were at the highest A*-A or 9–7 grades. The centre- and teacher-assessed grades awarded in 2020 and 2021 maintained this standard, and in 2022, almost seven out of ten grades achieved were at these highest levels. Pupils in the sixth form achieve highly in the IB Diploma Programme. In 2018 and 2019, IB results were well above worldwide average figures. In 2020 and 2021, the centre-assessed results remained above world average levels. In 2022, results were again high: boys, girls, pupils with SEND and those with EAL all achieved results which were above worldwide norms for all pupils. The school's most able pupils achieve highly because they are set additional challenges in class, and benefit from an academically challenging extra-curricular programme. Almost all pupils in Year 13 progress to university, many to institutions with very high entry requirements in the UK, Europe, the USA and Canada.
- 3.7 Pupils make excellent progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. For example, pupils in a sixth-form chemistry class were able to make excellent links between previous learning on stoichiometry and the need for using a primary standard when carrying out a titration to calculate the concentration of a solution. In a history lesson on British monarchs, pupils in Year 4 used a range of information to identify kings and queens and create a family tree. They could clearly explain the task, assimilate the information and match it successfully with the monarch. In response to the questionnaires, the very large majority of pupils said their English was improving, and a similar proportion of parents agreed.
- 3.8 Pupils develop excellent communication skills across the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop early. In a mathematics lesson on column addition and partitioning, for example, pupils in Year 3 listened well to instructions, then explained to their peers how they had completed the task, using subject-specific vocabulary. Older pupils become confident speakers. For example, in a history lesson, pupils in Year 11 explained with great articulacy how the media turned many US citizens against the Vietnam War. In an economics lesson, pupils in Year 10 showed excellent written communication skills in their analytical work on the strengths and weaknesses of large corporations. In a French lesson on vocabulary relating to school subjects, pupils in Year 5, many of whom have Greek as their first language, could read in French, and reply to the teacher in English, thereby developing their understanding of the world in three languages.
- 3.9 Pupils develop excellent numeracy skills from an early age. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils in the Reception Year were excited by their learning about the number 10. All managed to make 10 in their own way: using 10 construction blocks to build with, drawing or painting 10 flowers or people, 'cooking' 10 cupcakes in the sand tray, or arranging 10 shapes in a pattern. By Year 6, pupils can work out the area and perimeter of compound shapes using rectangles and can calculate missing lengths with confidence. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows pupils apply these numeracy skills very well in different subjects. Pupils in Year 10 showed good skills in calculating and analysing their personal ecological footprint in a geography lesson, while those in a Year 11 biology lesson demonstrated excellent mathematical skills when calculating the percentage chance of a child having blue eyes, when one parent is brown eyed and the other is blue eyed.
- 3.10 The development of pupils' study skills is excellent across a wide range of subjects. They are enthusiastic readers. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrated a love of books and were able to select those books that interested them very quickly, when visiting the school library. The scrutiny of Year 6 English books showed pupils using higher-order skills of analysis, hypothesis and synthesis successfully in their work on Tennyson's poem, *The Lady of Shalott*. Pupils gleaned evidence from the poem to justify their inferences, wrote clear summaries of the poem and analysed the text in terms of vocabulary. Pupils use a wide range of sources to a high level. For example, in a Greek lesson, Year 9 pupils used the available resources in a sophisticated way to analyse a Greek war poem and work out the message

about peace and war. In a computer science lesson, Year 10 pupils demonstrated high-level analytical skills in creating a program in a programming language to access two-dimensional lists, following the logic of the language as well as the logic of negative numbers in a list format.

