

The Alice Smith School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspected on
3 - 6 November 2014

Primary Lead Inspector: Hazel Callaghan
Secondary Lead Inspector: Sheila Nolan



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Tribal Contact Details:

Address: Tribal, Kings Orchard, One Queen Street, Bristol, BS2 0HQ, England
Telephone: +44 (0) 845 123 6001
Email: international@tribalgroup.com

Inspection number:	1114
Type of school:	All-through British International School
Phase	Primary and Secondary
Number of pupils/students:	Primary – 817 Secondary -768 (187 in the sixth form)
Age range:	3-18
Gender:	Mixed
Appropriate authority:	Council of Governors
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Lorien Holland
Head of School:	Mr Roger Schultz
School address:	2 Jalan Bellamy Kuala Lumpur Malaysia 50460
Telephone number:	6-03-21483674
Fax number:	6-03-21483418
Email address:	klass@alice-smith.edu.my

List of Inspectors

Primary Phase	Secondary Phase
Mrs Hazel Callaghan (Lead Inspector)	Mrs Sheila Nolan (Lead Inspector)
Ms Juliet Jaggs	Mr David Scott
Mr Stephen Howland	Mr Stephen Howland

The Purpose of the Inspection

This inspection was carried out by five inspectors from Tribal Education as part of the accreditation process by the Department for Education (DfE) for British Schools Overseas. The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, prospective parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's owners on the overall effectiveness of the school and the standard of education it provides.

The accreditation for British schools overseas requires inspection against the standards in the following areas:

1. the quality the curriculum - graded
2. the quality of teaching and assessment - graded
3. the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils - graded
4. the welfare, health and safety of pupils - graded
5. the suitability of proprietor and staff - not graded
6. the school's premises and accommodation - graded
7. the provision of information for parents, carers and others - not graded
8. the procedures for handling complaints - not graded
9. provision for boarding (where applicable) - graded
10. leadership and management - graded
11. Early Years (where applicable) - graded
12. The Sixth Form (where applicable) - graded

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Excellent
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

A guide to proportions used in the report

Proportion	Description
97–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
80–96%	Very large majority, most
65–79%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Description of the school

Alice Smith School, the oldest international school in Kuala Lumpur, was founded in 1946. It is an independent, non-denominational, not-for-profit, coeducational day school. There has been a change of Head of School and Principal of the secondary campus since the last inspection as well as a number of new staff in both management and curricular positions. The school aims to provide an education that is based on the English national curriculum but also to incorporate and celebrate the religious and cultural diversity of Malaysia. The school operates on two sites, over 20 kilometres apart, with the secondary campus based in Equine Park and the primary campus in Jalan Bellamy. Facilities for English, mathematics and science on the secondary site have been very recently upgraded and expanded. Through its two campuses, the school serves both the expatriate and Malaysian communities in the greater Kuala Lumpur area. The largest groups of students in the school are British and Malaysian but overall the school serves around 50 different nationalities.

The school is a long-standing member of the Federation of British International Schools in Asia, (FOBISIA), and of the Council of British International Schools, (COBIS). The school year follows a British model; at the primary campus the students take National Curriculum SAT tests and the secondary stage includes GCSE and advanced-level qualifications. As part of their studies, students in the rapidly growing sixth form also complete the AQA Baccalaureate programme. Most staff, other than the Modern Foreign Language specialists who are native speakers of Mandarin and Bahasa, have trained or taught in the United Kingdom. Many have had wide experience in other international British Schools. Professional development for staff is sustained through regular visits to, and professional visitors from, the United Kingdom as well as through the FOBISIA network

Most students transfer directly from the primary to the secondary campus. There are generally similar numbers of boys and girls in the school community but around 20% of the students join or leave the school at other than standard times. This is mainly associated with parental employment patterns. Entry to the school is non-selective but students' command of English must be sufficient for them to readily access the curriculum. Students with special educational needs are accepted if the school has the capacity to support their learning.

Information about the inspection

This four-day inspection was carried out by two inspectors in each of the primary and secondary campuses and by one inspector who spent two days on each. A range of inspection strategies was used to collect evidence, including:

- meetings with staff, primary and secondary students, members of the governing body, parents and other representatives of the school community
- a detailed scrutiny of school documentation, policies, planning, assessment information and students' work on both sites
- sampling of the quality of teaching in both schools, 80 parts of lessons in the secondary and 55 parts of lessons in the primary.

Daily up-date meetings were held between the inspection team and senior staff of both campuses.

Executive Summary**Grade: 1**

- The Alice Smith School, Kuala Lumpur, fully meets the accreditation standards for a British International School, as set out by the Department for Education (DfE) for England.
- The Head of School and the Principals of the secondary and primary campuses have built steadily on the very strong foundations of previous years. These secure foundations have enabled the primary phase to make significant improvements and it now provides an outstanding education for its students. The secondary campus has sustained and improved even further on its previous excellent provision.
- Governors play an ever more effective role in developing the school and ensuring its future. Sincere commitment and the desire to do what is best for the students drive them to provide expertise across important areas that truly benefit the school. They provide significant challenge for school leaders where necessary.
- The quality of education on both sites is reflected in the high attainment, academic success and excellent personal development of the students. In external examinations, both Key Stage 4 students and sixth formers successfully achieve the highest available grades. Those leaving the secondary campus mostly move on to their first choice of university and are very well prepared for their next stage of education. Primary students attain highly in basic skills so that they are at ease in accessing the secondary curriculum.
- The secondary curriculum is excellent and the extra-curricular activities second to none. At primary level, recent developments in the curriculum are likely to add much to the students' learning. It is already stimulating their imagination and curiosity even further than previously. Currently, the primary curriculum is good.
- Students' experiences, their fast academic progress and strong personal development empower them to move easily into British and other English-speaking academic institutions. The school very successfully promotes British values and a solid knowledge of British institutions.
- The school carries out the necessary safeguarding checks to ensure that all staff and other adults, local and international, employed at the school, associated with the school, or as governors are suitable to work with young people.
- Very good attention is taken of local circumstances, including weather patterns and government requirements.
- High priority is given to the well-being of the students from hygiene strategies and catering facilities, to the new building programme. Monitoring of learners' attainment and progress work well overall although there are some instances where this could be improved such as the half-termly data capture process. Reporting to parents is very regular and the school is constantly reviewing the effectiveness of its practice in response to parents' and learners' feedback.
- Behaviour in all phases is excellent. Students are highly motivated to work collaboratively with staff in all aspects of school life. In no small measure, their attitudes to school contribute outstandingly to their all-round success. Learners' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding and is reflected in the way this diverse, happy school community works together.
- Post-16 provision is excellent with students starting out well along a pathway to success in their future studies. There remains untapped potential in the extent to which these students could contribute to the development of Alice Smith.

