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The Patron's
ACCREDITATION
AND COMPLIANCE

REPORT

St George's
British International School
Rome

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Confidential to the Headteacher and Board of Governors

Lead Improvement Partner

Mr Michael Weston
Retired Headmaster

The findings and next steps of this report reflect the work of the Lead Improvement Partner.

The Compliance visit took place between Monday 10 and Wednesday 12 June 2019.

Compliance is valid for 5 years.
The next Compliance check is due in June 2024.

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COMPLIANCE REPORT

St George's British International School, Rome is COMPLIANT with the standards one to five of the COBIS Compliance system.

1.0 RECRUITMENT

The school has as a priority the recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

1A

STANDARD

The school recruitment process is fair and transparent and ensures that appropriate staff and volunteers are appointed. This applies to all staff, teaching and non-teaching.

FEEDBACK

A full range of policies and procedures were presented in evidence; and it sets the tone for this school's approach to a fair and transparent recruitment process, applied equally to teaching, to non-teaching and to support staff.

The Single Central Register (SCR) is meticulous in its detail: comprehensive, comprehensible and complete both for recently appointed and long-standing members of staff. All appointments, including volunteers and those out-sourced via employment agencies (for example, bus drivers and supply teachers whose credentials will already have been assessed) are subject to the full range of checks: local and other countries' police checks, DBS and ICPC.

8 teachers' personnel files (covering La Storta Junior School, City Centre Junior School and the Senior School, and a ten-year period) were examined in detail and none were found wanting. 3 non-teaching staff members' files were scrutinised and were also complete in all respects. The paperwork also includes the necessary, overarching Italian Labour Law contract, the EU-required annual medical check and a signed agreement covering data control.

The Principal has further amended and enhanced the system he inherited by increasing, for example, a) the number of references required from 2 to 3, such that there must be a written reference from the current or most recent employer and, in the case of teachers, from the person to whom any safeguarding or child protection matters would ultimately be referred; b) by ensuring that more than just a random sample of written references be checked by telephone and recorded.

NEXT STEPS

It is agreed that telephone reference checks be carried out for all employees and for every reference.

1B**STANDARD**

All staff within the school, including volunteers and supply staff, meet high standards of child protection and the safeguarding of students.

FEEDBACK

Safeguarding and Child Protection is thorough and meets all requirements. Moreover, it is delivered in Italian when it is felt desirable for complete understanding. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is trained to Level 3 standard; the 5 members of the Child Protection Officers' (CPO) group are all at Level 2 (as is the School Counsellor); and key members of the teaching staff with pastoral responsibilities, including PE and Outdoor Activities staff, are Level 1 holders.

The school has an action plan to increase the number of colleagues trained at both Level 1 and Level 2 during the next academic year. Annual (and intermittent, as necessary) training is both thorough and memorable, delivered by the knowledgeable DSL as part of a wide-ranging, 4-day induction programme. All members of staff interviewed were able to speak confidently and in detail about the policies and procedures for reporting concerns.

Face-to-face training is carried out in line with requirements and is delivered by Kidscape; online training is from Educare; recently, Digital Awareness ran training sessions for pupils, parents and staff, in order to ensure that cyber safety remains at the forefront of everybody's minds.

Child protection files are held in dedicated secure storage cabinets in both junior schools and the senior school. Evidence of the termly meeting between the CPO group and the designated governor was seen and is detailed. External agencies are known to the school and can be accessed in both Italian and English.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of best practice, and invest in a larger secure cabinet for the DSL, in order better to facilitate storage.

2.0 STUDENT WELFARE

The school provides a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

2A

STANDARD

The school provides a pastoral structure that meets the needs of all students and promotes their personal development.

FEEDBACK

The relevant, up-to-date policies and procedures are in place. They highlight in theory and conversations showed in practice that the school's structure is clear, thorough and supportive. Class teachers, form tutors, phase leaders, heads of year, house leaders and members of the Strategy Group (senior team) all take a close and genuine interest in the pastoral welfare and wellbeing of their pupils.

Contact with parents occurs regularly in formal and informal settings. There is a real sense of a close-knit community in which all of those involved actively strive to help one another. This is the result of hard work on the part of both staff and pupils.

