

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### **The British School in the Netherlands**

Full Name of the School	<b>The British School in the Netherlands</b>
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Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>28<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009</b>

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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 British School in the Netherlands was founded in The Hague in 1931 as ‘The English Kindergarten and Prep School’ with 26 pupils. The expansion of The Hague as a centre for international commercial and governmental organisations has had a significant impact on the development of the school since then. The whole school roll now totals more than 2000 pupils from the ages of three to eighteen. There are 450 staff, the great majority of whom are UK-trained and qualified. Four of the British School in the Netherlands schools are based in or close to The Hague: *Vlaskamp Junior School*, *Leidschenveen Junior School*, *Diamanthorst Junior School* and the *Senior School*. The fifth school, *Assen Junior School*, is located at Assen in the north of the country. The British School in the Netherlands also runs an international languages centre in The Hague which has approximately 2000 part-time students on roll.
- 1.2 The school is organised as an association (vereniging) established under Dutch law as a non-profit making organisation. The association has thirty five nominated members, drawn from three distinct groups: employer organisations whose employees have children at the school, special interests groups such as international organisations in the Netherlands, and independents who have no association with the former. The board of governors is made up of eight individuals. Six of these are appointed by the general meeting of the association and two are appointed by the British Ambassador who is the chair of the association.
- 1.3 The school’s principal is in overall charge of the group of schools. Each individual school has its own headteacher and senior management team. The headteachers, the principal, the assistant principal, and the director of finance form the board of management of the whole school and manage the school centrally. Individual schools work closely together and have common systems and structures. The school aims to ensure that there is an equally high level of provision of curriculum, staffing, resources and facilities in each school. A central business unit, overseen by the assistant principal, handles admissions, marketing, personnel, information and communications technology (ICT), and transport for all of the schools. In a similar way the experienced Finance Director is responsible for a whole school finance department.
- 1.4 The British School in the Netherlands schools all share the same mission statement and aim which is to provide a world-class education to individual pupils of all nationalities, developing their potential while encouraging self-discipline and mutual respect. It seeks to nurture creativity and the capacity for independent and critical thought. It wishes its pupils to be confident, resilient, engaged, and also tolerant and respectful to others. It hopes for the school to be in partnership, not only with its pupils but also with their parents and the wider community. The teachers and support staff are seen as creative professionals and the school aims to support each in fulfilling that role.
- 1.5 The school serves a largely professional group of parents who work for multi-national companies, European organisations and the diplomatic service. About two-fifths of the pupils are British but a considerable number of these do not come directly to the school from the United Kingdom. The remaining pupils come from more than eighty different countries. There is a high pupil turn-over because of the frequent changes in work location experienced by many of the parents. Pupils typically stay at the school for three to four years, and a significant minority stay for a relatively short time depending on the nature of their parents’ employment. A few pupils spend their entire school career at the BSN. Most pupils are working in their second language, many in their third language, and a number arrive with very little English.

- 1.6 The British School in the Netherlands is academically non-selective, apart from recognition of a pupil's evident desire to learn in an international environment and participate in the school's wide-ranging curriculum, and it provides for the full range of ability. Pupils' family backgrounds suggest 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 the age of five or six. A significant number of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), with some receiving extra support from specialist teachers. There are also a number of pupils identified as having specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 1.7 The schools do not take part in national tests at 7+ or 11+, but data collected from standardised cognitive tests indicates that the ability range within the schools is above the national United Kingdom average. Results of standardised tests taken in Year 7 indicate that the average ability of pupils in the senior school is above the national average of pupils in secondary schools in the United Kingdom. If pupils are achieving in line with their abilities, their results in examinations for the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) should be above the national average for pupils in all maintained schools in the United Kingdom. The average ability of pupils in the sixth form continues to be above the national average of pupils embarking on General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'A' level courses in the United Kingdom so that, if pupils perform in line with their abilities, their results will be above the average for all maintained secondary schools.
- 1.8 The school uses a British curriculum, modified and adapted to meet the needs of international pupils. Since the last inspection in November 2003, the senior school now offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma as well as A-level examinations in Years 12 and 13.
- 1.9 *Diamanthorst Junior School*, based in a suburb near to the centre of The Hague, opened in 2003 with a roll of 135 and has grown in size to 350 pupils, aged from three to eleven, of whom slightly more than half are boys. Forty nationalities are represented, and 117 pupils have EAL, of whom 67 receive extra support from specialist teachers. Sixty pupils are identified with specific LDD and receive special educational provision.
- 1.10 *Vlaskamp Junior School*, based in a suburb of The Hague, is the largest of the group's junior schools. It has 666 pupils on roll, with 54 nationalities. For about half of the pupils English is an additional language, and 72 have extra support for learning the language. Seventy-eight pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities, and all are given support through SEN Teaching Assistant in-class support and monitoring. There have been significant changes since the last inspection. The headteacher and one deputy headteacher have been in post for one year, management arrangements have been restructured and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was integrated into the school at the start of September 2009.
- 1.11 *Leidschenveen Junior School* opened in September 2009 and is currently housed in a temporary base and is preparing to move in early 2010 to a new purpose-built school on the outskirts of The Hague. About two thirds of the school's initial pupil intake is new to the British School in the Netherlands, with the remainder coming from other schools within the British School in the Netherlands group. The great majority of the staff have transferred from other schools in the group. At the time of the inspection the school held 159 pupils, aged from three to eleven, with slightly more boys than girls. Thirty-three nationalities are represented, and 70 pupils receive support with English as an additional language (EAL). Prior to their commencement at school, fifteen pupils have been identified as having specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and requiring special educational provision.

- 1.12 *Assen Junior School* has been part of the BSN family of schools since 1976. The school is located in Assen in the north-east of the Netherlands, some two hundred kilometres distant from the other schools. The school is funded by a major industrial company (NAM) based in Assen, working in partnership with the British School in the Netherlands. The school caters for boys and girls from three to eleven, and currently has 43 pupils on roll, significantly less than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils come from a variety of nationalities and more than half have English as an additional language. Nine pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities, with seven having extra support for this. The school moved in September 2008 to purpose-built accommodation and now has an inner garden, an information and communications technology (ICT) suite, a dedicated playground for the Foundation stage and spacious classrooms. The headteacher took up her post in 2008.
- 1.13 The *Senior School*, located in the outer suburb of Voorschoten, currently has 889 pupils aged from eleven to eighteen on roll with an approximately equal number of boys and girls. Most enter from one of the British School in the Netherlands' own junior schools, but nearly one half do not stay until the end of the sixth form, usually because their families have relocated. The largest group of pupils is British (about two-fifths and the second largest Dutch (about one-fifth). Sixty-nine pupils receive support in learning English as an additional language and 94 pupils are identified with specific LDD and receive special educational provision for this. Almost all pupils who leave the school after A-level study proceed to university or other centres of further education, usually in the United Kingdom.
- 1.14 This inspection looked at *Vlaskamp Junior School*, *Leidschenveen Junior School*, *Assen Junior School* and the *Senior School*. *Diamanthorst Junior School* was not inspected in full during this inspection because it had previously been inspected in June 2007. A one day visit was made during this inspection to check on the school's progress towards meeting the suggested Next Steps set out in its 2007 inspection report.
- 1.15 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