- Provision for the early years has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now excellent. The school has taken to heart the recommendations and students flourish in both pre-school and reception.
- The school is very well resourced. The building programme and the judicious management of finances ensure that the premises and accommodation provide a very attractive learning environment and that the future of the school is secure.
- Information for parents is very helpful, particularly the new parent portal.
- Eight weeks into this academic year, new staff, including senior leaders, have settled in exceptionally well as a result of the well-planned induction programmes. It is a tribute to all staff at Alice Smith that they appear so at ease in their new facilities in a very short time frame of just over a week.
- Self-evaluation is both accurate and honest in both campuses. The school is in the process of a strategic review of its priorities for development and these include, at secondary level, building further capacity at leadership level across the staff and students, and using to the best advantage the undoubted expertise within the school community to maximise the potential of the students.
- At the primary phase, the school's immediate task is to embed the very new curriculum and ensure that all staff are confident in its implementation so that students sustain the excellent attainment that prepares them exceptionally well for their secondary education.

What the school should do to improve further

In order for Alice Smith School to sustain excellence and further develop its outstanding and good practice, the secondary campus community should consider how best to:

- build even greater leadership capacity through empowering middle and emerging leaders to participate fully in monitoring and evaluating the experience of the students, particularly in subject areas,
- capitalise on the depth and breadth of knowledge and expertise within the staff particularly in relation to the quality of classroom practice,
- ensure there is a sharp focus on deepening even further students' understanding and teachers' awareness of minor errors and misconceptions,
- develop further the co-leadership of the students so that they are fully recognised as participating members of the school community in leading and managing the future provision at Alice Smith.

In the primary phase, ensure that the new curriculum is implemented effectively across the Campus so that:

- planned learning activities build meticulously on individual students' earlier learning, particularly for those who are very able or are less at ease with learning than their peers,
- students understand what is expected of them during lessons so that they use the time efficiently to make rapid progress,
- written feedback to students on the work in their books is always meaningful and enables them to respond by improving their work.

Primary Phase

Main Findings

Grade: 1

- The Alice Smith School Primary Campus meets all the requirements for British Schools Overseas.
- The principal provides excellent leadership. Her astute programme of development has moved the school forward to its current position. She has motivated staff at all levels to monitor, evaluate and improve the overall effectiveness of the campus from good at the last inspection to outstanding in this inspection.
- Students achieve highly in all year groups and are well prepared for the next stage of education, including returning to a United Kingdom school. Recent developments to marry competence in basic skills with the students' 'KLASS attributes' of enquiry and independent learning within theme-based projects are increasingly well embedded within the curriculum. The exceptional range of enrichment activities ensures that students' minds are stimulated at all ages so that they are very happy, willing learners who persevere with challenging tasks. Behaviour throughout the campus is excellent.
- The outstanding progress made by students throughout the campus owes much, not only to the generally excellent quality of teaching but also to their very positive attitudes to learning. Getting to grips with the new curriculum has challenged staff to reflect well on how to enhance the learning of all groups of students, building systematically on what they already know thoroughly and really understand. The challenge for staff, not yet always fully realised, lies in ensuring that the most able and those who find learning difficult are able to maximise their progress.
- Arrangements to check students' progress are excellent. Comprehensive systems to record and monitor students' performance ensure that the campus has a secure overview of each student's learning. Teachers mark students' work regularly but the usefulness of guidance on how to improve work is not of equally good quality in all classes. The school acknowledges that this is an area for further development.
- A notable improvement since the last inspection is the provision in the early years. Students make an excellent start to their education. The skilled teaching in all areas stimulates students' interest and excitement in learning. They make fast progress and are well prepared for learning in Year 1 where they continue to be fully absorbed by the curriculum and the way it is taught.
- Excellent support ensures that students feel safe and well cared for. Those who are vulnerable at any stage are exceptionally well supported. Skilled practitioners provide counselling and nurture so that students flourish, growing in confidence and self-esteem.
- Resources are well used to benefit students' learning and well-being. The specialist accommodation for sport, music and art is excellent. Careful planning over many years has enabled senior leaders and governors to plan well for the new building, soon to be opened.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to engage fully with the primary campus and their views are sought and taken on board regularly. The information is used to help the school evaluate its provision. Complaints procedures are in line with those in the secondary phase and readily accessible. There have been no formal complaints over many years.

- The primary phase of Alice Smith School evaluates its work for the students accurately and has clearly identified the areas where it can do even better. The campus is in the safe hands of a skilled senior team.

The quality of education – the curriculum**Grade: 2**

Since the previous inspection, the campus has developed an innovative curriculum with cross-curricular themes that complements the existing highly successful programmes of study in English and mathematics. Teachers and students have greater scope than previously to share powerful learning experiences, often with the aid of new technologies. 'Skills ladders' provide accurate reference points for sequences of lessons so that students build rapidly on what they already know and can do. These sit alongside carefully defined 'Klass Learner Attributes for Successful Students' (KLASS) to support not only learning but personal development.

