

International School of Samui

International Schools Quality Mark (ISQM) Accreditation Report

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Introduction

Education Development Trust accreditation

The purpose of accreditation through the International Schools Quality Mark (ISQM) is to bring about school improvement. Although accredited status is often perceived as an end in itself, the process is underpinned by the principle that school self-evaluation activities in which schools engage are of equal importance. In this sense, accreditation serves two goals:

- to provide a means by which parents, carers and pupils are assured that the school has been judged by independent evaluators to meet rigorous quality standards;
- to support the school's development through moderation of its own self-evaluation.

The school improvement plan is crucial in ensuring ongoing development. The accreditation provides recommendations for the school, which should be incorporated into the school improvement plan.

Principles underpinning the accreditation model:

- Accreditation criteria are rooted in high standards. They relate to international standards and benchmarks and to other inspection regimes, for example, The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in England and, in the case of Thailand, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA).
- It is a cost-effective means of providing quality assurance.
- The model is developmental – it is grounded in self-evaluation with the school providing an evaluation of its own performance.

Grades awarded

Judgements are made on a four-point scale as:

Grade 1: Outstanding

Grade 2: Good

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Accreditation status

Gold accredited status is awarded when the school is given Grade 1 meaning **Outstanding judgements in all** of the following sections:

- Standards and achievement
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management

Silver accredited status is awarded when the school is given at least Grade 2 or higher meaning **Good judgements or higher in all** of the following sections:

- Standards and achievement
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management

Bronze accredited status is awarded when the school is given at least Grade 3 or higher meaning **Satisfactory judgements or higher in all** of the following sections:

- Standards and achievement
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management

Evidence base

This ISQM verification inspection was carried out by a team of three Education Development Trust inspectors who spent three days at the school. The inspection team had access to a wide range of information about the school prior to the inspection. Inspectors visited 38 part-lessons, including two that were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff. Inspectors also conducted 11 learning walks and visited six extra-curricular activities. There were 23 meetings which took place with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's owners and governing board. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. They inspected the school's safeguarding arrangements. They also considered the views of

parents, pupils and staff. They observed the school at work and followed up on any issues raised.

School context

International School of Samui (ISS) is a non-selective, privately owned, co-educational, inclusive school that follows the British curriculum. The school is situated on a hillside occupying three acres on Koh Samui, Thailand. The head of the school joined the school in 2018 and has been in post as the headteacher and CEO since 2021. ISS is independently owned and was founded by a British couple, Jeremy and Victoria Lees in 2007. They are now the president and vice-president of the executive board.

There are currently 296 pupils on roll aged three to 18 years, but with only 12 students in the sixth form. ISS operates waiting lists due to its commitment to being a small community school of just one form per year group. Around half of the school's population moves away each year. This level of mobility reflects the transient population on this small island.

The school community is culturally diverse, representing 33 nationalities with a third of the pupils from English speaking countries. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) but only around half of these require extra language support. ISS has 39 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The dedicated learning support department provides support according to individual pupils' needs.

The school's vision is 'To be the premium international school of choice on Koh Samui.' Its mission is to provide pupils with a premium level of academic, co-curricular and pastoral provision, supported by an ethos that promotes and rewards integrity, hard work, and positive habits to give every student the opportunity to be 'the best they can be'.

Report summary

Accreditation status

International School of Samui is recognised as having met the required standards for accreditation.

The school has been awarded the Education Development Trust International Schools Quality Mark at **Gold level**, which reflects the **Outstanding judgements or higher** described within this report.

This accreditation is valid from **March 2024 to March 2029**.

Overview of main strengths and areas for development

Highlights

- Progress is outstanding across all subjects and for all groups of pupils. Attainment is at least good but mostly outstanding. It improves the longer pupils spend in the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and respectfully. They feel happy and are kind to each other. They want to be 'the best they can be'.
- Teaching is purposeful and engaging and provides a range of challenges to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers effectively use assessments to identify areas for development and adjust their teaching accordingly.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and appropriately modified for Thailand. It meets the educational needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Support staff and teaching assistants are very well trained to fulfil their responsibilities and contribute to pupils' progress.
- The school is generously staffed. The school is safe and secure, and its facilities provide a rich learning experience.
- The care and support for all pupils are outstanding. Leaders ensure a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate that it is welcoming and supportive. They describe it as 'one big family'.
- Leaders are highly approachable and responsive. They have a clear vision for the school and are excellent role models.
- ISS is a warm, caring and inclusive school. Its ethos promotes and rewards integrity, hard work, and positive habits.

