

CIS

NEASC

TASIS

The American School in England Thorpe, Surrey, England

April 24-26, 2006

Report on the Five-Year Visit

On behalf of

The Council of International Schools

and

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges

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INTRODUCTION:

The American School in England (TASIS) is an independent, co-educational college preparatory school located in Thorpe, Surrey outside of London. The school enrolls American and international day students in nursery school through grade 12, and boarding students in grades 9 through 12. There is a post-graduate option available.

TASIS England seeks to carry on the tradition of excellence in American and international education in Europe established in 1955 by its sister school, The American School in Switzerland. Founded by Mrs. Mary Crist Fleming, TASIS England opened its campus in Thorpe in 1976 to boarding and day students in grades 7 through 12. The current Headmaster is Dr. James Doran who took up his position in July 2005.

The governance structure has been re-organized. The new nine member TASIS Board of Directors was formed in September 2005 and is made up of a present parent, two alumni parents, one alumnus, a former TASIS England headmaster, a member of the Fleming family, a fundraising specialist, and a lawyer. The ninth member, the Chairman of the Board, is a 30-year employee of TASIS England who has served in a number of positions.

The current school population is around 725 students. The enrollment is broken down as follows:

Lower School (grade N-4): 195
Middle School (grade 5-8): 200
Upper School (grade 9-12): 330

There are approximately 160 boarding students. There are 35 nationalities represented in the student body.

The school employs over 100 teachers and has a large support staff. The vast majority of teachers are US or UK citizens. There is a student-faculty ratio of 8:1 and an average class of 13.

The early years in the TASIS lower school provide young children in Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten, aged three and four, with a stimulating environment in which learning occurs. The main goal of the program is to provide each child with a sound educational foundation while also developing a sense of responsibility, independence, compassion, fairness and respect for self and others. The TASIS early years curriculum is based on the *Core Knowledge Pre-School Sequence*.

The lower school curriculum focuses on the teaching of specific developmental skills within five core subjects: reading, language arts, science, mathematics, and history/geography. Subjects are often taught in an integrated manner, for example, reading historical fiction that encompasses goals from both the reading and history curriculums. This curriculum is also based on the *Core Knowledge Pre-School Sequence*.

The middle school program is based on the developmental needs of young teenagers. A key focus at this level is having students work with peers and adults. As middle school students grow more independent of their families, adolescents need guidance and understanding in the changing family dynamics. The TASIS middle school has a “house system” to help foster team-work and cooperation. There is also a strong emphasis on advisory and tutorial assistance. In addition to the core academic subjects, an array of electives is also offered. The school is a member of ELMLE (European League of Middle Level Educators).

The upper school academic program is exclusively college-preparatory for grades 9 – 12 and features an American-style curriculum in a supportive and challenging environment. A large number of AP courses are on offer. The College Board, the parent organization of the AP Program, has commended the School for its strong exam results – its pass rate in 2002/3 was an excellent 80%, which compares favorably with an American and independent school average of 60-70%.

In addition to implementing the Core Knowledge Sequence in the lower grades, the school has recently adopted the International Baccalaureate Program. 2005-2006 marks the first year of the IB program at TASIS.

The 35-acre campus is set on a beautiful historic estate of Georgian mansions and 17th century cottages in the quiet village of Thorpe 18 miles from Central London. There is a Campus Master Plan that is 50% implemented with a number of significant additions and improvements since the last Team Visit.

The school was first accredited by our organizations in 1981 [Grades 7-12 only]. The whole school was reaccredited in January 1991 and again in February 2001.

The Five Year Visit has a number of broad purposes, these being:

- To monitor the school's responses to the initial or latest Visiting Team Report in respect of recommendations which were not completed at the time of the school's One-Year Report.
- To report on major changes in any aspect of the school's operation.

- To access the school's position relative to the Standards of Accreditation at the actual time of the Five Year Visit and to make recommendations as to suggested Areas for Attention upon which the school would do well to concentrate in the period leading up to the school's next full self-Study and Team Visit.

