

Section 14 Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

**Assessment of Education
in places other than Recognised Schools**

**Independent School
Preliminary Assessment Report**

Name of School

SEK International School-Dublin

Address

Belvedere Hall. Windgates, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 EY23.

Name of Principal/Director

Alberto Domínguez Álvarez

Name of Assessor/s

Paul Sloan

Date of Assessment

24th April 2025

Date of Final Report

23rd July 2025

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Section 1 Background Information

1.1. School Hours

Opening Time:	08:30		
Closing time:	16:30		
Main breaks during the day:	10:25	to	10:40
	12:20	to	14:00

Is school in operation for more than five years?

Yes	
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If no, please give date on which school commenced operation

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1.2. Name(s) of principal and/or other teacher(s) interviewed

(Normally interview should take place with the principal)

Alberto Domínguez Álvarez – Principal
The Academic Supervisor

1.3. Sources of evidence on which report is based

This assessment report is based on the following sources of evidence:

Information furnished in School Information Form R2 completed by the principal

- Interview conducted with the principal and vice principal on 24/04/2025
- Classroom visits and interaction with teaching staff and pupils
- Observation of a sample of learning tasks completed by pupils
- Examination of educational materials in use, including International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum resources
- Review of the school's website <https://dublin.sek.es/en/>
- Documentation provided by the school, including curriculum plans and policies

Section 2 General Information and School Context

SEK International School-Dublin is a private, co-educational, independent school located in Windgates, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, approximately 30km from Dublin city. Established in 1981, it is part of the SEK Education Group, which operates schools in Spain, France, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. The school initially focused on providing a cultural immersion experience for secondary students that were enrolled in an associated SEK school overseas. In 2012 SEK Dublin transitioned to an international school, delivering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP). In 2019, it gained authorisation for the Diploma Programme (DP).

The school serves approximately 50-100 students at any given time with a rolling enrolment throughout the year. The majority of students attending SEK are students that are enrolled in a sister SEK school overseas. These young people travel to complete part of their studies in Ireland. The school offers boarding facilities onsite and also facilitates students to stay with host families in the locality. International students may stay for as little as a few weeks, some engage in up to two years of academic study, as part of their International Baccalaureate programme. In recent years the school has extended its enrolment policy to offer a full-time alternative secondary education programme to Irish children, primarily living in the locality. In the last academic year there were eleven children attending the school as day pupils. The enrolment of children from the locality was discussed as part of the school's desire to expand links with the local community and become more integrated.

The curriculum integrates the IB framework with the Spanish National Curriculum (LOMLOE), emphasising inquiry-based learning, global perspectives, and personalized education. The school successfully completed its IB evaluation in March 2025 and complies with regulations set by the Spanish Ministry of Education. It is governed by a board of directors under the SEK Education Group, with a local management team overseeing daily operations. The school's ethos promotes academic excellence, personal growth, and global citizenship, supported by a low pupil-teacher ratio and a commitment to individualised learning.

Section 3 The Principal and Staff

SEK International School-Dublin is led by the Principal Alberto Domínguez Álvarez, and the Academic Director who in turn are supported by a diverse team of 16 teachers representing over seven nationalities. Additional staff include a secretary, a host family coordinator, an IT coordinator, a librarian, and support personnel (e.g., catering and cleaning teams). An academic supervisor/IB coordinator and a finance manager ensure smooth operational and educational oversight. All teaching staff are qualified, Garda-vetted, and receive comprehensive training in child protection through the Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS). Teachers hold qualifications relevant to their subjects and participate in ongoing IB professional development to maintain high standards. The staff's international expertise and commitment to IB pedagogy support the school's mission of fostering a dynamic, inclusive learning environment.

Section 4 Time Devoted to Education

SEK International School-Dublin operates from 08:30 to 16:30, Monday to Friday, providing approximately 30 hours of instructional time weekly. The school follows an academic calendar aligned with the Spanish Ministry of Education and IB requirements, delivering 180 instructional days per year.

The daily schedule includes structured academic lessons, inquiry-based projects, and extracurricular activities, with breaks from 10:25–10:40 and 12:20–14:00. The curriculum balances core subjects (e.g., mathematics, sciences, languages) with IB-specific components, such as student-led inquiries and community service, ensuring a holistic educational experience tailored to pupils' developmental needs.