Breadth and balance in the students' experience is achieved through specialist teaching in modern languages, music and physical education as well through an exceptional arts programme. The improved coordination of the personal, social and health education provision reflects more clearly than previously the school's ethos empowering students to achieve highly in all year groups and make successful transitions to the next stage of their education or to re-enter the British system.

Professional development and training programmes have prepared teachers well to implement the new curriculum although there are still some challenges in balancing the requirements of a rigorous knowledge base with the flexibility to respond to students' ideas. Occasionally, there is too great a focus on promoting KLASS learner attributes, at the expense of the rapid progress of students with particular needs, such as the more able or those with barriers to learning. However, additional planned activities, both within and out of class, make sure that in the short term, these students are well catered for.

The extensive extra-curricular programme further enhances the good curriculum. Students have wide ranging opportunities in sport. Talented students do well on regional tours and the 'world cup' football programme enables the majority to enjoy competition between teams. The rich music programme fosters excellent performance through individual mastery of instruments as well as music-making in choirs and the orchestra. The musician- and artist-in-residence programmes motivate students to participate very actively in a rich extra-curricular programme. A variety of other activities also support students' interests. For example, students keen to write thrive as members of 'The Smithy' publishing team.

Quality of teaching and assessment**Grade: 1**

Students achieve exceptionally well throughout the primary phase. Attainment has been high for the past two years. In the foundation stage, the vast majority of students exceed what is expected for their ages and by the end of Reception many students achieve some of the learning outcomes ordinarily expected of students in Year 1. Students in Key Stages 1 and 2 also make fast progress. In reading, writing and mathematics their achievement is outstanding. Many students reach the highest available levels 5 and 6 in mathematics, for example. Students also perform very well in the foundation subjects and especially in art and design, music and swimming. In the latter sport, performance is often exceptional.

Students do so well because the quality of teaching and assessment are outstanding. Teachers provide well-planned sequences of activities that engage and motivate the

students who are encouraged to develop their sense of curiosity and creativity so that they consolidate and extend what they know and can do. Students in Year 1, for example, were totally fascinated by the ingredients they used for making 'potions', aided and abetted by resources from the secondary campus. As a result of the skilled teaching, students developed their writing skills, recording their own recipes as well as learning how to measure capacity using spoons, cups and measuring cylinders.

Teachers' strong subject knowledge and understanding of how students learn results in confident and often passionate teaching that enthuses students to aspire to higher levels of attainment. High expectations, coupled with good timing and the appropriate pace of learning typically ensures students are engrossed in their work. For example, highly motivated groups of students in a music lesson in Year 4 improved their knowledge and understanding of posture, breathing, phrasing, diction and expression before applying it to their singing during a practice session for their production. Whereas, in a physical education lesson for students in Reception, every second was used productively to build the students' skills of careful listening, running, stopping and sliding in playing a simple game. The students were physically challenged for a sustained period as well as having so much fun.

Good quality questioning, astute observations and the diligent appraisal of students' work enables teachers to accurately assess what students already know. This leads to lessons being pitched accurately, and to progressively challenging work being set as soon as students have mastered the initial steps. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, the proficient use of success ladders led to students to improve their writing through the use of varied vocabulary, connectives, sentence openings and punctuation.

Despite mostly excellent teaching, just occasionally, teachers' planning indicates uncertainty about how to interpret the new curriculum and this can lead to a lack of clear expectations for the quantity, quality and content of students' work, particularly for those with barriers to learning and for the most able.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils **Grade: 1**

The campus excels in its work to promote students' outstanding personal development. The citizenship award, for example, encourages all students to volunteer play their part in sustaining the school's thriving community. Students keen to take on leadership roles develop a mature approach because of the school's high expectations about how students apply for and fulfil these posts. Groups of students develop the school's Golden Rules and put together their own class rules. They honour their commitment to one another in upholding these pledges and students' behaviour is of an exceptionally high standard as a result. They are adept at conducting themselves in a manner appropriate to various situations, judging correctly their levels of enthusiasm and consideration for others. Teachers' thoughtful questions encourage students to understand how to think in different ways to learn exceptionally well. Making mistakes does not daunt students and they see this as a positive step in making progress. The cross-curricular elements of the curriculum encourage students to reflect on British values and to come to know about a range of British institutions. Students embrace the cultural diversity in the school. They say that the school has taught them to celebrate the differences between them, be they their personalities, their talents or their heritage.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils**Grade: 1**

Students are extremely well cared for and their safety and wellbeing ensured. Systems to ensure students' safety are comprehensive and thorough. Clear policies and rigorous procedures ensure the campus site is secure and regularly and effectively monitored for risk. Staff are well trained in the identification of any issues that could indicate a student is vulnerable and open to potential harm. Students' emotional wellbeing is seen as of equal importance to their physical safety. A counsellor is now employed fulltime to support students who may face distress through difficult events and circumstances. The school nurse also provides a high level of professional care and reassurance in the well-resourced medical centre. Parents express great confidence in the school's ability to keep the students safe. Students make strong friendships, enjoy school and thus attend regularly. Students routinely enjoy healthy lifestyles and participate in a wide range of sports and exercise. They try to keep themselves and others safe and are well aware of potential risks around them, including through unkindness to others in any form.

The suitability of proprietor and staff

The school takes very seriously the work of ensuring that all background checks on staff and other adults associated with the school confirm their suitability and fitness for their roles in working with students. These checks take into account the local, British and international aspects of the school. Procedures are consistently applied across both the primary and secondary phases of the school.

The premises and accommodation**Grade: 1**

The campus accommodation and surrounding grounds are excellent and provide a safe and secure environment that supports students' learning exceedingly well. A great deal of refurbishment, renovation and, in some areas remodelling, have occurred on the primary campus since the previous inspection. These improvements have successfully enhanced the buildings and facilities both inside and out. Teaching spaces are light and airy and provide stimulating environments in which students thrive. The outside areas are shaded and provide good opportunities for recreation and play. The outside space for the use of the youngest students in the early years is particularly well developed and provides an exciting place in which students can explore ideas and develop their knowledge and skills successfully.