The Five Year Visit to TASIS took place on April 24-26, 2006. The Visit was originally schedule for autumn 2005 but the school asked for a semester delay to allow the new Headmaster time to settle in. The Visitors met with administrators, teachers, staff and students.

It was felt by the Visitors that the Five-Year Report submitted earlier by the school was reflective of staff participation and contained helpful information. It was reported that 95% of the Visiting Team's recommendations [November 2000] were reported as "completed" or "in progress."

The Report which follows was written in standard format, each section containing the following:

Comments relating to original recommendations of the Visiting Team and the School's response to them.

Observations including perceptions and comments on any significant developments in the school.

Suggested Areas for Attention, these being areas of the school's operation which warrant particular attention prior to the next Self-Study and Team Visit.

The Report closes with a set of conclusions, summarizing our impressions of the school at this point in its development. We trust that the report is useful to the school and the accreditation agencies we represent. We would like to thank Dr. James Doran, the faculty and the staff for a most warm welcome and for all the courtesies extended to us. We would also like to thank Mrs. Debi Cross for the timely submission of the Five Year Report and supporting documentation well ahead of our Visit.

SECTION A: PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The mission statement be reviewed annually by the Governing Board to verify its continued appropriateness and to enhance its visibility as a guide to decision making.
- The school reviews both its admissions procedures and its special needs services to ensure that students who are enrolled can be appropriately served.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

The governing Board (see Section B) is now reviewing the school's guiding principles on an annual basis.

Regarding the school's admissions policies a new Special Needs Policy for Admissions is in a draft stage.

During the current year, the administration has decided that the school's commitment to character development would be strengthened especially for the boarding community. A Draft Boarding Policy exists and will be discussed further this year.

Suggested Areas for Attention

The new 7th Edition of the CIS/NEASC Accreditation Guide (which the TASIS School will use in the near future) asks all schools to determine its degree of success in putting its Philosophy and Objectives into practice. This would be a worthy exercise for the school to undertake when reviewing the school's guiding principles.

SECTION B: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The Governing Board implements a formal training program and establishes a policy manual to guide the performance of Board duties and responsibilities.
- The Governing Board addresses the issue of its own self-evaluation and performance, and that of the Headmaster.
- The organizational chart be reviewed and updated to delineate more clearly the roles and relationships that define the Executive Board and the administrative staff.
- The organizational structure be reviewed with a focus on streamlining the administrative structure where possible.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

The most significant development in this area in the past few years has been the restructuring of the governing body at TASIS. The former Executive Board has been abolished and a new TASIS England Board of Directors (TE-BOD) has been created. The new nine member TE-BOD was formed in September 2005.

There still exists a TASIS Foundation Board that oversees the various TASIS schools and legal structures. The newly formed TE-BOD has met only twice (at the time of the Five Year Visit). The TE-BOD has, according to the Organizational Regulations proposed on February 27, 2006 and pending approval at the next board meeting in May 2006, "supreme management" authority. The TE-BOD is also responsible for establishing the general policies and procedures for the operation of TE consistent with the policies established by the TASIS Foundation Board, evaluation of the Headmaster and strategic planning.

Another significant development has been the creation of a master Strategic Plan that was written during the 2004-2005 school year. The Plan is intended to help the school's educational, organizational and financial development.

Finally, a new Head of School was appointed at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year.

Suggested Areas for Attention

It is exceedingly important that the TESIS Foundation and the new TESIS Board of Directors work toward a proper governance and management relationship. We cite below some of the CIS/NEASC Standards and Indicators (from the 7th Edition) that we would like to see observed and implemented.

- The governing body shall be so constituted, with regard to membership and organization, as to provide the school with sound direction, continuity and effective support.
- The governing body uses a clear evaluation system to regularly and rigorously appraise its own performance against its duties and pre-determined goals.
- The governing body restricts its actions to the determination and the funding of policy, and the selection, retention and formal appraisal of the Head of School.
- There shall be a co-operative and effective working relationship between the governing body and the Head of School.
- The Head of School, although accountable to a higher authority, shall be the responsible leader of the school.

