

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

**THE BRITISH SCHOOL IN THE NETHERLANDS, JUNIOR SCHOOL
DIAMANTHORST**

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

5th - 8th June 2007

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

The British School in The Netherlands, Junior School Diamanthorst

Full Name of the School	The British School in The Netherlands, Junior School Diamanthorst
DfES Number	703/6410
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Age Range	4 - 11 years
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	5th - 8th June 2007

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The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The Junior School Diamanthorst (JSD) is one of a family of five schools that form the British School in The Netherlands (BSN). It opened in autumn 2003, as a school for pupils aged four to eleven years, on the site of a small teacher training college, in response to a significant increase in demand for an English education amongst the multi-national community living in The Hague. The building has been adapted to meet the requirements of teaching children of primary age the English National Curriculum. The other BSN schools were inspected in 2003.
- 1.2 The BSN has a governing body, whose main role is concerned with strategic planning. The governing body has delegated much of the oversight of individual schools to the principal of BSN, who, as the chief executive officer, is the line manager of the head teachers and carries out all the functions of a chair of governors. In this role he is aided by a board of management, which includes him, the head teachers, the vice-principal and head of finance for BSN. The governing body has also nominated two link governors for each school.
- 1.3 The school is non-selective and draws its pupils from families of over forty different nationalities and a great variety of cultural traditions, many of whom are not native English speakers. Just over four out of ten pupils are of British nationality, but a considerable number of these pupils do not come directly to the school from the United Kingdom. Small but significant minorities of pupils have Australian, Dutch, German, Italian and Nigerian nationalities. There is a high turn-over of pupils owing to the geographical mobility of parents and about one in six pupils leave each school year. The most common characteristics that the families of pupils share are that parents are in professional occupations, the diplomatic service or in management positions in business.
- 1.4 When the school began in 2003 with a roll of 135, it initially took all the new pupils enrolling for the BSN schools in the 4 to 11 age range in 2003 and 2004. This produced a pupil population with an enormously diverse range of experience, especially amongst younger pupils, some of whom had no previous experience of formal schooling. The great majority of the staff were also new to BSN in 2003, apart from the head teacher and a small number of other staff who came from other schools in BSN.
- 1.5 Since 2003, the school has more than doubled in size and now has 309 pupils, of whom slightly more than half are boys, while 41 pupils remain of the 135 who started in 2003. No pupils above Year 3 will have spent their whole educational life in the school. In total, 4 pupils at the school have statements of special educational need (SEN), funded by parents, mainly for language difficulties, 25 have been identified with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 117 have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 67 receive extra support from specialist teachers.
- 1.6 The family background of pupils suggests that they should do well in school, but the proportion who do not have English as their first language is large and some have had no formal educational experience before ages five or six. These last two factors are particularly likely to depress educational performance in tests for seven year olds. The evidence suggests that, if pupils are performing in line with their abilities at age seven, their overall performance will be below the national average for maintained primary schools in England, but by eleven years of age the factors depressing performance have been mitigated through specialist support and longevity in the school, so that performance will be above the corresponding average if it is in line with pupils' abilities.

