

Novaschool Sunland International

Carretera de Cártama Estación a Pizarra,
29580 Nueva Aljaima,
Malaga

School's regional authorisation number: 29002061

Date of Inspection:

Friday October 7th 2022

Inspection Team:

Angus McCormick (Lead Inspector)
Kathryn Slack (Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

to assess the school for reauthorisation from Nursery to Year 13 as British.

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from Nursery (*age 3 to 4 years*) to year 13 (*age 17 to 18 years*) for four years for 1100 pupils.

The next inspection is due in *October 2026*.

*Schools are **authorised** by regional authorities after **inspection** by NABSS (or another recognised inspection service) and **certification** by the British Council.*

Schools should not refer to themselves as being authorised by the British Council, NABSS nor any other inspection service. Schools must not use the logos of any of these organisations in their publicity. NABSS member schools may use the NABSS logo.

N.B. A NABSS inspection does not infer membership of the Association. Authorised schools may apply for NABSS membership.

History and Context of the School:

Novaschool Sunland International is purpose-built, and was founded in 2001 as Sunland. The Novaschool Group took over the school in 2010. It is the only British international school that it owns out of ten schools.

The last full inspection was in March 2017 when there were 518 pupils on roll. The inspection in 2022 recommended authorisation of the buildings for 1100 pupils from 3 to 18 years of age. There are now 749 pupils on roll. Seventy per cent are Spanish and twenty per cent are British.

The school is situated in extensive grounds in the countryside 20 kilometres from Malaga, and surrounded by mountains.

Accommodation and Resources:

The school is set in attractive and extensive grounds with two ponds. It has its own sporting facilities, kitchen, dining room, assembly hall, and open-air stage. The swimming pool is used for physical education lessons during the summer months, and a lifeguard is employed. Good use is made of the basketball court, volleyball court and football pitch for both learning and recreation.

The classrooms are in seven different buildings interconnected by wide pathways which provide wheelchair and security vehicle access. The classrooms are bright and spacious. However, there is no fume cupboard in either science laboratory.

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) classrooms are well-resourced, and open onto a large and safe play area. The pupils enjoy a sufficient selection of facilities for play and outdoor learning.

There is an inconsistency in the quality of classroom displays. The most vibrant classes use the wall and hanging space for information related to learning, and children's work is attractively displayed.

The school promotes environmental sustainability by using solar panelling and water filtration, and classrooms are kept cool during the summer using fans, shade and natural airflow.

The computing rooms contain sufficient laptops and desktop computers. Good use was made of them for a year 6 lesson where the pupils learned successfully how to use unfamiliar coding software for collision detection for a character in a computer game.

The library is sufficient for the current number of pupils on roll. Primary classrooms have their own supply of reading material.

Pupils use a wide variety of musical instruments in lessons and extra-curricular clubs which include an orchestra, a rock group and a choir.

Each block or building has easy access to sufficient toilet facilities for both staff and pupils. The staffroom has facilities for preparing drinks and food, and there are suitable covered outdoor areas that teachers also use for planning, preparation and marking.

Lunch is prepared by the school's kitchen staff, and there is provision for dietary requirements. There is a large adjoining dining room used by the teachers and pupils. The pupils consider the quality of the food satisfactory.

There is a café for the students which is also used as the year 13 common room. The café has an outdoor bar to provide food and drinks. This is popular with pupils in the upper primary and secondary school.

Pupils have enjoyed excursions and end-of-year residential trips to extend their classroom learning. Recent excursions include visits to nearby mountains, rivers and coastal areas as part of the geography curriculum.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

The buildings are safe and suitable for use. However, the easy access to the lower pond area is a safety concern for the younger children who use that area during playtime.

The office is the central point for first aid. All teachers have recent first aid training.

There are fire extinguishers clearly marked for each building, and each classroom has a fire evacuation plan and map. The school uses the sports courts for fire evacuation.

The designated safeguarding leader gives annual training to all teaching staff. Senior management and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) also liaise with a team of psychologists and therapists who work for the Novaschool Group to provide pupils with specialist support when needed.