### ***Junior Schools***

School	NC name
Foundation 1	Nursery
Foundation 2	Reception
Year 1	Year 1
Year 2	Year 2
Year 3	Year 3
Year 4	Year 4
Year 5	Year 5
Year 6	Year 6

***Senior School***

School	NC name
Year 7	Year 7
Year 8	Year 8
Year 9	Year 9
Year 10	Year 10
Year 11	Year 11
Year 12	Year 12
Year 13	Year 13

## 2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational experience provided by *Vlaskamp, Assen* and the *Senior School* is good with excellent features. At *Leidschenveen*, in the short time during which the school has been open so far, the educational experience is outstanding. All pupils benefit from an interesting and broad educational experience which provides effectively for the international dimension of their education. In providing such a curriculum, the school meets its aims and has improved on curriculum provision since the last inspection.
- 2.2 Across the school the education contributes effectively to pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic, and creative development. In addition, the emphasis placed on environmental education and understanding encourages pupils' care for the environment. The school successfully enables pupils to acquire the skills of speaking, literacy and numeracy.
- 2.3 Curriculum planning across the schools is good, and is particularly strong at *Leidschenveen*, where the advantage of a fresh start has been used to best effect. At *Vlaskamp* planning of the curriculum is meticulous and is focused on pupils' academic and personal development. The development of the curriculum at *Vlaskamp* represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The provision of extra curricular activities remains adequate. A significant development has been the improvement of pupils' skills in ICT. The school effectively incorporates the best features of a British education within an international setting. The curriculum for children in the Foundation 1 (nursery) and Foundation 2 (reception) classes is well planned in line with the EYFS curriculum in England. In line with the school's aims, pupils have opportunities to participate in all activities.
- 2.4 At *Assen* the strong focus on speaking and listening and on numeracy means that pupils are given ample opportunity to learn the skills of communicating and calculating. The topic-based approach is well organised enabling strong cross-curricular links between subjects. Most subjects are taught by class teachers with some specialist teaching for physical education, music, Dutch, French and ICT. ICT provision at *Assen* has benefited from the addition of a computer suite and interactive whiteboards in every classroom. The new facilities provide greater opportunities for physical education and outdoor play, and advantage is taken of this. The use at *Assen* of the inner garden has presented further opportunities for activities. In Years 1 and 2 they made bird feeders, named the different birds that used them and translated these names into Dutch. In the Foundation Stage at *Assen* the classroom and the outside area are organised into learning zones enabling development in all six areas which meets their needs and makes a strong contribution to linguistic development in English.
- 2.5 Pupils in Years 7 and 8 at the *Senior School* study fifteen compulsory subjects across the whole range, including four modern foreign languages. At GCSE a central and compulsory core of mathematics, science and English is well supported by a wide variety of optional subjects in the humanities, languages, creative and aesthetic fields. Provision in Years 12 and 13 is a significant strength of the school. The International Baccalaureate (IB) and A levels run side-by-side to offer an attractive choice for all interests, and language opportunities with an exciting international perspective are plentiful. Class sizes are small, especially in the sixth form, which further enhances the high quality of provision. The curriculum provides well for pupils of all abilities and interests. They are banded by ability in the core subjects of mathematics, English, modern foreign languages and the sciences. All subject departments have careful schemes of work, which define intended learning.

- 2.6 Considerable attention is given in all the schools to pupils' personal, social, health, and citizenship education (PSHCE) and to the development of a healthy lifestyle. Significant emphasis is placed on the international aspect of the school. Formal events are used to good effect, such as international day where all nationalities represented in the school share their cultural backgrounds and traditions. Pupils visit many places of interest locally and further afield. Plans are in hand to widen pupils' residential experience through collaboration across the junior schools within the group. The *Senior School* provides a well-planned course of PSHCE for all pupils from Years 7 to 11. Coverage includes a wide range of issues relevant to pupils, for example, healthy eating, appropriate sexual awareness and behaviour, the dangers of drug abuse and alcohol excess.
- 2.7 At *Vlaskamp* pupils benefit from an adequate range of extra curricular activities including music, sport and others such as scrabble, map and book clubs. A significant number of parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concerns about the range of extra curricular activities and the school development plan seeks to improve this range. At *Leidschenveen* equality of access and opportunity are integral to all plans and it was evident from the wide range of activities already undertaken that well-targeted curriculum planning had made an immediate impact underpinning these goals. Pupils of all abilities and nationalities took part in and enjoyed the "Sports for All" programme. At *Assen* pupils spoke positively of the quality of the extra-curricular activities provided. Further extension to the programme is provided by activities in the local community on Wednesday afternoon. The *Senior School* provides a good range of formal extra-curricular activities, with additional voluntary choice of sporting, musical and dramatic involvement. Residential field-trips, debating competitions, public performance, debating in a model United Nations, competitive sports and foreign tours abound. These range from an art trip to New York, a World Challenge visit to Vietnam, and opportunity for strong mathematicians to compete in Vienna. These visits further enrich the school's strong programme of cultural education.
- 2.8 The EYFS has only just joined *Vlaskamp* but is already fully part of the school. Work has begun to prepare children in Foundation 2 for the transfer to Year 1 in a year's time. Most pupils transfer from *Vlaskamp* to the Senior School, and transfer arrangements are effective. Preparation at *Assen* for the next stage of education is good. Pupils' records are transferred to inform the next stage of their education and the PSHE programme throughout school includes a section on 'new beginnings' and 'changes'.
- 2.9 In the *Senior School* pupils receive careful guidance on choice of subject options, and they have ready access to careers advice and the resources of a well-equipped careers centre. A programme running from Year 10 gives good advice on career paths and higher education in the United Kingdom or beyond.
- 2.10 *Vlaskamp* is highly successful in meeting the needs of the large number of pupils with English as an additional language. In particular, high quality support is provided for these pupils in lessons, and where necessary, outside the classroom. Care is taken through a number of imaginative activities, such as 'mother tongue picnics', to support their first languages. Well managed support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. Detailed and thorough assessment indicates the areas where extra support is needed and the nature of that support. Where needed, pupils are provided with carefully drawn up individual plans of support. The recent deployment of teaching assistants into lessons to support pupils with English as an additional language or learning difficulties and disabilities adds significantly to the support they receive. Pupils at *Leidschenveen* in need of learning support receive swift identification and attention so that their curricular access is rapidly developed. *Leidschenveen's* initial pupil intake contains an unusually high proportion of EAL pupils. In addition to this support all pupils take Dutch language lessons taught by specialist staff.

