



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.  
COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**FOUNDATION STANDARDS VISIT REPORT**

# **Haileybury Astana**

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Astana, Kazakhstan 10000

**Mr. Jonathan Ullmer MBE**  
*Head of School*

**Mr. Paul Rowe**  
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*Self-Study Coordinator*

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**Dr. Kenneth Imperato**  
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Al Qusais 1, United Arab Emirates

**October 2-3, 2018**

# Roster of Team Members

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## **Dr. Kenneth Imperato**

*Former Deputy Principal*

American International School

Al Qusais 1, United Arab Emirates

## School Context

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Haileybury Astana (HA) was founded in 2011 by the President of Kazakhstan with the intention of serving parents and youngsters of Astana via a rigorous (originally British) curriculum and program which cares for the needs of individual students and transforms lives through the value of education. It occupies an excellent purpose-built facility with a capacity of 650 but a current enrollment of 562, as the school has not fully matured evenly across year levels in this, the first year of a Year 13 graduating class. Enrollment indeed has met expectations, and the completion of the new detached athletic center will allow for further enrollment expansion within the current facility. 28 nationalities are represented in the coeducational student body of HA. Twenty students are able to attend thanks to owner-funded scholarships. Demand in the community is high to attend HA.

It is important to note that the Haileybury “brand,” while originally from the UK in the form of a prestigious coeducational boarding school, migrated north within Kazakhstan to Astana from its “older sister” school, Haileybury Almaty, which opened in 2007. The maturity of the Almaty school was beneficial in that it enabled mature structures in the area of governance, operations, human resources, academics, co-curricular constructs, and other supports to be established in the new Astana school in 2011 without having to reinvent the wheel from scratch. The Board of Governors and select operational level and support services specialists serve both schools.

HA is in the first year of a curricular shift away from the British national curriculum (BNC) to the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) programs for Early Childhood and Primary levels. An adapted version of the BNC drives Key Stage 3 learning, while Key Stage 4 prepares students for the IGCSEs and Sixth Form with the Diploma Programme (DP) of the IBO. The school plans to offer the American High School Diploma (AHSD) to complement the DP for its many students who aspire to post-secondary study in the USA. The AHSD will evolve from the existing Haileybury Advanced Diploma that validates a four-year high school course of study.

HA's Mission Statement is "to provide our community with an educational experience which enables our students to fulfil their potential academically, physically, culturally, and socially within a global and future context."

HA's Aims are:

- to develop pupils who are resilient, creative, independent, courageous, inquisitive, and reflective in all that they do in a safe and caring environment;
- to encourage these Haileybury Habits through a curriculum which covers a broad and balanced range of subjects, co-curricular activities, visits, and special events;
- to develop pupils who always try to understand the difference between right and wrong, their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, and the need to give back to society, while encouraging both self-awareness and teamwork;
- to reflect in ethos and activity the traditions, values, heritage, and cultural diversity of the Republic of Kazakhstan and of Haileybury Schools, and a commitment to intercultural and international learning;
- to provide a technologically rich environment with successful academic outcomes achieved through strong teaching and learning.

Based on the level of review for the Foundation Standards, the school is able to deliver on the Aims and Mission it has defined for itself.

HA is a member of the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) and is in the process of pursuing accredited status of that organization. The school hosts a December 2018 COBIS visit of four educators to assess it against their accreditation standards, but HA decided to pursue NEASC accreditation as well due to the large-scale interest in American higher education among students/families and NEASC's strong reputation among the options in US-based accrediting bodies.

During his two-day Visit to HA, the NEASC representative met with the school's Leadership Team, section- and stage-level academic coordinators, and representatives of the Board, parents, teachers, and students, as well as the Accounts Officer and the Directors of Human Resources and Operations. The Visitor had three hours of class observations built into his schedule and dropped in on approximately a dozen classes in all sections of the school, albeit and necessarily for relatively brief periods of time only (10 to 12 minutes).

HA did a very credible job of submitting a complete report with exhaustive documentation covering all aspects of the Foundation Standards, as well as a critical mass of other standards to be assessed in the next phase of the ACE process. The advance documentation and forthright conversations led to a successful Visit.

