

Kensington School, Barcelona

Carrer dels Cavallers 31/33 (Pedralbes) 08034 Barcelona

School's regional authorisation number: 08035568

Date of Inspection:

May 9th 2022

Inspection Team:

Alan Taylor (Lead Inspector)

Christa Mickle (Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

To assess the school for authorisation as British from nursery (3 years) to year 13 (18 years).

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from nursery (3 years) to year 13 (18 years) for a period of 4 years for 260 pupils.

The next inspection is due in May 2026.

*Schools are **authorised** by regional authorities after **inspection** by NABSS (or another recognised inspection service) and **certification** by the British Council.*

Schools should not refer to themselves as being authorised by the British Council, NABSS nor any other inspection service. Schools must not use the logos of any of these organisations in their publicity. NABSS member schools may use the NABSS logo.

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

History and Context of the School:

Kensington School, Barcelona was founded in 1966. It provides a British education for an international intake of approximately 220 students on a site on the residential outskirts of Barcelona.

The school is non-selective but assesses students' level of English prior to entry. There is a varied mix of nationality within the intake, reflecting demographic trends in the city. Recently, the proportion of students from China and Russia has increased. The nationalities most represented are Russian (19%), Chinese (17%) and British (11%).

The school was last inspected in May 2016 and given authorisation for 260 students from nursery (age 3) to year 13 (age 18) for a period of six years. January 2022 saw the arrival of a new Headteacher, seeing the school return to family leadership.

Accommodation and Resources:

The school offers good accommodation which supports learning. Students and staff feel safe and comfortable.

Classrooms are suitably sized and resourced given the small class numbers. Rooms are bright. Displays are excellent and they are used effectively to show learning and highlight wider learning skills. For example, displays in a Year 5 class help students to share a range of individual learning targets and steps in achieving them.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), outdoor learning facilities are well resourced and accessible from classrooms, and so students are able to access a range of play and learning equipment during and between lessons. Resources are well used to support role play and provide a stimulating learning environment.

In the newly renovated theatre, traditional rows of seats have been replaced by more informal seating areas which enable students to work in groups more easily during music lessons. The staffroom, which is adequate in size, contains a photocopier and computers which facilitate lesson preparation.

Outside space is adequate and students have sufficient facilities to socialise during recreational times, although they have highlighted a need for further shade in the patio areas. Dining facilities are good and there are sufficient toilets for student use around the school.

Practical resources are good for physical education, art and music lessons. Primary pupils make weekly use of a local swimming pool and a local sports centre is used for some secondary games. Science facilities are very good and well- resourced laboratories help students to gain a deeper understanding of scientific ideas using experimental methods.

An information and communications technology (ICT) classroom is used by both primary and secondary students and a small but well- resourced library encourages reading within and beyond class time. A sixth form study room also supports independent learning.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

Overall, the school provides a safe environment for staff and pupils. Detailed health and safety policies are followed to ensure a safe and secure environment for all.

First aiders are appropriately trained, and cases of intervention are recorded by the school. Evacuation drills are carried out annually and evacuation routes are posted throughout the school. Supervision levels are good, and a calm atmosphere pervades the school at all times.

The school's behaviour policy is clear and supports a positive working atmosphere. For example, behaviour monitoring report cards are used effectively by teachers to record and intervene when an individual student's behaviour falls below that expected. As a result behaviour is excellent and those who need support to maintain high expectations are monitored effectively.

The school has a suitable safeguarding and child protection policy, and several members of staff have recently undertaken training in this area. The required background and criminal record checks have been carried out for all members of staff working in the school. This process has improved since the last inspection. Visitors are well controlled through the school's main reception area at the entrance to the site. The storage of potentially hazardous chemicals within the science area is suitable, although not routinely locked.

The Curriculum:

Through the EYFS and primary school, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It enables students to develop numeracy, literacy and scientific skills with good progression between years. In key stage three, although the range of subjects offered is suitable, learning time for ICT and music is inadequate and so progress in these areas is slower than others.

Schemes of work and curriculum policies are clear and support common planning. Planning is age-appropriate, with good progression in the activities planned for different year groups. Some individual lesson plans indicate how the most able are to be challenged and how those with additional needs are to be supported, and some teachers are particularly skilled at matching work to individual pupil's needs. However, this is not consistently the case and in a number of lessons all pupils are asked to complete the same activity, regardless of ability.

English is used consistently as the language of instruction and in informal conversation around the school. This is a strength of the school. Students needing additional support are well monitored and interventions enable students to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Staffing:

The school staff are well qualified and the vast majority have good experience of the UK curriculum. They are well deployed to meet the needs of the students.

There are good staff-to-student ratios in all classes, with a maximum of 21 students, although many classes are currently much smaller. In addition to teachers, classes in the EYFS have assistants who are available to support teaching and learning. Assistants are shared effectively in key stages 1 and 2 where classes are small.

Staff morale is high, and turnover is low with more than 80% of staff having served three or more years at the school. Staff particularly value the international nature of the school, small class sizes, and good communication between the leadership team and the teaching body.

Staff feel that they have a voice and can contribute to improvements in the school.

Appraisal of teacher performance, although now evident in particular cases, is not used systematically. As a result, not all staff are clear about their performance and next steps in improving. Professional development opportunities are offered to staff although they do not relate closely to school priorities or provide evidence of the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, the school is not yet effective in monitoring and ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the whole school.

