

part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

Braeburn Mombasa International School

January 2025

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School's Details

School	Braeburn Mom	Braeburn Mombasa International School			
Address	Braeburn Mombasa International School				
	Bamburi Mombasa				
	Malindi Road				
	PO Box 83009				
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	Kenya	-			
Telephone number	+254 (0) 723 84	+254 (0) 723 846 878			
Email address	enquiries.bmis(enquiries.bmis@braeburn.ac.ke			
Headteacher	Mr Simon Welc	Mr Simon Welch			
Chair of governors	Mr Rob William	Mr Rob Williams			
Proprietor	Braeburn Schoo	Braeburn Schools Ltd 1 to 18			
Age range	1 to 18				
Number of pupils on roll	158				
	Early years	33	Juniors	61	
	Seniors	50	Sixth form	14	
Inspection dates	28 to 31 Januar	28 to 31 January 2025			

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Braeburn Mombasa International School (BMIS) is part of Braeburn Schools Ltd and was founded in 2004, moving to its current site in Bamburi, Mombasa, in 2012. It is a day school for male and female pupils and consists of an early years setting (including a crèche), a primary school for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and a secondary school. A sixth form was reintroduced in September 2023. The school follows the English national curriculum, and Kiswahili is a mandatory subject from Years 1 to 8. Elements of Kenyan history are incorporated into the curriculum. The board of Braeburn Schools Ltd is made up of executive and non-executive directors, and the operational management of the school is the responsibility of the group management committee. There is an executive principal, a headteacher and separate assistant headteachers for the primary and secondary school sections. The executive principal and headteacher were appointed in August 2024. The school is purpose built. There is a swimming pool sited on the sports fields.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to provide a holistic education that develops confident individuals, responsible citizens and learners who enjoy success. It seeks to provide an environment that acknowledges pupils' individual needs, to maximise their academic, physical and artistic potential, and to promote international and cross-cultural understanding.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils come from professional and business families in the local area and represent nearly 20 nationalities. Approximately half of the pupils are Kenyan. Data provided by the school suggests that the ability of pupils on entry is just below average compared with others worldwide using the same ability measures. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), three of whom receive additional support. Four pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), a small number of whom receive additional support. More able pupils and those with particular talents in sport are given specialised work and training.

2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an indepth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

This is a COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas. The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as met or as not met. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in May 2022.

Key findings

2.1 The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified.

Part 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education in paragraphs 1, 2(1)(a) and (b), 2(2)(a) to 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(i), 3(a) to (e), and 4 are met, but that relating to paragraph 2(2)(d)(ii) (encouraging respect for other people) cannot be met because it is precluded by the host country's legislation.
- 2.3 The curriculum in both the primary and secondary school, including the early years and sixth form, is well planned and takes account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils. It provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education, enabling them to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills and a good understanding of English. The curriculum provides personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which includes appropriate relationships education for primary pupils and relationships and sex education (RSE) for secondary pupils. Up-to-date and impartial careers advice is provided by the Braeburn group central team. There are appropriate programmes of activities for all pupils, including those in the early years setting and the sixth form. All pupils study Kiswahili from Year 2 to Year 8, and as an option until Year 11 (as well as some elements of east-African history). The curriculum otherwise is based on the English national curriculum and provides all pupils with the opportunity to learn and make progress, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British and Kenyan society. At the end of Years 11 and 13, pupils are examined in subjects offered by the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) and qualifications from the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC).
- 2.4 Teaching is well planned and shows a good understanding of the pupils and their needs, good subject knowledge and understanding, effective use of resources and effective strategies for managing behaviour. It provides pupils with the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and make good progress, fostering self-motivation, application and interest. Pupils who have SEND are identified and supported individually both inside and outside lessons. Teaching does not undermine fundamental British values. However, planned discussion around pupils' protected characteristics and many related issues is precluded by the country's legislation.
- 2.5 There are frameworks in both the primary and secondary schools to assess pupils' performance relative to their starting points, and leaders use assessment information effectively to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 2.6 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in sub-paragraphs 5(a), (b)(i) to (v) and (vii) are met but that in sub-paragraph 5(b)(vi) (encouraging respect for other people) cannot be met because it is precluded by the host country's legislation.
- 2.8 The school promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It promotes principles and sets an atmosphere and expectations through which pupils successfully grow in their self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence. Pupils can distinguish right from wrong and accept responsibility for their behaviour. They contribute to the lives of others and gain knowledge and respect for public

- institutions in England and for the responsibilities of Kenyan citizenship. Furthermore, the school encourages tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions and a balanced presentation of political issues and preclusion of partisan political views. The country's legislation prevents the encouragement of respect for other people with regard to many of the protected characteristics set out in the UK Equality Act 2010.
- 2.9 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of pupils' personal development and the factors that contribute to their development.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