Both CIS and NEASC will require a Special Report by July 1, 2007 in which the school submits an update on the relationship between the TESIS Foundation Board and the TE-BOD and provide comments on the above points.

The school considers incorporating the Campus Master Plan into the Strategic Plan so that the facilities development is part of the larger, more comprehensive school development plan.

SECTION C: SCHOOL STAFF

a) Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The administration assess the efficiency of the current deployment of support staff.
- The administration assess performance of support staff through an appraisal process.
- The school review and re-define (where necessary) the roles and responsibilities of the administrative staff to ensure clarity of purpose and efficiency in the management of the school.
- The administration increase and promote professional development opportunities for the instructional staff.

b) Observations, including responses to significant developments

All three of the Visiting Team's recommendations have received appropriate attention. Responsibilities of administrative staff in Upper, Middle, and Lower Schools have been re-assigned beginning in the academic year 2000-01. In-service days have been added to the calendar.

Appraisal and assessment systems are in process for support staff as facilities are developed. Opportunities for professional development of the instructional staff have been increased. Responsibilities for this purpose have been re-assigned to divisional heads.

The Strategic Plan (June, 2005) calls attention to the need to continue to formalizing the informal in terms of creating standards, goal-setting, and coordinating professional development opportunities with evaluation and assessment. Work in these areas is currently in progress.

New staff members receive a formal orientation program and a fully developed package of written guidance material.

Contracts for employment have become more specific; salaries and benefits have been improved.

c) Suggested Areas for Attention

The school should provide more opportunities to continue working for greater vertical articulation between the Upper and Middle school faculties.

The school should continue to develop and establish an on-going Appraisal Program for support personnel and teaching staff.

The school should continue to support professional development of the teaching staff and, consequently, raise the level of learning.

Further work needs to be done in documenting how assessment of instructional staff relates to curricular review and professional development opportunities.

SECTION D: EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

a) Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The ECP faculty and administration continue to work towards completion of an articulated curriculum which is also tied to assessment.
- The ECP teachers investigate the training of teaching staff about the use of more varied supplemental material to enhance workbook and whole-class text work, and to account for differing learning and teaching styles.
- The School administration should prioritize inclusion of expansion of ECP facilities in the Master Plan, particularly for the second grade classes.

b) Observations, including responses to significant developments

The Early Childhood Program no longer exists. The program for the youngest pupils has been combined with the larger Lower School.

The adoption of the *Core Knowledge Pre-School Sequence* curriculum provides a unified and coherent foundation for learning at this level. A new nursery unit for three-year olds called Frog Hollow has been opened.

The position of Director of Curriculum and Professional Development has been eliminated. The appointment of an Assistant Head of Lower School has been created. This person has responsibility for the implementation and development of the new curriculum.

In addressing Team Recommendation #2 more professional training is available to encourage teachers to use a more varied approach to supplemental materials. Several teachers have been sent to the *Core Knowledge* Conference.

Suggested Areas for Attention

Continued attention should be given to the training of “regular” classroom teachers who have ESL students and need to implement teaching/learning strategies specifically for this group.

TASIS will switch over to the new CIS/NEASC 7th Edition Accreditation Protocol at the end of this cycle. We encourage all accredited schools to look at the new standards including Curriculum B-4 that states: the curriculum shall be articulated vertically and horizontally throughout the school to ensure continuity within and among divisions and disciplines. The school would be wise to keep the new standards in mind as it implements or revises curriculum

SECTION E: ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM PROGRAM

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- Lower School teachers continue to develop and articulate a Pre-K through Grade 5 curriculum, clearly addressing the individual learning needs of students.
- The Lower School schedule time for grade level and cross-division meetings with Early Childhood and Middle School faculty to develop cohesion and continuity of teaching and learning *and* that classroom teachers work closely with specialist teachers to ensure that educational needs of students are being met and to more fully integrate specialist subject content.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

As noted above in the Early Childhood section, there is now one unified Lower School with a divisional principal and an assistant.