Recommended area for development

There is a wealth of subject expertise across the school, but this is not being consistently shared between all phases, in particular in information technology (IT) and computing. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have opportunities to share subject expertise through cross-phase professional development. This will ensure that over time pupils will be even better prepared for the next phase of their education.

Standard 1: The standards reached by students in their work and the progress they make in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), including computing and computer science

Highlights and Recommendations

- Children in the early years come to school at a level of development below that which is typical for their age. By the time they leave Reception most attain at least the level expected in the UK.
- In English across all phases, pupils' attainment and progress is outstanding. Pupils' rates of progress accelerate as they move through the school.
- In mathematics, pupils' attainment and progress are outstanding. The vast majority achieve or exceed the standards expected of them in each year group. Pupils on average attain better outcomes than their peers internationally.
- Attainment and progress in science is outstanding across the school. Pupils consistently outperform international averages in external examinations. They enjoy enhancing their scientific knowledge, particularly through investigative work and hands-on experimentation.
- In the secondary phase, pupils make outstanding progress in computing and achieve high attainment levels by the end of key stage 4. In the primary phase, progress is less rapid due to fewer opportunities to use technology across the curriculum.
- The small numbers of pupils sitting examinations and tests mean that comparison to international averages is not always statistically reliable.
- Almost half of last year's Year 11 cohort were new to the school, but despite this, attainment at IGCSE remained high across all subjects.

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding.

The vast majority of children who join the school in the early years have low levels of English. They are well supported by their teachers in the acquisition of reading and writing skills. By the end of early years, the majority of children meet or exceed the early learning goals in literacy and communication and language.

The teaching of phonics is highly effective. The phonics programme enables children to recognise sounds and blend letters to support them with their writing skills. By Year 1 they use their phonics knowledge to compose simple sentences using correct punctuation.

In the primary classes, pupils continue to make excellent progress in reading and writing in relation to expectations based on their prior attainment. Pupils who have

SEND make equally good progress through the very well-planned and targeted support. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop an extensive command of vocabulary and grammar, which they use well to write creatively for a range of audiences. As a result, they reach standards which are well above UK averages.

The school places a strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary throughout the curriculum. This supports all learners, including those with EAL, with their reading comprehension skills. As a result of effective teaching, the standards reached by pupils in reading and writing continue to improve as they move through the school.

Pupils' progress in English language and literature accelerates as they move through the senior school. By the time they reach Year 9, all pupils achieve at least at the expected level for their age and the majority exceed expectations in comparison to other pupils internationally. External examination results in IGCSE in English literature and language are consistently higher than Cambridge Education International examination (CAIE) averages. Despite very high rates of mobility, year on year, the school has maintained these higher attainment levels in English. There are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with SEND and EAL.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding.

In mathematics, pupils across the school make outstanding progress. The vast majority reach high standards of attainment by the end of key stage 4 in the IGCSE examination. Results have improved over time and are now better than before the Covid pandemic of 2020–21.

Children in the early years develop their understanding of number quickly. Most can accurately count up to 10 and a majority recognise some number patterns. Teachers help to broaden children's understanding of mathematical terms and concepts very effectively. For example, through their study of capacity, children learn the concepts of half and whole. The vast majority reach expected standards in number by the end of the Reception year.

In key stage 1, as well as pupils developing their basic number skills, they also learn to recognise the properties of some two- and three-dimensional shapes. Using this very good grounding in spatial awareness in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to make accurate estimates of length measurements for a range of objects.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils further extend their understanding of geometry by plotting, translating and scaling shapes on a four-quadrant coordinate grid. Pupils

also develop strong number skills. This enables them to quickly solve problems, such as missing numbers in an equation.