- 3.11 Pupils achieve highly in a range of endeavours: academic, artistic, musical and sporting, especially in the upper school, although many external competitions were limited recently owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils achieve highly in debate and public speaking, with pupils representing Greece in recent world debating championships. Pupils achieve very well in the UK Maths Challenge, with pupils achieving bronze, silver and gold awards. Pupils perform at a high level in music and dramatic arts, with many achieving LAMDA awards, including at distinction level. Greek pupils in Year 9 told inspectors how they had successfully prepared for a Greek Ministry of Education language exam that would be the equivalent of UK Advanced level standard. Pupils perform to a high standard in many sports, especially football, in which St Catherine's teams regularly win international tournaments, and cross country running in which the school is similarly successful. Individual pupils at the school are successful in a wide range of sports, including volleyball, tennis, show jumping, gymnastics and figure skating.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. A very large majority of parents in response to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils in Year 3 showed excellent initiative and independence when using artefacts, pictures and books as clues to deduce that their next topic in history would be the Romans. They made excellent use of reference books to find out more about the objects and pictures in front of them. In response to the questionnaire, the very large majority of pupils said they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently. Pupils' excellent motivation is seen in the high quality and quantity of written and word-processed work seen in almost all subjects. In a Year 10 PSHCE lesson on anxiety and depression, pupils demonstrated a very positive attitude to their learning. They engaged in the lesson calmly and maturely, contributed in a sensible manner speaking quietly to each other when prompted. The pupils' teamworking skills in collaborative work are first rate. For instance, in a Year 9 English lesson on the poem *London* by William Blake, pupils worked together very productively, ensuring all contributed with intelligence in comparing a Hogarth sketch to the poem.
- 3.13 In the lower school, pupils develop good ICT skills in their weekly computer science lessons. In one such lesson, pupils in Year 5 drew on their previous experience of writing their own programs to create a looped message on a micro-computer, using relevant IT terminology to explain what they had done. While pupils enjoy their experiences in the virtual reality room, and develop their skills in the popular robotics club, the school has decided to limit screen time for lower school pupils. In the upper school pupils apply their ICT skills well in subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils routinely use note-making software in humanities subjects and in English. In a Year 12 psychology lesson, pupils expertly utilised a website to create a 'brain structure museum' as a learning aid for pupils starting the study of psychology. In a Greek lesson, Year 8 pupils demonstrated confident, independent use of their personal devices to investigate food names, and pupils in a Year 9 physics class used their ICT skills to create an interactive presentation relating to the moon.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- 3.15 Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, respect systems of rules and laws, and accept responsibility for their behaviour towards others. In the lower school, pupils' behaviour is guided by the 'St Cat's Code' which is prominently displayed and frequently referred to. One pupil in Year 5, speaking for many, said: 'It symbolises everything about the school and how people should behave.' In the upper school, pupils demonstrated an excellent understanding of moral issues in many subjects. Pupils in Year 11 had strong views on the use of napalm and agent orange by the American army in the Vietnam War. In an English lesson, pupils in

Year 13 showed a sophisticated grasp of gender equality issues in a reading of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*.

- 3.16 Pupils display excellent social skills. They are socially aware and work effectively with others, to solve problems and achieve common goals. For example, boys and girls in Years 1 and 2 played together very harmoniously in the playground, learning together how to skip. In an English lesson studying the text *Goodnight Mr Tom*, pupils in Year 6 worked together very effectively, physically moving around the room and talking to each other, making connections to understand how different telegrams related to the text. Excellent levels of cooperation between year groups were seen in the science club, where younger pupils in the senior school worked together very effectively, aided by older pupils, in an experiment to test the absorbency of a nappy. During a lesson in the Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) strand of the IB, pupils in Year 13 demonstrated excellent collaboration skills in planning their CAS projects, with one group explaining to others how they intend to raise money for a local charity.
- 3.17 Pupils, especially in the upper school, make an excellent contribution to others, both in school and in the wider community. Pupil representative bodies, the school council and the senates, initiate much of this activity. They are involved in organising various charity events, which recently have included fundraising for a local children's charity, and for the Greek Alzheimer's society. Pupils have helped at the Athens marathon race and taken part in sponsored runs, bake sales and other charitable events. Older pupils are highly active in a wide range of voluntary initiatives in the local community and in school through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and as part of their CAS activities. For example, older pupils act as peer mentors as part of CAS, supporting younger pupils with their language skills and in mathematics. In the lower school, pupils make a good contribution to the lives of others within and beyond the school. They support local and national charities, they contribute to the running of the school as members of the lower school council and its eco-council, and pupils in Year 5 act as playground friends for younger pupils.
- 3.18 Pupils display excellent respect for diversity and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions, in a school where a wide range of cultural backgrounds are represented. In response to the questionnaires, the very large majority of pupils said that the school encourages them to be tolerant of people with different faiths and beliefs, and a similar proportion of parents agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance. Younger pupils in the lower school during international week investigate and appreciate the lives of others as they research a particular country and its culture. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to explain the differences between Greece and Burundi with colourful and descriptive language. In a lower school assembly, pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 spoke clearly and confidently about inspirational women around the world and explained why they were role models. In a Year 11 French lesson, pupils demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of cultural differences, discussing the ban on mobile phones in French schools, and considering whether this policy could be applied in Greece.
- 3.19 Pupils of all ages display an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. In response to the questionnaires, the very large majority of pupils said the school provides them with a safe and healthy environment and a similar proportion of parents agreed. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet. For example, in a PSHE lesson, pupils in Year 2 discussed healthy eating and showed a mature understanding of the foods we can eat a lot of, and those that should just be a treat; while in a psychology lesson, pupils in Year 13 demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the causes of the global obesity problem. Pupils of all ages appreciate the need for healthy exercise. Pupils in Year 3 participated enthusiastically in a series of twisting, stretching and balancing breathing exercises outside between lessons. Across the school, there is a focus on taking regular exercise, and pupils participate well in physical education (PE) lessons and in extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils know how to stay safe physically. Pupils in a Year 9 chemistry lesson demonstrated an excellent awareness of how to carry out halide ion tests safely, including why safety goggles and laboratory coats should be worn. Pupils of all ages know how to stay safe online. They said they were taught this when they were young and receive regular reminders. Pupils understand how to maintain positive