At the time of the Team Visit an initiative was underway involving curriculum mapping and the development of a sequential curriculum guide. However, for several reasons the project was terminated.

Since then the school has adopted the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. This curriculum covers all academic and readiness areas from nursery and pre-K levels to grade 6.

Core Knowledge handbooks – produced by the publishers – will be available in 2007. These guides will give benchmarks, standards and indicators that will assist teachers in the evaluation of the implementation of the new curriculum.

ESL instruction is now available in the Lower School. Spanish has been added in grades 3-5.

The school is to be commended for using the culture of the host country as a resource to enhance the curriculum. Numerous field trips to historical locations, museums and other areas of interest are organized on a regular basis.

Suggested Areas for Attention

TASIS will switch over to the new CIS/NEASC 7th Edition Accreditation Protocol at the end of this cycle. We encourage all accredited schools to look at the new standards including Curriculum B-4 that states: the curriculum shall be articulated vertically and horizontally throughout the school to ensure continuity within and among divisions and disciplines. The school would be wise to keep the new standards in mind as it implements or revises curriculum.

SECTION F: MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROGRAM

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- Teachers investigate alternative methods of delivery of instruction and classroom assessment reflecting current research.
- Teachers receive training on ways to incorporate information technology into instruction and learning.
- A systematic method of ensuring that Information Technology learning objectives are met within the middle school program be developed.
- The faculty, in conjunction with the Middle School Head and the Director of Curriculum and Assessment, investigate and implement systems of using assessment results in curriculum review and staff development.
- The faculty review articulation with regard to the curriculum progression from Lower to Middle School, and from Middle to Upper School.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

Workshop opportunities, internal planning time, development of facilities and appropriate re-assignment of administrative roles have facilitated progress in the areas of the development of alternative ways of instructional delivery and meeting Information Technology objectives.

Articulation among all three Schools with regard to curriculum progression has been improved since the adoption of the Core Knowledge Sequence in 2004

Suggested Areas for Attention

TASIS will switch over to the new CIS/NEASC 7th Edition Accreditation Protocol at the end of this cycle. We encourage all accredited schools to look at the new standards including Curriculum B-4 that states: the curriculum shall be articulated vertically and horizontally throughout the school to ensure continuity within and among divisions and disciplines. The school would be wise to keep the new standards in mind as it implements or revises curriculum.

Assessment processes require continuous monitoring

The role of department heads and their responsibilities should be examined closely.

SECTION G: HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROGRAM

a) Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

- A coherent procedure be developed for the evaluation and review of the curriculum on a regular basis that includes reference to a variety of assessment techniques.
- Strategies and mechanisms be developed for regular communication between and within departments and between teachers and the administration.
- Existing computer and technology facilities be reviewed and that each department explore ways to incorporate technology into the curriculum.

b) Observations, including responses to significant developments

Procedures for the evaluation and review of upper school curriculum are being carried out on a regular basis. Preparations for the adoption of the IB Diploma Program guaranteed that a significant amount of intra and inter-departmental conversation took place; and plans to double the size of that program for the next academic year make the same process necessary over the next few months.

Expansion and diversification of other school programs within and alongside the academic curriculum (AP, ESL, Special Needs, for example) are causing concern about the feasibility of “getting it all done” within the confines of the current schedule.

A new purpose-built computer facility is nearing completion at the time of this writing, and trained staff has been added to help incorporate technology into the curriculum.

c) Suggested Areas for Attention

Further work needs to be done to coordinate the work of the Resource people with the classroom teachers.

Examine the daily schedule and consider alternatives to provide more flexibility to meet current demands

CURRICULUM SUB-SECTIONS WITH SIGNIFICANT COMMENT:

a) Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- *There were numerous recommendations in the specific curriculum sub-sections.*

b) Observations, including responses to significant developments

Since the Team Visit, the school has instituted the IB Diploma Program. Beginning in the current 2005-2006 school year, eighteen students have started the two-year IB sequence with an expected graduation date of June 2007. The expectation is that the IB program will continue to grow.