Specialist accommodation for music, art, physical education and the teaching of modern foreign languages are good and used well. An 8 lane 25 meter swimming pool also supports students' fitness and promotes their enjoyment in physical activity throughout the school.

Buildings are suitable for the age and number of students in the school and are well maintained. Systems for drainage, the supply of fresh water, air conditioning and lighting are highly effective. Access to classrooms for those who have physical disabilities, particularly those who might use wheelchairs have been improved but there are still particular difficulties in reaching classrooms in Year 5 and 6. There is, however, a well-developed plan for further improvements. Health and safety checks are made regularly and there are effective systems in place to promptly address any concerns. Alarms for example, alert everyone to the

dangers of a lightning strike so helping to keep the school population safe. A new building, almost finished, will provide a quality dining hall facility for the students and modern, purpose-built office space for parent services upstairs.

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school makes excellent provision for sharing information with parents, carers and others. Key policies and documents are readily available through the secure parent portal. Useful weekly messages from the Head of School and the Principal provide parents with frequent updates on school events and sports results. Parent workshops are well attended and enable parents to support students' home learning. Parent-teacher meetings and detailed annual reports sustain good quality communication about students' progress throughout the school. Social media reinforces the strong link between the parent representatives for each class, the school and all parents. The school's thoughtful arrangements to welcome new families strengthen the partnership with parents. Family events are well supported and do much to enrich the school community.

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school has a suitable complaints procedure showing the procedures and stages of the process that is accessible to all parents. Teachers are approachable and parents say that their few concerns are dealt with personably and efficiently at this informal stage.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Grade: 1

The campus has improved significantly since the last inspection under the outstanding leadership of the Principal. Her clear vision, energy and drive have moved the campus forward. The Principal works closely with the Head of School and is ably supported by the senior team who have, in their own ways, made a significant difference to the development of the campus.

Leaders at all levels now have clear roles and responsibilities which they carry out effectively and with enthusiasm. Staff recognise the improvements in the campus and are proud of their part in making it happen.

From this stable platform fresh challenges have been undertaken to move the campus further forward. A new curriculum that focuses on strengthening students' personal learning skills, their creativity and independence as well as maintaining high attainment has been introduced. It is still in its infancy and not yet fully embedded but is already enhancing the learning experiences of the students.

The primary campus continues to be successful in attracting high quality staff and regular reviews and training are used to help them extend their personal skills and development. Rigorous systems to ensure all staff are suitable to work with young children are maintained. Induction of staff new to the campus is excellent and parallels that in the secondary campus.

Arrangements for assessing students' attainment and progress throughout the campus are systematic and provide a clear picture of each student's achievement. Regular meetings with staff to review student progress have resulted in clear targets for any that are in danger of underachieving.

The role of the governing body in monitoring, supporting and challenging the senior staff has greatly advanced since the last inspection. Self-review and training programmes for governors have enabled them to develop rigorous systems by which the school's work and performance are monitored. Relationships between the governing body and the senior staff are very positive. A well planned sub-committee for governance has been highly effective in providing a clear strategic direction for the school. Effective financial controls are employed to ensure the future security of the school and to enable an extensive programme of refurbishment and building to take place.

Early Years

Grade: 1

The provision for students in the early years is outstanding and successfully promotes students' welfare along with their progress in their learning. Teaching across the early years is excellent. Staff work together as a strong and effective team to promote students' interest in and excitement for learning. Teachers have a good understanding of how young students learn and plan exciting well-structured activities that build on what they already know and can do.

An excellent range of resources and an exciting outside area stimulate students' curiosity and their desire to experiment and explore ideas. Teachers use students' ideas and extend them very well so that students use their knowledge and skills in many different ways. Teachers are skilled at questioning students to assess what they know and to plan new challenges. All staff work effectively to build the students confidence and resilience so that they are ready to try new things and to collaborate with one another. As a consequence, students of all abilities make excellent progress in all areas of their learning to reach levels of skills and knowledge that are usually above those expected for their ages.

The curriculum is well planned and well matched to students' age, interests and maturity. Teachers know their students well. They assess students' development carefully and set next steps effectively to move them on in their learning.

The provision for students in the early years has significantly improved since the previous inspection because of excellent leadership that demands much of the staff in maximising learning and in promoting students' well-being.

Letter for Primary Students

6 November 2014

Dear Students

Inspection of Alice Smith School Primary Campus, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome. We much enjoyed talking to so many of you, looking at your work and hearing about the many interesting activities you do. We are writing to tell you about some of the many things we found out about your campus.

You told us that you really enjoyed school and we can see why. We thought the staff taught you extremely well and did all they could to make your lessons interesting. Some of your activities were great fun as well as helping you to make rapid progress in your learning.

We thought you also put in lots of effort. You work hard and try to do your best. You told us that you thought you were successful in your lessons and we agree. Most students leave Year 6 reaching high levels in their work because of the excellent progress you make in lots of subjects, not just reading writing and mathematics, but also sport, swimming, music and art. Many of you are also confident in using technology in your lessons.

Teachers challenge you to think hard and to do difficult work and many of you relish these challenges and even challenge yourselves to work harder to reach higher levels.

Students in the early years are also working hard and enjoying their learning. We thought all of the activities were really exciting and that all of you were making really good progress.

You behave extremely well, get on well with each other and make strong friendships. You told us that the range of personalities in the school as well as cultural differences and backgrounds makes the school an exciting place in which to learn.

You enjoy school and feel safe because of the very special care and attention given to you by all the staff. You are also aware of potential dangers and act sensibly helping to keep yourself and others safe.

Many improvements have been made at the campus since we visited you last. This is the result of the very strong leadership of your Head of School, Principal and the other senior staff. All staff are working hard to make your school even better.

The school provides you with an excellent education. There continue to be lots of extra clubs and activities for you to enjoy and many subjects for you to learn.