Healthy eating is promoted not only by the sensible approach taken by the host country, but also by the enhancements made by the school. Catering arrangements (in terms of fare and settings) are enviable.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain and further develop the current friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

2B

STANDARD

The school has provision for the health and safe supervision of all students to allow them to flourish in the school environment.

FEEDBACK

The host country's requirements are met and exceeded by the school's additional policies and procedures. In place and up-to-date are: the H&S Policy, the Emergency Evacuation Policy, the Critical Incident Policy, and all local certificates and permissions.

Health and Safety reports for routine maintenance are acted upon in a timely fashion; major concerns reported to the Governance and Risk sub-committee and to the full Board are acted upon.

Fire drills are frequent, but small anomalies were noted in one of the records. Supervision of pupils is first-rate generally, especially the detailed procedures for drop-off and pick-up at La Storta, and in particular at the City Centre site.

Medical care on both sites is of the highest order in terms of modern facilities, experienced staff and detailed procedures. A good number of teaching and non-teaching members of staff are trained in first aid and several of them also in defibrillator use; and the lead first-aider is a qualified doctor, who is supported by Red Cross nursing staff.

NEXT STEPS

Further improve record-keeping for fire drill practices. Identify termly, announced drills in the staff calendar, so that best use can be made of valuable curriculum time, particularly in the busy summer term.

2C

STANDARD

The school ensures that, through positive behaviour management, students are supported in their learning and safety.

FEEDBACK

There is a clear Behaviour Policy that, as far as punishment is concerned, covers several levels before reaching permanent exclusion. Examples are given at each stage of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour together with the appropriate and graduated sanctions. The same can be noted for rewards, of which there are far more distributed than the former. Meticulous records are maintained via the school's SIMS database.

Discipline problems are rare: a wholeheartedly positive approach permeates the community and is evident in all areas of the senior school and both junior schools, allowing all pupils the opportunity to do their best.

NEXT STEPS

Add a section to the Behaviour Policy (such as the one in the Complaints Policy) in order to be certain that everybody understands that a right of appeal to the school's governors is permissible following a decision by the Principal permanently to exclude a pupil.

2D**STANDARD**

The School ensures that off-site activities are appropriate and safe.

FEEDBACK

The school's Education and Visits Coordinator (EVC) is both experienced and qualified for the role (having undertaken training with Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP)). He explained clearly the detailed Trips and Visits Policy and its associated procedures covering all possible known eventualities, showing not only an eye for detail, but also commitment and kindness.

All off-site activities are thoroughly risk assessed; all adults who accompany trips know pupils' pastoral and medical information; and procedures for dealing with an emergency are in place.

Over 50 off-site activities have taken place in the current academic year, including routine local excursions: the impressive May Week residential trips to various parts of Italy for senior school and some of the junior schools' year groups; and those to destinations further afield too.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of best practice.

3.0 FACILITIES

The school provides all students with access to an environment conducive to learning and that keeps them safe.

3A

STANDARD

Accommodation supports the learning needs of students.

FEEDBACK

The understandably not-inconsiderable paperwork required by Italian authorities in Rome is in place. All of the school's facilities are fit for purpose. A generous CapEx provision for summer holiday works includes classroom refurbishment and modification; additional safety features for play spaces; a complete re-imagining of the front garden space at La Storta to improve its use and appearance.

There are specialist areas for PE and Games, Sciences, Music, IT, Art, Drama, and Learning Support. The school is very clean; has a plentiful supply of water stations (and all pupils have their own water bottles); and modern, age-appropriate toilet facilities that respect privacy at all ages; visitors' toilets also include a facility for nappy changing.

NEXT STEPS

The school's ambitious development plans will ensure continued improvement in several key areas, all of which are genuine needs identified after thoughtful consultation.

3B

STANDARD

The site(s) provides a secure environment for students to enjoy.

FEEDBACK

The Access Control Policy was seen in action throughout the visit and the procedure for visitors at both sites (La Storta and City Centre) was consistently applied. Both sites offer a noticeable level of security with high perimeter boundaries and limited points of entry that are continuously manned by security staff. Everything is managed without fuss, not least for the children of high profile parents. An enhanced transport provision will be introduced by the school at the start of the next academic year, in order further to protect these children.

The school regularly rehearses its critical incident and lockdown procedures. There is a personal emergency evacuation plan in place for a wheelchair dependent pupil. Assembly points are well positioned and suitable. Access for emergency vehicles has been carefully planned.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current responsive levels of vigilance.