- 1.7 The school shares the aims of all BSN schools. As stated in the BSN prospectus, ‘the overriding aim of the curriculum is...to provide a structure within which we can prepare students for a happy and successful life, developing all aspects of themselves, not only concentrating on their academic progress but on their ability to understand and respect the opinions and values of others’. The school’s individual aims include: offering a broad and balanced curriculum founded on the English National Curriculum; pursuing the highest standard in teaching, pupils’ learning and achievement; developing analytical and critical thinking skills in pupils and the capacity to work independently and in collaboration with others; ensuring confidence and competence in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT); inculcating a well-founded set of moral and social values to guide pupils’ actions in later life; stimulating imagination, creativity and interest in the arts and music; celebrating and learning from the wealth of cultures represented by pupils and their families in the school; involving parents in the education of their children and the life of the school.
- 1.8 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational experience that the school provides is good, with a number of excellent features. It is consistent with the aims and philosophy of the school and ensures that pupils are helped to understand the value of work and leisure and encouraged to become confident and happy individuals, in a secure and busy environment. The lessons and activities on offer stimulate the imagination, help develop creative talents and encourage in the children an interest in the arts and music. The work develops the capacity to think critically and analytically and the organisation of many of the lessons enables the pupils to work effectively both independently and in groups.
- 2.2 The curriculum contributes well to pupils' literacy and numeracy, human and social awareness, and to their investigative, physical and creative skills. Insufficient curriculum time for extended writing sometimes hampers the more able writers, but these pupils often continue with their work at home. All pupils study Dutch from reception onward and in Years 5 and 6 pupils experience short 'taster' courses in French, Spanish and German. Assemblies provide good opportunities for speaking in public.
- 2.3 Academic provision is planned carefully in order to give pupils opportunities to apply and explore their subjects. This was seen, for instance, in Year 6's science investigation of reflecting light using mirrors, protractors, rulers and torches and in a Year 3 lesson learning about LS Lowry and trying to copy his style of painting. Physical development is supported through very well-structured physical education lessons for all age groups. Design and technology, and in particular art and music, make strong creative and expressive contributions. During his visit, an author inspired younger pupils and his presentation appealed to their imaginations. This reflects the contribution that the many visitors make to enriching the school curriculum.
- 2.4 The curriculum affords many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and literacy skills through the frequent use of small-group work, discussion, presentations and interesting tasks requiring writing for different purposes. The provision of these opportunities is a central part of curriculum planning. Similarly, mathematical understanding and the development of numeracy skills are encouraged strongly through the mathematics curriculum and the various opportunities provided in other subject areas, such as the measurement of refraction in science or the calculation of distance in geography.
- 2.5 Pupils' experiences are enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. A spectacular example of this was the lunchtime science club run by Year 5 pupils, under the direction of the science teacher, for the benefit of Year 2 pupils. 'Playground art' was a particularly popular and interesting activity open to all age groups. Drumming and recorder playing were activities of high quality. Pupils also visit the local fire station; the local police come into school to run an assembly; Year 6 pupils spend an afternoon in a local state primary school learning about the Dutch educational experience; many pupils take part in sports activities at local sports clubs, as is the Dutch tradition; large numbers of pupils take the Dutch cycling proficiency test. The pupils are positive about the extra-curricular activities on offer.
- 2.6 Almost all of the pupils move on to the senior school after Year 6 and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Various functions and procedures facilitate this transfer. Year 6 pupils enjoy a 'taster' visit in January and a 'transfer' day in July, including a barbecue with pupils from the other local junior school. There is careful liaison between

the two schools in managing the transfer of pupils with EAL, those who have LDD and those who have statements of SEN. The two schools have established a curriculum liaison committee, which has developed English and mathematics projects that pupils begin in Year 6 and complete in Year 7, to aid curricular continuity. Other curricular links with the senior school are more limited, which the school is aware of and is planning to improve through the committee.

- 2.7 The curriculum is planned effectively and promotes participation in a wide range of activities and interests, whilst ensuring that all pupils have full access to it. In particular it serves the needs of those with EAL and those who have LDD or statements of SEN extremely well. Each year group has detailed termly planning documents and meets weekly to develop its short-term planning. Such thorough planning and the regular review meetings are largely successful in creating an effective curriculum. Subjects are supported by comprehensive documentation; teaching seen was often at its strongest when the planning was meticulous, as in English, literacy, learning support and in the reception classes. Nevertheless, opportunities to use ICT are variable across the curriculum. An impressive media studies centre allows for research and independent learning. Quiet reading areas in dedicated class libraries enhance the provision for reading.
- 2.8 Appropriate and effective procedures identify learners with LDD and the significant number of those with EAL. These pupils are strongly supported with individualised programmes devised by the relevant support staff. They receive extensive assistance both in the classroom and on a withdrawal basis, as deemed appropriate. Thorough records are kept and review procedures are in place, which are enhanced by extensive liaison between specialist teachers, learning support assistants, class and subject teachers and parents. The school meets well the requirements for the four pupils with statements of special educational need. It is developing strategies and programmes to enable gifted and talented pupils to be fully challenged.

