



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

St George's International School Luxembourg ASBL

March 2022

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School's Details

School	St George's International School ASBL			
Address	11 Rue des Peupliers L-2328 Luxembourg City Luxembourg			
Telephone number	+352 42 32 24			
Email address	reception@st-georges.lu			
Principal	Dr Christian Barkei			
Chair of governors	Mr Phillip Charlton			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of students on roll	870			
	EYFS	123	Primary	413
	Secondary	250	Sixth Form	84
Inspection dates	21 to 24 March 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St George's International School, Luxembourg, is a non-denominational co-educational day school for students aged 3 to 18. It operates as a not-for-profit trust and is located in the district of Hamm, about three kilometres from Luxembourg City. The school is structured as a single entity, consisting of the primary school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and the secondary school, including a sixth form, each with its own head responsible to the principal. The governing body has up to 15 appointed members, including parents, drawn primarily from stakeholders in the school community. The school opened in 1990 as a primary school. From 2003 onwards, the secondary school has gradually developed. The school moved to its current location in 2008 and has continued to expand on a self-contained, purpose-built site.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to prepare students to lead purposeful, fulfilling and successful lives and to achieve their highest potential through challenge and care; to provide stimulating academic opportunities and a foundation of strong values based on mutual understanding, tolerance and respect; and to celebrate diversity within a learning environment that is stimulating, positive, supportive and safe.

About the students

- 1.3 Over 60 nationalities are represented within the school, which predominantly serves families drawn from the international business community, the professions, financial, government and European Union staff in Luxembourg.
- 1.4 The ability of the students is generally above the national average for pupils in English schools. The school has identified 111 students as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support through working with specialist teachers individually and in small groups. There are 505 students with English as an additional language (EAL), twenty per cent of whom receive additional support for their English. The school has identified 132 students as more able, who receive additional challenges in lessons and in specialist small groups.

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 February 2018. This inspection, originally planned for March 2021, had to be rescheduled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 is supported by policy documentation, planning and schemes of work which take account of the students' ages, aptitudes and needs, and encompasses all the required areas of learning and experience. The teaching motivates students to learn, to develop good subject knowledge and understanding and to prepare for life in British society. It does not undermine fundamental British values and is supported by effectively used resources. An appropriate framework is in place to assess students' performance.
- 2.4 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the students' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

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

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

- 2.6 The school actively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance, and enables students to develop the required personal qualities including respect for different cultural traditions and for the protected characteristics. Students are actively supported in the development of their self-esteem, their contribution to the lives of others, their respect for public institutions and the responsibilities of life in Luxembourg, Europe and the wider world.
- 2.7 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the students' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of students

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

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students by means that pay due regard to current guidance in England and Luxembourg, supported by a recruitment policy that meets requirements. Students have suitable opportunities to express concerns and are confident they will be listened to. They receive an effective response when they express a concern. Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable and the needs of students with SEND are taken into account; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; and provision is made for the administration of first aid. Students are appropriately supervised; admission and attendance registers are properly maintained; and the school implements a suitable approach to risk assessment.

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

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

- 2.11 The school carries out all required checks in accordance with the BSO standards, guidance from the DfE and local regulations in order to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors. A comprehensive central register is maintained of all appointments.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

2.13 Suitable toilet and washing facilities, and appropriate accommodation to cater for their medical and therapy needs, are provided for students. The premises and accommodation are appropriately maintained having due regard to health and safety requirements. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate. The provision of water for drinking meets requirements. Suitable outdoor space is provided for students of all ages including the Early Years for physical education and play both on-site and at facilities located nearby.

Part 6 – Provision of information

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

2.15 An appropriate range of information is provided or made available to parents and prospective parents. This includes contact details of the school, the principal and the chair of the governing body; a statement of the school's ethos; the required policies and arrangements for admissions, managing misbehaviour and exclusions, provision for students with SEND and EAL, promoting good behaviour, preventing bullying, management of health and safety and first aid; and the school's safeguarding policy. Details of the complaints procedure and the number of formal complaints received during the preceding school year are published. The school publishes information on students' academic performance and results in public examinations, and previous inspection reports. It provides a report at least annually to parents on their child's progress and attainment.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

2.17 The complaints policy meets requirements. Parents' complaints are handled in accordance with a three-stage process outlined in the complaints policy including at the third stage a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school. Time scales are set out clearly for each stage. At the third stage, the panel may make findings and recommendations which are appropriately communicated. Suitable confidential records are kept, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

2.19 The governors ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the BSO standards are met consistently. They actively promote the well-being of students.