At the same time, the school is particularly proud of its AP Program. The strengths include: a) the large number of AP offerings -22- in an Upper School of 300 students and b) the outstanding success rate of students on the AP exams- approximately 88% achieving a score of 3 or better in 2004-2005.

Since the school has been approved to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, the English Department has had to make changes to the eleventh and twelfth grade syllabi in order to meet IB requirements.

As there is a renewed interest in studying German the foreign language department is presently offering a German 1/2 course in the Upper School as well. This is the second year that the school is offering an introductory course in Spanish in the Lower School in grades 3, 4, and 5.

The school has purchased Interactive whiteboards for all Upper School Mathematics classrooms. Also considerable money was spent hiring a consultant to hold a workshop on using the new Interactive Boards.

In the Upper School IB Biology and Chemistry were introduced in September 2005. A new interim laboratory will open in September 2006 for the Physical Science and Physics classes, freeing up the existing Physics Laboratory for expansion as the school moves into the second year of IB.

As a result of the introduction of the IB, two new courses have been added to the History curriculum. One is IB Economics, a two-year course which covers the principles of microeconomics and macroeconomics in the first year, and then international trade and development in the second year. The second new course is 20th Century History.

A revision of the Upper School Art Curriculum is now underway in order to reflect the philosophy and general requirements of the IB Diploma Program.

The Drama Department continues to be performance oriented, but has introduced 'outside' adjudication to the students (via the RADA Shakespeare Certificate program as well as the IB). Facilities have been significantly updated and refurbished.

The Music Department has been restructured to include a larger team of teachers, whose teaching assignments are appropriate to those individual teachers' area of expertise. A new course, "Introduction to Music Theory", was introduced in September 2005.

The PE Department has developed a strong link with the Middle School English department, particularly seventh grade. Students are asked to combine their Physical Education "end of unit reflections" with research in English class.

In January 2006, a reorganization of the IT department was announced, giving the Headmaster the chief role in providing technological leadership for the school.

The school has added two new ESL teachers, one who is three-fifths ESL in the Upper School and the other who is full-time in the Middle and Lower Schools. The addition of the part-time teacher in the Upper School is in response to an increased number of ESL and International Section classes.

The IB core component course, Theory of Knowledge, is part of the Humanities Department.

c) Suggested Areas for Attention

TASIS will switch over to the new CIS/NEASC 7th Edition Accreditation Protocol at the end of this cycle. We encourage all accredited schools to look at the new standards including Curriculum B-4 that states: the curriculum shall be articulated vertically and horizontally throughout the school to ensure continuity within and among divisions and disciplines.

This is a particularly arduous challenge for secondary schools with their departmental structure. With the implementation of the IB- running concurrently with the Advanced Placement Program – looking carefully at the curriculum horizontally will be a valuable exercise for the TASIS faculty.

SECTION H: SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The school consider the need for coordination of special needs/support services in all divisions.
- Written documentation about the referral process be articulated in the Middle and Upper School.
- Communication continues to be promoted and developed between special tutors and classroom teachers in the Middle and Upper Schools to provide consistency in student learning.
- Statements about special education in the TESIS information literature be realigned with current practice.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

Considerable progress has been made in this area since the Visiting Team Report, and further development is indicated through 2007. There is now 3 Full Time Equivalent staff at upper, middle, and lower school levels. All the Visiting Team recommendations have been adequately addressed and are either completed or in progress.

Suggested Areas for Attention

The school should continue to meet the needs of students for whom special education is necessary.

Facility growth and development must mirror program growth and development.

Resource personnel should take the initiative in expanding their work to include the "regular" classroom program.