- 2.11 Suitable arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and such arrangements are in line with Kenyan law and have regard to the relevant guidance in the UK. Pupils are encouraged to share their concerns. Pupils are listened to and provided with early help where necessary. The particular vulnerability of those who have SEND is recognised. Staff are aware of the code of conduct, whistleblowing policies, and the need to share any low-level concerns about the behaviour of staff or other adults. Safeguarding is effectively managed, and communication between the school and outside bodies promotes the wellbeing of pupils at risk or in danger of harm. Pupils have a secure awareness of how to keep safe online. Security arrangements, including the checking of visitors, safeguard pupils as far as is practicable.
- 2.12 Leaders and staff promote good behaviour effectively, including through their implementation of the school's behaviour policy, which has recently been amended. The system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by pupils and effectively applied by staff. Bullying is prevented as much as possible and confronted if it happens. The school complies with the national health and safety laws and fire safety standards. Documentation is thorough and shows an effective overview of procedures. Suitable first aid is provided for pupils who have accidents or who feel unwell during the school day. Pupils are suitably supervised through efficient deployment of staff, and attendance and admission procedures ensure that the school can monitor the whereabouts of pupils. The school is implementing the recent changes in guidance in recognising and championing school attendance. The risks to pupils relating to all activities in school and trips to other parts of the country and overseas are appropriately assessed and recorded.

Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.
- 2.14 The suitability of persons appointed as members of staff is checked in line with both national requirements and guidance issued to schools in Britain. Appropriate checks are made on those working as contractors, and volunteers. Members of the board are checked to an appropriate level. A comprehensive and accurate record, including the required information, is maintained of the recruitment checks undertaken on all those who work at the school.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.
- 2.16 Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided, including those for pupils who have SEND. The medical room provides accommodation to cater for the medical and therapy needs of all pupils. Premises and accommodation are maintained to a standard so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. The acoustics conditions and lighting are suitable. External lighting supports pupils to safely enter and leave the school premises. The provision of water for drinking and washing is

suitable, and outdoor space both on and off the school site is provided for physical education (PE) and play. The perimeter of the premises is secure and monitored throughout the day and night.

Part 6 – Provision of information

2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

- 2.18 The contact details for the school, the head, executive principal and the chief executive of the Braeburn group, and a statement of school's ethos are provided for parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the school website.
- 2.19 Policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for those who have SEND and EAL; the school's academic results; guidance on how to raise complaints; the curriculum policy (including PSHE and RSE); and the school's approach to the promotion of good behaviour, prevention of bullying, health and safety and first aid are made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the school website. The school publishes a list of other information that is available to parents on request.
- 2.20 The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are published on the school website. The school regularly communicates with parents about the content of PSHE lessons. It keeps parents informed about the progress made by their children and provides them with an annual formal written report of their progress and attainment.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.21 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

2.22 Following the requirements of the BSOs, the school's complaints procedure is available on the school website. It provides for concerns and complaints to be considered on an informal basis; the establishment of a formal procedure for complaints to be made in writing; provision for a hearing before a panel which includes independent member and allows for parents to be accompanied; provision for the panel to make findings and recommendations and for a confidential record to be kept of findings. Concerns raised by parents are dealt with quickly and informally.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.23 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

- 2.24 The leadership and management of the school, including the members of the Braeburn executive and board, demonstrate good skills and knowledge and have fulfilled their responsibilities so that the BSO Standards are met. The new role of executive principal provides informed support for the school's leadership in implementing policies and procedures effectively. In both the school's day-to-day leadership and in the oversight of, and decisions made by, the school's leadership and the Braeburn group, the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.
- 2.25 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the pupils' learning, achievement and personal development.

3. Inspection of Educational Quality

Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development.

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is good
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
 - Teachers should provide greater opportunities for pupils to strengthen their oral communication skills.
 - Teachers should seek to develop pupils' thinking skills by providing more consistently challenging work in lessons.
 - Leaders should strengthen pupils' ability and willingness to read and question critically.
 - Leaders in the primary school should monitor more closely the planning of the curriculum to allow pupils the opportunity to make sustained progress in all areas.
 - Leaders in the senior school should promote greater opportunities for service and leadership, such as those provided by the school's 'Dragon Award' scheme.

The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is good.
- 3.5 The large majority of children successfully achieve the early learning goals at the end of the early years stage. Assessment data indicates that primary school pupils make good progress and, in some cases, excellent progress towards levels expected for their age. This correlates closely with observations in lessons, where pupils make good progress from their starting points against the learning objective. In the early years, teachers have a detailed understanding of the needs and potential of each child and plan activities accordingly, while also allowing pupils to explore their own interests and ideas.