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 The quality of learning and achievement is good overall, with many aspects of learning of an outstanding quality, fulfilling the school's aims of seeking the highest standards of learning and individual endeavour.
- 2.10 Pupils demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subjects that they study. Similarly, they develop good subject skills and show a notable capacity to think critically and creatively. By Year 1, for instance, they are already developing an understanding of the importance of prediction in science.
- 2.11 The school has been particularly successful in ensuring that the very diverse needs of the pupils have been addressed effectively, so that all pupils make good progress as they proceed through the school, and this is particularly so for younger pupils with EAL and LDD, as instanced in Year 2, where pupils with EAL were observed making good progress in story-telling, with the help of support staff. Similarly, the few pupils with statements of SEN make good progress, benefiting from the well-focused support available.
- 2.12 Pupils apply mathematics and mathematical concepts effectively, both within the subject and in other areas of the curriculum. In Year 3, pupils were able to identify multiples of 3, 5 and 7 from the table of numbers and in Year 6 pupils could use protractors to measure the angle of reflected light during a light investigation. They use ICT effectively in a range of contexts and make good progress in other technological skills. In Year 3 pupils were observed using the internet to investigate and make notes about endangered species of

- animal, while in Year 5 pupils were doing an open-ended investigation, demonstrating creativity and critical analysis in using a computer program to control the movement of an object, reflecting the appropriate attention that the school pays to developing pupils' skills in control technology.
- 2.13 The school enters pupils for the English national tests at ages seven and eleven. The interpretation of these results presents particular difficulties in the case of the school. This is partly because many pupils do not have English as their first language and many have had little formal education before aged five or even six, particularly in the first two years of the school's existence. In this context, the 2004 results for pupils aged seven, which were well below the national average, should be discounted. The results for 2005 and 2006 reflect a more realistic picture of achievement. These were in line with the English national average for all maintained schools and represent good achievement for these pupils, taking account of the fact that a considerable number were emerging learners of English.
- 2.14 For pupils aged eleven, results in English have been consistently well above the national average for all maintained schools in England between 2004 and 2006, and are good in relation to pupils' ability, reflecting the close attention paid to developing pupils' literacy skills. Results in mathematics and science have been more variable. In 2004 and 2005 results were above average and satisfactory for the ability of the pupils, although in 2005 the achievement of higher level grades in science in particular and in mathematics declined. The school identified this as an area for improvement and undertook staff development to enhance staff confidence and expertise. In 2006 results in mathematics and science were well above the national average, matching those for English, and were good in relation to pupils' ability.
- 2.15 In the short life of the school, pupils have already achieved success across a wide range of areas. Pupils have won an international school art competition, and achieved representative honours with the Dutch national boys' and girls' cricket teams. Year 5 pupils have participated in an art project with a professional artist that led to their work being exhibited in an art gallery in The Hague, the recorder ensemble has taken part in an international music festival and the football team won the mini-World Cup football competition, involving several international schools. Pupils have been selected to represent BSN and area teams in various sports. These achievements reflect the good quality of work done in lessons and during extra-curricular activities, as well as the school's willingness to be flexible about its curricular arrangements in order to allow pupils with talent to pursue their activities, such as playing cricket or music.
- 2.16 Pupils develop the essential study skills very effectively and display excellent attitudes towards work and study. They are articulate and those with EAL made particularly rapid progress in developing their language skills. All pupils make good progress in reading, aided by the regular reading assignments for homework, particularly lower down the school, and become fluent and competent readers. Pupils learn how to write with technical accuracy and confidence. Sustained prose writing is less well developed, but the visit of a well-known children's author during the inspection was generating some lively examples of this. From an early age, pupils listen very carefully to teachers and each other. This is indicated in the thoughtful and reflective manner in which they respond to questions.
- 2.17 Increasingly, pupils demonstrate the ability to reason and argue cogently and to think for themselves. Thoughtful discussions were observed in many classrooms, where pupils had to justify their views and take account of the opinions of others.