SECTION I: GUIDANCE SERVICES

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- In service opportunities be provided for dorm residents and advisors.
- The function and responsibilities of the guidance counselor be closely examined and addressed to ensure that the range of parents, students and teacher needs are met in all school divisions.
- The effectiveness of the implementation of the Advisor and Tutorial periods be addressed related to the logistics in scheduling conflicts and teacher and students schedules.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

College guidance is currently directed by an experienced, full-time officer who presently utilizes the tutorial periods to advance the goals of that department. All 11th and 12th grade students are required to attend a series of seminars which facilitates the college application process.

There are various teams working closely with the guidance counselors to assure that students and teacher needs are met in all school divisions. There is an appropriately trained group of trained clinicians and therapists readily available to assist the guidance counselors and health officers in meeting the needs of students and families. Facilities are available on campus for outside and school based conferencing. Guidance work is well integrated into classroom activities, particularly at the lower school level.

Suggested Areas for Attention

The college guidance office should consider expanding its schedule of visits to colleges and universities in the USA and UK.

There is no evidence in the Five Year Report that parents or students were polled to test their satisfaction with the guidance program. That omission should be dealt with at the next point in the accreditation cycle.

SECTION J: HEALTH SERVICES AND SAFETY

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The school considers space reallocation to provide a larger, more appropriate space for the health centre.
- The school encourages staff to take advantage of health services in a proactive manner.
- The school develops new procedures/locations for the storage of student book bags during lunchtimes.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

A new purpose built Health Centre was opened in February 2006. The design, construction and furnishing of the new unit were carried out in strict accordance with the regulations laid down by the government's Department of Health.

There are two clinical rooms, 4 sick bays and a 24-hour on-call suite for a nurse or other health care personnel.

There are new storage areas in other parts of the campus for student book bags. This is now much less of a problem than during the time of the Team Visit.

Suggested Areas for Attention

While the area of Health and Safety is always a top priority for the accreditation agencies, we feel that the school has responded positively to the Team recommendations. Additionally, the local authorities have very effective monitoring procedures and controls in respect to school clinics. Thus, we have no areas of concern at this time.

SECTION K: STUDENT SERVICES

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- Food Service makes sufficient supplies of food available during formal dinners and "late" lunches, commensurate with other meals.
- Food services consult with a dietician on a yearly basis to ensure sound nutritional value in food.
- Administration continues to monitor overcrowding in dormitory rooms.
- Administration clarifies duties of security personnel with regards to parcel and package acceptance, particularly during peak periods.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

Apart from normal wear and tear to be found in old buildings, the perception of the Visitors was that school buildings were generally clean and in good order. Recent inspections from the British health authorities and the list of required improvements they require make careful oversight of facilities a given.

Conditions in the boarding areas have been improved by the purchase and remodeling of Herne House and the re-allocation of bedroom space has provided common room space in all 13 dormitories save one very small one. The catering staff supplies food to special meetings and meals whenever asked to do so.

Recommendations of the Visiting Team in the areas of food, nutrition and security have been adequately met. The Visitors found the food to be tasty and offered in variety.

Security measures at the gates are adequate, and entrances and exits to the campus are monitored

Suggested Areas for Attention

Consideration should be given to continuing the general upgrade of the dormitory space. Bunk beds must be replaced by 2008 as mandated by British health authorities, and the Visitors noted one room that housed four students. The Visitors also noted that the dormitories are very small and charming – perhaps a trade-off for the somewhat crowded living conditions. Retro-fitting such old dormitory houses will always be a problem.

The Visitors found the entrance way to the dining area to be very crowded near meal-times – an upgrade would make an excellent long-range planning subject.

SECTION L: STUDENT LIFE

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The school continues to ensure consistent application of the disciplinary code in all divisions of the school.
- The school gives high priority to the provision for adequate common room facilities for students.
- The school improves the quality of student orientation through the provision of extra sessions for new students at regular intervals.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

The Visitors met both formally and informally with representative members of the student body and informally with other students throughout their two-day visit. Student morale was generally high and reflects satisfaction with the effort that the school administration is making to provide a comfortable environment for all. Among features cited as "good" were the quality of classroom instruction, availability of teachers to students, international texture of the student body, and the family atmosphere created by caring adults in a beautifully adapted facility.