The Curriculum:

The curriculum covers the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum. However, there is an imbalance between different classes of the same year group in the time allocated to some subjects. For example, in year 8 science, one class receives two-and-a-half hours a week while the other receives three hours a week.

Older pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects offered at iGCSE and A level. Pupils in the sixth form receive ample support for applying to universities through the school's mentor system, and also from the Novaschool Group's specialist careers advisors for Spanish university entry.

The SENCO works closely with class and subject teachers to help implement strategies for pupils in need of specific support.

Pupils make good use of the extra-curricular activities held during breaktimes. These include music, drama, sports, and academic support clubs.

Staffing:

Staff are suitably qualified and well deployed. However, senior managers do not have sufficient time to fulfil their teaching and managerial responsibilities. As a result, these responsibilities are not fully implemented because after teaching, meetings, and observations, little time remains for planning, preparation, assessment, monitoring, and feedback.

Twenty percent of staff have worked at the school for more than ten years. Overall, staff retention is reasonable.

Each EYFS class has a teaching assistant, and Key Stage 1 share assistants. They are well used support learning.

The school has sufficient professional development and training. Each year staff receive in-house training for first aid and safeguarding. Some teachers attend the NABSS conference workshops, and an external company provides additional professional training. Where relevant, the impact on learning is monitored through lesson observations.

Teaching and Learning:

The teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, and overall is good. Where it is outstanding, pupils are engaged, inquisitive, and all make progress. The behaviour and rapport with the teacher are always good. In a year 6 science lesson, a wide range of questions stimulated the pupils' curiosity and they participated well, even posing questions themselves. A good selection of resources and activities were used, and progress was made by all pupils.

Although other lessons are satisfactory, children are not challenged and pacing is slow. Consequently, pupils are less engaged, and make less progress.

Overall, the pupils' level of spoken English in the school is good.

Exam class pupils are well-motivated and well-informed about their progress. They know their predicted grades and what they are aiming to achieve.

Marking and feedback are inconsistent. In some classes pupils receive comments relating to what they have achieved in their learning and what their next step is. But where the marking policy is not followed by some teachers, work is left unchecked, and comments are cursory. As a result, pupils do not have reference to what they have achieved or how to improve.

Assessment:

Formal assessment is constructive. The school uses a digital platform for tracking progress which is shared with pupils and parents.

Regular assessments are used to guide planning and establish ability groups for mathematics and English from year 1 upwards. The results are analysed by teachers and management alongside observation of pupils' work in class to establish support and intervention, where necessary.

Thorough school reports are issued each term. Pupils in examination classes also receive an initial report on their progress in their new courses.

Year 10 to year 13 pupils achieve above average results in external examinations in almost all subjects when compared to British and worldwide averages.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

Pupils are well-behaved throughout the school. They are comfortable and confident in talking about what they are learning.

Pupils are allocated one or more teacher mentor for guidance and advice, and they feel confident in seeking their support.

A house point system is used to positive effect, and prefects are proud to be able to share the results with other pupils.

The school contributes positively towards the community by hosting and participating in sporting events, and through different charitable initiatives. Furthermore, the primary school choir sing at residential centres for the elderly.

Leadership and Management:

The leadership of the school is purposeful and self-evaluation is thorough. Staff, management and pupils are all positive about their school. New initiatives and investment have enabled the school to grow substantially since the last inspection where in previous years the numbers had fallen.

The management system has clear lines of responsibility. Duties are fulfilled, despite the sparse non-teaching time allocated to those members of staff. At present insufficient time is allocated to implement further initiatives to raise the standards of teaching and learning.

Response to the previous inspection reports:

While much of the teaching is good, the school has the capacity to raise all teaching beyond satisfactory.

Recommendations:

- improve safety around the lower pond.
- use the existing good practice to drive improvement in standards of teaching and learning where they are satisfactory at present, and provide sufficient time for teachers with responsibilities to steer such improvements.
- improve the quality and regularity of marking and feedback to pupils to make them consistently thorough throughout the school.
- adjust timetables so that subjects within year groups receive the same appropriate amount of teaching time.
- supply sufficient resources and facilities as the school expands, including a fully equipped, science laboratory.