- Occasionally, a lack of effective monitoring of the curriculum in the primary school means that topics can be repeated in consecutive years.
- 3.6 Leaders and teachers use data to monitor the progress of secondary school pupils each half term. Almost all parents say that they receive helpful information about their child's progress. The small numbers in each examination group, and the transient nature of the pupil population, mean that overall judgements based on data are unreliable. At IGCSE, typically just under one-third of examinations are graded A* or A, and about three-quarters of the year group achieve five or more A* to C grades. The sixth form has only recently been introduced, and hence there are no public examination results. Pupils studying for BTEC qualifications are producing work of excellent quality, particularly in art and business studies.
- 3.7 Leaders have introduced effective strategies for identifying pupils who have SEND, including additional learning, behavioural or physical needs. The support given inside and outside lessons is effective and is decided in communication with parents and pupils. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress. The large majority of parents say that their child's individual needs are effectively met.
- 3.8 Children in the early years setting have good numerical skills and by the end of the stage the large majority achieve expected levels of mathematical development for their age. Leaders have introduced a curriculum that successfully emphasises the application of mathematical skills. Primary school pupils develop good skills which they are able to implement effectively when set word problems, puzzles and abstract mathematical challenges. Secondary pupils achieve results in IGCSE mathematics that typically reflect good progress from their individual starting points. A few pupils in each year group gain the highest grades and achieve awards at various national mathematical competitions.
- 3.9 Secondary pupils quickly and efficiently assimilate new knowledge in most lessons. This is a result of teachers' strong understanding of their own specialist areas, and planning that focuses on pupils' acquisition of factual content. Pupils develop their skills at a good rate, particularly when they are actively involved in lessons. Key examples of this are in art, PE and swimming. A large majority of secondary pupils say that teachers improve their skills and knowledge in lessons, that teachers know their subjects well and help them to learn. However, a large minority of pupils say that teaching activities do not engage them and encourage them to apply themselves.
- 3.10 When pupils are encouraged to ask questions or set more difficult problems, they more quickly develop their deeper understanding of topics. In mathematics, computer science and history lessons, teachers persuaded pupils to explain their opinions or solutions. In subsequent discussions, pupils report that listening to the learning of their peers supports their own understanding and progress.
- 3.11 Pupils of all ages are keen to learn. The large majority of pupils say that teachers are supportive, and that teachers' feedback and marking helps them to improve. Older pupils in the primary school and secondary pupils adeptly analyse their own work and build on advice given. A scrutiny of written work across year groups shows how quickly pupils develop their accuracy, for example in spelling or grammar, and their skills, for example in number work or algebraic manipulation. Skills in presentation rapidly improve as pupils move through the school, reflecting the high expectations of teachers and the positive attitudes of pupils. However, written work is predominantly linked to examination requirements, and this can limit opportunities to increase their wider subject knowledge.
- 3.12 Children join the early years setting and primary school with a wide range of competence in spoken English. Leaders have provided a wide variety of continuous resources that allow children to very effectively explore their interests, start projects and consolidate learning. Leaders emphasise opportunities for pupils to present their ideas to each other and adults, for example during the 'play and stay' morning for parents. These collaborative activities enable children to develop excellent communication skills for their age very rapidly. By the end of primary school, pupils have an excellent descriptive vocabulary and secure grasp of subject-specific terminology, such as 'oesophagus' and 'enzyme'.

- 3.13 In discussions, or in events such as the 'secondary showcase', many secondary pupils communicate clearly. They listen intently and respond to each other. However, opportunities to enhance pupils' communication skills in lessons are limited beyond the early years. Pupils are reticent to ask questions and explore their use of subject vocabulary. Leaders have recently emphasised the importance of the performing arts in the secondary curriculum. Pupils are gradually developing confidence and audibility in their public speaking, through Model United Nations activities and presentations to parents.
- 3.14 Pupils are enthusiastic when using information and communication technology (ICT). Primary pupils learn to code and use specific applications to compose music. Several secondary pupils use software packages to support their learning. Computer science is one of the more popular optional IGCSE courses, and pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills.
- 3.15 Pupils typically attain at least a good level of achievement in their chosen non-academic fields. Opportunities are sometimes constrained by the limited local facilities. However, pupils regularly reach the national swimming finals, win national titles in chess, and achieve success in other sporting competitions in east Africa. Pupils have been successful in art competitions. Opportunities for musical performance are identified, and the quality of performance is increasing as a result of the work of school leaders in providing extra resources and curriculum time.
- 3.16 Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to their learning and display a positive and enthusiastic approach to their education. They work well in collaboration, expressing ideas and respecting opinions. Secondary pupils describe the necessity of a team approach to the 'world scholars programme' that enables pupils to compete with other schools in a variety of intellectual challenges, and the need to identify in the team those who have the strongest skills at debating, researching and synthesising literature, and writing persuasively.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