- 2.11 Provision at *Assen* for pupils with LDD, and for pupils for whom English is a second language (EAL) is excellent and pupils have a highly effective programme of planned support. Individual education plans (IEP) are written, reviewed termly and shared with parents and pupils. Pupils who come to school with no English receive thorough support both through carefully planned lessons as well as through withdrawal. The school identifies pupils who are gifted and talented and provides effective extension activities in lessons and when required through lesson withdrawal.
- 2.12 Differentiation in regular lessons in the *Senior School* to take account of particular pupil abilities is presently limited, although learning support teachers do provide additional lessons for those identified as needing LDD or EAL support. IEPs are prepared for some pupils, whose progress is carefully monitored and specialist tuition increased or reduced as necessary. Overall, the provision for EAL pupils is outstanding, so that extra support is often soon rendered unnecessary. The school recognises the need to provide similarly for those whom it identifies as gifted and talented.

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.13 Pupils at the British School in the Netherlands are well educated. This accords with the school's aim of helping pupils to fulfil their potential, and represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' learning is good, and frequently outstanding, and their achievement is good. This represents success, given that all of their learning is in English. There are no significant differences between the relative attainment of different groups of pupils within subjects or across the curriculum. The school identifies significant movement among the pupils, some joining in mid-course and some leaving in mid-course, but all do well. Differences in relative attainment between different groups of pupils, or in different subjects or curriculum areas, are slight and are monitored closely by the school.
- 2.14 Pupils' learning skills are well developed in the junior schools. At *Vlaskamp* the good progress made in literacy is especially notable because of pupils' linguistic backgrounds. The youngest children confidently name the primary colours. Older pupils competently write in the style of journalists. Pupils read well in English as the school places considerable emphasis on this aspect of literacy. Pupils achieve well in numeracy, especially in their skills of calculation. For their age they show a good understanding of computational skills. For example in Year 2, they confidently use their understanding of addition and subtraction facts to identify correctly 'missing' numbers. Older pupils confidently discuss the properties of quadrilaterals. An improvement at *Vlaskamp* since the last inspection is the competent skills pupils show in ICT. At *Leidschenveen* pupils are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects and activities provided, including Literacy and Mathematics, and learn to apply these effectively. They are able to think critically and creatively and express their opinions in a confident and articulate manner both within and beyond the classroom. At *Assen* pupils in all age groups acquire good levels of knowledge and skill, especially in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematical competence. ICT facilities across the school are very good and are used for the most part effectively to enable pupils to present work and carry out research. Pupils think logically and independently and their mathematical and literacy skills are well developed.
- 2.15 In the *Senior School* pupils are well organised and keen learners. Pupils of all ages and across the full range of ability become well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding. They apply these effectively so that they produce work to a high standard. Language is at the heart of these skills with many pupils being multilingual, and confident in their learning and performance. Those for whom English is a new and additional language learn quickly and confidently. All are articulate and precise in their use of language. They are excellent listeners and enjoy reading. Their written work is neat, presented with clarity and sustained

- by logical argument. They acquire mathematical skills quickly and apply these well. Pupils develop creatively and physically through high standards of work in art, music, drama and physical education. There are examples of excellent work using ICT but these are not frequent enough given the outstanding resources available. The development of independent thought and research is not always as strong as it might be given the high levels of ability of many of the pupils.
- 2.16 Pupils in the junior schools do not take national tests. However, their attainment is regularly assessed against the standards required by the National Curriculum in England. Analysis of data from the school's assessments, scrutiny of pupils' completed work and lesson observations confirm that in relation to pupils' ages and ability achievement is good. Pupils with EAL make rapid progress largely because of the well managed and effective support they receive. Across all the junior schools, pupils make good progress, including the more able and those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- 2.17 In the *Senior School* attainment in public examinations is good in relation to abilities. During the last three years for which national comparative data is available, pupils' performance in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) is consistently well above the average for maintained schools in England, and in line with the average for maintained selective schools. At A-level, pupils' achievement is above the average for maintained schools in England, and again in line with the averages for maintained selective schools. This high attainment is shared almost equally between boys and girls. Standardised measures indicate that pupils' progress to GCSE, and from GCSE to A-level, is good and above the national norms for pupils of similar ability studying within the United Kingdom.
- 2.18 Across the school pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They often have a sparkle in their eyes and show enthusiasm in their lessons. Pupils respond with eagerness, join in with gusto and persevere when necessary. They show considerable skills in English and express themselves confidently. Pupils think for themselves and contribute to discussions. In Year 6 at *Vlaskamp* pupils debated the influence of the media, both now and in the past. When given opportunity, they competently undertake research, for example into the wreck of the *Mary Rose* as part of their studies about Tudor England. At *Leidschenveen* pupils in a Year 6 geography lesson showed their understanding of the varied landscape and climate of Mexico and could evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of living in different parts of the country. At *Assen* pupils develop good critical and creative thinking skills.
- 2.19 Pupils achieve well in a broad range of activities. They participate in local sports competitions, achieve great success in international mathematics challenges and have their art work displayed in the main library in The Hague. At *Assen* a bronze sculpture unveiled by Helen Sharman at the opening of the new building was designed and made by pupils. In the *Senior School* pupils engage in extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm and across a broad range. A day of languages organised by the school and supported by parents, produced wide engagement and a rapid growth in interest and excitement in communication among the pupils.
- 2.20 Across the schools group work and paired activity are a common feature of lessons and one with which pupils are comfortable. At *Leidschenveen* pupils empathise with the challenges faced by others, for example, those with limited English, and are most willing to offer support and to work cooperatively. At *Assen* the ability of pupils to work together is outstanding, and they are highly cooperative and supportive of each other. At *Vlaskamp*, a notable feature of the school is the way pupils work together. The high quality 'big art' on display around the school is testament to teamwork.

- 2.21 In the *Senior School* pupils are well organised and keen learners. They cooperate successfully and respect each other's views and judgements, although independence in research and thought is less well developed.
- 2.22 Pupils show a good and often outstanding ability to apply themselves to their work. They are quick to settle to a task and display high levels of concentration and perseverance. They show clear thinking, coherent and cogent argument and express their views clearly and confidently.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.23 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding in the junior schools and good in the senior school, and meets the school's aim to provide effectively for pupils' personal development. The strengths reported at the last inspection have been built on successfully.
- 2.24 Although religious education is not taught, the school enables pupils from a number of faith backgrounds to share and understand the personal beliefs and traditions of others, and to understand the specific celebrations of a variety of faiths through work in the classroom and in assemblies. Opportunities are taken to develop the pupils' sense of wonder of the natural world both around the school and in the surrounding areas. Creative arts contribute to pupils' spiritual development in all the schools. In the *Senior School*, lessons in history, geography, modern foreign languages and English literature all encourage understanding of the place of religion and spirituality in personal and social life.
- 2.25 Pupils' moral development is well advanced. Through the system of 'golden rules' pupils successfully distinguish right from wrong. They know and respect the rules, and understand that they are there to help them make the correct choices. From the start in the Foundation Stage, pupils learn to take turns and consider others. At *Vlaskamp* in an activity known as circle time, older pupils purposefully discussed a moral dilemma posed by the book that was being read to them by their teacher. Pupils in the *Senior School* have a strongly developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 participate well in debating and the model United Nations.
- 2.26 Social development is a great strength of the school. Pupils treat each other, and staff and visitors with warmth, courtesy and consideration. At *Vlaskamp* pupils show awareness of the needs of others and take part enthusiastically in 'Buddy' arrangements enabling them to support each other. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility as house and sports captains or as class and School Council representatives. These are valued and respected roles and allow pupils to contribute to the school community.
- 2.27 Local community services and the accessibility of The Hague provide many opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of Dutch public institutions and services in the Netherlands. Visiting speakers are welcomed to the school. At *Leidschenveen*, for instance, plans are in place to include parents who are from the European Space Agency and from the European Courts of Justice. The curriculum, and in particular a programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils a rounded understanding of social issues in the contemporary world and their global impact. Provision of Dutch lessons across the school enables pupils to understand local culture and local people. Community service in the *Senior School* enriches pupils' education and development through the International Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, extensive charity activities and the global citizenship programme and allows them to put into action their genuine concern for others.

