



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**Geneva English School**

**September 2021**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Geneva English School			
<b>Address</b>	Geneva English School Route de Malagny 36 1294 Genthod Geneva Switzerland			
<b>Telephone number</b>	+41 22 775 0440			
<b>Email address</b>	admin@geschool.ch			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Matthew Williams			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Kate Bontekoe			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	299			
	<b>Early Years</b>	36	<b>Primary</b>	157
	<b>Secondary</b>	99	<b>Sixth Form</b>	7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13 to 14 September 2021			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Geneva English School (GES) is a coeducational day school. It was founded in 1961 by a small group of British parents that wanted a British education for their children. There are two campuses, one for the primary school and one for the secondary. The secondary school opened on a purpose built site in Versoix and the first Year 11 sat their GCSE examinations in the summer of 2021. GES opened for A level in August 2021. The school is an association by Swiss law and all parents who are joining the school automatically become members and have voting rights. The school is managed by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection the secondary school site has opened, a new chair of governors has been elected and a new headteacher took up office in September 2020.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide an outstanding, modern, British education within a caring and collaborative learning environment. All aspects of school life revolve around the core values of community, respect, opportunity, integrity, teamwork and courage.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from families with a range of professional backgrounds. Some are second or third generation living in Switzerland, others come for a short time to work and remain, whilst some move on after a few years when the family relocates for work. Data provided by the school shows that the ability profile of the pupils is above average for similar schools in the UK. The school has identified 56 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 32 of whom receive additional specialist support. Of the 99 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 23 receive additional specialist support. The needs of more able pupils are met through curriculum modification by their class or subject teachers.

## 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 ONLY inspection and as such 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 March 2017.

## 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 school has a suitable curriculum from the Early Years through to sixth form. It caters for the needs of all abilities including those with SEND, EAL and the more able. The curriculum offered enables pupils to strengthen their experiences and learning in a range of subjects that supports their academic, creative, physical and personal development. The curriculum is supported by a suitable range of extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh programme for those in the secondary school. Subject planning reflects teachers' awareness of the needs of pupils and their prior learning. Pupils in the secondary school receive appropriate careers guidance, which has been strengthened through staff appointments who have experience in this area. The curriculum and its delivery effectively prepares pupils for life after they leave school or for their next stage of education.
- 2.4 Teaching is well planned to meet the needs of the pupils, showing good subject knowledge. Teachers know their pupils well. This enables pupils to make good progress in all areas of learning. A wide range of resources are used effectively, often making use of technologies to promote interest and secure pupil understanding. The teaching uses a variety of strategies to engage pupils and is successful in maintaining a positive learning environment where pupils behave responsibly. Teaching does not undermine fundamental British values. Pupils treat one another with respect and the contribution of all is valued, ensuring there is no discrimination.
- 2.5 There is a suitable framework in place to assess pupils' performance. This ranges from informal teacher assessments through to standardised testing in both the primary and secondary schools. Information gained from such assessments is used effectively by staff to plan the next stages of the pupils' development.

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

#### 2.6 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

- 2.7 The school environment provides the ideal backdrop to ensure that the personal development of the pupils is optimised. The city is home to both the United Nations and The International Red Cross and the values that these espouse filter through many aspects of school life. Pupils understand the democratic process and develop a moral code that focuses on mutual respect and harmony. The UNICEF Rights of the Child are core to many of the school's key policies and their implementation. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate the differing cultures and backgrounds of pupils. In discussions pupils speak with confidence and show a commitment to recognise and celebrate individuality. They understand their role as responsible citizens in an international community. Equality for all, including those who have protected characteristics, is ensured through a range of both organised and spontaneous activities. For example, posters and flags around the secondary school actively promote the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus (LGBT+) community. Fundamental British values are actively promoted by all. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is supported by appropriate schemes of work for personal, health, social and economic education and for relationships and sex education.

### Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- 2.9 The school ensures that the welfare, health and safety of all is met. There is a suitable safeguarding policy that is effectively implemented. Staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibilities, are suitably trained and they understand local safeguarding arrangements within the Canton of Geneva. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) liaises effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Governors have effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements and carry out an annual review of the school's policies and procedures. There is a nominated governor who is also suitably trained. In discussions pupils state that they feel safe in school and they know that they can talk to anyone should they have any worries or concerns. The school's safeguarding arrangements are planned in line with British statutory guidance such as *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2021) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2019). The school implements an effective Prevent strategy to reduce the risk of potential radicalisation. The DSL keeps detailed records of all safeguarding matters. There is a named safeguarding lead for the Early Years and the age group also has suitable procedures in place for the use of mobile technology.
- 2.10 The school has suitable policies and procedures in place for both building positive behaviour and anti-bullying arrangements. These policies and procedures are implemented effectively. Pupils feel that there is a suitable sanctions and rewards system in place. This has been recently strengthened and staff, pupils and parents comment that this has had a positive impact on pupil behaviour. Pupils understand right from wrong and so incidents of poor behaviour and/or bullying are rare. Any concerns about behaviour or bullying are recorded on the school's management system, which allows any patterns or trends to be identified and addressed. Rewards and sanctions are also recorded on a separate system. This again enables school leaders to scrutinise the procedures and to identify any aspect that may require further investigation.
- 2.11 The school complies with all Swiss health and safety laws and fire-safety standards. The health and safety policy provides an oversight of all aspects including key roles and responsibilities. Tours of both sites show that health and safety and fire prevention are given a high priority. The school maintains suitable records on all matters relating to health and safety including checks on fire equipment and installations. There is an appropriate risk assessment policy in place and this is supported by a range of risk assessments for activities that take place inside school and for when pupils are away from the main premises. School leaders have effective oversight of all risk assessments to ensure that risk is minimised wherever possible.
- 2.12 Suitable arrangements for first aid are in place. There are first aid kits located in strategic positions around both sites. Staff are suitably trained, including in paediatric first aid, and their work is supported by the school nurse. Suitable records are kept of all first aid incidents and parents are kept informed as required.
- 2.13 Pupils of all ages are appropriately supervised at all times of the school day. In discussions, pupils feel that there is always an adult available should they require any help or support. Suitable supervision arrangements are in place for when pupils leave the school premises, such as when secondary pupils, in their lunch break, choose to visit the lakeside. Children in the Early Years are always in sight of staff.
- 2.14 The school ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained which conforms to local regulatory requirements.

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

#### 2.15 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

- 2.16 The school has effective safer recruitment practices in place which are applied to all staff and governor appointments. All required checks for staff are undertaken before the commencement of employment. The school's recruitment procedures reflect both Swiss requirements and those operating in the United Kingdom. A register of all appointments, including governors, is kept as required. The school does not use supply staff. Suitable checking and safeguarding arrangements are in place for when contractors or visitors are on the school sites.

## **Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

### **2.17 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

- 2.18 Tours of both sites and discussions with senior leaders confirm that the premises and accommodation at the school meet the required standards. There are suitable toilet and washing facilities which are located at strategic points around each site, including in the Early Years. Each site has a suitable designated medical room with the required facilities. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a suitable standard. Lighting and acoustics are appropriate for the activities taking place and there is suitable outdoor lighting to enhance pupils' safety after dark. There are suitable water supplies to both sites. Regular water quality tests are undertaken, and the temperature of hot water does not pose a risk of scalding. Drinking water is available and is labelled. There is suitable outdoor space for physical education and play. Pupils in the secondary school have access to outdoor areas and weekly access to Lake Geneva.

## **Part 6 – Provision of information**

### **2.19 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

- 2.20 The school provides all required information. This includes contact details for the school, the headteacher and chair of the governing body. The school website also provides a statement of the school's ethos, policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions, provision for SEND and EAL, the school's academic performance, complaints procedure, curriculum policy, arrangements for promoting good behaviour, preventing bullying as far as possible, health and safety and first aid. The school website also contains the school's safeguarding policy and the most recent inspection report. The school provides parents with an annual written report of each pupils' progress and attainment.

## **Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

### **2.21 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

- 2.22 The school has appropriate measures in place to deal with any complaints should they arise. Details of the complaints policy are stored on the open section of the school website. These arrangements include the opportunity for parents to make a complaint on an informal basis in the first instance. If dissatisfied with the outcome, the policy allows for parents to make a formal complaint in writing to the deputy head of each school and then to the headteacher. Should this provide an unsatisfactory outcome parents may ask for their complaint to be heard by a panel which includes an independent member. Parents may be accompanied to this panel hearing. The school's arrangements allow the panel to make findings and recommendations which are to be shared with the complainant and, where appropriate, the person being complained about. The policy states that a confidential record will be kept of the findings.

## **Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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



- 2.24 School leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the BSO standards are met consistently in order to actively promote the well-being of pupils.

### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration periods. 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 Graham Gorton

Reporting inspector

Mr Ian Raybould

Team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school, United Kingdom)