

School inspection report

21 to 23 January 2025

Instituto Espanol Vicente Canada Blanch

317 Portobello Road

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The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in line with the school's values. Leaders consistently promote equality, diversity and inclusion, enabling pupils from a young age to develop an understanding of and respect for people's different characteristics, such as sex, race, religion and beliefs.
2. Leaders ensure that the school's core aims and values are supported through every aspect of school life. They promote these aims and values from the early years onwards and ensure that pupils and parents understand them.
3. The proprietor provides effective oversight, ensuring that leaders are knowledgeable, and that school policies and procedures are implemented in a secure and effective learning environment. As a result, the school meets the Standards.
4. Leaders and the proprietor are reflective and regularly evaluate the school's provision to identify areas for development. They have effective understanding of risk management and engage well with external agencies to promote pupils' wellbeing.
5. The broad and varied curriculum enables pupils to develop personally as well as academically. The effective combination of Spanish curriculum and English national curriculum enables pupils to develop skills across a wide range of subjects, including a variety of languages, from an early age. There is a suitable range of recreational activities available to help pupils develop their interests and extend their skills.
6. Leaders and staff monitor pupils' learning carefully. Teachers make use of assessment information to adapt their teaching to meet individual pupils' needs effectively, so that they make good progress. Leavers are successful in gaining places at their preferred choice of university either in Spain or in the United Kingdom.
7. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported to extend their fluency in English, so they can access the curriculum successfully.
8. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes contain suitable content and are taught in an age-appropriate manner. Pupils develop their understanding of issues such as the importance of consent effectively.
9. A suitable behaviour management policy is in place. Staff implement this policy effectively overall and as a result behaviour is generally good. However, in some lessons, low-level disruption affects the progress of pupils, particularly amongst younger age groups in the senior school. This is because staff do not implement the behaviour management policy in a consistent manner across the school.
10. Leaders ensure that relevant health and safety legislation and fire regulations are followed. The school premises are suitably maintained, and security is robust. Suitable risk assessments are in place, which leaders review regularly.
11. Pupils are taught British and Spanish values, such as the value of democracy and the importance of mutual respect. As a result, they develop their sense of responsibility towards others. Pupils contribute positively to the local and wider community through voluntary and charity work.

12. Careers guidance is comprehensive and effective overall in helping pupils to prepare for the next stage of their education and work. However, the guidance provided to pupils in the lower years of senior school is not always as relevant to their needs as possible.
13. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Training for staff and the proprietor is thorough and ongoing. Consequently, staff know how to act should any safeguarding concern about a pupil or an adult arise. Close links between safeguarding leaders and external agencies ensure that pupils affected by safeguarding issues receive appropriate and timely support.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that all staff consistently apply the behaviour management policy, particularly in the younger years of the senior school
- strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the careers guidance provided to pupils in the lower years of senior school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. Leaders communicate the school's aims and ethos effectively to parents, pupils and staff. They are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and promote these consistently through the curriculum and the school's values, which are woven throughout the school.
15. Leaders and the proprietor undertake rigorous self-evaluation to assure themselves that the Standards are consistently met and any required actions addressed. This enables them to have a clear understanding of where the school is most effective and where it has areas for development. Leaders use this self-evaluation to inform their development planning. There is an active parents' association with staff and pupil representation which regularly discusses matters relating to education, wellbeing and safety. Parents receive regular newsletters in both Spanish and English. Leaders use external specialists such as fire consultants to check that health and safety measures are appropriate.
16. The proprietor's effective oversight of the school ensures that leaders fulfil their responsibilities, apply their appropriate skills and knowledge, and promote pupils' wellbeing consistently. This is achieved through regular meetings, reports and effective scrutiny of policies and procedures. The proprietor provides leaders with appropriate support and challenge through frequent visits and meetings with key personnel, including the safeguarding team. As a result, the proprietor has a thorough knowledge of the school and its needs and uses this to liaise with the Spanish Ministry so there is clear shared understanding of the requirements of independent schools in the United Kingdom.
17. In the early years, leaders' effective planning and knowledge of children's needs serve to promote children's development. Children make good progress. Leaders work closely as a team and self-evaluate to constantly develop their practice. Communication between leaders and parents is ongoing, enabling parents to understand and support their children's development. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, and staff look after children well within a warm, caring environment.
18. Leaders manage any potential risks effectively. They maintain awareness of any local risks or issues that might arise. Risk assessments identify potential risks carefully and include suitable measures designed to mitigate these. Leaders monitor and review risk assessments such as those associated with trips and visits. There is a robust approach to planning and approval of educational trips, including the use of post-trip evaluations to inform future planning. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the school's risk assessment measures.
19. Leaders are proactive in engaging with the local authority and others in the wider community. This includes regular communication with agencies such as the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police when appropriate. This helps leaders to keep up to date with the latest developments and promote pupils' wellbeing effectively.
20. Leaders ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. They promote inclusivity, including through staff training. Leaders implement and review the school's suitable accessibility plan effectively.
21. Leaders promote positive relationships with parents and are easily accessible, including in person. They implement a suitable complaints policy and address any issues consistently and in a timely manner. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of complaints records to identify any trends.

