

Certification Inspection Report

BRITISH COLUMBIA PROGRAM

at

SIS CANADA

18 CHEONGDAERO 351,

SOKCHO, GANGWONDO, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

OCTOBER 26, 2015

INTRODUCTION

On October 26, 2015, a Certification Inspection was completed on SIS Canada (SIS), Sokcho, Gangwondo, Republic of Korea, termed the School in this report. The purpose of this inspection was to determine whether the requirements for the British Columbia (BC) education program have been met, according to the *BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement*. The inspection Team (the Team), appointed by the Director of International Education (the Director), British Columbia Ministry of Education (MoE) in accordance with the *BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement (the Agreement)*, consisted of Doug Lauson (Chair) and Hugh Gloster.

The school's BC Program has an enrolment of 72 students, in Grades 1-12. SIS Canada is housed in a stand-alone building. The school does provide boarding facilities.

During their visit to the School, the Team reviewed all standards required in the *BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement and Operating Manual* and met with the School's Owner/Operator, BC Principal (Ministry Liaison), BC Teachers and support staff.

The Owner/Operator, Mrs. Young Sin Kim, is responsible for the BC Program. She operates an independent pre-school Kindergarten in addition to the Grades 1-12 BC Program. This independent program provides students for entry into the BC Program.

The BC Program's philosophy, objectives and special features include:

- offering unique extra-curricular clubs that includes many outdoor activities usually associated with an onshore BC school such as outdoor education, horseback riding, wall climbing, hiking, etc.
- providing a unique English Language Learners (ELL) program that teaches the students to think and write using TED talks, IELTS, 'Reading Town' software and other resources,



- programs on other languages depending in the expertise of the staff, e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Japanese.

The Team would like to thank SIS Canada for its hospitality, cooperation and preparedness for the inspection visit.

The School has satisfactorily addressed requirements contained in the previous inspection report.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The previous inspection had one requirement with respect to the equivalency and challenge details. The administration of the school responded to this requirement by the deadline set, to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Education.

Commendation:

The Principal is to be commended for immediately responding to this requirement and developing a policy regarding the school's procedures for processing students who seek credit through the equivalency or challenge process.

OWNERSHIP AND AGREEMENTS / BUILDING AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE 2.0

2.1 The Owner/Operator meets all other requirements as set forth in the BC Global Education Program Offshore Schools Certification Agreement (The Agreement).

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team confirms that the Owner/Operator meets all the requirements in the applicable sections of the Agreement by having appropriate processes and policies to ensure that the specified requirements are met.

Commendation:

The Owner/Operator is to be commended for operating the school in an efficient and organized manner through the supervisory services of the Principal and Vice Principal.



2.1 (v) The Owner/Operator has completed and filed the Business Plan section with the BC Ministry of Education, confirming the sustainability of the Program.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team examined the 2015-2016 annual report submitted by the Owner/Operator that included the Business Plan. The Business Plan includes information about the school and its description, as well as a summary of the school's business operations including a focus on communication, marketing activities, long-term growth and human resources. The school is in communication with an onshore BC independent school to create a twinning relationship.

Commendation:

The Team confirms that the goals and objectives stated in the business plan are within reach and conform to the school's long-range plans of increasing its enrolment to 100-120 students which will fill the existing facility.

2.2 The School meets local building, safety and cafeteria codes and regulations. The facilities are deemed to be suitable to support the BC Program.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team examined several construction documents that verify the completion and final inspection of the school building (February 26, 2008) and the housing facility (September 4, 2013). There is a letter on file (June 15, 2011) from the Superintendent of the Sokcho Yangyang Office of Education that registered the school as an English Academy. This letter also entitled the school to operate the BC curriculum. The similar letter from the Superintendent registers the school as an Academy to teach foreign language, entrance exam preparation and arts education (October 15, 2012). A SIN A Alternative School Foundation Plan concerning the foundation and management of an alternative school was submitted by the Owner/Operator on February 25, 2014. The business license was issued on December 8, 2010 by the Chief of Sokcho Tax office.

The Team examined the Fire Extinguishing Equipment Inspection Report of September 30, 2015 which stated that there were no issues. It also examined the Sanitary Checklist (Restaurant) which is the equivalent of cafeteria inspection. There were no compliance issues stated.

Fire drills are held three times a year and the school is developing a tsunami drill.

The parent company operates a dormitory that houses about 60% of the student population.



Commendation:

The Team commends the Owner/Operator for providing building facilities that satisfactorily support the establishment and continuance of SIS Canada's BC program.