- 2.28 Cultural development is outstanding. A major strength of the school is its rich cultural diversity, where pupils from many cultural backgrounds readily make friends and work and play harmoniously. Pupils are at ease with each other, and racial and cultural tolerance is evident throughout the school. The pupils are enthusiastic in their respect for their own cultures and the many others represented in the school. Cultural understanding is creatively nurtured by the school in a variety of imaginative ways. An annual ‘international day’ organised by parents at each school reinforces the school’s broad cultural values and enables pupils to learn more about each other’s cultures. At *Vlaskamp* Year 6 International Ambassador representatives meet and greet new pupils in their home language. At *Leidschenveen* care is taken to incorporate the various home languages into the school day through language related posters and signs and the use of personalised greetings in the child’s home language. In the *Senior School* the striking multi-linguistic and multi-faith character of the pupil body intensifies the value of the international education which the school offers, and is supplemented by an extensive programme of visits across Europe and beyond.

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.29 The quality of teaching is good across the school and is frequently outstanding. Teaching fully supports the school’s aim to ensure pupils are successful in their academic development. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 2.30 Across the school good and often outstanding teaching, showing good subject knowledge, enables all pupils, including those with EAL and LDD, to make good progress in acquiring knowledge, understanding, and skills, and ensures they quickly develop in their application of intellectual, physical and creative effort. Teaching takes place in an atmosphere of mutual trust, with teachers successfully encouraging pupils to participate fully and to enjoy learning.
- 2.31 There are examples of the good and often outstanding quality of teaching in all the schools. At *Vlaskamp* the excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils enhance the quality of teaching and enable pupils to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. In the best teaching, open-ended questions are used to ensure that pupils think for themselves. ‘What would happen if...?’ and ‘What makes you think that?’ are examples of such effective questioning. Pupils readily express their views and answer teachers’ questions even when uncertain.
- 2.32 Teaching in all areas at *Leidschenveen* strongly fosters pupils’ intellectual, physical and creative effort. Teaching employs a wide variety of effective strategies to consistently reinforce positive behaviour and encourage the enjoyment of thinking and learning. Teachers show good knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject and this results in very positive pupil responses.
- 2.33 At *Assen* the high and often outstanding quality of teaching seen in all areas of the school enables pupils to learn effectively. Activities are varied and pupils are challenged to think for themselves according to their ability. In an excellent mathematics lesson, full of energy and with clear differentiation, pupils took part in a mental mathematics session where questioning was carefully targeted before quickly settling to varied activities including board games, the use of the computer and text book exercises.

- 2.34 In the *Senior School* teaching enables pupils to increase their understanding well, to develop their skills and to apply these effectively to their work. Consequently, they reason soundly, show clear interest in their work and, together with their fellow students, achieve good solutions. The relationships between teachers and pupils are open, trusting and strongly effective. Teachers' expectations are assured and clear so that they conduct lessons in a friendly as well as challenging manner. Pupils feel at ease in asking questions of their teachers and they appreciate and enjoy their lessons. The tasks set by teachers are appropriate and enable the pupils to make good progress. In a minority of lessons a lack of pace reduce the pupils' opportunities to learn quickly and to achieve well.
- 2.35 Where teaching is particularly successful, it is imaginative and the planning of lessons is meticulous. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils are to achieve. For example, in a science lesson at *Vlaskamp*, thorough planning and excellent organisation of resources enabled pupils to build successfully a number of environments in which insects and worms could live. Across the school, effective partnerships are formed between class teachers and support staff to support specific pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- 2.36 Extensive teaching resources of high quality are used well to enhance learning. The whole school is well provided with ICT equipment including computers, data projectors and interactive whiteboards. There is much competent and confident use by staff of interactive whiteboards which strongly enriches the children's experience, although the interactive facilities have potential applications that are still underdeveloped. At the *Senior School* the library is centrally situated and holds a wide range of up-to-date books and journals. It is an attractive and important resource, well staffed and used frequently by pupils. Outstanding sports facilities have both natural and artificial surfaces which enable a variety of sports throughout the year. Music, art and drama are well provided for and pupils' work is either exhibited openly or referred to publicly.
- 2.37 A common approach to assessment in the junior schools ensures pupils generally progress at the rate of which they are capable. In the EYFS, teachers frequently make and record assessments of children's progress using materials used nationally in England. Although pupils do not formally take the English national curriculum they are regularly assessed against its standards.
- 2.38 At *Vlaskamp* detailed and thorough assessment is made of pupils' fluency in English for those with EAL, especially those at an early stage of learning spoken English. Thorough assessments are made of the needs of pupils with LDD, both to pinpoint where help is needed and also to measure their progress. Excellent use is made of the assessment data to measure pupils' progress and to plan the curriculum. In the regular meetings between each of the deputy headteachers and individual class teachers at *Vlaskamp* assessment information is used to inform the discussions about each pupil's individual progress and to identify areas for development. Detailed analysis is made of the results of teachers' assessments to gauge the school's performance year-on-year. Recent analysis has led to action being taken to enable more pupils to reach higher standards in writing. Marking of pupils' completed work at *Vlaskamp* is thorough and regular. The marking policy which asks teachers to provide pupils with feedback on their success and guidance to improve their work is not consistently implemented. Such inconsistency hinders *Vlaskamp's* planned development to use assessment to improve the quality of learning.