2.20 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the students' 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 students:

- the quality of the students' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the students' 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 students.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the students, 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 students' 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 students' learning and achievement is excellent.

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

Recommendations

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes overall, the school might wish to make the following improvements:

- Improve the consistency of marking and assessment of written work in the secondary school in order to support more effectively students' reflections on their work and further strengthen their level of achievement.
- Create opportunities for the further expansion of team and competitive sport so that students are able to develop a wider range of skills and even greater resilience.

The quality of the students' learning and achievement

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

3.5 The students in the secondary school achieve consistently high levels of success at IGCSE and A-level examinations that are well above the average for maintained schools in England. Data provided by the school show that students achieve results that exceed expectations particularly in mathematics, the sciences and the creative arts. The average level of achievement for each cohort has risen consistently in recent years. Students proceed to a range of universities with demanding entrance criteria in the UK and other countries. In the primary school, results of standardised assessments indicate that students achieve well above the average for schools in England especially in mathematics and the sciences. Data is used to identify students needing support or extra challenge, for example through initiatives such as guided reading. Well-planned teaching in all year groups from EYFS to Year 6 enables students to develop strong skills of communication and writing in a wide range of genres. Their

grammar, spelling and punctuation are excellent. From an early age they learn the ability to apply mathematical skills in different settings.

- 3.6 Although the majority of students entering the school do not speak English as their primary language, sustained support and meticulous monitoring by teachers and senior leaders enable them to achieve results in examinations in line with those of their peers, including in English and language-based subjects. Students with SEND also achieve results in line with or above expectations as a result of carefully targeted practice and review enabling them to improve in any identified areas of weakness in preparation for final exams. In a pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the quality of teaching at the school which enables their child to make good progress and develop skills for the future. They were extremely positive about the extent to which the school meets their child's needs and, if their child has EAL, with their child's progress in learning English. The very few students who responded to the questionnaire were similarly positive in their questionnaire about the opportunities they are given to learn and make good progress and the support they receive from teachers, although a small minority of this small sample did not feel that teachers' marking and comments helped them to improve their work.
- 3.7 Students show considerable achievement in local, national and international competitions, including regular success in the Royal Society of Chemists' *Top of the Bench* chemistry competition, in which students have represented the three Benelux countries and reached the final for the past three years. Students have also been successful in the UK Mathematics Challenge and in chemistry and physics Olympiads. In addition, individual student successes have included achieving the highest mark worldwide in A-level media studies; winning the youth category with a dress design in a national competition; representing Belgium or Luxembourg in squash, hockey and football; and wide-ranging success including at distinction level in externally accredited drama examinations.
- 3.8 Students demonstrate high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Students in the primary school respond well to the high expectations of teachers, the challenge of extension tasks and detailed oral feedback provided. In a science class, students engaged in detailed technical discussion of the forces applied to a car they had made, analysing ways to make it move without touching it. In the Early Years, children used electronic scales to weigh ingredients successfully in a cookery session, while others showed a confident understanding of phonics. Children showed excellent fine motor skills in creating their *Diamond Art* Easter project. Secondary school students in an economics class demonstrated excellent analytical skills in a discussion of currency devaluation. Younger students displayed flair and commitment in a music lesson and as a result were able to learn rapidly the different techniques of plucking and strumming a ukulele while singing to the chord played, before focusing successfully on the notation of the music. Students showed a detailed understanding of preceding direct and indirect object pronouns in French in line with expectations for bilingual students.
- 3.9 Students of all ages communicate fluently and confidently. They articulate ideas well, contributing enthusiastically to discussion and proving themselves adept at both speaking and listening. In the primary school including the Early Years, they develop a wide and varied vocabulary, using it effectively to explain their thinking and express opinions. Students show enthusiasm for independent writing at their writing table and read avidly for enjoyment. They produced travel accounts that were outstanding in both content and presentation. In the secondary school, students were able to answer open-ended questions with sophistication. GCSE students showed good use of subject-specific terminology and language when analysing unseen poetry, to which they brought mature, reflective insight. Students are generally adept at recalling facts and previously learned material, for example in a Year 2 lesson on forces and gravity. They collaborate keenly, challenging each other's understanding, asking thoughtful questions and exploring ideas respectfully.
- 3.10 Students are justifiably confident in their mathematical ability. At all ages, their grasp of complex and age-appropriate concepts is well-developed. Children in the Early Years enjoy recognising numerals everywhere, even incorporating them into their play. As they move up through the school, they

continue to apply their skills to other areas, whether in the primary school, using pictorial representations to link fractions and decimals or explaining when the understanding of perimeters would be useful in real life; or in a secondary school art lesson, designing a bungalow in art using previously learned techniques of measuring.