In key stage 3, pupils increase their fluency in mental mathematics, as a result of very effective teaching. Teachers set sufficient practice exercises to increase pupils' confidence. Pupils regularly apply their reasoning skills to complex word-based problems. Internal and international benchmarking assessments confirm pupils' rapid progress, demonstrating that they consistently reach the expected standard and outperform international averages year on year.

In key stage 4, pupils, including those with EAL and SEND, make outstanding progress. On average, pupils attain higher than the CAIE average in IGCSE, despite high levels of mobility. Teachers plan learning to quickly spot and remedy any weaknesses, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for public examinations.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding.

Pupils consistently surpass the CAIE averages in science IGCSE and exceed international benchmarks in science progress tests in key stage 3. Pupils with SEND and EAL make excellent progress as a result of the high-quality targeted support that they receive in line with their needs. There are no significant differences in science progress tests based on gender or nationality. However, those pupils that have been part of the school community for an extended period tend to outperform newer entrants on average.

Throughout the early years, children begin to explore and experiment. They actively engage with topics such as life cycles and get hands-on experience in caring for animals and appreciating the natural world at the school's farm.

In key stage 1, pupils have explored a range of topics, and, most recently, have a good understanding of food chains. In Year 1, they experiment making snowstorms, clouds and tornados in a jar to learn about extreme weather. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have a deep understanding of electricity and can carry out scientific investigations using valid methods.

At IGCSE the number of A* and A grades continues to increase over time. On average pupils attain one grade higher than predicted by their Year 10 baseline targets.

Attainment and progress in **computing and computer science** are outstanding in secondary and good in primary.

In **computing**, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress in secondary. As a result of strong teaching in the secondary phase, pupils often attain much higher than CAIE

averages. While pupils in the primary phase make good progress, they do not demonstrate secure knowledge of specific concepts. For example, some pupils have gaps in their understanding of key elements of computing, such as how to use, store and manage data, and the use of basic coding techniques.

The school has invested well in its IT infrastructure. Pupils now have greater access to tablet computers to use in lessons and for homework. However, in primary, teachers' and pupils' use of a wide range of digital technologies across subjects is less developed. The school has begun whole school training to support teachers' use of new digital devices in their lessons and planning.

Across early years, children confidently use cameras and simple programmes on a tablet. They learn to use instructional language confidently to move a robotic toy forward and backwards. At key stage 1 teachers devise lessons which build on pupils' logical thinking and improve their simple programming skills. Pupils learn to spot errors in their coding instructions confidently.

Across key stage 2 teachers help to secure pupils' understanding of algorithms and simple coding techniques, which they apply with increasing confidence. Pupils in Year 4 enjoyed programming their animated figures to make a game. The quality of teaching in computing across the primary phase varies considerably and this has led to gaps in some pupils' knowledge.

Pupils in key stage 3 learn at least two programming languages in line with the National Curriculum for England guidance. Pupils not only enhance their computational thinking, but also secure their understanding of how to handle data safely. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils relished the challenge of designing circuits to solve complex toolean situations.

Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, achieve extremely well in their IGCSE examinations. During key stage 4, pupils use their well-developed programming skills capably to take on more complex problems. Pupils understand how to use technology in an increasingly competent, responsible and safe way. Their technical skills in using digital media for different purposes is strong. Pupils are well prepared for studying computing at a higher level.

Pupils make excellent progress in a range of **other subjects** across the curriculum.

The percentage of pupils, achieving five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has increased over the previous four years. The percentage of A* and A grades has also continued to increase. IGCSE grades in all subjects are higher than the CAIE average. On average, pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, gained almost

half a grade higher than their predictions, but this was generally higher the longer the pupil had been at the school.

ISS teachers do not teach A levels to the small number of students in the sixth form. Instead, students receive remote lessons from an external company. It is for this reason attainment and progress for these students are not included in this report. Most students go on to Thai universities, some after Year 12, but others after gaining A level qualifications in Year 13.

Internal assessment information across the whole school indicates that pupils make at least good progress in music, art, design technology (DT), physical education (PE), performing arts, business and BTEC subjects of travel and tourism and PE. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and are completely committed to ensuring they can be 'the best they can be'.