Section 5 The Learning Environment

The school's campus in Greystones features modern, purpose-built facilities designed to support the IB curriculum and foster a nurturing learning environment. Classrooms are equipped with digital whiteboards, and specialised spaces include a science laboratory, a Makerspace for technology and Design, a music room, and a central library supporting multilingual resources. Outdoor facilities include tennis courts, basketball courts, and expansive green areas for recreation and learning.

With a low pupil-teacher ratio, the school ensures personalised attention, fostering strong pupil-teacher relationships and a supportive community. The learning environment is safe and inclusive. Outdoor learning is emphasised through environmental projects and physical education, aligning with the school's ethos.

Section 6 The Educational Activities

6.1. General information

The curriculum at SEK International School-Dublin combines the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) with the Spanish LOMLOE curriculum, promoting inquiry-based learning and critical thinking. Subjects are delivered through interdisciplinary projects, encouraging pupils to explore real-world issues. The school offers English, Spanish, Sciences, Mathematics, Social Studies, Arts, and Physical Education, with additional language support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners. Extracurricular activities, such as music, sports, and Model United Nations, enhance holistic development. Assessment is continuous, with three termly reports aligned with IB and LOMLOE standards, fostering academic rigour and personal responsibility.

SEK International School-Dublin integrates the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) with Spain's LOMLOE curriculum, encouraging a learning environment focused on inquiry and critical thinking. Teaching is structured around interdisciplinary projects that engage students in addressing real-world challenges. The curriculum includes English, Spanish, Sciences, Mathematics, Social Studies, Arts, and Physical Education, with tailored support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. A wide range of extracurricular opportunities such as sports, music, and Model United Nations support students' all-round development. Assessment is ongoing throughout the year, with three termly reports based on both IB and LOMLOE standards.

6.2. Language and literacy skills

English is the primary language of instruction, with a strong focus on language acquisition for EAL students. The language and literacy programme emphasises oral communication, reading comprehension, and academic writing across subjects. Teachers use scaffolding, translanguaging, and home language support to build linguistic proficiency. Literacy practices include open ended inquiries, peer-led discussions, and diverse reading materials reflecting cultural perspectives. Digital literacy is integrated, with pupils using digital tools for research and presentations. The school's language policy, aligned with IB standards, ensures all teachers support language development, fostering confident communication.

6.3. Numeracy

Numeracy is taught through the IB MYP and DP frameworks, integrated with LOMLOE standards. Lessons emphasise conceptual understanding, with pupils exploring mathematical concepts in contexts like science and sustainability projects. Inquiry-based methods encourage problem-solving and pattern recognition, supported by tools such as graphing software and interactive whiteboards. Small class sizes enable personalised support, with formative assessments (e.g., quizzes, group investigations) tracking progress. Real-world applications, such as financial literacy and data analysis, enhance relevance, preparing pupils for further education and practical life.

6.4. Irish

Irish is not a compulsory subject within the curriculum due to the school's international focus and alignment with the Spanish curriculum. Pupils may study Irish as an additional language upon request. The study of Irish is delivered through conversational classes and cultural activities, such as storytelling and songs. This optional provision supports linguistic diversity and respect for Irish heritage, aligning with the school's global citizenship ethos.

Children attending an Independent School should be afforded opportunity for the study of Irish, however the study of Irish is not a requirement for registration under Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Where Irish is included in the provision, an Independent School may identify students attending that they consider would qualify for an exemption from the study of Irish. Independent Schools can make decisions in consultation with parents regarding arrangements for these children. Any arrangements made in relation to the study of Irish does not entitle students to an exemption from the study of Irish in the event of a subsequent enrolment at a Department of Education recognised school.

Parents of children attending an Independent School should be informed of and acquaint themselves with implications of not taking Irish and/or having a second language. Parents seeking information should consult with the Department of Education www.education.ie and/or the State Examinations Commission www.examinations.ie with regard to the requirement for Irish and/or an additional language.

6.5. Other areas of learning

The curriculum includes a wide range of subjects to foster holistic development:

- Arts: Music, visual arts, and drama are taught, with pupils engaging in performances and creative projects.
- Physical Education: Sports including tennis, golf and basketball are offered, promoting teamwork and fitness.
- Sciences: Science subjects across disciplines are studied and include hands-on experiments in the science laboratory develop investigative skills.
- Social Studies: Interdisciplinary projects explore global issues, aligning with IB's focus on international studies.
- Technology: The Makerspace supports design and coding activities, enhancing digital fluency. Seasonal events and community service initiatives cultivate social responsibility and environmental awareness, complementing the academic programme.