I expect you have seen how your lessons have been changing as teachers help you to meet your 'Goals' in learning. The new curriculum is helping you develop your knowledge and skills in different subjects while researching new topics; it is an exciting way of working. I know many of you agree, but it is still fairly new and not always quite as effective as it could

be in ensuring all of you make the best progress in every lesson. We have asked teachers to be even clearer in what they expect you to do to improve in your work.

The accommodation has been improved and I know you are excited about the new building that is almost complete.

We wish you every success in the future and look forward to hearing about your achievements. We hope you keep up all your hard work and continue to develop the skills and attributes that will help you to learn successfully as you move on to your new schools whether at Equine Park or in any other school and country.

Hazel Callaghan, Juliet Jaggs and Steve Howland
The Inspection Team

Summary of inspection judgements – primary phase

Inspection Judgement Recording Form	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum		✓		
The quality of teaching	✓			
The quality of assessment	✓			
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
Welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
The premises and accommodation	✓			
Leadership and management of the school	✓			

Secondary Phase

Main Findings

Grade: 1

- The Alice Smith School's Secondary Campus, Kuala Lumpur, meets all the requirements for British Schools Overseas.
- Deeply committed school leaders have sustained and developed further the excellence of the school over the period since the last inspection. Students' talents blossom because of the determined drive for academic excellence and the nurturing of interests and interpersonal skills.
- Students 'reach for the stars' at Alice Smith achieving very highly in their examinations at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Attainment is high across the subject range. Most notable is the high proportion successfully taking up engineering options at university, the result of the excellent work of the sciences, mathematics and design technology.
- At all levels, students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, including those returning to the United Kingdom. This is the result not only of excellent academic success but also of the superb opportunities for wider personal development. The exceptionally rich curriculum, both within and outside of the timetable, enables students to develop as well-rounded individuals with a thirst for knowledge, wide interests, and real concern for others.
- Provision in the growing sixth form is outstanding. Almost all students gain their first choice of university places, many to prestigious universities. Extended projects, wider learning days, charity projects and school journeys empower students to excel in their university interviews.
- The quality of teaching is never less than good and often outstanding. Integral to inspiring classroom practice is the regular attention to promoting independent learning, problem solving, collaborative working and genuine enquiry. However, within this context, opportunities for dialogue with students that question the depth of their understanding are sometimes missed as are occasional opportunities for diagnostic and constructive written feedback where needed.
- The monitoring of teaching by senior leaders is regular and very effectively linked to training opportunities for staff. Professional development is given a high priority so that staff are able to maximise the potential of the students. Nevertheless, there is scope for the further development of middle leaders to engage them more fully in the evaluation of the school's practice across the curriculum.
- Whole-campus checks on the students' academic performance and well-being are very effective and reporting to parents regular so that they are well informed on progress. However, in between these half-termly assessments, the effectiveness of feedback to younger students on their learning in lessons, their written work and homework is variable in its effectiveness both between and within subject areas.
- Although provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students is excellent, and students have total confidence in the adults around them, the school is striving to do even more to ensure that a key member of staff has a sharp overview of the personal development of each student.
- Excellent planning by senior staff and governors are ensuring that the campus site provides a superb learning environment. The new accommodation for the core areas of the curriculum is a positive factor in the improvements in learning and teaching since the last inspection.

- Relationships across this very inclusive campus are excellent. Attitudes to learning, behaviour and a very strong collaborative approach to learning are key strengths of the students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. Students of varied traditions value each other's talents and work very harmoniously together.
- Communication across the campus and with families is very good. The parent portal, developed since the last inspection, is a very effective mechanism to inform parents about the school and its many activities. There have been no formal complaints in recent years and informal concerns are dealt with rapidly and sympathetically. The occasional issues that occur on school transport are dealt with rapidly and the school is working steadily to refine the understanding of students and parents on how others may misunderstand comments.
- Self-evaluation is both accurate and challenging. The campus is undertaking a strategic review of its priorities for development. These include building further capacity at leadership level across the staff and students, and using this and the expertise within the school community to the best advantage to maximise the potential of the students.

The quality of education – the curriculum**Grade: 1**

The excellent curriculum is a significant strength of the school. It promotes a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. The augmented English 'national curriculum' is carefully adapted to meet local and national requirements and to fulfil the school's aim of providing students with 'an outstanding British education for an international future'. British values are extensively promoted throughout the students' campus experiences. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well across subjects with reading having a very high profile across the campus. The 'Novel Knock-out' and visiting poets and authors all contribute very effectively to students' interests. Additional breadth to the curriculum has been achieved, for example, through options such as extending design and technology in Year 9. Very helpful information at transition points and clear guidance on pathways for progression cater for the needs of students of all ages extremely well.

The exceptionally wide-range of subjects on offer at Key Stages 4 and 5 enables all students to acquire a broad range of skills and experiences. The curriculum is well tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of students across the campus, including those who find learning less exciting. The importance of engineering in the local region is well catered for through the extent of mathematical and scientific studies. Other areas of the curriculum, however, also provide extremely well for their personal well-being and for a wide range of future careers, enabling students to become confident and articulate learners. Although the most able students are served extremely well, opportunities are occasionally missed across the curriculum to ensure that they always acquire the depth of understanding of which they are capable.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme promotes the school's aims extremely well, enabling students to fulfil their potential. Timetabled lessons and 'wider learning' days, enable students to learn about personal relationships and how to lead healthy lifestyles. Sport contributes immensely effectively to students' well-being. Students contribute exceptionally well to school life and the wider community. For example, they build and work in a school in Cambodia and support those in need locally. Post-16 students regularly support and work with younger students on a range of projects such as charity events and clubs. This creates a strong sense of family throughout the school. Careers education supports students outstandingly well in reflecting on the best option choices, including those leading to places at world class universities.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it is relevant and up-to-date so that students are able to re-enter the British system as required. The school has recently introduced the 'KLASS Learner Attributes for Student Success' framework. This is designed to promote the six learner attributes: – independent learners, communicators, problem-solvers, respectful, happy and healthy, and community minded. Of particular note, is the 'enquiry-based' approach which is being developed throughout the campus. Curriculum resources are of high quality, including the highly innovative and imaginative use of new technologies. This is a significant strength and motivates, stimulates and support students' motivation to further study both on campus and at home. A striking example was seen in the way a group of students engaged online with an absent student, so she could participate remotely in the learning task.