Standard 2: Students' personal development

Highlights and Recommendations

- ISS is a warm, caring and inclusive school. Difference is celebrated and all are welcomed.
- Pupils value the opportunities the school has to offer. Pupils, including those with SEND, get involved in many aspects of school life.
- Pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for. They enjoy coming to school. Attendance is managed well.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and respectfully in and out of lessons. They fully understand the impact their behaviour has on others.
- Pupils develop strong learning habits and strive to do well in academic, sporting and artistic pursuits.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding.

From a young age, pupils develop strong social skills. They learn to manage their emotions and form strong relationships with their peers and with adults. An air of positivity and mutual respect pervades the school. The school's mission to promote the values of hard work, integrity and positive habits are fully evident throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their school life, arrive on time and the vast majority attend regularly. Attendance is just under the UK average.

Pupils develop a strong moral compass. Prejudiced behaviours are rare and bullying is not tolerated. The school capitalises on its multicultural intake. International food

events and cultural celebrations help to sow mutual respect and understanding in the community.

The school consistently and effectively implements its behaviour policy. Pupils believe that rewards and sanctions are fairly applied. Teachers regularly praise pupils for their good behaviour and good deeds. The positive behaviour approach, where teachers focus on choices and personal responsibility, has contributed to the calm, orderly and respectful environment pupils enjoy.

ISS has a strong sporting tradition. Teachers use competition to inspire pupils but also to build their resilience. Pupils develop helpful strategies to deal with setbacks. House competitions are a regular feature of school life and the trophies that they win are highly prized by the pupils.

Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility and develop independence. The students' council representatives and house captains carry out their duties diligently. Those pupils who undertake the Duke of Edinburgh Award learn the importance of teamwork, leadership and helping their community. International trips, such as the excursion to Cambodia, are very popular. Pupils feel listened to as leaders, take their feedback seriously and act promptly.

Attitudes to learning are highly positive. Pupils work well with one another in lessons and strive to meet the high expectations of their teachers. Older pupils take on board the guidance they receive in personal, health and social education (PHSE) sessions. They learn important study skills. Pupils, including those with SEND, play a full part in the life of the school take part in the life of the school. They relish opportunities to learn new skills such as yoga, cooking and jiu jitsu during extra-curricular activities.

The school helps pupils to be aware of their privilege. They are compassionate towards others less fortunate than themselves. The regular charitable events, such as non-uniform day, raise money for food donations to poor communities.

Teachers help pupils to be aware of their responsibilities towards the environment as global citizens. The school's own organic farm and recycling campaigns foster positive attitudes towards sustainability and the avoidance of waste.

Standard 3: Teaching and learning

Highlights and Recommendations

- Teachers across the school have very good subject knowledge and demonstrate an excellent understanding of how pupils learn in all phases of the school.

- Learning activities and tasks are specifically designed to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, are able to make at least good progress and achieve well from their starting points.
- Teachers manage time well and deploy teaching assistants effectively to ensure that learning is purposeful.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and to extend and deepen their learning.
- Teachers provide clear, precise, and timely feedback to pupils. This helps pupils to identify their strengths and know what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils are highly motivated and ambitious to achieve well and to develop themselves as self-sufficient learners as they move into their next phase of learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding across the school.

Highly effective teaching enables all pupils to make strong progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified and have very good subject knowledge. Teachers plan tasks and activities that fully engage and motivate pupils.

Enthusiastic teachers encourage pupils to do their best and celebrate their efforts and achievements. Teachers create a positive learning environment in which pupils feel respected and valued. It is a safe environment in which pupils can learn from their mistakes, knowing their efforts are always considered worthwhile.

Throughout early years, teachers and teaching assistants nurture children in a creative and inclusive environment. This helps children settle into school well and develops their confidence. Teachers demonstrate an excellent understanding of how young children learn and develop. They provide opportunities for children to learn through active play and exploration.

Pupils' attitudes to work and to others result in excellent standards of behaviour. They are self-disciplined, respond very well to their peers and adults and resolve difficulties in mature ways. In lessons, pupils demonstrate independence of mind and co-operate well with others, including those with special needs, both socially and in their school work.

