

Klaus Eusebius Jakobsen

Statement from the Inspector of Copenhagen International School (CIS), Levantkaj 4-14, 2150 Nordhavn Hellerup.

School Code 157041

Certified Inspector for schools with Danish and English as teaching languages, Principal emeritus, Klaus Eusebius Jakobsen MA.

I have been the Inspector at CIS since 2015.

The teaching and communication at Copenhagen International School (CIS) is primarily in English – naturally, the teaching in the subject of Danish, is mainly in Danish.

The main conclusion: The teaching which is prepared and carried out at CIS measures up in every way to the normal requirements in the Danish State School.

CIS teaches according to the International Baccalaureate Organization's programmes – i.e. the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students from 3-10 years old and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students from 11-16 years old - and for the oldest students (corresponding to Danish Gymnasium) CIS offers the IB Diploma Programme (which is not covered in this report).

The inspection took place on CIS's new school premises, Levantkaj 4-14, 2150 Nordhavn. The inspection took place on Monday 11th September 2017, and lasted for a school day.

The inspection refers to the same grade levels that are called 'grundskole' (primary and lower-secondary) in Denmark. CIS offers basically the same subjects as in a Danish State school, but the subjects are transformed by a pedagogical programme which is incorporated in all subjects which, in a broad sense, gives a background to develop the students' basic human relations, including understanding of and identifying types of government in society: democracy, ecology and creative powers (more on this later in the report).

Apart from observing the framework of the new buildings, and evaluating to what extent it corresponds to the pedagogical goals of the school, my focus on this visit was primarily to inspect whether the school lives up to Friskolelovens § 1, no. 2.2, which states that "The school must, according to their goals and in all activities, prepare the students to live in a society similar to the Danish society, with freedom and democracy, as well as develop and strengthen the students' democratic education and their understanding of and respect for basic freedom and human rights, including gender equality."

There are 917 students of 84 different nationalities, and 198 employees of 24 different countries, and the goal is to prepare the students in the primary and lower- secondary school (PYP and MYP) for the International Baccalaureate (IB).

Apart from observing teaching, I talked to students and teachers as well as had a discussion with the school leadership, the head of the Middle Years Programme (MYP) Principal Karen Rohrs, as well as the Director of the school, Jennifer Weyburn.

We discussed, first and foremost, the challenges CIS has with the growing number of students. The new facilities provide space for the increasing number of students and, despite local problems regarding especially one 'supplier' of students to CIS, JW found that the small increase of 1% was satisfactory seen in the light of the special challenges of moving the school in the middle of the school year, and the fact that the building was not completely ready at the time of the move.

I saw teaching in the following subjects in different classes: Danish (3 classes), Maths (3 classes), ITC, English, Humanities (Unit of Inquiry) (2 classes). Apart from this, I attended a morning meeting in a single class. The levels of the classes were from 1st grade to 7th grade.

The teaching itself took place in friendly, well-lit classrooms, that are large and spacious. There is plenty of space for the maximum of 22 students that is the norm for the majority of the classes. The classrooms have large functional adjacent rooms, just as the school has a very large, airy canteen, with a modern kitchen, that, on the day of my visit, had the weekly meat-free day! There are no less than 3 sports halls (built in the school itself), as well as some smaller rooms for movement, and very inspiring rooms for the creative subjects (art, music, drama, etc).

Despite the fact that it is only 6 months since the school opened its doors, it is surprising how quickly the new classrooms have become cosy and inspiring, with many posters from the teaching, students' work, many colours, good advice etc. (a characteristic that is often linked to International schools, and that I sometimes miss in corresponding Danish schools).

There are interactive boards in all classrooms, which I noticed are used frequently by all the teachers I visited.

As mentioned, I focused on whether the requirements from the Friskoleloven on democracy etc. could actually be seen in the teaching.

From conversations with the school leaders, I know that it is close to their hearts, and that it is not merely a written vision, but is practiced in the classroom.

Overall, I can conclude that this was definitely the case in the teaching I observed and the conversations I had at the school.

In two classes, the subject was on the agenda on the day of the visit: in a 5th grade "Unit of Inquiry" there was a thorough and relevant debate on human rights – their origins, examples from history and from the present day, what are the problems and challenges with human rights and what the students could learn about the concept. Big problems that were adapted to the students' age - and they managed admirably.

In a 7th grade, I arrived in the middle of a serious debate amongst the students: they were playing a game called "The Great Government Game". In this game there was a bill which could stop plagiarism in the school, and the class was divided into different groups/parties that beforehand had familiarized themselves with the problem seen from their group's point of view.

The student who was chosen to be the Supreme Court representative concluded in a very mature way that according to the constitution, this law (which, by the way, was not passed at the voting that took place after the discussions in the 'Parliament'), could not be passed, because it violated basic human rights.

These are two very clear examples of how this theme influences the programme of the day in a concrete and exemplary way.

Incidentally, I found very committed teachers in all classes who clearly set a framework for the work in the class and carried out the teaching at a professional and high level.

I found in all classes motivated but also happy students. The classes were quiet and the students worked seriously. Many of the teaching methods took place as a dialogue student/student and teacher/student with a good starting point in a fixed agenda for the lesson. Most of the lessons I saw took place in front of the interactive board, with the students sitting on the floor on a large square carpet – relaxed, but even so with full concentration. The few students that did not understand the goal were kindly, but firmly instructed.

Everyone felt good in the classroom – despite the diversity of nationalities – the language of communication was English – although Danish was used in teaching the subject of Danish.

The general impression of my inspection is, as mentioned in the introduction, that CIS is a very well-functioning and engaged school, where the teaching, without any problems, measures up to the teaching in the Danish State school, and has something extra to offer with the International basis.

I would like to congratulate the school on the lovely, new facilities: I have visited many schools in Denmark and the world, but I don't think I have ever seen such a well thought through concept as this – and the quality of the buildings and materials is top notch. The many stairs, which some students see, perhaps, as a problem contribute to the fact that the students get some exercise!

With kind regards,

Klaus Eusebius Jakobsen

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