ADMINISTRATION 3.0

3.2 Offshore Program Consultant (OPC) - The Owner/Operator may appoint an individual to act as Offshore Program Consultant. This individual must be confirmed by the Province and must meet all of the requirements set out in Section 14 of the Agreement.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Owner/Operator has not appointed an individual to act as the Offshore Program Consultant, but has conferred these duties on the School Principal, as outlined in the *Certification Agreement, Schedule B, Part II 4.*

3.3 The Principal meets the requirements as outlined in Section 3.3 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Principal is experienced in both onshore and offshore school administration. She has been a Principal since 1987 and has 45 years of teaching experience, 36 in BC and nine in offshore schools. The Principal's job description is in the Staff Handbook.

Commendation:

Discussions with the Principal indicate her full understanding of the BC Global International Program and her understanding of the Korean education system and how the two operate within each other. This knowledge has been invaluable to the SIS Canada school in its day-to-day operation and future plans.



3.4 The School meets the Administrative Support requirements as outlined in Section 3.4 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Principal is supported by a Vice Principal who will assume the Principalship in September 2016. The Principal is mentoring the Vice-Principal for the position. The current Principal will then assume the role of the Offshore School Representative. Support is also given by the Owner/Operator and a Director who maintains the student records. The Owner/Operator assists the school in acquiring resources and other needed supplies.

Commendation:

The Owner/Operator, Principal and Vice-Principal work well together as a Team providing for the education of the students and the needs of the staff.

3.5 The School meets the Student Record requirements as outlined in Section 3.5 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

Student records are stored in locked filing cabinets in the Director's office and are sorted by grade level. In addition to the required elements of the Inspection Catalogue, the student files contain various consent forms (field trips, media), health forms and medical information, academic honesty form, workload guidelines, technology policy, student residence agreement where applicable and a copy of his/her passport. The Permanent Student Record cards are stored separately from the student files. The school uses Maplewood school administration software to log student demographic information and together with the student files, form a complete record for the students.

Commendation:

The student files are organized neatly filed.



3.6 The School meets the Teacher Certification requirements as outlined in Section 3.6 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team examined the Teacher files and cross-referenced the teachers' list with the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) certificate verification file. It also examined the teaching certificate of the local national teacher who teaches Korean language under the certificate issued by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. **The Team confirms that all Authorized Persons under The Agreement possess valid and current certification under the BC Teacher Regulation Branch, except for one who has a letter of exemption from the Director of International Education.**

The teacher files also contained additional information such as copies of the teacher's the Korean Work Visa and a detailed Teacher Contract that specified all the requirements listed in the Inspection Catalogue.

Commendation:

The contents of each teacher's file were identified with a Contents checklist at the beginning of each teacher's file.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM 4.0

4.1 The School meets the requirements for English Language Assessment and Acquisition as outlined in Section 4.1 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

Students are accepted into the school based on a comprehensive process that takes into account a variety of information and is adjusted according to the age and grade level of the students. Applicants are initially invited to apply online. For children entering Grade 1, the current Grade 1 teacher assists the Principal in the evaluation process to help determine suitability for the BC Program. For other students seeking entry into the later Primary Program, the assessment determines if they can cope with basic instructions in English. For older students, the results of English language assessments such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), are used as data pieces to help determine suitability. For Grades 1-6, PM Benchmarks are also used as an instrument to measure proficiency, while in Grades 7-9, Pearson Education materials are employed. For students entering in later grades, sample exam questions from the previous



grade's final exam are used. There is also a Math assessment being used that helps to determine the student's Math ability. Information from the student's previous school, such as report card data, is also factored into the decision-making process. Following this, older students are then asked to produce a written essay. Finally, the Principal conducts an admissions interview to determine how well the student responds to a set of questions. All of this data is then reviewed by the members of the school leadership Team, including the Principal.

Because the majority of the students in attendance at SIS Canada also live in the adjacent dormitory, the school takes the admission process very seriously. Every effort is made to ensure that the students will thrive both academically and socially/emotionally.

Once a student is enrolled in the school, his/her level of English language proficiency is assessed on a regular basis. A school-wide write is conducted in September and May each year to help monitor progress. In grades 1-7, PM Benchmarks and Reading A to Z are used to assess students, while Grade 4-9 students also complete the CTBS every June to check their progress. The Vice-Principal also sends out a request to teachers every two weeks to submit the names of students who are struggling so that a direct intervention may be applied well in advance of summative evaluations being conducted.

To enhance English language proficiency, all Grade 10-12 students also attend a mandatory after-school English language instruction and support class. Every Tuesday afternoon, students in Grade 10-12 also attend a mandatory session hosted by the Principal and one other teacher. During this time, students watch and listen to a thought-provoking video and then read the script from it. They also engage in discussion and debate and finally have to write an essay in response. The entire school has also adopted a focus on vocabulary development with many initiatives taking place to help students improve their understanding of subject-specific vocabulary.