Duty rotations and faculty dormitory residents appear to provide reasonable coverage during evenings and weekends. The Visitors noted that a special residential unit was created on campus to accommodate a boy with a spinal cord injury.

The Visitors observed a rich and fully developed extra-curricular program, noted evidence of careful nurturing of student leadership at all levels of the school through programs such as student council, peer help groups, and "special authors week." Also the Visitors noted even-handedness in the application of discipline at all three of the school divisions. There are expanded orientation programs for all new students.

Suggested Areas for Attention

None at this time.

SECTION M: LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTRE

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The physical size of the ECP/LS and Middle School division libraries be expanded, making sure that proper heating and telephone facilities are in place.
- The coordination among the three divisional libraries and the use of the resources held by each be maximized through sharing of data base information and inter-library loans.
- The utilization of library technology be improved by adding additional library computer stations with necessary support personnel to assist with proper operation, and acquiring server capabilities, which support both local and remote Intranet, database access.

Observations, including responses to significant developments

There have been significant changes in this area. The school maintains three separate libraries: lower, middle and upper school. The middle school has a purpose built space now and the lower school is currently being renovated.

A more effective management system has been installed through the purchase of the Follett Library Automation Program. This software integrates the databases of all three TASIIS libraries thus facilitating inter-library loans.

There are now regular meetings between the staff in this area.

New computers have been added to all three library areas and additional plans exist to future improve the technology as a learning resource in this area.

Suggested Areas for Attention

The school should continue to examine ways in which the library serves as a teaching/learning centre using both text and electronic resources.

SECTION N: SCHOOL FACILITIES

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The School investigates short-term building utilization solutions until the realization of the Master Plan.
- The school continues to examine solutions to improve problems created by the historical nature of many buildings.
- Efforts be made to correct the space issue evident in the health services area prior to the realization of the Master Plan.

Observations, including responses to significant development

The Campus Master Plan is now 50% fully completed. A number of large and small projects have been completed since the time of the Team Visit. While this list is not complete, some of the projects are noted here.

- A new health centre
- A new science lab for the Middle School
- An expanded and relocated library for the Middle School
- A new science laboratory for the Middle School
- Ten classrooms have been renovated in the Lower School
- Information Technology resources have been expanded dramatically
- Safety on campus has been improved
- A purpose-built security centre has been built
- Various properties in the local village has been purchased for expansion

The school is to be congratulated for the many substantial improvements being made to the TESIS campus. New buildings are being added while others are being renovated. New projects are carefully integrated within the school's historic setting and rural ambience.

Suggested Areas for Attention

As suggested in Section B (Organization and Administration) consideration should be given to incorporating the Campus Master Plan into the Strategic Plan so that the facilities improvement is part of the larger, more comprehensive school development plan.

SECTION O: FINANCES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The Head of Finance continue with the review of improvements in budgeting, procurement and cash management.
- Funding of the ten-year Master Plan be strategically scheduled to address those issues which require immediate attention in the school plant (e.g. dormitory living areas, library space, health facilities.)

Observations, including responses to significant developments

The Visitors noted significant progress in the business area since the Team Visit.

The Business Office is directed by a capable business manager, who directs a staff of five. The appointment of the new Board of Directors has resulted in the establishment of a new Finance sub-committee.

Steps have been taken to strengthen internal systems and reporting practices, and appropriate relationships with banking and financing entities have been established. Attempts to develop financial benchmarks, streamline the database, and facilitate on-line payment options for parents are currently underway.

Despite improvements in operational systems, the issue of opacity of finances, or at least the perception of it, continues to be a central issue at TASIS, at least among long-term staff. The Visitors found references to it whenever middle and top-level administrators were asked to comment on the school's current needs. The Visitors also observed that solutions to this issue may well be beyond the control of the Business Office.