The excellent programme of enrichment activities provides a stimulating additional dimension to students' learning. On average, over 80 clubs run each week, ranging from Mandarin to mathematics and robotics to running. Lunchtime lectures given by eminent outside speakers provide further opportunities to deepen students' understanding of their subjects and world affairs. For example, during the inspection, a former student who is a world-class swimmer, returned to the school to coach students. On other days, lectures included visiting university staff speaking on paradoxes in mathematics, and on international relations. The annual trips week to over 10 countries, together with many other local and international visits, including sporting events with other schools from south-east Asian British International schools, ensures students to have a wide appreciation of their own traditions and those of others.

Almost all students proceed to English-speaking universities, many ranked among the best in the world, with most gaining their first choice offers. This demonstrates that the curriculum policy and practice fit students' needs outstandingly well in preparing them for their futures.

Quality of teaching and assessment

Grade: 1

Typically, at least good and often excellent teaching empowers students to achieve outstandingly well from their generally above average starting points. Students in all year groups make rapid progress in acquiring knowledge and skills, culminating in very successful examination outcomes, both at the end of Year 11 and the sixth form. Standards are high across the range of subjects but particularly in English, chemistry and physics, mathematics, design and technology, history and geography, art and photography, Mandarin, Spanish and sociology at Year 13. At the end of advanced level studies, three quarters of all grades ranged from A* to B and almost half of the grades gained were at the highest available A*. The quality of learning in classrooms ensured that 85% of the students reached their first choice of university, not only in the United Kingdom but across the world. Alice Smith School is exceptionally effective in developing its students to follow courses in engineering. Well over a quarter of all Year 13 students, an unusually high proportion, were accepted for engineering courses of choice, reflecting the success of the contributing subject areas in encouraging the students to look for applications of their growing knowledge and skills.

In 2014, Key Stage 4 students excelled in the sciences, modern foreign languages, including Bahasa, English, mathematics, textiles, graphics and photography. In the IGCSE examinations, over two thirds of all grades awarded were at A* and A. The breadth of achievement at Alice Smith, however, centres not only in the highly-prized academic areas but also in the fields of the arts and physical education. Students excel also in these areas, reaching world-class standards.

Since the last inspection, much has been done to improve the quality of teaching. The campus is now at a stage where it can enhance the management skills of subject leaders in developing even further teachers' understanding of how students learn across a range of disciplines. Characteristic of most teaching is the excellent subject knowledge of the staff and the enthusiasm for their subjects. This leads, in the most successful lessons, to innovative and detailed planning for what students need to know and for real challenge for students at all levels. New technologies are particularly well used across the school by students and staff to further learning. Subjects such as mathematics are developing exciting applications through which to engage students in discussion, further exploration and in

developing a love of the subject. A collaborative, scholarly ethos and warm working relationships support admirably the students' motivation to learn and achieve of their best. In design and technology, for example, students used particularly well a video model provided by staff and then applied similar skills to explaining the work to others. High-quality research skills, supported by the new facilities for break-out activities, were at the heart of an English lesson considering the major themes of life and death.

As students move through the school, the range of methodologies used in classrooms supports students very well in becoming increasingly independent learners. This is a huge strength of Alice Smith and prepares students exceptionally well for higher education. Students' creativity and imaginative responses to tasks are extremely well harnessed in the arts and in their extended sixth-form projects. Be it the arts and humanities, social and physical sciences, modern foreign languages and sports, growing technical skills and strengthening critical evaluation enable the students to work very productively. For those students who require additional support in their learning journeys, provision is excellent. Personalised experiences enable them to make significant progress and overcome barriers to learning.

In the vast majority of lessons, staff and students are skilled at assessing understanding and what needs to improve. This was very clearly seen in physical education lessons, in a history lesson where students were learning about how to structure essay work, in design and technology, and in a geography lesson on climate change. However, there are a few remaining instances where not all teachers adequately check day-to-day learning, or always provide sufficient guidance through marking so that any errors or misconceptions are ironed out. Oral feedback to students is invariably helpful but despite much probing questioning, students are not always challenged enough to explain the 'why of things'. Senior staff are aware of where there are inconsistencies in the quality of provision and are paying due attention to this area of further development.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils **Grade: 1**

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The very large majority of students are extremely positive about school life and feel that 'at this school we like and care for each other'. They are confident and articulate young people who appreciate the dedication and care of the staff. They feel safe and secure, enabling them to thrive and flourish. As a result, students rarely miss school and show considerable concern when genuine circumstances arise that necessitates their absence.

Students display high levels of respect and cooperate extremely well with each other and with their teachers, both in and out of lessons. They thoroughly enjoy school and display an infectious enthusiasm for learning. They are also mindful of the need to care and support those who are not so fortunate. They give generously of their time to raise funds for local and international charities, including helping refugees and those with cancer. The school is a sociable community where students and staff eat together comfortably at breakfast and lunch times.

Opportunities for spiritual reflection are woven into the school day. Through regular assemblies, tutor time and visits from outside speakers, students are able to reflect on the impact of their actions and words on others from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs. Students are afforded many opportunities to participate in events involving song, dance and musical performances. For example, during 2013, students performed a Christmas Choral

concert at the Cathedral and the drama department performed four Shakespeare plays. These activities further enhance students' appreciation of the arts and provide a medium for them to express their deeper thoughts, feelings and emotions.

As an international school, Alice Smith is a multi-cultural community, where students gain an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures through assemblies, PSHE, art and music. They visit places of interest, both locally and internationally, which gives them a strong sense of what it means to belong to a global community. In addition, events such as international week and the celebration of festivals from around the world, help students gain a mature appreciation of the differences and similarities between each other and the main world religions. The school makes strong provision that extends their understanding of how society works and gives them a broad general knowledge of key aspects of modern British life and institutions.