3.17 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- 3.18 Pupils have excellent self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline, including an understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance. As a result, they are well prepared for their next stage of education in their lives. Almost all parents feel that the school promotes an environment that successfully supports their child's personal development. In the early years, children understand the structure and routines of the school day, often guiding each other on where to be or helping to choose activities. Leaders have provided outdoor areas that very effectively encourage children to explore. Consequently, children quickly develop the confidence to create their own games, reacting calmly and amending ideas if they do not work at first. They persevere and find solutions to their obstacles.
- 3.19 Pupils across the school have strong, trusting relationships with their peers. They respect school leaders, teachers and assistants, often turning to them for advice or to discuss any concerns. Teachers do not typically set challenging problems in lessons. As a result, pupils can lack confidence in their knowledge and understanding, and seek help form teachers at an early stage. Sixth-form pupils are more confident, because leaders have chosen courses that successfully promote intellectual resilience. As a result, sixth-form pupils work with initiative and independence.
- 3.20 Pupils are encouraged to contribute to and influence, and when appropriate make decisions about, many areas of school life. Pupils feel listened to, and the structure of the school council ensures that each representative has an opportunity to be heard. Teachers in the early years skilfully allow children to make their own decisions about activities, intervening only if children are at risk. For example, younger children were allowed to climb a tree under supervision, deciding for themselves which branches were safe. As a result, from an early age pupils start to assess risk and adjust their actions.

- 3.21 Sixth-form pupils carefully consider their choices after leaving school. They value the detailed personal guidance they receive from careers and university advisors on the Braeburn group and feel well prepared for university courses that cover a range of academic disciplines across the world.
- 3.22 Pupils develop an awareness of the non-material aspects of life. For some pupils, the identification of the non-material aspects of life is apparent in their approach to art, particularly in IGCSE and BTEC work. Pupils are encouraged to contemplate beauty in, for example, the 'raw power of the ocean'. Portfolios draw on painting and photography of Kenya. Pupils have created powerful images to complement commentary on, for example, the relevance of nature and the impact of potential leaks of nuclear radiation. Younger pupils have opportunities to take part in yoga and reflection activities.
- 3.23 Pupils show excellent judgement in distinguishing right from wrong. They understand and respect systems of law and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. In the early years, children quickly develop a strong understanding of appropriate behaviour and language. They want to please their friends and adults. Staff allow the youngest children to resolve disagreements without intervening. In discussions, primary school pupils showed a mature awareness of the need for rules. Leaders consult secondary pupils about very recent changes to the school's procedures for promoting good behaviour. The vast majority of pupils agree that the school expects them to behave well.
- 3.24 Pupils show a strong loyalty to the community. They work extremely effectively with others, discussing problems and searching for common solutions. Many families are posted to Mombasa for only a few years, and hence the pupil population is transient. There is a clear process for welcoming and integrating newcomers. Older pupils show good care for other year groups, for example checking their wellbeing during lunch in the outside area or engaging with them at breaktime in the quadrangle. Primary school pupils play easily alongside each other. They understand the difference between taking turns and sharing. Leaders encourage opportunities for secondary pupils to take initiative and organise events. Prefects have initiated and organised a wide-ranging careers fair and involved all secondary pupils, parents and former pupils.
- 3.25 Primary pupils, and a few secondary pupils, participate in the 'Dragon Award'. Pupils develop their skills in their own choice of interests, take part in overnight expeditions and undertake some sustained service in the school or local community, for example beach clean-ups. The safety of pupils means they work closely with staff and parents in supporting those in residential homes or fundraising for local and national charities. The school's new leadership is aware of the need to expand such opportunities for secondary pupils to better develop their service and leadership skills.
- 3.26 Pupils show extremely high levels of respect and value the diversity of the school population. In the surveys almost all parents said that the school actively promotes respect and tolerance. School timetables accommodate major religious festivals, for example adjusting swimming events to avoid times of religious fasting. Primary pupils enjoy taking part in each other's religious festivals, for example Diwali or Christmas. Discussions with secondary pupils show that they develop a deeper understanding of the commonality and differences between world faiths. There are no behavioural issues rooted in differences in racial or national background. Pupils are acutely sensitive to the needs of those who have physical disabilities. They show patience and care without any sense of intrusion.
- 3.27 The youngest children show a mature understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They explore new apparatus, assessing risk, particularly when playing with others. Staff closely monitor activities, intervening only if there may be a risk to safety. Children know how to wash their hands and other hygiene procedures, especially when sharing, for example musical instruments. They have a good understanding of healthy food and the importance of exercise. Primary and secondary pupils relish the opportunities for daily sport. Swimming is central to the lives of the majority of pupils. They make healthy choices about bringing their own lunches or eating those provided by the school. Secondary pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy relationships and factors that affect their mental wellbeing.

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4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, pupils and staff to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole Reporting inspector

Mr Craig Heaton Team inspector (Head, IAPS school, Nigeria)