



Evaluating internationalism in schools

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This report describes the way in which primary, secondary and special schools that had gained an International School Award wrote about their international work in their self-evaluation form and how this aspect of their work was reflected in their section 5 inspection reports.

Of particular interest to:

Headteachers, International Schools Award coordinators, local authorities

Age group
3-18

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Executive summary

This paper reports on consultancy carried out by Ofsted on behalf of the British Council. The work was part of a wider brief to support the British Council and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in aligning the development of the International School Award (ISA) with the New Relationship with Schools (NRwS) and in achieving the government's aim that over time all schools should gain the Award by 'equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy'.¹

Ofsted evaluated the extent to which schools evaluated their international work and the ISA in their self-evaluation forms (SEF) and how this aspect of their work was reflected in schools' section 5 inspection reports. Ofsted examined the SEFs and inspection reports of the 84 schools that held such an award and had had a section 5 inspection between September 2005 and February 2006. It also examined the SEFs from the schools which had an ISA and were inspected as part of the Future of Inspection pilot from April 2004 to July 2005.

It was clear from scrutiny of the self-evaluation forms and the reports that in many schools which had an ISA a significant amount of teachers' and pupils' time was involved in international work. Almost all schools which had completed a SEF mentioned their international work or their ISA within it. With a few notable exceptions, primary and special schools wrote about their international work more enthusiastically than secondary schools. It was rare in the SEFs for the impact of the international dimension on young people's enjoyment and achievement to be evaluated. This is an area for improvement.

Key findings

- ❑ Only seven of the schools in the survey did not mention in their SEF the international dimension of their work. Of those that mentioned it, almost all referred at some point to their International School Award. Many mentioned specific Comenius projects.²
- ❑ Fifty reports referred to the school's international dimension, usually in a succinct evaluation. Very occasionally, the award was mentioned in the section 'Description of the school'.
- ❑ The impact of the international work on children's and young people's enjoyment, achievement or development was evaluated only occasionally in the SEFs.

¹ *Putting the World into World-Class Education* (DfES/1077/2004), DfES, 2004; <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-1077-2004&>

² The Comenius programme is funded by the European Union and aims to promote transnational cooperation within schools and colleges in the EU.

- ❑ Where the ISA was a strength of the school, and the SEF gave evidence of the impact on developing the pupils' international awareness, then the report usually mentioned this fact, and occasionally it was reported in the pupils' letter.
- ❑ Overall, primary and special schools wrote about their international work more enthusiastically than secondary schools.
- ❑ In a very small number of the schools in the sample, inspectors reported that not enough attention was paid to helping children and young people to understand the rich diversity of modern multicultural Britain.

Recommendations

The Department for Education and Skills and the British Council should:

- draw schools' attention to the importance of promoting understanding of multicultural Britain, as well as internationalism and global awareness, when discussing their application for the ISA.

Schools which have or are applying for the ISA should:

- evaluate the impact of their international work and report this in their SEF
- ensure that they promote understanding of the diversity of multicultural Britain as well as internationalism and global awareness.

Ofsted should:

- continue to report orally on the impact of the school's international work, and briefly in the report, where it is significant.

Schools' self-evaluation of internationalism and the International School Award

The self-evaluation form

1. In completing their self-evaluation form, most schools reported on their international work in one or more of the following sections:
 - 1b Please summarise briefly your distinctive aims and describe any special features of your school.
 - 1d Please note any additional characteristics of your school that you would particularly like to draw to the attention of an inspection team.
 - 4c How much do learners enjoy their education?
 - 4d How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?
 - 5b How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?

However, a very few schools also reported under other sections: gathering the views of learners and parent/carers and what that told them about the school's provision; learners' achievement and standards; other aspects of personal development, for example where a school shared a healthy schools project with a school in another country, or where their international work was particularly relevant to the sixth form; and the overall effectiveness of provision and links with other organisations in section 7 of the SEF.

Primary schools

2. There were 26 SEFs from the 39 primary schools in the sample.³ Only two did not mention their international work. Of those that did, almost all referred to their award, when they gained it, or the stage they had reached in reapplying for it. For example:

We are very proud to hold the International School Award. This is our second and we are now collecting a portfolio of work to submit for our third.

The inspection report on this school judged that the children 'developed a good understanding of the wider world through international links'.

3. Although much of what was written in the SEFs was descriptive rather than evaluative, they included good examples of schools being clear about their intention to enhance pupils' learning. For example, under section 1b

³ Some of the schools were inspected as part of Ofsted's Future of Inspection project, which made it more likely that they had not completed a written self-evaluation.