- 2.39 At *Leidschenveen* teachers who lead on achievement and progress have introduced baseline testing and are already making excellent use of assessment data to identify the needs of individual pupils, producing, wherever necessary, detailed and effective action plans. Standardised testing is being introduced to further inform the school of its pupils' abilities.
- 2.40 At *Assen* the assessment of pupils' work is regular and mostly thorough. The school's marking policy is clear and well adhered to. Much work is marked in the children's presence and they appreciate the clear guidance they are given. Good use is made in literacy and numeracy of assessment to inform future learning and to ensure pupils know the areas to target. Not all subjects yet have clear assessment procedures. *Assen* pupils' termly grades set their work in the context of national curriculum levels in literacy and numeracy and the school makes good use of arrangements for pupil performance to be evaluated against its own aims.
- 2.41 *Senior School* teaching departments use an annual assessment and reporting calendar to inform their planning and to revise targets. They analyse outcomes and results regularly, and they use these to guide their intended development and action plans. Some, but not all, teaching departments standardise and moderate assessment to ensure reasonable consistency. Where this does take place, both teaching and learning is enhanced. A school marking policy exists, but actual practice varies between and within departments. Some is excellent. Some is infrequent and cursory so that rapid progress and change on the part of the pupil is delayed. Oral feedback in lessons is strong. Pupils with EAL are assessed annually according to value added measures and Council of Europe assessment levels. They are also entered for external language examinations each year. The school uses well standardised tests of pupils' progress. It identifies gifted and talented pupils well but this information is not currently used effectively in regular lessons. The school has gathered much data and it monitors outcomes in each department, but not yet in regularly setting individual targets for pupil attainment or for vigorous monitoring of each pupil's learning.

### 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, and the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding throughout the school. It fully meets the school's aims and in certain aspects improves on provision at the time of the last inspection. At *Vlaskamp*, pastoral care continues to be a major strength throughout the school, now extending to the recently integrated EYFS. At *Leidschenveen* the care devoted to the well being and development of all pupils is excellent, enabling the school to meet fully its aim of providing high quality pastoral care in which the quality and strength of all relationships are valued. At *Assen* pastoral care meets the aims of the school and is an improvement since the previous inspection. In the *Senior School* pupils are confident about and happy with the guidance and support which they receive.
- 3.2 At the heart of pastoral care is the school's wish to support the whole child, academically and in their personal development. Staff provide highly effective guidance for all pupils, who clearly feel able to ask for help. Teachers develop an excellent knowledge of their pupils, their characteristics and personalities, and respond quickly and sensitively to their individual needs, ensuring that a culture of practical care prevails throughout the school. Relationships between adults and pupils, and amongst pupils are excellent.
- 3.3 Each school has a comprehensive and well-organised framework of care, and pastoral arrangements are clear, understood by pupils and adults, and implemented consistently through good management structures. In the *Senior School*, for instance, the provision is directed by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and implemented by heads of year and form tutors, and provides exemplary support and guidance for all pupils. An electronic monitoring and recording system is used well to improve speed and efficiency in resolving concerns or dealing with lapses in pupil behaviour.
- 3.4 Across the school measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are secure. At *Vlaskamp* for example, pupils enjoy the various arrangements that enable them to look after others, for example as 'buddies' or 'playground pals'. The younger children in the EYFS are exceptionally well looked after by the caring dedicated staff and by older pupils. At *Leidschenveen* pupils' conduct is excellent and any difficulties encountered, for example through linguistic misunderstanding, are quickly resolved. A thorough system of rewards is much appreciated and well understood by the pupils. They happily support and deem fair the rules and guidelines which are well publicised and clearly defined.
- 3.5 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are wide ranging and highly effective. Rules are clearly understood by staff and by pupils, who acknowledge these as fair. A clear anti-bullying policy is enforced, and across the school pupils are confident that any isolated lapses are dealt with quickly, efficiently and fairly.
- 3.6 Arrangements to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well being are secure and implemented effectively. Robust attention is given to child protection. The child protection policy for the whole school is detailed and thorough, and staff have received the necessary training. A single central register of appointments is in place and checks on the suitability of staff are carried out. Admissions and attendance registers are kept fully up to date, and any absences are quickly followed up so that all pupils can be accounted for at any time.

- 3.7 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. All appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Fire risk assessments are up to date. Detailed risk assessments are in place for health and safety matters and full risk assessments are made and checked for educational visits, including residential visits. Good health and safety procedures are disseminated through appropriate policies in the staff handbook and through a health and safety policy. The school has revised and improved its safety procedures in dealing with bus transport for pupils.
- 3.8 Pupils are encouraged to live healthily and to take regular exercise. Due attention is paid to this in the curriculum both in PSHCE and in science. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take exercise during lessons and in after-school activities. At *Vlaskamp* pupils in Years 1 and 2 now often start the day with a period of physical activity known as 'activate'. At *Assen* weekly physical education (PE) lessons and the autumn term swimming lessons alongside the provision in the local community for physical activity enable pupils to develop a satisfactory understanding of the importance of health. However, the content of packed lunches and other snacks at *Assen* is not sufficiently monitored to encourage further the importance of healthy eating. In the *Senior School* there are plentiful opportunities for physical exercise, and catering provision for pupils eating within the school encourages a healthy diet.

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.9 The quality of links with parents and the community is good across the whole school. This is in line with the school's aim to forge an effective partnership with parents, and maintains the quality of links seen at the time of the last inspection. The links that *Leidschenveen* school has made with its parents in the short time it has been open are outstanding.
- 3.10 Parents show strong support for the school and a generally high degree of satisfaction. Some parents expressed concerns which were specific to the school their children attended. So for example while at *Vlaskamp* there was strong support for the school in most areas, the availability of extra-curricular activities, the setting of homework and information from the school were raised by a significant minority of parents. Inspection evidence indicates that the published information available to parents regarding homework and assessment of their children's progress does not reflect the good and evolving practice evident in school, particularly the development of independent learning. Homework is a useful point of contact between the school and parents and a homework record sheet is filled up by the children and parents have space to add comments. The provision of extra-curricular activities is adequate for a school of this size. The need for improvement has been recognised by the school through the appointment of a co-ordinator with a brief to make improvement as part of its school development plan.
- 3.11 At *Leidschenveen* parents indicate exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision and, in particular, in relation to the quality of teaching. They especially mentioned the speed with which their children have settled into this new school and the welcoming approach of the staff.
- 3.12 At *Assen* and in the *Senior School* the inspection also revealed a high degree of parental satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school. *Senior School* parents appreciated strongly the help and guidance afforded their children, the attitudes and views promoted by the school the high standards of behaviour expected of their children, the good range of extra-curricular activities and the manner in which the school handled their concerns. Some parents expressed a wish for improved communications with the school, greater opportunity to discuss their children's progress and more encouragement to be involved in the life and work of the school. For their part, the school's leadership has devised policies and embarked on

programmes to improve these areas and the inspection team found these steps were working well.