- 2.18 Pupils become increasingly confident and develop skills such as note-taking and working independently as they move up the school. This leads to independent projects about famous Victorians such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Sometimes, nevertheless, they can be over-reliant on the original language of internet websites in project work. The ability to collaborate well together is evident from an early age.
- 2.19 A striking feature of pupils' learning in classrooms is their ability, from an early age, to settle quickly, both at the beginning of a lesson, when tasks are set, and in tidying up at the end of lessons, so that very little time is lost. They persevere with great determination on tasks set and their attention remains sharply focused on what they are doing. They clearly enjoy their work and gain a great deal of satisfaction from it.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.20 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding and the school is very successful in meeting its aims of developing a well-founded set of moral and social values, and celebrating and learning from the wealth of cultures that pupils and their families come from.
- 2.21 Pupils quickly develop a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and with it a strong sense of social justice. The ethos of the school plays an important part in the development of these aspects of pupils' education. Staff treat pupils with a natural courtesy and civility and strongly encourage this in pupils. They have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which is guided by a clear, easily understandable set of school rules that pupils quickly internalise, and is reinforced through cooperative and altruistic behaviour that is consistently rewarded through praise and encouragement. Pupils learn much also from the work that they do studying topics such as the effects of global warming and protection of the environment, the Civil Rights movement in the United States and life in Victorian Britain, or the work of European institutions and the United Nations.
- 2.22 Similarly, pupils are very much aware of their social responsibilities and accept them willingly. Sometimes they can be formal, such as acting as a register monitor or through the science club that Year 5 pupils organise for Year 2 pupils. On other occasions, they are more informal, such as helping younger pupils with computer programs in the computer club, or helping each other with particular tasks.
- 2.23 Pupils develop a strong sense of self-esteem and self-confidence from an early age, so that they express their views confidently, partly as a result of the positive manner in which staff praise achievement, but also through the way in which pupils are encouraged to express and debate their own opinions. This is well illustrated by the confident manner in which a class developed rules to keep themselves safe if they got lost whilst out with their parents, and is evident more generally in the manner in which pupils go about their various activities in the school.
- 2.24 They also develop values that go beyond the purely materialistic world. In their responses to music and art, their reflection in assembly on the importance of caring for the environment, the protection of animals that share our world, or the charity work in which they are involved for UNICEF, pupils recognise values of beauty, interdependence and social harmony that are essential to the well-being of the world.
- 2.25 The cultural development of pupils is also outstanding. The school community contains an exciting mix of cultural traditions, with children of over 40 different nationalities. Pupils enjoy this vibrant cultural mix and, as Year 4 pupils put it: "you find out a lot about the

world from other children". The ethos of the school strongly encourages pupils of different nationalities to work and play together and share their experiences, which the regular collaboration in small groups during lessons supports.

- 2.26 In a more formal context, the school continually supports the cultural development of pupils through its own cultural diversity. In the school hall the national flags of every child in the school are displayed, providing a colourful reminder of this. Various artefacts of different cultural and national traditions are displayed on a rotating basis. Assemblies are used to illustrate particular cultural traditions, such as the Chinese New Year, to which parents and their children often make a valuable contribution. Major events in the school calendar are the International Day celebrations, where the different cultural traditions of the various countries from which pupils come are represented, including the different types of art, music, food, games and clothing. This year some pupils also brought in artefacts about their birthplace. In discussion pupils talked in an animated fashion about the International Days. One unusual way that some entered into the spirit of the festival was by answering their names in a language of one of their friends, rather than their own, much to the surprise and amusement of teachers and the class.
- 2.27 Pupils also learn about British and Dutch cultural traditions and experience them, including the traditional English Harvest Festival, where they visit a local home for the elderly to sing and make presentations. This is a particularly poignant moment for many of these residents because they remember such celebrations, which no longer generally take place in The Netherlands.
- 2.28 Within the curriculum, pupils also develop and extend their cultural understanding, whether learning about endangered species in Year 3, or the particular characteristics of The Netherlands and the Dutch landscape in Years 1 and 6.
- 2.29 From all their experiences in the school, pupils develop a great interest in cultural diversity, and a strong commitment to interdependence, as exemplified by some of the 'dreams' that Year 4 pupils produced through small-group work. These were in response to hearing an extract of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech, and included "the ending of all wars" and that "children would play together like a rainbow dancing in the sky".