(‘Please summarise briefly your distinctive aims and describe any special features of your school... ’), one school wrote:

The school aims to give pupils a sense of the wider community and appreciation of cultural differences, so it has been involved in international links work for many years and has just gained recognition... See International Links File and action plan.

The same school went on to detail its work succinctly under section 4c. The inspection report acknowledged the school’s ISA and its work.

4. Thirty of the primary school reports mentioned the school’s developing or, in some cases, very well developed internationalism and, amongst these, some noted that the school had gained the ISA. Inspectors reported on this mainly under the headings ‘Personal development and well-being’ or the ‘Curriculum and other activities’, as in these three examples:

As a result of the excellent links forged with other countries, and the wide range of experiences to learn about different ways of life, their cultural development is good.

Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures, fostered through the school’s good links with a school in Cameroon. Pupils exchange letters, which effectively promotes understanding of how people live in different countries.

Their ‘International Schools’ status, for example, has had a very positive impact on developing pupils’ awareness of the cultures of other countries, while still promoting an understanding of their own culture.

5. Where this aspect of the school’s work was particularly significant, some letters to pupils referred explicitly to the school’s strengths in international work, for example:

...how the links you have with schools abroad help you to appreciate different ways of life...

The staff also go to great lengths to make sure that you get excellent opportunities to learn about how people in other countries live...

6. In one school, which was very proud of its ‘intercultural education’ and listed a plethora of international activities and three modern languages in its SEF, inspectors judged in the section on ‘Overall effectiveness’ that the school had failed to check whether new initiatives had had the desired effect.

7. In another school with an award at intermediate level, inspectors judged that not enough attention was paid to understanding the rich diversity of modern multicultural Britain.⁴

Special schools

8. Only one of the five special schools in the sample did not have a SEF. The four schools referred enthusiastically to their international work in their SEFs. All the inspections reported on international work in some way and two of the reports referred to young people's views. One reported:

They [pupils] talk enthusiastically about their visit to Holland.

Another report referred to young people talking enthusiastically about how their residential visits abroad had made a difference to their lives.

Secondary schools

9. Twenty-nine secondary schools SEFs were analysed. Of these, only four did not mention their international work and almost all of those that did listed their ISA. However, occasionally, the only mention was the award itself or a comment such as 'development of an international ethos' in section 1 or 'Comenius projects. Overseas visits' in section 4c. In six schools, their specialist status or application for designation or redesignation as a specialist school appeared to eclipse the schools' evaluation of their international work.
10. Half of the secondary school inspection reports in the sample reported on international development, which represented a much lower proportion than in the primary and special schools. Inspectors reported on it mainly under the headings of 'Personal development and well-being', or the 'Curriculum and other activities' and, occasionally, in the 'Description of the school'.
11. One in four reports noted that there were school visits abroad, trips, exchanges, work experience abroad, or a wide range of cultural activities, sometimes commenting that they enriched the curriculum.
12. Where internationalism was of particular significance the report reflected this fact. A large school with humanities as its specialism detailed its international development for pupils and teachers carefully in its SEF under a number of headings, including 'Leadership and management'. It had achieved its ISA in September 2005. Inspectors clearly noted this and reported briefly under several headings, succeeding in flavouring the

⁴ The award is made at three levels: foundation, intermediate and full. Schools have to reapply for the award after three years.

report with the school's commitment to internationalism and its impact on its young people.

13. In other reports, brief evaluations appropriately captured schools' work:

...awareness and respect for other cultures are outstanding...

The school has developed an international dimension to the curriculum which enhances pupils' cultural awareness.

Students' knowledge of other cultures is supported extremely well through the school's international links.

Links made through international [work] give students a wider perspective of community.

Language colleges

14. Four out of the six language colleges that had completed SEFs represented their international development satisfactorily. Three of the subsequent inspections reported on the impact of their international development. One made the link to the quality of the school's leadership and management:

The school's specialist status is being used well to improve opportunities in modern foreign languages, both internally and in local primary schools, and to develop an international dimension.

15. A report on a language college that had the ISA at intermediate level said: 'The school does not do enough to promote the understanding of other cultures.' This was related to the diversity in the school population and heritage groups.

Notes

These findings are a result of examining the SEFs and inspection reports of all the schools that had an ISA and a section 5 inspection between September 2005 and February 2006, as well as those schools with an ISA which were inspected during the Future of Inspection pilot in 2004/05.