Teaching and Learning:

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and consistently good or better in the EYFS and primary school. In the secondary school, although good overall, a significant number of lessons are satisfactory rather than good.

In lessons where learning is good or better, clear learning objectives are linked to activities well matched to student needs. Working in small groups and adapting learning activities to match needs helps students to share ideas and support others. For example, in one Year 5 lesson about the multiplying of fractions, students worked in ability-based groups so those who needed more support could be effectively supported by the learning assistant who used additional resources to support work better suited to the ability of individual students. This ensured good progress for all.

Well-structured questioning, adapted to student understanding, helps maintain good pace so all students make good progress. For example, in one excellent year 11 chemistry class, assessment of learning through a quick quiz enabled the teacher to move students on to more challenging problems more quickly than planned and ensured swift progress for all.

In lessons that were only satisfactory, whilst all students made some progress, pace and challenge were sometimes restricted. Learning objectives were shared but activities were not always well linked to student ability. For example, in one year 8 lesson, individual progress was limited by over-reliance upon teacher talk and whole class discussion. In another lesson, students worked individually through a set project booklet which supported the completion of tasks but did not help students to reflect upon their learning. Some children participated more than others and pupils had fewer opportunities to evaluate what they had done. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory because progress was made by students in these classes.

Assessment:

Both written feedback and the setting of individual learning targets have improved since the last inspection, although good practice is not yet commonplace.

The school has recently revised its policy for marking. Teachers are now encouraged to provide more useful feedback to pupils about what they have done well and how their work could be improved. Where written feedback is offered, it is often very effective in highlighting next steps in learning. However, whilst some teachers are skilled at doing this, others are not and the quality of marking varies greatly from class to class, most notably in the secondary school.

Individual target setting has had some impact in the primary school where academic, social and extracurricular targets are shared and reviewed. This helps students to see their progress more clearly.

The academic attainment of the secondary pupils is now more regularly measured and reported, and some interventions have taken place as a result of underperformance. Targets, although widely set, are not used systematically and so students are often not fully aware of their academic progress, especially when preparing for external examinations.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

The values and ethos of the school, in addition to the programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, promote positive relationships and enable students to leave well-prepared for adult life.

Students are polite and well-mannered, and their behaviour towards their peers and adults is excellent.

Attitudes to learning are also excellent. Students value learning within smaller groups and the strong relationships which exist between them. Cases of bullying are low and students feel safe and well supported. They also feel that relationship problems are resolved effectively when they occasionally arise.

Students take an active part in the life of the school as evidenced by the work of several student voice projects, including the eco committee and school council. They have led events including forest and beach clean-ups and introduced a recycling scheme across the school. Students were also instrumental in lobbying the council to place recycling bins opposite the school. They have also organised school events to contribute to their community including the raising of over 1000 euros for the Save The Children charity this year.

The forest school project and the Kensington Award both offer good enrichment experiences which develop self-confidence and independence through outdoor challenges.

Leadership and Management:

The new Headteacher, who is a member of the owning family of the school, joined in January of this year and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas in which it should improve. He acknowledges that progress in response to previous recommendations has been slower than expected. A clear action plan has been written and a review of leadership roles is underway to increase the school's capacity to improve further.

Although some observations are taking place, there is no systematic appraisal of the performance for teachers. As a result, the leadership team has a limited impact upon the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Next year, more time will be allocated for leaders and teachers to reflect upon practice in order to improve consistency.

Attainment data is now collected and used at least termly to target individual student performance. Some interventions have taken place although the school has not tracked performance of students over time in order to measure the effectiveness of interventions and to take further action. Trends over time are not analysed in order to highlight and act on underperformance of individuals or cohorts in a timely manner.

Response to the previous inspection reports:

Since the last inspection, the school has made slow progress in the areas of improvements recommended.

1. *Some policies, for example for marking, should be reviewed to ensure they have maximum impact on sharing and encouraging good practice.*

The school has done much work in developing the written feedback policy although this remains inconsistently applied and as a result student understanding of their next steps in learning is sometimes unclear.

2. *More rigorous quality assurance procedures should be developed to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.*

Quality assurance procedures have not been developed and the quality of teaching, although overall good, is not consistently so; nor does the school have systems to assure or improve the quality of teaching and learning further.

3. *The school should continue to develop strategies for matching work more closely to pupils' abilities, especially for the most able. This could be a fruitful topic for whole school staff training and greater use of ideas between primary and secondary departments to develop best practice across the school.*

Opportunities to share good practice between primary and secondary school teachers have not been taken and so some disparity in the quality of teaching and learning remains.

4. *All marking should enable pupils to be more aware of the progress they are making. Targets should help pupils to understand their immediate achievements and their progress over time.*

Although students' performance is now more often reported, their progress over time is not monitored and targets are not used to highlight progress by individuals or across subject areas.

5. *The required police checks must be carried out at the time of employment.*

Police checks are now undertaken more rigorously before employment begins.

Recommendations:

In order to improve further the school should:

1. Monitor the quality of teaching and learning with rigour so leaders can assure at least good standards are attained consistently across the school.
2. Extend opportunities for professional development to help the staff to work towards fulfilling the priorities set by the school and to share good practice.
3. Track students' progress systematically over time so that the school can use the information to set priorities for improvement.
4. Increase learning time for ICT and music in key stage 3, and personal social and health education in key stage 4 to ensure the curriculum is properly broad and balanced.
5. Review the secure storage of potentially hazardous chemicals.
6. Maintain the high standards already achieved in the students' positive attitudes to learning.