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.30 The quality of teaching is good overall: the majority of it is good, a significant minority is excellent and a relatively small minority is satisfactory. The teaching, therefore, means that the school is successful in its aim of seeking the highest standards in this respect.
- 2.31 Universally strong features of the teaching are the calm, firm but gentle authority of the teachers, the purposefulness of the teaching and the excellent relationships that they have established with their pupils, marked by courtesy, respect and affection. These create an atmosphere in classrooms that is highly conducive to learning, where pupils want to learn, are very diligent, are often enthused about their work and have the confidence to think and learn for themselves. This allows teachers at times to work with individuals and small groups, confident in the knowledge that the rest of the class will remain focused on the tasks set while they do so.
- 2.32 Lessons are always thoroughly planned and well organised. They normally have clear and appropriate objectives, which are often shared with pupils, and considerable thought is given to how the questioning, explanation and various tasks set for pupils will achieve the intended

- learning. Occasionally, the teaching does not identify clearly enough subject specific learning goals.
- 2.33 Careful thought is also given to addressing the often diverse learning needs of pupils and the deployment of support staff, where available, to achieve this. This was well illustrated in a literacy withdrawal group where the two support staff were deployed very effectively to help pupils with LDD and EAL needs carry out particular tasks concerned with seeking information from books.
- 2.34 The teaching is effective in helping all pupils make good progress. It is particularly successful in ensuring that the many pupils with EAL needs make rapid progress in developing their language skills and that pupils with LDD make consistently good progress. The well-organised, sharply focused work of support teachers and teaching assistants, combined with close collaboration with class teachers, plays an important role in the good progress that pupils make.
- 2.35 Teaching methods are carefully selected to achieve their objectives, with tasks that ensure progress in learning. Many lessons include the use of a variety of methods, such as exposition by the teacher, small-group work and/or individual tasks and end-of-lesson plenaries, which are often used well to test and consolidate learning that has taken place during the lesson. Teachers manage transition from one activity to the next well and the pace of learning is nearly always brisk, so that effective use is made of lesson time.
- 2.36 Teachers' subject knowledge is usually secure and often very secure, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and enhances the quality of the teaching. This is evident in the lucid explanations that pupils are offered and in the quality of questioning, which is commonly a strong feature of the teaching. In a few areas teachers' subject knowledge is more variable and occasionally adversely affects the development of pupils' subject specialist skills, such as historical interpretation.
- 2.37 Generally the teaching shows a very good understanding of the prior attainment, attitudes and needs of pupils. This is helped by the careful diagnosis of the learning needs of the regular new entrants to the school and the work of the support staff in EAL and LDD, who get to know the pupils they support very well and often help them to make rapid progress. The swift integration of new pupils into teaching and learning and life in the classroom is an excellent feature of the teaching and owes much to the attitudes and work of class teachers and support staff.
- 2.38 The teaching is well supported by a good range of resources, which include books, handouts, equipment and materials, for instance various types of rock to aid pupils in a science lesson on rock classification. Interactive whiteboards are used unobtrusively and effectively by many teachers, but their exciting potential is not yet exploited fully. Various examples of pupils using computers were observed in lessons, and personal research projects, often set as homework, such as finding out about famous Victorians, require pupils to carry out personal investigations using the internet. In one Year 3 class a carefully constructed format for notes ensured that there was no copying from the website, but this is not always so.
- 2.39 Questioning and teachers' oral comments often provide some helpful advice to pupils about how they can improve their work. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is regular and personally encouraging, but sometimes does not explain clearly to pupils what they have done well or how they can improve their work. In literacy and English this is often done well and sometimes includes helpful personal targets to support progress in pupils' learning. In the Foundation Stage it is done outstandingly well. More generally, teachers' practice is

variable and often marking does not make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and is not used effectively to aid the planning of subsequent work. The school is aware of this weakness and has identified assessment for learning as a key issue for improvement.