- 3.11 Students' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is intuitive throughout the school. Already in the primary school, students show highly developed techniques of applying their ICT skills to different contexts, understanding how to follow processes and using technical vocabulary with ease. Students used tablets to film their puppet show, and used virtual reality headsets to create a multi-sensory activity when learning about India. Tablets are also used by older students both for research and for the production of informative posters. Students in a BTEC performing arts class adroitly used software to produce acoustic and visual effects for their production. The integration of ICT with other learning resources by the students is seamless.
- 3.12 Students show advanced study skills already at an early age, whether working independently on posters or analysing texts together in cross-curricular guided reading in English, or hypothesising using their knowledge of the properties of materials in science. In the secondary school, students develop effective note-taking skills, support each other in their revision and showed impressive analytical skills in an A-level organic chemistry lesson. Feedback and responses to students' written work in the secondary school is not consistently of the quality of the best, which as a result means that students' progress is similarly inconsistent.
- 3.13 Among other notable achievements in students' wider school life have been success in reaching the finals of an international debating competition in Spain and the regular broadcasting of an outstandingly successful show on local radio by sixth-form media studies students. Instrumental players perform at festivals abroad, play in a professional orchestra in Luxembourg, or perform with the jazz band at prestigious events for UNESCO or the British Embassy, reflecting their high level of achievement both as individuals and in ensembles.
- 3.14 Students are overwhelmingly positive about their school. They maturely articulate the importance they attach to learning. They collaborate keenly, confident that making a mistake is nothing to be feared but rather another learning opportunity. They are conscious of the importance of kindness and empathy. Students show resilience in their learning, without showing inappropriate bravado, and are aware of the need to improve at all times. Students do not generally make similar progress in physical attainment or in collaboration through teamwork in sport because of the limited opportunities available to them to develop those qualities. A constant focus on the school's vision of achievement through challenge and care by the leadership and management, supported by active monitoring by governance, enables students of all ages to thrive.

The quality of the students' personal development

3.15 The quality of the students' personal development is excellent.

- 3.16 Students see themselves as valued individuals who are also part of the school and the international community, supported in this by the attitudes and vision of the governance, leadership and management. They recognise that their opinions are listened to and respected, and healthy debate is a strong feature of life in the school. They want to play their part in ensuring that everyone has a positive experience at school, whether in lessons or outside. Students believe in their ability and enjoy both their own success and that of others. They know their strengths and weaknesses, taking advantage of the many opportunities they are given, especially in the primary school, to evaluate their learning and improve.
- 3.17 Students understand from an early age the importance and the impact of the decisions they make. Already in the Early Years, children make their own decisions when operating in a free-flow environment. The outdoor learning space is a significant feature of the setting that enables them to

assess the implications of their choice of activities. In the secondary school too students make informed decisions about the direction of their learning, for example in a music lesson in which they carried out detailed research before making their own choice of an appropriate musical track to play themselves. They develop a wide range of leadership and team-building skills through committees, the student parliament and other positions of responsibility which involve recognising the consequences of their decisions. They value the challenges of elections and their involvement in the decision-making processes of the school. Students recognise the importance of making decisions to support their own and others' well-being. Older students work sensitively with younger students, for example Year 10 students mentoring students in Key Stage 3; Year 7 students acting as buddies for students moving from the primary to the secondary school; or students using their first language to help out with conversation classes for fellow students who had different first languages.