- 3.13 A small minority of parents who completed the questionnaire at *Assen* were concerned about the handling of their concerns, but inspection findings show that the small number of parental concerns has been handled with due care. Parents have access to a detailed complaints procedure and a significant majority who completed the questionnaire indicated that the school handled their concerns appropriately. A few parents were concerned with the provision of extra curricular activities. Inspection findings show that, although the number of activities is limited, further provision is made for activities to take place in the local community.
- 3.14 Parents are provided with many and varied opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Volunteers at *Vlaskamp* and *Leidschenveen* help in a wide range of activities and parent class representatives are active in welcoming new pupils and their parents to each class. The Parent Representative Committee is a useful forum for parents to discuss school issues and the Parent Teacher Association supports the school through its organisation of social events and activities for parents and pupils.
- 3.15 At *Assen* outstanding opportunities are provided for parents to become involved in the life of the school. The Friends Association is a positive feature and provides social events and fundraising activities, welcoming families warmly into the international parent community. Parents help with clubs and many regularly attend assemblies and help out with special curriculum days. The parents' forum provides a useful opportunity for parents to meet informally with members of the senior management team (SMT) to discuss key topics and share information.
- 3.16 A parents' council in the *Senior School* has representatives from each year who meet with the headmaster and senior managers six times each year. This helps to inform the school of parents' views on central issues such as the structure of the school day, travel and uniform. The parent-teacher association is a positive feature in the school which provides social and fundraising events and warmly welcomes families into the international parent community. Parents feel encouraged to support and help with clubs and sports and by their engagement with work experience. Parental involvement in the school's day of languages was an outstanding feature of the activity and gave status and endorsement to the event.
- 3.17 Detailed information about the whole school is provided for parents and prospective parents through prospectuses, 'welcome' booklets, newsletters and termly curriculum information sheets. The school has its own website and Intranet service known as ParentNet, although parents at *Assen* do not have access to this service, which excludes them from various aspects of whole-school information.
- 3.18 Parents across the school have sufficient opportunities to meet staff to discuss their children's achievement and progress. The school has a clear open door policy which advises parents as to the best times to meet teachers each week. In addition parents are invited to make an appointment for a more formal consultation between October and May. The expectation is that there should be two consultations during this period. Parents are provided with written reports about their children's progress towards the end of the summer term. The individual subject reports are detailed. Some outline targets for pupils.

- 3.19 The school has secure and well established links with both the local and wider community. At *Vlaskamp* teachers make effective use of the local community within the curriculum as when younger children visit the park, the local farm and the fire station and the school choir visits the local shopping centre to sing. Pupils on the school council were involved recently in the school's discussions with the local police to establish a designated drop off point for parents in order to increase safety and reduce congestion.
- 3.20 At *Leidschenveen*, after moving to its new building next year, the school has in place well-established plans to provide the local community with access to the British School in the Netherlands' new sports centre and to a day care facility.
- 3.21 *Assen* has made beneficial links with the local community. Teachers and parents take younger pupils for forest and lakeside walks, and older pupils visited NAM, the local oil industry site, for an 'engineering day'. Many charities are actively supported and pupils took part in a sponsored walk for charity with children from local schools. A local special school has visited the school to share Christmas songs.
- 3.22 In the *Senior School* links with the local community are good and beneficial to pupils as well as community members. That all pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 learn Dutch is a significant step to communication and understanding within the wider community. Reciprocal access between the school and local community to sports facilities are enjoyed and produce significant benefit to pupils by increased challenge and higher participation. The school supports and accepts drama and musical opportunities in the wider community and foreign travel is extensive, including to Uganda and to Vietnam. The school endorses and supports environmental policies of benefit to the community and it participates in The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award scheme of structured community service.

## 4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Governance at The British School in the Netherlands is good, and meets the aims of the school by supporting it in its wish to provide for the learning needs of all its pupils. The good quality of governance has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
- 4.2 The structure of the board of governors is well defined and ensures effective oversight of the school. The stability and relatively small size of the board of governors helps to provide secure and consistent support for the school. The board is generally well informed about the school. Members take individual responsibility for different aspects of the school's work such as finance, marketing and human resources, often related to their own professional expertise.
- 4.3 The governors' determination and commitment have ensured the school's ambitious building programme reaches its goals, including the fine new school building for Leidschenveen junior school. Governors have good awareness of parents' views and take these into account in their planning.
- 4.4 Each of the schools has a link governor who is regularly involved in the work of the school for example through formal and informal contact with staff and parents, often during the working day. This arrangement enables the governing body as a whole to be suitably informed about the school. At *Assen*, located at a great distance from the rest of the school, the link governor has provided an important connection with the main school. He is well known within the school by parents and staff, and his frequent visits provide a greater understanding of the small school environment. Governance has provided a valuable source of expertise and influence for the *Assen* school, enabling it to relocate into premises that promote further the standards of education. At the new school, *Leidschenveen*, the link governor role has had very little time to develop but there are clear plans for links which follow the pattern evolved successfully by the other schools. The *Senior School* is served well by a designated governor who visits regularly and frequently, and meets informally with staff and parents. Once each term he visits with a particular enquiry such as reform of the structure of the school week or the successful introduction of the International Baccalaureate. This provides the board of governors with useful information about the school.
- 4.5 Governors know about their responsibilities in relation to pupils' welfare, health and safety, and ensure that the school follows local and UK requirements where applicable. There is some scope now for the governing body to have more systematic updates on the latest developments in regulatory requirements for UK schools and their implications for schools in the Council of British International Schools (COBIS).
- 4.6 The governing body is also aware of the need to ensure that pupils achieve to the very best of their ability. With the principal's professional input the governors are developing a clearer focus on the how best to achieve the highest quality provision and outcome in all areas of teaching and learning across the school.

## The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.7 Leadership and management are good overall with some outstanding elements. In two of the schools, *Vlaskamp* and *Leidschenveen* leadership and management are outstanding, and are good at *Assen* and in the *Senior School*. Leadership and management contribute significantly to the quality of education provided and to working towards the school's aim to provide a world-class education.
- 4.8 The school is led with exemplary efficiency and a careful eye to detail by the principal, now in post for one year, who holds headteachers and assistant staff rigorously to account for the organisation and effective running of their schools. In return the headteachers and staff of the individual schools are highly conscientious and committed to ensuring that their establishments contribute to the success of the whole school. The principal is developing, with the Board of Governors and his colleagues on the Board of Management, a clear view of the educational direction of the school.
- 4.9 The school makes very successful use of its business units in finance, human resources, marketing and admissions and information technology to ensure good and efficient day to day running, and sound forward planning in major projects. The school has a works council (Ondernemingsraad) which provides regular opportunities for staff to represent their views on the development of the school to leadership and management. This plays a useful role in the life of the school and helps to give a voice to a full range of opinions.
- 4.10 At *Vlaskamp* leadership and management are outstanding, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The head and the senior management team provide excellent leadership. The effectiveness of the leadership and management is seen in the pupils' outstanding personal development, the excellent pastoral care and in the good academic standards sustained by strong teaching. In addition, the recent highly successful integration of the EYFS is testament to the leadership and management.
- 4.11 The recently introduced management structure of achievement and progress leaders, supported by lead teachers, who work with subject leaders with a whole school responsibility, is already making an impact. The management of support for pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is effective. Staff development is given a high priority and rigorous arrangements for staff review have been established in the past year. Explicit links are made between classroom observation and staff review. To support this, a teaching and learning framework has been drawn up and shared with staff to give teachers clarity about the criteria being used in the reviews. Induction of staff new to the school is in place. Appropriate arrangements support the induction of teachers new to the school. Robust attention is paid to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.
- 4.12 Accommodation is of high quality. The recent additions of an ICT suite and research facility in the library and a mini gym ensure that this quality is maintained. The newly established provision for children in EYFS is also of high quality. The accommodation makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. The well developed grounds, especially the environmental areas where storks nest and pupils participate in pond dipping, are carefully looked after and add significantly to pupils' learning experiences, especially in environmental education.
- 4.13 At *Leidschenveen* leadership and management are outstanding. Between the head's appointment in September 2008 and the school's opening a year later considerable work has ensured that exceptionally clear direction has been given to those with senior and middle management responsibilities and by those to the whole staff. This has ensured that the