- 2.40 Pupils' performance has been assessed regularly through national test results since the beginning of the school's life, and this evidence has been used effectively to identify weaknesses and determine strategies for improvement. The school is now moving to the use of another testing system which provides more frequent and finely graded data about the performance of individual pupils.

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care in the school is outstanding and meets very well the school's aim of providing good pastoral care, so that pupils feel very secure and well cared for. The school has also introduced various effective measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils.
- 3.2 Classroom teachers are the key figures in pastoral care and they know their pupils very well, as do other staff, who closely support them. The deputy and assistant heads, partly through their support work, also know much about pupils. The ethos of the school is very welcoming, warm and friendly, so that pupils feel very secure in a safe environment and new arrivals settle very quickly. Pupils name their class teacher as the first person to whom they would turn if they have a problem or need guidance, but they are equally comfortable about approaching other staff, confident in their belief that their concerns would be taken seriously and addressed expeditiously. This very much reflects the strong bond of trust between pupils and staff.
- 3.3 The excellent care, support and guidance provided build pupils' confidence and self-esteem very effectively. It is supported by well-structured pastoral arrangements, and there is a clear line of management responsibility to the deputy head, who has overall responsibility for pastoral care. These arrangements include time each week during personal, social and health education (PSHE) for pupils to raise any concerns that they have. Pupils report that these concerns are discussed in a sympathetic and helpful manner.
- 3.4 Relationships throughout the school are excellent and are characterised by mutual respect between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils. The admirably simple set of school rules, known as the 'golden rules', advocates gentleness, kindness, honesty, diligence, care for property and the importance of listening to others. They are well known and internalised by pupils, so that they guide their behaviour and discipline in the school. Behaviour in classes and around the school is exemplary.
- 3.5 Various measures exist to encourage good behaviour, the most significant of which is the time given on a Friday afternoon for pupils to pursue a range of activities put on by staff, called 'golden time', in acknowledgement of good behaviour during the week. This time is greatly valued by pupils and provides an effective extra incentive for them because they can lose some of this time for any misbehaviour, albeit in small amounts. The school also runs a house system for older pupils, with points awarded for helpful behaviour and achievement, academic or otherwise. Pupils clearly appreciate the system and a visible air of excitement was apparent in the weekly assembly where the head teacher announced the points score for each house. The school has appropriate anti-bullying procedures and policies, but these are seldom used and had not been used at all during the current year. Pupils spoken to could not recall any incidents of bullying. At the heart of the exemplary behaviour of pupils is their whole-hearted acceptance of the 'golden rules' through which they live their lives in the school community.
- 3.6 Measures to promote the health and safety of pupils are successful. The head teacher is the child protection officer of the school and has undergone appropriate training, as has the deputy head who is his nominated deputy. Child protection procedures are fully in place and all staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau or have had equivalent checks carried out in The Netherlands. The school has a satisfactory number of staff trained in first

aid and as fire-fighters, as required by Dutch law. Protection against fire hazards is very thorough, as are risk assessments for any activities taking place outside the school, which are well recorded. Thorough risk assessment procedures are also in place for activities taking place inside the school and school grounds. The school has been adapted carefully to meet the needs of pupils with physical disabilities, although there are currently none at the school.