3C

STANDARD

The fabric of the school provides an effective working environment.

FEEDBACK

Although the school's development plans will lead to an expansion of provision at both sites, current classrooms are generous in size for their various uses. Many rooms will be further improved in the summer works programme, which includes furniture replacement and re-decoration.

Technology resources are evident on both sites. The appointment of a Director of Digital Learning who will take up his post in September, will inevitably lead to yet more improvement in how much access pupils will have to the latest technology and techniques for learning how best to use it.

Wall displays, ceramics and sculptures, in place throughout both sites, are colourful and relevant. The overwhelming majority of the work (especially artwork) has been produced by pupils of all ages. EYFS and KS1 enjoy outdoor learning spaces adjacent to their classrooms; and the La Storta site also has a securely-fenced, dedicated and well-used garden for younger pupils' exploration, creativity and horticulture. Next year will see the establishment of a forest area at La Storta, thanks to the pupils' active environmental group and to the generous funding provided by the Parents' Association.

NEXT STEPS

The development plans will ensure that continued improvements support the need for an effective working environment.

3D**STANDARD**

Overall facilities meet the needs of all students including those with learning needs or physical disability.

FEEDBACK

The school's Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department, which encompasses SEN, EAL, counselling and speech therapy, operates across the three sections of the school and is second to none in terms of its personnel, its facilities and its care. Pupils have easy access to well-qualified (for example, CELTA trained) and knowledgeable staff in appropriate surroundings. Increasingly, the Director of Student Services is encouraging teaching staff to undertake EAL training, in order to better understand how to bring out the best in those pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue.

Well-being and mindfulness have been a part of the wide curriculum for some time. Of note, too, is the remarkably effective beginners' programme in English for those children who arrive in the primary or secondary phase with little, or no, knowledge of the language and who reach fluency quickly. Both sites have lifts to help those who find stairs difficult to use.

The previously mentioned wheelchair-dependent pupil is thriving because of the care and attention she receives from a wide range of staff.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain and build upon the current high levels of provision and achievement.

4.0 GOVERNANCE

The school's governors/proprietor works to support students and the work of the school.

4A

STANDARD

All governors or proprietor(s) meet the requirements for staff with access to young people reinforcing the importance of safeguarding within the school.

FEEDBACK

Everything relating to this section of the Standard is in order. The SCR is complete for all governors (including an archive of previous governors) and police checks have been carried out.

All governors have received the appropriate level of Safeguarding and Child Protection training and are up-to-date in terms of frequency. There is a named governor with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters, who meets at least termly with the CPO Group. There is also a termly report to the governors' Education sub-committee and the Principal's report to the full Board includes a summary too.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of best practice and review as and when necessary.

4B

STANDARD

Measures are in place for governors /proprietor to either register interests and/or manage conflicts of interest.

FEEDBACK

The Conflict of Interest Policy is in place and properly recorded in meeting minutes. A conflict of interest was described and was satisfactorily resolved at an early stage.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of best practice and review as and when necessary.

4C**STANDARD**

There are written procedures/protocols for the remit of the work of governors/proprietor.

FEEDBACK

The school benefits from its membership of AGBIS, and so all procedures and protocols in this section of the Standard are in line with expectations and requirements.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of best practice and review as and when necessary.

4D**STANDARD**

There is appropriate induction for new governors.

FEEDBACK

Induction for new governors is wide-ranging. The presentation given by the Principal to 4 new governors in February 2019 was included in the evidence for this Standard and can be seen to be thorough.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain current level of best practice and review as and when necessary.

4E**STANDARD**

Governors or proprietor have a commitment to training or development.

FEEDBACK

Governors spoke appreciatively about the training they had received and which is clear in the evidence provided. The members of the Board are committed to their positions and are aware of the responsibility they have to ensure the continuing growth and success of the school.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain current level of best practice and review as and when necessary.

4F**STANDARD**

The governors or proprietor provide records of meetings, decisions as appropriate and separately that parents know how to contact the governors/proprietor.

FEEDBACK

Minutes of the full Board and of the sub-committees' meetings are detailed and cover all aspects of school life in line with expectations and requirements. The Board benefits from having a dedicated clerk, who is a former governor and, therefore, provides continuity and a depth of knowledge from which newer members can benefit.