pupils' educational experience has commenced strongly, in full support of the school's ethos. During the months preceding the school's opening the senior management team effectively analysed the school's many needs, prioritising these and ensuring that staff put these decisions into practice with particular efficiency. Senior managers have worked diligently to ensure the creation of key policies necessary to establish the school's identity and to initiate the incorporation of these into procedural practice. Other policies have been adapted from such documents already extant within the BSN family. Since the appointment of the senior team, its members have worked hard to secure, motivate and support suitable, appropriately qualified and experienced staff. The resourcing and furniture needs of the school have been well thought out so that on arrival pupils were welcomed into bright, attractive classrooms and other teaching areas. As a result all staff have excellent resources which strongly underpin their teaching and administration. The school's work in meeting the children's needs is supported by a highly effective team of ancillary staff.

- 4.14 At *Assen* the quality of leadership is good and provides clear and purposeful direction in line with the previous inspection. School self-evaluation has identified strengths and appropriate areas for development. The senior management team ensures the school's aims and ethos are strongly realised. The new management structure takes account of the recent changes in the school and roles and responsibilities are accepted willingly and enthusiastically by a dedicated team of staff. Subject coordinators have clear roles and responsibilities.
- 4.15 Analysis of the school's needs is highly effective. Appropriate priorities have been identified and the senior management team is aware that the school's well-conceived policies and procedures need time for full implementation. Decision making is well considered and the school's development plan is detailed.
- 4.16 Careful monitoring of these developments is planned, together with formal observations at all levels of management across the school, to complement the valuable interaction between colleagues, as for example in the system of target setting against set criteria to further pupil progress. Since the last inspection the curriculum has been carefully reviewed and monitored, content has been analysed for effectiveness and changes implemented as necessary. Regular meetings take place to ensure communication and consultation. The self evaluation document was drafted following wide consultation prior to this inspection and it is now being used alongside the school development plan as the basis for discussion annually.
- 4.17 Staff and the senior team benefit from whole-school initiatives which enable them to liaise with colleagues in other schools. In service training is regular and linked to staff review and specific needs. Sufficient, qualified, experienced teaching staff are in post and a generous ratio of teachers to pupils is evident throughout the school. The school has spacious accommodation. Large airy classrooms, a library and a computer room, comfortable carpeted areas, specialist teaching rooms and much improved outside facilities strengthen the learning experience. The Foundation Stage class is well resourced to meet the requirements of the early learning goals. The internal environment is enriched with excellent interactive, colourful and informative displays. Administrative staff aid the smooth running of the school through efficient communication and ensuring the welfare of teachers and pupils alike.
- 4.18 The quality of leadership and management in the *Senior School* is good. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced the International Baccalaureate, has increased its size effectively and has improved its provision for pupils with EAL and LDD.

- 4.19 The new headteacher, appointed in April 2009, is ambitious to raise the school to the highest standards, to continue its programme of improved contact with parents, to enhance pupil awareness of environmental issues and to increase the use of information technology in teaching and learning. He has consulted well in these areas and provides strong leadership in pursuing these aims. He meets formally with the principal each week and informally whenever necessary. He recognises clearly the position and importance of the Senior School within the family of the British School in the Netherlands.
- 4.20 The senior managers discharge their areas of responsibility effectively and well, including careful consultation and strong guidance. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress and of their conduct and behaviour is careful and comprehensive.
- 4.21 Academic leadership is effective so that the curriculum is wide and challenging, and monitoring is regular and good. Academic management is arranged through heads of faculty who are each responsible for a cluster of heads of related departments. These provide well for the school and its members in its routine management, but the established system of lesson observation is not always used effectively enough to ensure that best practice beyond core subjects is better shared across the school. The fine teaching and learning in many non-core subjects is not used sufficiently as an example of good practice which could beneficially spread into and permeate the whole school. The school provides clear induction for teachers newly appointed to the school.
- 4.22 The deputy head for pastoral care shares responsibility with heads of year, with whom he meets formally twice every term. He is highly active in his work and in his leadership. Heads of Year provide well for the particular needs of all their pupils at each stage in their passage through the school. Each head of year is supported by a team of form tutors. School and Year assemblies are regular. Trained medical care is available throughout the day. Both deputy heads observe an open door policy of constant access for staff and pupils.
- 4.23 The school's administration is both efficient and welcoming. The library is well staffed and welcoming to all. Staff recruitment procedures are secure and effective. A staff appraisal system is securely in place and it includes lesson observation and feedback. The provision of in-service training is good. Technical, secretarial and clerical assistance is to a high standard. School buildings and grounds are well maintained and almost invariably tidy and clean. Catering provision is limited but popular with the pupils. Playground supervisors are cheerful, vigilant and supportive. All members are proud of their school and they work well for it.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The British School in the Netherlands is highly successful in fulfilling its aims. This large, complex and very busy establishment is led and managed with calm efficiency and a strong commitment to meeting the needs of its pupils, who come from a uniquely diverse range of backgrounds and prior educational experience. A particular strength of the school is the way it helps pupils with little or limited English to learn the language quickly and rapidly engage with the curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning, work hard, make good progress and achieve well. They are given outstanding pastoral care by the school. Excellent provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has excellent resources and often outstanding accommodation. The school has improved since the time of the last inspection and its aims are met in virtually all areas. The school, including the board of governors, is aware that for it to fully achieve its world-class educational aspiration there is scope for all the teaching and learning to reach the level of excellence which is already evident in many aspects of its provision. The school is poised to develop even further as new leaders and senior managers put in place their well-constructed plans for the future.
- 5.2 At *Vlaskamp* the school successfully meets the school's aim to ensure that pupils of all nationalities are well educated and that their potential, self discipline and mutual respect are nurtured. Children in the EYFS and pupils in the remainder of the school receive a good all round education well suited to their interests, aptitudes and needs. Pupils are happy. They achieve good standards reflecting the strong teaching. Pupils are provided with an interesting and well planned curriculum and are effective learners. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pastoral care and provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. Well tailored support is provided for pupils with English as an additional language and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Links with parents and the community are good. These successes are largely due to the outstanding leadership and management together with the determination of the staff to do the best for their pupils. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in that pupils do not always receive guidance about how to improve their work. The information for parents about homework and the assessment of pupils' achievement no longer reflects the developing practice in the school. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection. The curriculum is managed and planned more effectively. Pupils' skills in ICT are well advanced and a successful start has been made to provide more opportunities for pupils to think independently. Leadership and management have improved.
- 5.3 At *Leidschenveen* the school has made a strong start in its temporary building and already provides an outstanding educational experience fully in line with its aims and ethos. Considerable detailed planning has taken place and firmly underpins teachers' excellent work in creating a brand new school. The plans carefully enshrine the needs of the large numbers of EAL pupils who represent an unusually broad spectrum of nationalities. These comprehensive plans have been created with transferability to the new site in mind so that the move, when it takes place, will have the immediate support of considerable forethought. Pupils' educational experience and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, fostered especially by the school's rapidly evolving ethos of encouragement and praise both in and out of class. Pupils also enjoy good, and frequently outstanding, teaching which ensures the level of their learning, and their current achievements, are also of a good and frequently outstanding standard. The first class pastoral care is underwritten by clear, well-understood, child protection and welfare procedures. Links with parents are outstanding and good plans are already laid for community links when the school is settled in its new building. Good governance already exists and this is evolving to further support the

outstanding leadership and management which has succeeded in establishing and motivating all staff in creating a palpably welcoming educational community where pupils' needs are paramount.