mental health. In a PSHE lesson, for example, pupils in Year 8 showed they understood the dangers of comparing themselves with the apparently perfect images of other people on social media.

- 3.20 In many discussions with inspectors, pupils displayed high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are highly resilient. For example, in a mathematics lesson on substituting letters for numbers, pupils in Year 7 showed excellent determination using substitutions into more complex expressions in order to break a code. In the lower school, pupils are clear how to improve their work. They undertake regular reflective self-review and set themselves targets, both academic and personal. Pupils said this helps them think about their individual strengths and weaknesses and identify their next steps. This is not so consistently achieved in the upper school, although some excellent examples were noted in some subjects. In a physics lesson, for example, Year 12 pupils demonstrated excellent self-awareness when completing work on latent heat, and could identify where they had gone wrong, and what their next steps would be. However, pupils in the upper school are not always clear in all subjects on how to improve their work and learning. In response to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said that teachers' marking and comments in their books did not help them to improve their work. This view was borne out by discussions with pupils, and the scrutiny of pupils' work in the upper school.
- 3.21 In the lower school, pupils develop excellent decision-making skills. For example, when visiting the early years library, pupils in the Nursery Year investigated the books there, looked at pages with interest, and made sensible book choices for themselves. Pupils in Year 2 spoke about the variety of activities in St Cat's time and how they enjoy deciding what activity to undertake each week. In the lower school, pupils are given time to think about their decisions and reflect on them. For example, at the end of break, pupils playing football stop a little early and the coach talks to them about any poor decisions they may have made, so pupils can return to class leaving any disagreements behind. However, pupils in the upper school do not always feel fully supported as they make decisions about their future courses and destinations. In response to the questionnaires, around one in five pupils felt they did not get good advice about their choice of subject or career, and a small minority of parents agreed. There was some evidence of pupil anxiety regarding future decisions. Several pupils in Year 13 told inspectors that they did not feel well supported in their applications to university. The school has recognised this and has recently improved its provision in this area.
- 3.22 Pupils' spiritual understanding is good overall. Pupils in Year 3, sitting outside in an art lesson drawing an olive tree, spoke of how they loved art and creativity. Pupils in Year 5 showed a sense of awe and wonder in their English lesson, using the virtual reality headsets to experience the feeling of flying over mountains, towns and lakes, and describing their feelings in figurative language. In the upper school there were some good examples in art and music lessons of an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, but these involved relatively small numbers of pupils. In discussions, pupils in Year 11 felt that little was made of the wonder of nature or human artistic pursuits in the school, and that they had limited opportunities to discuss and enjoy art, music, literature, world religions or philosophical ideas. Other interviews with pupils, and observations around the school confirm this view.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Michael Phipps	Reporting inspector
Mrs Louise Robinson	Assistant reporting inspector
Mr John Coombes	Team inspector (Assistant headteacher, COBIS school, Netherlands)
Mrs Karen Mehta	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school, UK)
Mr Robin Silk	Team inspector (Headmaster, ISA school, UK)
Mr Matthew Tansley	Team inspector (Head of secondary, COBIS school, Romania)
Ms Christine Williams	Team inspector (Former head, HMC school, Italy)