Teachers understand the difficulty of certain concepts and have a vast repertoire of examples, which helps pupils grasp complex ideas. For example, in English, Year 8

pupils explored aspects of social injustice and identified key literary devices, such as symbolism and emotive language in passages from Che Guevara's, 'The Motorcycle Diaries'. The purpose of activities is clear and the review of learning is an integral part of lessons. Teachers share the purpose of lessons appropriately and review progress so that pupils have a clear sense of achievement. There is an excellent balance of activities with the use of, where appropriate, whole class, individual and group work. Teachers use a wide range of resources effectively to motivate and engage pupils in their learning. However, this does not regularly include the use of technology in primary lessons. Classroom environments are positive, and there is a high standard of display material used to stimulate learning and celebrate pupils' achievements.

Teachers use an extensive range of approaches and techniques to ensure pupils' active participation in lessons. Teachers quickly engage and capture pupils' attention through stimulating starters to lessons. In a school with such a high number of non-native English speakers and with many needing EAL support, key vocabulary is consistently shared so that pupils are able to learn and apply it correctly. For example, in Year 6, pupils explore different genres of music in history and use technical vocabulary such as rhythm, dynamics, unison, timbre, pitch and harmony.

Teachers focus their questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and to extend and deepen their learning. Teachers' questions are focused and often individualised and judged sensitively for particular pupils in response to their assessment of pupils' levels of achievement. Teachers' expectations are consistently high and appropriate for pupils at all levels of prior attainment. Teachers regularly adjust the pace of learning as a result of pupils' responses. Pupils have many opportunities for partner and group work to share their understanding with their peers.

Teachers use assessment as an integral part of their teaching. The school has recently introduced an initiative called: 'Teacher fast Feedback'. Where used, it provides detailed personalised feedback to individual pupils and is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' levels of progress. In key stage 2, pupils are beginning to take more ownership of their own learning, responding to feedback to improve their work further.

The school has ensured that it has robust assessment systems in place to effectively identify and rigorously track all pupils across all year groups. In addition, it provides a comprehensive picture of those who need further support as well as those requiring greater challenge.

Teachers have established learning environments that are orderly and creative to support pupils to thrive academically, personally and socially. Well established, clear routines ensure that transitions between activities are smooth with no learning time

lost. Specialist teachers and support staff understand the learning needs of individual pupils and are highly effective in their planning to meet those needs.

Standard 4: The curriculum

Highlights and Recommendations

- Pupils across all phases gain access to a broad, rich and well-designed curriculum based on the National Curriculum for England. Cross-curricular links enable pupils to make relevant connections. It prepares them well for the next phase of their education.
- The curriculum undergoes regular evaluation to ensure that standards remain high.
- There is a strong commitment to the education of pupils with SEND. The school accurately assesses and identifies pupils' needs and provides excellent levels of high-quality support.
- Through the well-planned PHSE and citizenship education programme and the cultural studies curriculum, pupils learn to appreciate different cultures and develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- In secondary, pupils choose from a selection of IGCSE, BTEC and Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses that match their interests and ability.
- A rich and varied programme of co-curricular activities successfully supports the formal curriculum, providing opportunities for all pupils to develop their personal interests and skills.

The quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the National Curriculum for England leading to IGCSE, and the requirements of the Ministry of Thai Education. The curriculum has a clear focus on the development of skills and knowledge. It meets the educational needs of pupils of all abilities, enabling them to make outstanding progress from their different starting points.

The curriculum is appropriately modified for Thailand. Pupils' various traditions, cultural backgrounds and beliefs are valued, respected and celebrated by all members of the school community. The school values diversity and inclusivity, ensuring that all pupils learn in a studious, cordial community where mutual respect is of paramount importance.

In the early years, the topic-based curriculum suits the needs and age range of the children. There is a wide range of child-initiated activities from which the children can

select. They have an excellent degree of autonomy for their own learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum covers topics and themes with an emphasis on acquiring an understanding of the world, fostering creativity and children's personal, social and emotional development. The topic-based approach to the curriculum continues through to the primary phase. Teachers systematically plan and teach cross-curricular themes to ensure pupils' meaningful development of skills across a range of subjects.