- 3.18 Students' appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is outstanding. They appreciate each other's cultural backgrounds, feeling proud to be global citizens and part of a genuinely international family at school. They learn about religious and ethnic customs from around the world and are eager to discuss the traditions and practices of different faiths. In drama they showed an excellent understanding of existential issues relating to the human spirit, producing a powerful, challenging play on the subject of robots and their relation to human beings. They enthusiastically develop ways of thinking philosophically, including through the school's conscience alleys. Already in the primary school, students could be heard discussing the importance of being kind even to people who appear bad, while needing to understand why those people may be as they are. Art provides further examples of students' creative achievements including in the classroom, where their studies of abstract painting led to innovative work of their own. The exceptional displays of students' work and imagination throughout both the primary and secondary schools enable the students themselves to take genuine pride in the contribution they make to the ethos of the school itself and how it is both realised and perceived.
- 3.19 Students understand that the school has certain expectations that they should live up to, and that it is their shared responsibility to make the school a positive environment. In the primary school, they showed mature understanding of right and wrong, for example when discussing in an SMSC lesson whether to tell the truth or a lie and having to recognise the consequences of both. Students are very conscious of their own responsibilities, feeling that the school has just enough rules to create a community where people are well-behaved, but not too many. After listening to a talk on The Troubles in Northern Ireland, secondary school students explored in mature discussion the extent to which unregulated freedom can lead to hate speech and, by contrast, how rules can be negatively restrictive. Students consciously accept responsibility for their own behaviour, showing an excellent understanding in a psychology lesson of the moral constraints in carrying out psychological experiments on patients. They are articulate in discussion of complex ethical issues of global significance, as well as those of more personal moment for individuals. Students actively create an environment throughout the school where mutual respect is paramount. The rewards and sanctions systems are seen as fair by the students, who recognise that the school's main focus is on constructive praise and encouragement.
- 3.20 The students enjoy working together in class and solving problems as a team. Throughout the inspection, examples of this were observed in both formal and informal situations. For example, in the primary school, an activity was described in which the students had to organise themselves without talking, using only non-verbal communication. On another occasion, they talked about a film to which they had each contributed scenes for a shared outcome to be enjoyed by all. In class assemblies, students give presentations to each other. In a maths class, they actively engaged with each other to measure the perimeter, collaborating easily, demonstrating proficiency with rulers and, at all times, excellent behaviour as they aimed towards a common goal. Students enjoyed the challenge of learning Luxembourgish, recognising that almost all of them were learning something new together and supporting each other with natural empathy. In the Early Years, they created homes for the *Gruffalo* from building blocks, working co-operatively, without the need for intervention from a teacher. In yet

another class, students worked together building Icelandic houses as part of their topic. The naturally caring atmosphere of the campus is reflected also in the secondary school, where students are socially aware and constantly help each other fit in to this multi-national environment and work together for the common good.

- 3.21 Students consciously contribute to the life of the school as well as to the local and wider communities. Despite the restrictions having been imposed by the response to the covid-19 pandemic, students have actively participated in moving back towards the level of contribution they had been used to before then. In the secondary school, they are involved in charitable fundraising through the student parliament, which is just one aspect of their community involvement. Students appreciate opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities and say they would value more such engagement. The house system provides some opportunities. During the inspection, a number of lunchtime concerts took place in aid of the victims of war in Ukraine. They take part in Christmas tree decorating competitions with local schools, have friendly football matches against other schools, and invite children from other schools and from local creches to come to St George's for a celebration of the feast of St Nicholas in December. Students from the primary school sing for the residents of a local hospice.
- 3.22 The natural way in which students respect the diversity of the school community and show cultural understanding is exceptional, and palpable throughout the school. A contemporary example of this was seen in the sensitive way in which both Russian and Ukrainian students took part in the same history lesson on the Cold War. The number of nationalities in itself makes St George's a genuinely international school. Students regard this as a reflection of their expressed interest in learning about other cultures, not as something formulaic or artificial. The cauldron of different languages spoken by the students appears to lead to strong bonds of friendship between those of different nations and cultures. In lessons or other activities, students mix well, rarely defaulting to national groups. The libraries too contain many multi-cultural books in a range of languages. Students in the primary school in fact were quite clear that it would be taken very seriously if anyone was nasty about others, which hardly happens. They openly talk about difference and take great care not to cause offence to others, even inadvertently. In the questionnaire, a small number of parents made reference to bullying, but there was no dominant theme or cohort where this proved to be a major concern. All interviews and scrutiny of records indicated that if a rare case of unpleasantness did arise between students, it would be swiftly and effectively handled, with concern for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Students were satisfied that in such cases, the behaviour had not recurred.
- 3.23 Students understand how to keep themselves safe, including online, for which they receive regular training and guidance. The students talked about regular fire and lockdown practices and how they can keep fit and healthy through PE and playtime. The personal development curriculum has some sport built into it, such as yoga, but this is not consistent across the school. There was a suggestion from some older students and in the questionnaires that the school's approach to examinations did not fully reflect an understanding of the stresses caused by academic pressure, but this was not borne out in the openness and confidence of the students generally or by the overall approach of the school to well-being through assemblies and the support given to students, for example during registration periods. The environment is generally healthy, although both students and staff referred to the wish to have more team and competitive sport.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 students, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr John Dunston	Reporting inspector
Mrs Kay Goldsworthy	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school, UK)
Miss Penelope Kirk	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school, UK)
Mrs Karen Mehta	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school, UK)
Mrs Louise Orton	Team inspector (Senior deputy head, GSA school, UK)
Mr Robin Silk	Team inspector (Head, ISA school, UK)