22. Leaders provide parents with all the required information, mainly through the school's website. Parents receive regular reports detailing their child's attainment and progress.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

- 23. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. There is a broad and varied curriculum in place that constitutes an effective mix of subjects representing the Spanish and English national curriculum. This ensures linguistic, mathematical and other key areas are planned to meet the needs of pupils and prepare them well with knowledge and skills that go beyond national age-related expectations. The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to draw links across different subjects and apply their knowledge from one subject to another. For example, in science, younger pupils develop and apply English skills while learning about animal adaptation. Senior pupils use different skills across projects, for example in their film re-enactment of *Les Misérables*, which features a musical score and subtitles. The approach taken by leaders to curriculum delivery enables pupils to develop positive attitudes regarding social and cultural differences.
25. Leaders prioritise pupils' communication, language and literacy skills from the early years so that pupils rapidly develop confidence and become able to speak two or more languages. This develops their research and collaborative skills, equipping them well for their next steps.
26. Leaders and staff assess pupils' progress systematically. Teachers identify any gaps in pupils' learning quickly and provide pupils with clear and effective feedback about how they can improve their work.
27. Teachers apply good subject knowledge and different teaching methods, such as effective questioning, to successfully motivate pupils to learn. For example, when appropriate, imaginative use of drama, music and visual resources captures pupils' interest and helps them clarify and express their learning. Effective teamwork and consistent coordination of teaching across subjects adds to pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
28. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils mean that pupils are confident to ask for help if they do not understand a task. Teachers are highly effective in supporting pupils who need extra help, or extra challenge, so they make good progress from their starting points in each age phase, demonstrating consistent improvement over time. Pupils typically achieve highly in final examinations and are successful in passing the competitive Evaluation for University Access (EVAU) examination required for entrance into Spanish universities. Similarly, children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
29. Pupils who speak EAL are assessed and supported so that their needs are met. They develop English language skills effectively with the help of specialist teaching, enabling them to successfully access the curriculum and make good progress.
30. Teaching in the early years is effective. Teachers plan their teaching with regard to children's interests and develop children's skills of enquiry well. Staff teach children about the sounds that letters make in both Spanish and English through carefully planned activities, enabling children to develop cursive handwriting skills. Children work together well, learning to communicate ideas while amicably sharing resources. Parents are invited to participate in workshops such as art and reading to support their children's learning. Teachers regularly assess children's progress, and this is shared with parents.
31. The activity programme enables pupils to develop confidence and skills through a range of clubs. These include sport, music, Catalan and coding. The recreational programme provides pupils with creative, mental and physical stimulation to complement their academic work.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

32. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

33. The PSHE and RSE programmes contain suitable content that reflects the requirements of current statutory guidance. Pupils learn strategies that can be used to recognise and manage emotions and deal with moments of stress or anxiety. They learn about issues such as the importance of consent and different types of healthy relationships and receive age-appropriate guidance about sexual health and puberty. Teachers assess pupils' understanding of themes met in PSHE and RSE effectively. Leaders inform parents about the content of RSE and why particular themes are taught.
34. From a young age, pupils learn about equality, diversity and inclusion, developing their awareness and understanding of different people in society and why their protected characteristics, such as disability, faith, race and gender identity, should be respected. For example, young children explore stories that include characters with disabilities and forms of neurodivergence, allowing them to develop familiarity with and respect for these. Pupils celebrate Black History Month and study different countries to broaden their understanding of world issues and how these affect different people.
35. The school provides effective pastoral support. Pupils are well cared for, with staff on hand to meet their physical, mental and emotional needs. Form tutors and classroom teachers provide time each day for pupils to raise any matter they wish to discuss. Pastoral leaders work closely with staff and meet regularly with pupils to ensure that they remain aware of any needs. Leaders provide consistent daily pastoral support for pupils.
36. The physical education (PE) programme develops pupils' understanding of how physical activity and exercise can have a positive impact on physical and mental health. Children in the early years learn how to control and coordinate body movement using dance routines. Pupils, both male and female, develop their skills in individual and team sports, including swimming and football. Pupils learn how to warm up correctly when preparing for physical exercise. Teachers of PE make effective links to themes studied in PSHE and biology to reinforce awareness of good physical and mental health.
37. The caterers provide pupils with a range of healthy food options, including international dishes. The school meets pupils' particular dietary requirements and staff take appropriate precautions with regard to food allergies.
38. The caring relationships between staff and children in the early years create a happy and kind learning environment. Staff encourage children to express their feelings and listen to them carefully. A variety of suitable resources indoors and outdoors encourages children to share different activities with each other and take suitable risks to build confidence. This helps them to develop a resilient approach to interacting with their environment and they learn together comfortably and securely.
39. Behaviour management is typically effective and ensures that pupils' behaviour is generally good. However, some low-level misbehaviour, particularly in younger senior-school lessons, affects the progress of pupils. This is because not all staff apply the suitable behaviour management policy consistently.

40. The school teaches pupils about bullying and the harm that it can cause. Events such as ‘anti-bullying week’, assemblies and group discussions serve to raise awareness. Bullying is rare and leaders act promptly to resolve any bullying incidents that do occur.
41. The premises are maintained appropriately. Leaders ensure that site security is regularly reviewed and monitored, with effective systems in place to control access to the premises. Leaders and the proprietor monitor and review health and safety arrangements, ensuring all required checks and maintenance take place. Leaders take effective measures to reduce risks from fire. Staff receive regular training and termly fire evacuation drills are undertaken. A suitable fire risk assessment is in place.
42. First aid arrangements are effective. There are appropriate procedures for the administration of first aid. Staff are trained in first aid and specialist training is provided for teachers who support any pupils experiencing issues such as bereavement, divorce and moving to another country.
43. Pupils are carefully monitored, with effective staff supervision in place throughout the day, including break and lunchtimes. Appropriate staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times in the early years. Leaders manage drop-off and collection times effectively to ensure appropriate supervision at all times.
44. The school maintains admission and attendance registers appropriately and in line with current statutory guidance. Staff are vigilant and promptly follow up any pupil’s absence. The school informs the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
45. The school develops pupils’ spiritual understanding effectively. Pupils learn about different religions and traditions through the curriculum and by visiting a range of places of worship.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils’ physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

47. Leaders actively promote respect and inclusion through the curriculum and pastoral work. Pupils speak confidently about different cultures and the importance of treating everyone equally. They learn about the harm prejudice and discrimination can do by exploring themes such as homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, and the experience of the Windrush generation. Pupils are taught how different people have treated each other in history, for example during the Holocaust. As a result, pupils develop a sense of right and wrong, tolerance and a keen awareness that people's differing views should be respected. This prepares them well for life in a diverse society.
48. Leaders successfully enable pupils to learn about British and Spanish culture and values such as individual liberty and democracy through the PSHE programme and visits to various institutions. In the early years, children explore what makes a fair society. Pupils learn about the law and how the English judicial system works from a visiting judge. They visit Europe House to learn about European Union institutions, and Parliament to experience political debate. Leaders ensure there is a balanced perspective regarding political content.
49. Leaders create opportunities for pupils to experience firsthand different languages and cultures through trips and international exchanges to Spain, France and Italy, and links with a school in Japan. This further promotes international understanding, enabling pupils to identify similarities and differences between these countries and the United Kingdom.
50. Leaders encourage pupils to become responsible and caring citizens. The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to engage actively in the local and wider community. Primary pupils play cards and sew with the elderly at a local centre, and senior pupils create podcasts. Pupils raise money for local charities and appeals, such as providing for the families of the recent floods in Valencia. Every year, pupils remember the Grenfell Tower victims.
51. Pupils acquire an economic understanding through the curriculum and visiting speakers. This includes introducing the concepts of credit and debit, as well as raising awareness of the dangers of gambling and debt. Children in the early years are introduced to the value of money as they role play supermarket shopping, enabling them to develop an understanding of how to plan and what to buy. Senior pupils are adept at working out supply and demand in economics to ensure profitable margins. They learn about the responsibility of wealth and investment, as well as the workings of the British pound and the euro.
52. Leaders ensure that careers guidance is impartial. Pupils learn about careers through the careers programme which includes visiting speakers, university fairs, workshops and parental support in different fields of work. Specialist support provides pupils with personal interviews to help them make informed decisions about future pathways. Leaders have set up an online careers platform for pupils and parents, enabling families to readily access information. Pupils are well prepared and successful in gaining places at competitive Spanish and UK universities, and also pursue vocational routes. There is appropriate content and support for pupils overall. However, the careers guidance given to younger senior pupils is not always as relevant to their needs as it could be.
53. The school council provides leadership opportunities for pupils, with representation from all year groups. The council offers an effective forum for discussion and a vehicle for service to others. Pupils