The sample comprised 84 schools: 39 primary schools, five special schools and 40 secondary schools (which included two academies and 10 specialist language colleges). Of these, 69 schools had the full ISA, nine the intermediate award and six had the foundation award. A number of schools had received the full award more than once. (Schools reapply after three years.) Twenty-five schools had not completed SEFs. A number of these schools were involved in the Future of Inspection pilot.

Further information

The International School Award (ISA) scheme is an accreditation scheme, supported and funded by the DfES. It provides a framework for schools within which to form and develop international partnerships through curriculum-based international work.

It encourages and supports schools to:

- develop an international ethos
- involve a majority of their pupils in international work
- develop collaborative curriculum-based work with partner schools
- develop curriculum-based work across a range of subjects
- have year-round international activity
- involve the wider community
- evaluate and improve their activities and their international programme.

Further details are available at:

www.globalgateway.org.uk/default.aspx?page=1343

Other useful websites are:

www.globaldimension.org.uk

www.citizenship-global.org.uk

www.qca.org.uk/esd

www.qca.org.uk/respectforall

www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

Annex

The following schools comprised the sample for this work:

School	Local authority
Abbey Hill School & Technology College	Stockton-on-Tees
All Saints CE Junior School	Hampshire
All Saints' CE (A) Primary School	Oxfordshire
Altrincham Grammar School for Girls	Trafford
Alwoodley Primary School	Leeds
Archbishop Blanch School	Liverpool
The Archbishop's School	Kent
Ashby School	Leicestershire
Backwell C of E Junior School	North Somerset
Bar Hill Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Belle Vue Girls' School	Bradford
Belmont Community Primary School	Lincolnshire
Belmont School	Gloucestershire
Belvoir High School	Leicestershire
Beverley High School	East Riding of Yorkshire
Blewbury CE Primary School	Oxfordshire
Bosmere Community Primary School	Suffolk
Broad Oak Primary School	Manchester
Burrowmoor Primary School	Cambridgeshire
The Business Academy	Bexley
Callington Community College	Cornwall
The Cathedral CE High School	Wakefield
Cator Park School	Bromley
Chesterton Community College	Cambridgeshire
Childwall School - A Specialist Sports College	Liverpool
Chosen Hill School	Gloucestershire
City of Ely Community College	Cambridgeshire
Cooper Perry Primary School	Staffordshire
The Dales Primary School	East Riding of Yorkshire
Dunkirk Primary School	Nottingham
Durham Johnston Comprehensive School	Durham
Egglescliffe School	Stockton-on-Tees
Fitzwaryn School	Oxfordshire
The Glebe Infant School	North Somerset
Green Hedges School	Cambridgeshire
Greenland Community Infant School	Durham
The Grove School	Shropshire
Hagbourne CE Primary School	Oxfordshire
Hamworthy First School & Nursery	Poole
Haybridge High School	Worcestershire
The Hermitage School	Durham
Hetton School	Sunderland
Holy Cross and All Saints RC Primary School	Salford

The Holy Family Catholic School	Bradford
Horfield CE VC Primary School	Bristol
Horley Infant School	Surrey
Hornton Primary School	Oxfordshire
Houghton Primary School	Cambridgeshire
King Edward VI Five Ways School	Birmingham
The King John School	Essex
Leiston Primary School	Suffolk
Longlevens Junior School	Gloucestershire
Lymm High School	Warrington
Manchester Academy	Manchester
Meadowhead School and Language College	Sheffield
Montgomery High School	Blackpool
Morley Memorial Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Northbourne CE (A) Primary School	Oxfordshire
North Lancing First and Middle School	West Sussex
North Nibley Church of England Primary School	Gloucestershire
Parish Church School	North Yorkshire
Park View Community School	Durham
Peatmoor Community Primary School	Swindon
Pershore High School	Worcestershire
Ponteland Community High School	Northumberland
Queen Mary's Grammar School	Walsall
Reepham High School	Norfolk
Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School	Lancashire
St Andrew's C of E Primary School	Bath and North East Somerset
St Augustine Webster Catholic Primary School	North Lincolnshire
St Austin's Catholic Primary School	Liverpool
St Austin's RC Primary School	St Helens
St Laurence's RC Primary School	Cambridgeshire
St Nicolas CE County Primary	Oxfordshire
Seaford Head Community College	East Sussex
The Shrubberies School	Gloucestershire
Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School	City of London
The Thomas Lord Audley School and Language College	Essex
Valley Gardens Middle School	North Tyneside
Walford Primary School	Herefordshire
Warlingham School	Surrey
Woodbridge High School – A Specialist Language College	Redbridge
Worthing High School	West Sussex
Yealmpton Primary School	Devon