Moral values are frequently emphasised through assemblies, which are often taken by students. Any deviation from the school's expectations is dealt with rapidly by staff who work assiduously with families as well as students to influence awareness of what may distress others. In addition, the school's dynamic enrichment programme promotes practical skills, resilience, team work, happiness and well-being. Students have many opportunities to connect with the natural world, for example, through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, participating in engaging and motivating activities that develop social and emotional skills that promote students' understanding of equality well. The school is constantly striving to ensure that there is no discrimination at Alice Smith.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Grade: 1

The welfare, health and safety of the students are a high priority at Alice Smith School. The school very positively promotes a welcoming ethos where students feel at ease with both one another and with staff. Students are very secure in their knowledge that there is always an adult to help them should the need arise. Staff seek students' views very regularly and the overwhelming majority consider that adults respect and care for them very effectively, both academically and pastorally. Key mechanisms to maintain these excellent working relationships include the induction processes for new students, the target-setting and review days, mentoring and the 'GLUE' days which are structured to build and maintain the rapport of both staff and students within year groups. Counsellors, a nurse and staff in the Learning Support Unit, along with as careers advice from higher education leaders, all contribute to the well-being of the students.

The campus makes excellent use of local and international partnerships and activities to support the health of the students mentally and physically, from physical education and personal, social and health education in school, to stress management, yoga and relaxation techniques and vibrant extra-curricular experiences. Staff work regularly in conjunction with parents and other agencies to ensure that students are well-informed on relevant issues of risk and of behaviour that might cause themselves or others harm. The school has an on-going programme to sustain improvements in the cafeteria service with an excellently motivated professional staff who do their best to ensure that nutrition makes a very positive contribution to students' well-being.

Procedures for safeguarding and keeping students safe are very robust. The campus site is secure and very well maintained and protected. There is a full range of tried and tested policies, which are implemented efficiently and effectively, including those related to any

particular local conditions or international concerns. Risk assessments are thorough for both local conditions and for outward-bound activities, including international school journeys. All staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and undertake regular training in such as first-aid, for example, to keep up-to-date. All staff receive training in child protection, although for some new to the school, the timing of update training may be later in the year in which they join the school. This is because not enough members of staff have the highest level of child protection training so that they can train new staff in-house, rather than waiting for external training. The school is already addressing this issue.

The very successful and harmonious community that is the Alice Smith School enables students to feel that they really belong. Students form powerful friendship bonds that support them in their personal goals and in their collaborative learning. The school's strategies for the development of the campus have the students at the centre of the plans. The school also has well-considered ways forward through which to harness the existing strengths of its systems for overseeing the personal and academic care of the individual student so that each receives the best possible care, guidance and support at key points in their learning journeys. Sustained excellent careers education and guidance continues to ensure that all students are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and training, demonstrated in the high success rate of reaching their first choice of higher education.

The suitability of proprietor and staff

The school takes very seriously the work of ensuring that all background checks on staff and other adults associated with the school confirm their suitability and fitness for their roles in working with students. These checks take into account the local, British and international aspects of the school. Procedures are consistently applied across both phases of the school.

The premises and accommodation

Grade: 1

The secondary campus site continues to provide facilities and resources that are excellent. Recent upgrades to the accommodation provided for English, mathematics and science reflect the high importance given to these core areas. Not only do the new buildings provide spacious learning spaces but much thought has been given to how the environment supports the development of learning and teaching in such a way as to encourage the KLASS attributes as well as excellent academic outcomes. Other faculties are in line to benefit from similar new facilities in the on-going building development master plan. Excellent continuing attention is given to the safety of the students, given the climatic conditions, and to the hygiene of the site. Superb sports facilities, the stimulating and enriching display of students' art work, calming study areas and the landscaped grounds, together with generous resources, all contribute to the excellent quality of the students' learning experiences.

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The engagement of the school with parents at Alice Smith is outstanding. Through a range of media, the school provides high quality information about activities, procedures and policies, and above all the progress of the students. There is a half-termly short progress report which is balanced by the main full annual report. Parents also have access to staff as

needed. The school is constantly seeking ways to refine how it works with families to the best advantage of the students and to this end is actively considering further ways to make the interim reports more meaningful so that they more fully capture the students' learning journeys. The parent portal has brought further ease of access to parents on the students' work schedules and the opportunities open to them. A concerted effort is underway to encourage readership of the weekly e-newsletter, supported by a parent app for phones. Induction for new families is strong as is information and consultation at key transition points in the school calendar.

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets fully the requirements for handling complaints in a fair way and within the designated times within the policy. Since the last inspection, there have been no formal complaints. Staff are readily available to deal with any issues that may cause parental or student concern so that any situations are dealt with immediately. Parents have access to the new parent portal on the school website as well as many face-to-face information and decision-forming meetings. These vehicles enable parents to discuss any issues of concern in a sympathetic environment.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Grade: 1

Since the last inspection, the leadership at Alice Smith has sustained and consolidated the many strengths of the school. The school's self-evaluation is authentic and accurate and matches well the findings of the inspection team. Academic excellence has been maintained alongside outstanding pastoral care. Despite changes to senior leadership as well as the expected changes in teaching staff, the school has preserved the best of its teaching practice and developed its strong characteristics even further for the benefit of the students. Leaders and managers inspire staff and students to form a vibrant scholarly community but also one which nurtures personal development and reaches out locally and internationally. The school has a very clear vision of how it wishes to develop both its academic and pastoral work further, using its campus imaginatively to create the best possible learning environment. There is close collaboration with members of the governing body who have taken advantage of the many excellent training opportunities open to them. As a result, under the leadership of the very able chairperson, they understand well their roles and how they can best challenge and support the school. Finances have been carefully managed so that the future of the school is secure. Both governors and senior staff are sharply focused on maintaining excellence at Alice Smith.