are confident that they are listened to by leaders. Pupils are supportive of each other, as demonstrated by older pupils who regularly help younger pupils with reading and library work, and who support teaching, for example during 'science week'.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

54. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

55. Leaders work effectively to promote a positive safeguarding culture. There is an awareness that safeguarding issues could arise at the school and that everyone working at the school is responsible for identifying, reporting and acting on concerns.
56. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of safeguarding through regular review of policies and procedures and visits to the school. The proprietor also meets with leaders who have designated safeguarding responsibilities and scrutinises their reports to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and in line with current statutory guidance.
57. Leaders encourage pupils to voice any worries that they might have. As a result, pupils are comfortable speaking with trusted adults and have confidence that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. The school also enables pupils to communicate any concerns anonymously.
58. Leaders provide staff with suitable safeguarding training, including when they first join the school and when updates are required to reflect changes to statutory guidance. The safeguarding team receive additional training for their role. Staff are knowledgeable about possible signs of safeguarding concerns and how to report these.
59. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities maintain effective working relationships with external agencies. They readily seek advice when safeguarding issues arise and, when required, refer safeguarding concerns to relevant safeguarding partners.
60. The safeguarding team is sufficient in number to ensure appropriate support for pupils of all age groups. They maintain suitable safeguarding records which detail any safeguarding concerns and the rationale behind decisions and actions taken in response to these.
61. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online, through the curriculum, assemblies and discussion. A suitable filtering and monitoring system is in place and tested regularly. Leaders take appropriate action should any alert occur.
62. Staff recruitment procedures are robust. All necessary pre-appointment checks are carefully completed for all staff. Leaders maintain a suitable and accurate single central record (SCR) of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 63. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Instituto Espanol Vicente Canada Blanch
Department for Education number	207/6305
Address	Instituto Espanol Vicente Canada Blanch 317 Portobello Road London W10 5SZ
Phone number	020 89692664
Email address	canada.blanch.uk@educacion.gob.es
Website	http://www.vicentecanadablanch.educacion.es
Proprietor	Spanish Embassy Educational Attache
Headteacher	Mrs Justina Castillo Garcia
Age range	3 to 19
Number of pupils	416
Date of previous inspection	30 March to 1 April 2022

Information about the school

64. Instituto Espanol Vicente Canada Blanch is an independent Spanish co-educational day school located in Notting Hill. The school is owned by the Kingdom of Spain and governed by the Spanish Embassy Educational Attache, supported by an advisory board. The majority of teachers are from Spain and are appointed on a six-year secondment by the Spanish government. The school comprises four sections: the early years, primary, secondary and Bachillerato (sixth form). The current headteacher took up her post in September 2024.
65. There are 50 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
66. The school has not identified any pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
67. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils.
68. The school states its aims are to respond to the training needs of pupils and contribute to the development of an integral education in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment that allows them, with guarantees of success, access to higher studies in both Spain and the United Kingdom. It seeks to enable pupils' incorporation into social life as free people who are critical, responsible, participatory and supportive in both societies.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

21 to 23 January 2025

69. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

70. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor and an advisory board member
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

71. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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