6.6. Special educational needs

The SEK has designated SEN team. This team is comprised of the Academic Coordinator, Wellbeing Counsellor, and Principal, supports pupils with additional needs. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed collaboratively with parents, focusing on removing barriers to learning. Inclusive teaching practices, such as differentiated instruction and small-group support, ensure accessibility. The school maintains a SEN register and resources, with staff trained in inclusive education. External support services are accessed as needed, ensuring pupils with diverse needs thrive academically and socially.

Section 7 Assessment and Record Keeping

SEK International School-Dublin employs an assessment system, with continuous evaluation through three termly reports aligned with IB and LOMLOE standards. Assessments include projects, presentations, and written tasks, emphasizing both process and outcomes. Records are maintained digitally via the MySEK platform and validated by the Spanish Ministry of Education. Attendance and academic progress are accurately tracked, with reports shared with parents. Upon completing secondary education, pupils receive a General Certificate of Secondary Education from the Spanish Ministry, recognised internationally.

Section 8 Other Relevant Information

The school fosters strong home-school links through regular parent-teacher meetings and digital communication platforms. Parental involvement is encouraged in events like cultural festivals and IB exhibitions. The school's governance under the SEK Education Group ensures financial stability and strategic oversight. The principal has confirmed that all staff comply with Garda vetting and child protection training.

The school's Child Safeguarding Statement, which follows the Children First National Guidelines, is displayed prominently, with named Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP identified.

The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service referred the school to the Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU) for review of the safeguarding statement and have provided information and guidance for the school to engage with the Children's First Information and Advice Service (CFIAS). Following engagement with the CSSCU the school's Child Safeguarding Statement was deemed compliance, and the school will be required to continue to engage with the Children's First Information and Advice Service (CFIAS) to ensure that all requirements for procedures under the Children First Act 2015 are in place and implemented.

Section 9 Evaluation of the Education Provision and Recommendations

In my opinion, the education provided at SEK International School-Dublin can be characterized as “a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual, and social.”

Successful Aspects of the Provision:

- The integration of the IB MYP and DP with the Spanish LOMLOE curriculum, offering a thorough and globally recognised education.
- A supportive learning environment with modern facilities and a low pupil-teacher ratio, fostering personalised learning.
- The commitment to inclusive education, with strong SEN support and individualised pathways.
- High quality staff training, ensuring ongoing professional development.
- Continuous assessment and record-keeping practices that promote pupil progress and accountability.
- Opportunities for extracurricular and community engagement, enhancing moral and social development.

Recommendations for Further Development:

- Consider the development of an enhanced formalised Irish language programme to enhance cultural integration, even if optional, to align with local educational expectations.
- Establish a regular schedule for parent communication to strengthen home-school links.
- Introduce structured professional development sessions focused on SEN strategies to further enhance inclusive practices.
- Engage fully with the Children First Information and Advice Service to ensure that all requirements for procedures under the Children First Act 2015 are in place and implemented.

The findings of the assessment were discussed with the participants on the date of the assessment. The participants were advised that the decision regarding registration would be made by Tusla – the Child and Family Agency: Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service (AEARS).

Following the assessment, a draft report is provided to the principal, along with a Factual Accuracy and Feedback Form, which may be submitted within a specified timeframe, in response to the content of the draft report. The report, along with any information provided on the feedback form for consideration, is brought to the AEARS Registration Panel. The Registration Panel make decisions regarding registration of children in receipt of the education at the Independent School.

Section 10 Discussion of Finding of Report with Principal

The findings of this preliminary assessment were discussed with the Principal and Academic Director. It was indicated that the report would recommend registration of pupils, findings affirmed the school's strong educational provision while suggesting enhancements as outlined. The final decision regarding registration will be made by the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Panel - Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

Section 11 Outcome

Outcome of Tusla Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service Panel Regarding Requirements for Section 14 Registration of Children Attending the School

Following the Assessment, the Registration Panel decided that children attending SEK International School-Dublin will be registered and retained on the register of children receiving an education in a place other than a recognised school as required by Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

Registration is subject to a periodic review by the Child and Family Agency