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.7 The quality of links with parents and the community is good, with a number of outstanding features. The school is successful in meeting its aims of involving parents in the education of their children and the life of the school and is creating strong links with the wider community.
- 3.8 The great majority of parents responding to the questionnaire administered before the inspection was satisfied or very satisfied with the education provided by the school. A small number of parents raised queries about the following aspects: the information that they receive about their child's progress; the range of extra-curricular activities available; how well the school handles parental concerns. The inspection evidence supports the view of the vast majority of parents, who are fully satisfied with all aspects of the provision of the school, while noting that the school is increasing the range of its extra-curricular activities.
- 3.9 Parents have good opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. The school has a Parents Representative Council, which is elected each year, with one representative from each year group. This group meets regularly with the school's leadership team to discuss issues raised by parents. The representatives met by inspectors report that the school listens carefully to issues that they raise and responds positively, for instance, by producing a termly list of topics that each year group will be studying, so that parents are better informed about this, and by running workshops on how literacy and numeracy are now taught. Parents are also asked to sign homework diaries and comment on any aspect of the homework that has caused their child difficulties. This they do and it has helped to clarify learning problems that pupils are facing. Regular coffee mornings are run at the school for parents and various parents are invited to speak to pupils about their occupations and particular cultural interests or traditions. Parents also play a very important part in the cultural events that the school runs, such as the International Day, and attend the various musical evenings, drama productions and other events that the school puts on.
- 3.10 The BSN marketing department undertakes a survey of parents' views every two years and this information is used to review various aspects of school provision. Equally important is the comment form that the head teacher sends out each year with end of year reports, which serves the same purpose. These are analysed and the comments inform the planning for development in the coming year.
- 3.11 Parents are very well informed about the school and its various activities. On entry into the school they receive a detailed and well-presented information pack, which provides them with a great deal of information in a lively and accessible format, both about the school and the BSN family of schools.
- 3.12 During the time that their children are in the school, parents are kept well informed about their progress. Parents discuss their child's progress with teachers at appointed times during the autumn and spring terms, where targets are set to aid pupils' progress. These meetings are followed by a written record of what was said and agreed, which is sent to parents. In the summer term parents receive a formal written report about the progress and achievement of their child. In effect, therefore, parents receive three written reports a year, as well as the

two oral reports. Parents' initial contact is usually with the class teacher, but the assistant and deputy heads and head teacher are always available for consultation, at parents' request.