In key stage 3, all pupils study English, mathematics, science, drama, history, geography, art, DT, PE and computing. In line with Thai Ministry of Education regulations pupils study Thai language, culture and history and either Spanish or Mandarin. Throughout the senior school, subject specialists teach the curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced across all phases.

By the end of key stage 3, there is a focus on supporting pupils to decide which of the eight optional subjects they wish to take at IGCSE. Study in the sixth form is currently facilitated externally online. The school has implemented plans to ensure that starting in the following year, a new external company will teach live sessions. Timetabled weekly sessions in the sixth form provide high quality university and careers guidance. To date almost all students have gone on to study at Thai universities. The current Year 13 students have plans to study at universities in Hong Kong, Dubai and the United States. The school has put in place BTEC qualifications along with a range of ASDAN courses for pupils with SEND who have significant learning needs. Level 2 BTECs are also available to all pupils with an interest in the subjects offered.

There is a clear focus on improving pupils' literacy skills across all phases with the implementation of specific programmes that develop pupils' reading, writing, phonics and key vocabulary with termly testing to measure pupils' progress.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated as part of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes and takes account of the views of all staff members. Planning across the phases of education, both within the school and at the point when pupils transfer to the next phase, prepares pupils well.

The curriculum provides a rich and varied programme of co-curricular activities, including yoga, cooking, competitions and Brazilian jiu jitsu. In addition cultural day trips and support for a marine conservation programme strongly enhance the curriculum. These successfully support the formal curriculum, providing opportunities for all pupils to develop their personal interests and skills.

Standard 5: The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources

Highlights and Recommendations

- The school is extremely well staffed to meet the needs of the curriculum and to maximise the potential of pupils.
- Accommodation is spacious, stimulating and secure. It allows pupils to develop their self-esteem and thrive to reach high standards.
- Effective use of resources provides pupils with a rich learning experience.

The quality and quantity of the school's accommodation and resources are outstanding.

The school is extremely well staffed with a ratio of one staff member to nine pupils. All teachers are appropriately qualified to deliver the curriculum, culminating in high levels of success in IGCSE and BTEC examinations. The school has a commitment to be inclusive and invests heavily in support staff, deploying teaching assistants and learning support teachers effectively.

The school maintains a single central register (SCR) to record all the appropriate safeguarding checks that need to take place prior to staff appointments. The school checks references and carefully selects candidates who match the school's ethos.

All staff benefit from good quality professional development, keeping up to date with new practices in teaching and learning. They also have the opportunity to observe good practice among their colleagues. The school could, however, enhance this by prioritising the sharing of subject knowledge and best practice across phases.

The school's facilities provide a rich learning experience. The school sits on a hillside and as such has numerous stairs to gain access to different parts of the building. Beside these steps are ramps allowing access for all. Classrooms are large, bright and welcoming, having recently undergone expansion.

The school is very well resourced with technology supporting teaching and self-study, including the recent installation of large TV screens in most classrooms. Pupils from Year 9 onwards bring their own devices to school. Sports facilities are excellent, and the school has a new sports centre planned for the following year. Specialist classrooms for DT, art, music and performing arts support specific curriculum needs. Outdoor spaces are plentiful as are indoor air-conditioned rooms for use at breaktimes. The Founders' Farm is an excellent resource for the curriculum across all key stages. Pupils have some responsibility for the well-being of the animals and for caring for the plants.

The school's owners have made significant investment in facilities and resources. These have been properly targeted, using self-evaluation, to help pupils make excellent progress to attain high standards whilst providing a sense of safety and security.

Standard 6: How well the school cares for and supports its pupils

Highlights and Recommendations

- The arrangements for ensuring the protection of pupils from harm online and offline are robust. The culture of safeguarding is strong.
- Pupils trust the adults in the school and know how to report concerns.
- The school has a strong commitment to supporting pupils' physical, mental and emotional health.
- Policies to support pupils' health, welfare and safety are comprehensive, well understood by all stakeholders and strongly adhered to.
- The management and provision of pupils' medical needs are strong and effective.
- The site is maintained and supervised well, creating a safe and healthy environment.
- The school strongly adheres to local regulations and ministry requirements for health and safety.