Central to the success of Alice Smith is the genuine care for the individual student and member of staff, coupled with systematic professional development that strives to make classroom practice as enriching as possible so that the students maximise their academic potential. The regular cycle of monitoring of teaching and learning feeds well into staff training at all levels. Regular contact with other British International Schools in the region as well as helpful links with the United Kingdom allow staff access to excellent opportunities for professional studies and contact with other educationalists. This leads to innovative approaches within the school while preserving the best of its established practice. The renewed emphasis on the KLAS attributes, for example, is building on much already very good practice in problem solving, enquiry-based learning, collaborative working and independent research.

Whole-school procedures for the monitoring of students' progress and the on-going assessment of their learning work very well within the context of this exceptionally well-motivated student body. Post-16 students much appreciate the excellent individual support and constructive feedback from staff. Senior students welcome the varied types of feedback they receive as it is always helpful and they consider it 'fit for purpose'. Nevertheless, the youngest students would benefit from greater consistency across faculties in how guidance on improving their written work is coordinated to ensure that any underachievement is picked up between the effective half-termly whole school tracking and reporting events.

Safeguarding procedures are meticulously implemented for both the site and all members of the school community. Resources are very well managed and developments in the use of current technologies are better managed across the campus than previously. School leaders are aware of students' sensible suggestions over the use of their own equipment and information technology platforms and are set to consider how to implement these appropriately. The school finances have been carefully managed to gain best value and to ensure the prosperous future of the Alice Smith learning community.

Sixth Form

Grade: 1

The provision in the sixth form is excellent. Teachers are highly skilled subject specialists who can teach, in great depth, passionately about their subjects. As a result, students are highly motivated and challenged consistently, so that they make rapid progress and reach standards that are well above the United Kingdom average for advanced level examinations and the AQA baccalaureate. In 2014, the most able students achieved almost twice the proportion of A*-A grades than their peers in the United Kingdom, and were only marginally below the national average for major independent schools. As a result of excellent teaching, students achieve outstandingly well.

Students thoroughly enjoy their time in the sixth form because of their positive experiences lower down the school. They develop excellent academic and personal skills which enable them to learn by themselves and co-operatively. They engage very purposefully in learning activities and extended projects, and are determined to do well. They appreciate their teachers' passion for their subjects and how well prepared teachers are for lessons. Students make excellent use of new technologies to access online resources to complete their research assignments. The extended projects are a major contributor to their success in gaining places at prestigious universities. Teachers provide excellent on-going feedback on students' work. As one student commented, 'Teachers devote themselves to helping us not just in lessons but also in their free-time'.

Students' conduct around the campus and in lessons is exemplary. Relationships between staff and students and between students are exceptionally good. They are excellent role models for younger students, taking a lead role in running clubs, organise fundraising events for the school's charities and acting as subject mentors in departments. This enables them to gain a deeper appreciation of those who are less fortunate than themselves and a greater understanding of their responsibilities to their fellow global citizens. For example, all sixth form students complete the Enrichment Award, undertaking 30 hours of community service. Activities range from teaching English to refugee children to organising activities as part of the recent Halloween celebrations. The sixth form also hosts an annual charity dinner held at a leading hotel where they work as waiting staff and provide the entertainment for parents and school staff. The money raised at this event is used effectively to support school charities.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent. It is highly effective in securing the best outcomes for students. High quality careers education and guidance which, together with the personalised support and excellent teaching, prepares students extremely well for their future. In 2014, 73 students entered prestigious universities based in the United Kingdom and in other English-speaking countries. The vast majority entered their first choice universities. In addition, in the last three years thirteen students successfully gained an Oxbridge place.

Letter for Students

06 November 2014

Dear Students

Inspection of the Alice Smith School, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

We, the inspection team, would like to say a very big thank you to you all for making our inspection such a pleasant experience. We really enjoyed our conversations with you and were impressed with your unfailing courtesy, patience in explaining things, and in helping us to find our way around.

You will find below the main judgements about your school.

Your school meets fully all the requirements for British Schools Overseas. Truly your school does live up to its aim of providing you with an outstanding British education for an international future.

Alice Smith School is in really safe hands. Outstanding leadership and management by the Head of School, the Principal and the senior team have sustained excellent learning conditions so that your subject specialists and pastoral staff can do their best for you.

You achieve really well throughout the school and your excellent examination performance opens very important doors for your future. You are very well prepared for your futures as global citizens. For those of you in the sixth form, it was a delight to talk to you about your extended projects. We look forward to hearing the outcomes of your in-depth studies.

All of these really impressive things only happen because your school provides you with an excellent all-round education through a rich curriculum both inside and outside of the timetable. Overall exceptional teaching develops you very well as scholars and global citizens.

You also contribute really well to this process. You demonstrate genuine care and concern for those around you, both in school and the wider community. You show high motivation to 'reach for the stars' both academically and in the artistic and sporting fields. It has been a pleasure to see you hard at work in the library even before lessons start!

You tell us you are very happy with your school and the only things you would want to see develop are stronger links between the primary and secondary campuses. We have passed this information on to the staff. We are also intrigued that you think teachers work too hard at providing feedback for all students and feel that they should concentrate their energies mainly on those who most need it. It is excellent that you appreciate their efforts but we agree with your teachers that even the most able of you can further deepen your understanding.

Together with your school leaders, we have discussed ways to keep Alice Smith the excellent school that it is. We know that they intend to discuss ideas with you so that you can play a full part in its future development.

We wish you every success in the future and will be looking out to see your accomplishments in the next stage of your education and training. Thank you for having us.

Sheila Nolan, David Scott, Steve Howland
The Inspection Team

Summary of inspection judgements – secondary phase

Inspection Judgement Recording Form	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum	✓			
The quality of teaching	✓			
The quality of assessment	✓			
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
Welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
The premises and accommodation	✓			
Leadership and management of the school	✓			