Commendation:

The school is commended for its comprehensive admissions process that is used to determine suitability for entry into the BC Program and the additional supports it has put into place to help students improve their English language proficiency.

4.2 The School meets the Course Credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions and BAA courses) as outlined in Section 4.2 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

SIS Canada has a policy in place to address requests from students for either equivalency or challenge credits. To date, no student challenges have been received, however several



instances of students coming from other countries and requesting equivalency standing were documented. In each case, the prior learning was assessed to determine a match of 80% or higher with Ministry-developed or Board Authority Authorized courses.

SIS Canada currently offers two BAA courses: Performance Music Ensemble 11 (YVPA 11 A) and Leadership 12 (YCPA 12A). Leadership 12 is a new course and will be offered every second year for Grade 11 and 12 students. In each case, overviews for the courses are in place and have been signed off by the appropriate personnel.

Korean language (Grades 4-9) has been exempted by the MoE.

4.3 The School meets the Course Overview requirements as outlined in Schedule B Part I (d) of the Agreement; namely, that all BC Program courses offered in the School meet or exceed the learning outcomes identified in the Educational Program Guides for each course, with a course overview for each course that includes content, teaching strategies, evaluation and assessment methods which are clearly linked to the BC learning outcomes.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team was provided with binders containing all course overviews for Grades 1 to 12. During the inspection, all teachers and classrooms were visited to review the detailed planning documents that had been developed. During these visits, it was noted that there was variation in the approaches that teachers were using to prepare their lesson and unit plans, however, the documents were typically comprehensive and included references to content, learning activities/teaching strategies, planning for assessment and achievement indicators, along with the connection to the prescribed learning outcomes. The differences that were noted between teachers frequently reflected the varied teaching styles as well as the unique composition of the cohort groups of students. In each case there was clear alignment with BC learning outcomes, as well as evidence of short-term, long-term and daily planning. The Team was able to confirm that the courses being offered within the BC Program meet or exceed the learning outcomes established by the Ministry of Education.

It was also noted that many teachers were using Google Classroom tools as part of their planning and organizing to teach, as well as in how they were communicating with their students. The use of technology in all aspects of the teaching-learning process was noted as a strength of SIS Canada.



Commendation:

The Team noted that while there was a consistent alignment with the provincial curricula in all classes, teachers were using a variety of delivery methods to attempt to meet the needs of their students. The efforts of teachers to differentiate their instruction based on particular cohorts of students was commendable.

4.4 The School meets the Instructional Time Allotments requirements as outlined in Section 4.4 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools, including the requirements set out in sections 1.1 to 6, with the exception of s. 4(5)(b), of Ministerial Order 41/91, the Educational Standards Order, enacted under the Independent School Act.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

SIS Canada runs a unique schedule and timetable for its elementary, middle and secondary students. Elementary and middle school students follow a linear model where they take their courses over a full year. Secondary students are on a semestered timetable where they take 4 courses in each of the two semesters. In each case, students are receiving 5.5 hours of instruction each day over the course of the year. This results in a total of 1001 instructional hours which far exceeds the minimum requirement of 850 hours. Additionally, for senior students, certain after school clubs are mandatory, which further extends the contact time between teachers and students.

The Daily Physical Activity requirements established by the Ministry of Education are being met in a variety of ways. In Grade 1-6 classrooms, this is scheduled by the teacher to include a minimum of 40 minutes per day, and can be done either through PE classes or through other activities. For Grade 10 students, they receive 80 minutes of physical activity every other day. Grade 11 and 12 students track their activity through the DPA tracker contained within the 'Learn Now BC' online site. The SIS Canada Student Progress Report does indicate whether the DPA requirement has been met.

A number of initiatives were noted that provide support for teachers developing strategies to enhance instruction for English language learners. An initial orientation session is done for teachers at the start of the year, and staff are asked to teach vocabulary and language skills beyond the content area of the curriculum they are responsible for. The Team observed teachers planning by themselves and with colleagues to incorporate adjustments to pedagogy that help when working with ELL students. Teachers were observed to be explicit in the instructions they were giving their students and were routinely taking the time to help develop the vocabulary necessary for student success in their discipline areas. Teachers also had resources provided in their staff binders with many helpful suggestions of ways they could effectively adjust their teaching. Staff were also provided with a copy of the book 'Vocabularians' as a resource showing many ways for teachers to approach vocabulary



development.

Commendation:

The staff of is to be commended for the many extra-curricular activities they are providing for their students.

4.5 The School meets the Assessment Methods requirements as outlined in Section 4.5 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team noted a number of formative and summative assessment methods being used in most subject areas. Rubrics were observed being used extensively throughout the Humanities area.