The Visitors did not meet with representative parents to sample the degree of their satisfaction with business practices.

Suggested Areas for Attention

Support and eventually complete the Strategic and Campus Plans

Insist on financial transparency and assist the Headmaster and the new TE Board of Trustees in keeping clear lines of financial responsibility and accountability.

SECTION P: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

a) Comments relating to the Recommendations of the Visiting Team

The Visiting Team's recommendations pertained mainly to the following areas:

- The administration and faculty should continue to develop a school-wide assessment policy that addresses essential agreement among teachers to use a variety of assessment tools.
- That the faculty continues to develop and review an appropriate and authentic range of assessment strategies that is both informative and summative based on current research.
- That faculty and administration implement a system for review of assessment results across all grade levels to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the written curriculum, instructional practices and external/internal professional development.
- Faculty should use assessment results regularly to develop strategies for improving student learning and more consistently involve the student in the process.

b) Observations, including responses to significant developments

A main topic of the 5 Year Report is that assessment, while on-going, is local and department or teacher driven rather than comprehensive and school-wide. The Visitors deem that with the adoption of the IB Diploma program and other changes currently underway, a school-wide assessment program may be a few years off. The decision to abandon the Curriculum Mapping process after a year's work indicates that there are divisions of opinion in the administration about the usefulness of instituting a school-wide assessment program, at least at this time.

The Visitors did note, however, the adoption of the Core Knowledge Sequence at the lower and middle school levels and the IB program at the high school level. Due to these new programs, considerable teacher hours are spent discussing assessment practices at various levels, and the Visitors found that assessment systems are considerably better developed than they were at the time of the last Team Visit.

Consistent grading policies and the practices that result from them are a large part of any successful assessment program. Frequent teacher turnover makes that goal hard to achieve without constant monitoring and mentoring of younger or “new” teachers. The Visitors found that TESIS administrators are aware of this need and responding appropriately.

Suggested Areas for Attention

More work needs to be done in linking assessment practices together with curriculum review and professional development in order to promote consistent progression in curriculum delivery.

The school should continue to formalize its policies regarding professional development.

CONCLUSIONS:

The TASIS School has undergone a significant amount of change since the Team Visit of November 2000. These many changes reinforce the importance and value of the Five Year Report and the subsequent Five Year Visit.

Substantial progress has been made in implementing the Campus Master Plan including important improvements to safety, security and health resources.

A Five Year Strategic Plan was launched in 2004. There have been enormous advances in information technology. The curriculum has seen changes including the implementation of the *Core Knowledge Sequence* and the initial adoption of the International Baccalaureate program in the Upper School. There is a renewed interest and commitment to non-native speakers of English. The “arts” at TASIS continue to flourish. There is a vast array of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Many of the school’s “guiding principles” have been reviewed including the Mission Statement, the Boarding philosophy and a Special Needs Policy for Admissions.

A new Headmaster was appointed in the summer of 2005. Most importantly, as part of the overall restructuring of the larger organization, there is a TASIS England Board of Directors. It is hoped that a Board directly responsible for the TE campus will bring a new sense of focus to the school in England. Getting the new governance and management structure “right” will be the key to the school’s success during the next phase of its development. To this end both accrediting agencies will require a report in one year’s time which should outline the details of the new governing structure.

Mrs. Fleming’s vision of a school that values the worth of each individual and the importance of enduring relationships is alive and well amidst the green fields of the English countryside. Given the aesthetic beauty of the campus, its talented staff and engaged students, it is difficult to imagine a school with more potential.

Nevertheless, institutions, including international schools, have peaks and valleys of performance. It is hoped that the TASIS School remains in a healthy state during the accreditation cycle and that the new governance and management structure will lead the school to higher levels of achievement. Everything is in place to make this happen.

We are pleased to recommend to our agencies that the TASIS School retains its accreditation status until the next point in the cycle.

Respectfully submitted to CIS and NEASC

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CIS

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