Care and support for pupils across the school are outstanding.

Leaders have made sure that there is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Policies are compliant with UK and local safeguarding statutory guidance. All members of staff receive training to recognise the signs and symptoms of harm. They are vigilant and report concerns to the designated safeguarding leaders in a timely way. Leaders ensure that pupils who are at risk receive the support they need. Pupils are safe and well cared for. The school strongly supports pupils' emotional well-being; they benefit from having two trained counsellors.

Pupils know how to keep safe online. The anti-bullying campaigns convey powerful messages about the harm such behaviours can cause. There is helpful signposting around the school, showing pupils whom they can speak to if they are upset or worried. They trust all the adults in the school. There are rigorous electronic access and exit controls in place so that no one can enter the school without an authorised pass.

The policies and procedures to manage pupils' health and safety are strong and effective. The infirmary is spacious, well-appointed and managed by suitably trained staff. Parents provide medical and health information upon admission. Nurses monitor

the safe storage of medicines in locked cabinets. The encouragement of pupils to be physically healthy is evident throughout the school. The number of sports teams that participate in external competitions is impressive for the small size of school. The school's canteen provides balanced nutritious food.

The school meets all local and national requirements for fire and electrical safety checks. The school conducts fire drills routinely. During the visit, the fire alarm was set off twice by a new smoke sensor in the kitchen. All members of the school followed the fire evacuation procedures extremely well. Hazardous materials, including chemicals in the science laboratory, are stored securely. Leaders carry out risk assessments for a range of activities, including trips and visits. The playground area is well designed to minimise accidents. The school employs internationally qualified lifeguards to supervise and teach swimming. School vehicles are well maintained and driven by suitably qualified staff.

Standard 7: The school's partnership with parents and the community

Highlights and recommendations

- Parents speak very positively about their children's experience of school life. They receive timely and detailed reports on their children's attainment and progress.
- Communication between parents and staff is regular and frequent. Parents know that school leaders value their views, and any concerns are quickly resolved.
- The school has strong links with the community. Pupils are proactive and encouraged to take the initiative to make a wider contribution to the community.

The school's partnership with parents and the community is outstanding.

Parents are highly positive about the school. They typically describe the school as being 'welcoming and supportive'. They state that the main reason they chose the school is that leaders and staff are very approachable and it is like 'one big family'. The leadership team, teachers and other staff are always visible at the beginning and end of the school day and are extremely helpful if parents have any concerns. Parents appreciate this accessibility and the open-door policy. Parents agree that staff demonstrate exceptional dedication in their thoughtful approach to nurturing each child. They feel that the school is well led and speak highly of the inclusive culture.

Parents appreciate the termly reports that they receive regarding their children's academic outcomes, their personal development and well-being. Open evenings

provide excellent opportunities for parents to discuss their children's success with teachers and to provide them with guidance about the next steps to promote their children's learning. Parents of children with SEND or EAL confirm that their children are very well cared for and make the best possible progress.

Parents praise the school for the quality of communication and range of information provided. Parents are able to contact their child's teacher, tutor and subject teachers directly through the school's email at any time. They can also request to meet teachers to discuss any concerns that they may have. Parents are appreciative of the way the school communicates with them on a regular basis through its online platform.

The school ensures that there are parental information workshops at the beginning of the academic year for Reception to Year 6 to help them support their children at home. Parents are regularly invited to join pupils during educational visits and to share their knowledge and skills. The Friends of ISS parent group is actively involved throughout the year in supporting various school activities such as the Royal Coronation Garden Party and the international charity food fair.

The school has established strong links with the community and has productive partnerships with several local Thai schools. For example, local Thai pupils participate in some of the school's traditional Thai cultural events.

The school demonstrates its commitment to a cleaner, greener environment through the work pupils engage in with key partners to manage and recycle ocean-bound plastics, preventing damage to the ocean. ISS pupils volunteer to support local Thai children to learn to swim through the Swim4life programme. Pupils also actively support the Samui Elephant Sanctuary by helping and raising funds to buy food and medicine.