- 5.4 At *Assen* the school is successful in meeting its aims. The Foundation Stage provides children with a highly successful start to their education, catering for each child's individual development. Throughout the school pupils personal development is excellent, supported by the outstanding pastoral care given by all members of staff. Relationships throughout the school community are excellent and parents are very positive about the progress of their children. Pupils learn and achieve successfully because of a broad curriculum and the expertise of dedicated teachers. Leadership and management are strong. The procedures for the monitoring of the educational provision are clear and but not yet established in all curricular areas. The extra curricular programme lacks depth. The school is aware of these issues and is already considering the way forward. Progress since the last inspection has been good with the curriculum being monitored to ensure consistency between timetable allocations and increasing the opportunities for pupils to study science and physical education. Management responsibilities have been spread appropriately.
- 5.5 The *Senior School* is purposeful in pursuing the aims of the British School in the Netherlands and it has considerable success with them. It provides a high standard of education for all its pupils and supports this with a good standard of teaching and a high quality of pupil learning and achievement. In its pastoral care the school is outstanding, which produces also a high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development among its pupils. Links with parents and with the communities at home and abroad are good. The quality of governance in a family of schools is good, purposeful and clear. So too is leadership and management. Weaknesses are few, and are to be found in the limited exchange of best practice in teaching, and in the school's provision for those pupils whom it recognises as gifted and talented. Since the last inspection in November 2003 the school has grown in number and expanded its facilities, improved the provision of ICT, introduced successfully the International Baccalaureate and improved electronic communication with parents. It has mitigated but not removed its 29-minute lesson-periods, and it has improved its monitoring of school policies and teaching.
- 5.6 In addition to the full inspection of the four schools listed above, the *Junior School Diamanthorst* was visited during the inspection to find out how that school had responded to the school's full inspection in June 2007. An inspector spent a day in the school, spoke to the headteacher and senior staff, observed a number of lessons and extra-curricular activities, looked at relevant documentation and briefly reviewed pupils' written work. *Diamanthorst* is a thriving school with a positive and encouraging atmosphere where children enjoy learning. The school continues to be successful in meeting all its aims and continues to display all the positive features found at the time of the inspection. The high standard of achievement and outstanding learning are still securely in place. The school provides a distinctive and stimulating environment very well suited to the encouragement of learning. Pupils show obvious enjoyment in learning, and this is supported by good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Teaching is confident and well planned, and makes use of well-chosen strategies to promote good learning. For example, Year 6 pupils studying the Victorians and the life of a small boy in a nineteenth century workhouse expressed their views of his plight through drama and creative writing. The head and senior teachers have been assiduous in addressing the Next Steps indicated by the 2007 inspection report. The quality of marking has improved significantly and now makes use of a wide and effective range of marking and assessment techniques which are proving their worth by raising pupils' awareness of how well they achieve and what they need to do to improve. The role of subject co-ordinators has been successfully enhanced through internal review, training and subject curriculum

development. The development of curriculum links with the *Senior School* has been very effective in defining pupils' learning needs, and ensuring that their development in, for example, mathematics is better planned and tracked as they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school, and these are well supported and enjoyed by large numbers of pupils. The school has well organised systems of regular and timely reporting to parents, including face-to-face meetings, scheduled and on request, and written reports. The school takes good account of pupils' views, and the Student Council makes well-informed and helpful contributions to the day to day life of the school.

- 5.7 The school meets all the English regulatory requirements either directly or through their local equivalents.

### Next Steps

- 5.8 The school has no significant areas of weakness. There are some steps which the school should consider as it moves towards the next stage of its development and to ensure the provision of a world-class education.

1. *Vlaskamp*: to build on its success and make further progress the school should consider ways to:
  - improve the marking and feedback to pupils about their work by ensuring that teachers consistently provide pupils with useful advice about improving their work;
  - ensure that the information for parents about how their children's achievement and progress are assessed and about homework reflect the developing good practice in the school, especially the encouragement of pupils' independent thinking.
2. *Leidschenveen*: in order to continue the school's highly successful start it should:
  - regularly review the EAL provision to ensure that such pupils are fully supported;
  - develop governors' roles to underpin further the management of the school as a whole;
  - review the whole-school common policies to ensure that their effectiveness in supporting the evolving school ethos is maximized.
3. *Assen*: the school should improve the pupils educational experience by:
  - increasing opportunities for research and independent study;
  - widening the co-curricular experience;
  - to utilise best practice across the school to further the roles of the subject coordinators.
4. *Senior School*: the school is clear in its aims and achieves well across the full range of its activity. To secure these more fully, it should:

- spread across all curriculum areas its best practice in teaching, especially by increased mutual observation of lessons and by improved use of assessment data and procedures;
- increase its identification of, and its provision for, those pupils who are gifted and talented.

5.9 No action is required in respect of the English regulatory requirements.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 28<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009. 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 Peter Jones	Co-ordinating Inspector
Dr Anthony Dachs	Reporting Inspector, Senior School
Mr Alan Cooper	Director of studies, HMC school
Dr Nicholas England	Headteacher, HMC school
Mrs Mary Gargett-Stringer	Head of Department, ISA school
Mr Peter Hamilton	Headteacher, HMC school
Mr Anthony Mavin	Deputy Headteacher, COBIS school
Ms Claudia Neuse	Head of department, COBIS school
Mr Timothy Roberts	Headteacher, COBIS school
Mrs Sara Wiggins	Reporting Inspector, Junior School Assen
Mr Michael Anderson	Headteacher, IAPS school
Mr Robin Lewis	Reporting Inspector, Junior School Leidschenveen
Mr Jeremy Long	Principal, COBIS school
Mrs Joy Gatenby	Headteacher, GSA school
Mr Rod Sharman	Reporting Inspector, Junior School Vlaskamp
Mrs Linda Garner	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Mrs Amanda Johansson	Formerly Headteacher, COBIS school
Mr Bryan Kane	Deputy Headteacher, IAPS school
Mrs Briony Long	Headteacher, COBIS school
Mr Harry McFaul	Headteacher, IAPS school
Ms Christine Williams	Head of School, COBIS school