Governors' profiles are provided on the school's website and they also appear in the photograph gallery in the school. Parents are aware of how to make contact with them.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of best practice and review as and when necessary.

5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES

The school has an evident British ethos and promotes internationalism.

5A

STANDARD

A British ethos is apparent and important to the school such as reference to British values freedoms and culture as far as it is permissible within the context of the laws of the host country.

FEEDBACK

There is ample evidence both written and in conversation with governors, staff, pupils and parents to show that the school has a very real British ethos and that it promotes the best of British values across the community in the curriculum (for example in PSHE, Citizenship, history and assembly programmes) and beyond it. British celebrations, such as summer fêtes, Christmas festivities, and West End musicals stand alongside many others. The host country presents no barrier to the work of the school in this area.

A traditional British-style house system allows for vertical integration and friendly competition, apparent not only on the sports fields, but also in a range of other areas. Not least amongst these is fundraising for charities: the school has a long-standing and generously supported relationship (in terms of funding and hands-on assistance from pupils and staff) with a school in Zambia and also with a number of local charities in Rome.

The school has long been a supporter of a range of COBIS competitions (and pupils have been winners of several prizes).

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of commitment and continue to host and to seek additional engagement in COBIS events for pupils and staff alike.

5B

STANDARD

The school promotes education for international understanding.

FEEDBACK

With some 84 nationalities in the school, it is difficult not to be international in outlook and to promote a genuine sense of nations united under one roof, as it were.

The annual International Day celebration is always a huge success. Pupils highlighted the school's diverse population as one of their proudest distinctions.

The school benefits greatly from its parental links to various embassies and, in particular, to the United Nations. Pupils are fortunate to have such first-hand knowledge and expertise enabling them not only to learn from visiting speakers, but also to drive their own international humanitarian agenda too. The Model United Nations (MUN) group, for example, is a strong and successful one. Involvement in the NO Project and a commitment to the UN Global Goals are routine matters for many pupils.

The school is ideally placed to make the most of its host country's history, geography and heritage, and it does so in no small measure through a variety of trips and visits.

Also very evident amongst the pupils interviewed is an understanding of ecological issues that affect the world around them. The pupil-led environmental action group is proactive in areas such as the provision of non-bottled water, single-use plastic and efficient use of resources. There are costed plans that have been drawn up by pupils, for example, for the installation of solar panels.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain and expand the current range of commitment.

5C

STANDARD

The school teaches the majority of subjects through the medium of English.

FEEDBACK

English is the lingua franca for all pupils at all stages throughout the school and this serves as a very clear example of how British international education works at its best in theory and in practice.

The commitment to teaching Italian to all pupils (alongside other modern and ancient languages) is commendable.

NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current high level of practice.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

St George's British International School is in a remarkably strong position, having been well-established, well-maintained and now clearly focussed on yet further development, so that it might properly be regarded as one of the leading British international schools in Europe. This is not an unrealistic ambition and is one that should be supported as far as possible.

The Principal and his senior colleagues have given careful thought as to the range of ways in which St George's can become a European hub for education, not only for COBIS but also for other schools, their staff and their pupils. A genuine willingness to continue and to broaden the array of events hosted comes across loud and clear.

The Principal, who took up his post only five months ago, was given change and development as a priority. The evidence from the dynamic development plans demonstrates that he and his knowledgeable senior colleagues are working together harmoniously and are determined to see further improvements come about as soon as possible - the local context and its understandably careful approach in such an historically important city notwithstanding.

The number and range of opportunities in and away from the classroom that pupils enjoy is enviable, but none is taken for granted with several members of staff speaking engagingly about further plans not only for their pupils, but also for them and for their colleagues. The scope for professional development is extensive and fully supported.

The overriding impression gained from the Compliance process (not only from the paperwork, but also from the visit) is that this school is operating at the highest level academically and pastorally – in the widest sense of the two terms – and that it intends to continue so to do. The next step towards full Patron's Accreditation should be taken as soon as possible, so that all areas of best practice can be scrutinised, recognised and rewarded.

Recommendation to COBIS Director of Accreditation

I wholeheartedly recommend that the school be able to continue its membership of COBIS and be granted COBIS Member School status.



www.cobis.org.uk

✉ accreditation@cobis.org.uk

☎ +44 (0) 203 826 7190

🐦 @COBISorg   