- 3.13 The school responds quickly and appropriately to any concerns the parents raise, through a clear set of procedures that indicate when senior staff should be involved. Procedures for dealing with any formal complaints are available for parents to view, but it has not been necessary to use them recently.
- 3.14 As well as its strong links with parents, the school has developing links with the local and wider community. Visits are made to local shopping centres to conduct surveys, pupils visit a residential home for the elderly and play in local sports clubs. They also visit local museums and art galleries. Pupils visit the local fire station and the local police come in to school to run an assembly. Year 6 pupils spend an afternoon at the local state primary school and large numbers of pupils take the Dutch cycling proficiency test. The school supports UNICEF and celebrates the various communities and traditions of pupils, while pupils have benefited from visits of international artists and authors.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The governance of the school is good, with some unusual but very effective features. The structure and management arrangements of the governing body are well defined and support effective oversight of the school. The major part of this responsibility has been delegated to the principal and board of management; an arrangement that works well.
- 4.2 The roles and responsibilities of the principal and the board of management are clear and well understood by all participants. The school benefits greatly from the broad experience and accumulated wisdom that the principal brings to his role, which informs the advice and guidance that he provides. He meets with the head teacher on a weekly basis to discuss day-to-day management and more strategic issues.
- 4.3 The board of management meets fortnightly and provides a valuable opportunity for strategic planning to be reviewed with a group of professional peers, who have a considerable weight of educational experience and expertise. This requires the head teacher to explain and justify strategic decisions and enables him to benefit from a level of professional educational expertise seldom available to head teachers.
- 4.4 Similarly, the school benefits considerably from the level of financial expertise that membership of BSN provides, through its centralised finance department, and from the expertise of the marketing department, which also handles admissions. This allows the school to focus on teaching and learning without some of the distractions that many schools face.
- 4.5 The governing body also appoints two members as link governors, whose responsibility is to keep the governing body informed about their perceptions of developments in the school, which complements the detailed reports of the principal. This arrangement allows the head teacher to benefit from the support and guidance of experienced non-educational professionals, who often provide valuable insights and a different perspective on what the school is trying to achieve.
- 4.6 The principal knows the school very well and over a two-year period interviews every teacher in the school individually. On a regular basis he meets members of the school's 'works council', made up of elected representatives from the school's employees, to discuss various issues related to the running of the school, as prescribed by Dutch law. The principal attends the school's social functions. Together with his regular meetings with the head teacher and perambulations around the school, this range of contacts gives the principal a very good knowledge of the school and its staff. The combined roles of the principal and the two link governors ensure that staff receive a very helpful range of support and advice, while facing challenges that are demanding but manageable.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.7 The leadership and management of the school are good and play an important part in ensuring that it is successful in meeting its aims.
- 4.8 The head teacher and leadership team provide clear educational direction and leadership. They have a very good understanding of the underpinning principles and ethos of the school that they wish to promote, and of the stages of development that the school needs to go through to achieve these. Each stage of development is planned carefully, drawing on evaluations at various levels, from the governors, board of management, the principal and the results of test scores and evaluations by staff and pupils, in order to assess progress and guide development. School development planning supports this process well.
- 4.9 The decision to use the other two members of the leadership team in leadership and teaching roles in LDD and EAL has contributed to the success of these two critical areas of provision in the learning and achievement of pupils. At the same time they provide good leadership and management of the pastoral and academic aspects of the school.
- 4.10 In the first stage of the school's development, the major focus was on recruiting high-quality staff, developing the procedures and policies of the school and creating a calm, caring ethos in which pupils felt happy and secure. This has been achieved. The school now has a highly motivated, experienced and well-qualified staff and is moving on to its next stage of development, which focuses on developing the roles of subject coordinators as curriculum managers and innovators. This is at an early stage, but planning documentation is now in place and much of it is of a high quality. Until recently, monitoring and review were very largely the province of the leadership team, but this is now being extended to middle management roles.
- 4.11 Staff development focused on specific school priorities identified in the school development plan during the first two years of the school's existence. Now that an effective review process has been established, attention is also being paid to more specific subject and personal needs of staff. The school is developing processes for determining the impact of staff training on teaching and learning and already has some procedures in operation.
- 4.12 Financial resources are well managed to support educational aims and meet the developing needs of the school and its pupils effectively. In this the school benefits from the expertise that the central financial planning department brings to financial management.
- 4.13 The administration of the school is very efficient and makes an excellent contribution to the effective day-to-day management of the school.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The Junior School at Diamanthorst is successful in meeting all of its aims and achieves great success in some of them. Its curriculum, founded on the English National Curriculum, provides a good educational experience for pupils, which is enriched by the school's extra-curricular activities and meets the diverse learning needs of all pupils well. The achievement of pupils is good and many aspects of their learning are outstanding. The school is particularly successful in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. This includes the development of a strong and secure set of moral values, great self-esteem and confidence, recognition of the importance of the aesthetic, interdependence and social harmony, a strong sense of social responsibility and a great interest and delight in cultural diversity. The teaching is good overall and some of it is excellent. It is notable for the calm, gentle authority of teachers, the purposefulness of the teaching and the excellent relationships staff establish with pupils. This is supported by outstanding pastoral care, so pupils feel very secure and well cared for. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school and links with the local and wider community are developing. The governance of the school is clearly effective and the leadership team has played an important role in its successful development through thoughtful and perceptive leadership and management of the school. The administration of the school is excellent.
- 5.2 A number of issues remain for the school to address. These include improving the quality of teachers' marking, ensuring that subject coordinators are successful in monitoring and improving learning and achievement in their curriculum areas and improving curricular continuity with the senior school. The school is aware of these issues and is already taking steps to address them.
- 5.3 The school meets all of the English regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school should implement ways of:
1. improving the quality of teachers' marking, so that it makes a more effective contribution to pupils' learning;
 2. further developing the role of subject coordinators;
 3. improving curricular continuity with the senior school.
- 5.5 No action in respect of the English regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 5th - 8th June 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Ted Cohn	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Susan Errington	Former Early Years Coordinator, GSA School
Mrs Suzanne Goshawk	Former Deputy Head, IAPS School
Mr Mick Jonas	Deputy Head, IAPS School
Mr Stephen Prescott	Head Teacher, COBISEC School