Standard 8: Leadership and management

Highlights and Recommendations

- The governing body that includes the owners knows the school extremely well and is therefore able to support and challenge school leaders strongly. The governing body has a vision for ongoing improvements in the school.
- Leaders actively commit to the school's vision for every child to be the best they can be, and they consistently communicate and model this vision at every opportunity.
- Leaders champion, respect, and value equality, inclusion and diversity throughout the school and at external events so that all pupils feel safe and comfortable.

- Self-evaluation is rigorous and demonstrates a clear understanding of the school's priorities.
- Leaders focus on research and development to keep up to date with practices in teaching and learning and encourage this through staff development. Staff value the opportunities for development and progression.
- Performance management is meaningful and supports individual teachers' goals.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The president and vice-president of the governing board are the co-founders and owners of the school. They and the other five members of the board have a very good strategic understanding of the school and its mission and show strong commitment to continuous investment in the school. The board works hard to ensure an appropriate balance between being a critical friend and not interfering. They are, however, fully involved in strategic planning, long-term policy and financial matters. The board appraises the headteacher.

Every member of the board has completed safeguarding training. The president, who has advanced training, leads on safeguarding and its scrutiny at every board meeting.

The headteacher has been in post since 2021 when the school made changes to its leadership structure. He is highly approachable and displays all the values he expects of staff and pupils. He has extremely good relationships with parents who appreciate his positive attitude. The senior leadership team (SLT) communicates the vision for the school at every opportunity and has strong ambitions for pupils to be 'the best they can be'. The SLT consistently seeks new opportunities for pupils to maximise their potential, for example by introducing BTEC subjects and by girls excelling at football. The SLT is very successful in removing barriers to learning and promoting opportunities for all. The school is fully committed to ensuring equality and inclusion and addresses any concerns immediately, even when they take place externally. As a result, this small school community is a happy place where all teachers are positive role models.

The school has improved considerably since the last accreditation visit and leaders have a wealth of evidence to show the positive impact of these improvements. These include, for example, improvements in the tracking and analysis of both internal and external pupil data, and a review of all school policies. Leaders share and discuss the whole school development plan (SDP) with staff. Middle leaders ensure that future planning reflects the school's priorities. These plans are regularly monitored to ensure positive impact.

Professional development (PD) is closely linked to the SDP priorities. The SLT engages as much as possible in research and development to influence PD and ensure teachers stay up to date with the latest pedagogy. Teachers' own research is actively encouraged as is peer observation, which can be self-selected or directed. Currently, there is little sharing of subject expertise and best practice across phases. Leaders could encourage this more to improve pupil's learning, particularly in computing.

The recently reformed performance management system focuses on teachers also being 'the best they can be'. Teachers set their own goals broadly related to the SDP, reviewing them with their mentor. A mid-year review encourages self-reflection, before a final end of year review. Positive feedback in staff surveys shows that they value professional development opportunities, indicating that they are forward looking and open minded.

Staff retention is high, with many staff in post for over 10 years. Almost all staff confirmed that they enjoy working at the school and are proud to be a part of the ISS team. Teamwork is strong and staff support each other whenever possible.

Standard 9: Quality and provision for Thai Language, Culture and History

Leaders ensure that the school complies with the Ministry of Education requirements for the provision of Thai language, culture and history (TLCH) for Thai and non-Thai pupils. Pupils across the school, including those in early years, benefit from well-planned lessons each week and as a result make at least good progress. There are separate culture and language lessons. Thai pupils study Thai to IGCSE level and perform very well. A third gained A* or A grades last year.

The Thai department is well led and managed. The coordinator of the TLCH curriculum regularly monitors and evaluates the provision. Leaders provide a range of training for Thai teachers to further improve their practice. Pupils show high levels of engagement and respect in lessons. The range of resources that the teachers use is interesting and appealing. In one Year 9 lesson, pupils learnt about Thai herbal remedies. They relished the opportunity to make their own, using the herbs and materials provided by the teacher.

Pupils gain a strong appreciation of Thai culture and traditions. Regular Thai cultural events such as Loy Krathong and Songkran festivals are well attended by all members of the school community. These celebrations are seen as highlights of the school's calendar.