Students continue to be successful in Math and Science, both in provincial exam marks and course work. For the 2014-15 school year it was noted that a reasonably close correlation existed between the school and provincial exam marks in English 10 and Social Studies 11. For Science 10 and Foundations of Math and Pre-Calculus 10, the school and exam results were almost identical. Staff acknowledged the need to focus on improving the success of students on the English 12 examination, as last June's results were outside the acceptable range. The school anticipates that the literacy-based initiatives that have been implemented to support Grade 10, 11 and 12 students, will result in less discrepancy between the school and exam marks in English 12 in the future. A fundamental change the school is going to make is to have the students take the exam sitting in May.

Commendation:

The staff of SIS Canada is commended for the number of very deliberate literacy initiatives it has launched since the last sitting of the English 12 final exam.

4.6 The School meets the Learning Resources requirements as outlined in Section 4.6 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

Overall, SIS Canada is well equipped with the necessary Learning Resources to deliver the BC Program.



The library is open throughout the day, and is used as a gathering place for students. Without a dedicated librarian students are required to sign out books through the front reception counter of the school. The collection of fiction and non-fiction resources does not appear to be used very often, although students and teachers do use the physical space. The school subscribes to three different online subscriptions where students can access reading materials using their own technology. SIS Canada is also using 'Reading Town' as a program to promote student reading and this includes ongoing assessments to see if students are ready to move to the next level in their reading.

SIS Canada has a computer lab that can be booked by classes and is used as the site for writing online Provincial Exams. Each classroom has a teacher desktop computer that is connected to an LCD projector and speakers. Additionally, an Apple TV streaming device is located in classrooms so that teachers and/or students can project their work from their own device.

Every student from Grades 1 to 12 has their own iPad or laptop to support and enhance their learning. The school also subscribes to many online text books and many teachers are using Google Classroom tools to communicate between themselves and their students regarding coursework. Teachers may also request to have specific Apps or Programs loaded onto the student devices.

The Team observed adequate print resources in place to deliver the BC curriculum. In many cases, the online textbooks were supplemented by a limited number of printed hard copies. Teachers use a wide variety of supplementary resources to support student learning.

4.7 The School meets the Student Progress Report requirements as outlined in Section 4.7 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

SIS Canada produces detailed report cards that include letter grades, work habits, attendance information and detailed comments. These reports are sent out four times a year. Because the majority of the students in the school are boarding at the school and their parents don't live in the area, parent – teacher interviews are scheduled following the issuing of report cards in November and March. A week is set aside at this time for parents to travel to the school to have conferences. The Manager of School Operations also contacts parents regularly to update them about their child's progress, and she will also act as a translator for conversations between the BC Program teachers and the parents.



POLICY DEVELOPMENT 5.0**5.1 The School meets the Parent / Student Handbook requirements as outlined in Section 5.1 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.**

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Student Handbook has been revised for the 2015-16 school year. The 35 page handbook contains all the information necessary for a student in attendance at SIS Canada, from student policies and guidelines to information for parents.

Commendation:

The Student Handbook is organized, well written and easy to follow.

5.2 The School meets the Teacher Handbook requirements as outlined in Section 5.2 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Team examined the detailed Teacher/Admin Handbook that contains all the information a SIS Canada teacher would need to know. Its 81 pages cover school policies and guidelines, emergency evacuation procedures, as well as staff roles and responsibilities.

Commendation:

The Teacher/Admin Handbook is well written, detailed and easy to follow

Appendix 5 The School meets the Distributed Learning requirements as outlined in Section 18 of The Agreement and Appendix 5 of the Inspection Catalogue for Offshore Schools.

Requirement Met Requirement Not Met Not Applicable

Comment:

SIS Canada does not offer any distributed learning courses.



CONCLUSION

Commendations

The Inspection Team wishes to recognize the Owner/Operator, Principal and staff of SIS Canada for:

- detailed planning that provides evidence that the BC curriculum is being taught,
- creative teaching that employs a variety of teaching strategies that cater to ESL children including the school-wide focus on vocabulary and language success in each subject. This is a multi-pronged strategic approach to enhance English acquisition,
- an excellent extra-curricular clubs program that gives children a unique BC 'outdoors experience',
- the use of technology throughout the school to enhance teaching and learning,
- the BAA Leadership program for grades 10-12 to develop leadership skills,
- well organized administration and leadership with excellent support from the Owner/Operator, for examples the school facility and new housing building,
- excellent feeder program in Kindergarten,
- excellent community for a staff that has only been together for a few months and the positive relationships between teachers and students.

SUMMATIVE RECOMMENDATION

The Offshore Inspection Team recommends to the Director of International Education that the British Columbia Program offered at SIS Canada continue to be recognized as a British Columbia Certified Program.