# Foundation Standard 1: Learning Structure

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The school has in place clear statements that express a definition of learning and a set of learning principles and objectives that shape and drive its programs and practices. A curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices and principles of assessment exists.

Standard is fully met and implemented

## Summary Observations

HA is a school that is maturing in terms of its learning structure. While previously aligned with the British National Curriculum (BNC) and IGCSE, the school examined the status of learning with particular emphasis on the Primary levels. After determining that certain features of the pre-existing curriculum were not producing enough of a growth mindset in students, it was also apparent that cross-curricular synergies and international mindedness were not produced at levels that the school envisioned. Based on these and other factors, a shift to the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) was initiated for the current year between the Early Years and Key Stage 2, along with Edexcel i-primary. An adapted version of the BNC is used in Key Stage 3, with IGCSE and the IB Diploma Programme (DP) driving curriculum in Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form, respectively. The school plans to offer the American High School Diploma (AHSD) to complement the DP for its many students who aspire to post-secondary study in the USA. The AHSD will evolve from the existing Haileybury Advanced Diploma that validates a four-year high school course of study.

The various curricula are fully documented, and intensive training has been provided and will continue for those teachers implementing the new Primary curricula for the first time. There has been inconsistent buy-in from some teachers as to the anticipated benefits of the IEYC and IPC, but the administration feels that they will come around after more months of implementation, and resulting data becomes available with which to make such an evaluation. As HA students will sit for the DP exams for the first time in May 2019, those data will enable the school to better analyze the efficacy of its roll-out of the DP. The CEM exam and IGCSE exam results have not yet yielded longitudinal results in enough cases (n-sizes) to be able to make valid inferences on overall student performance over time, but the teachers and administrators at different levels in Key Stages 3 and 4 are conversant in what the current data reports show, resulting in better planning of individual student goals from one year to the next. It was less clear how well the CEM data was being used in Primary years.

The organigram demonstrates a very strong structure for supporting teaching and learning, led by a Headmaster who, among other things, is charged with developing greater consistency in high-level learning among students. To help achieve this, just over a year ago a data-driven Director of Studies was also hired, and is now serving as an unofficial Academic Head of Secondary and overseeing the Head of Primary, IB Coordinator, a Teaching and Learning Coordinator, and Language and Learning/EAL Head, as well as subject-area leaders and a Librarian.

Administrators and teachers reported that vertical and horizontal articulation has improved under current structures. A set of external assessors hired by the Board of Governors to provide an independent lens and support for teaching

and learning is planning its third visit this year to help the school prepare for its COBIS and NEASC Learning Principles visits, as well as to provide general feedback to administrators.

Underpinning most of HA's initiatives to strengthen learning and teaching is the focus on inquiry-based learning and increased use of project-based assessments to nurture student innovation, entrepreneurship, performances, and other 21st century skills. This is one of the reasons why the HA leadership believes there is strong alignment between the school's Mission and Aims and the ACE Learning Principles. The Visitor agrees.

The IB Learner Profile attributes, along with a series of "Haileybury Habits," are driving the learning culture. These attributes and habits are cemented in comprehensive academic and support policies, handbooks, and guides, as well as in the school's Strategic Improvement Plan and an accompanying Action Plan that documented and monitored progress on 24 specific actions undertaken last year in support of the goals articulated in the Strategic Improvement Plan. While teachers, Middle Level Leaders, and the School Management Team all articulated that the school is moving rapidly into its organizational midlife from its early stages with high expectations to move from "good to great" (as one administrator put it), the level of support from the Governing Body on down through leadership levels appears to be preventing "initiative fatigue." HA appears well-positioned to leverage the Learning Principles to achieve a greater level of instructional consistency across curricular areas and vertical levels that is sought as the main thrust for administrators in the coming year.

In addition to "unlocking the potential of each pupil to achieve intellectual growth, and academic success at world-class universities through the development and delivery of a balanced and challenging 21st century curriculum," as articulated in the school's documents, developing the whole child with a strong moral compass is also at the forefront of HA's programs and services. Providing opportunities in the visual and performing arts, sports, and beyond with engagement in leadership and teamwork, HA offers a varied and challenging co-curricular program. Concepts such as right and wrong, rights and responsibilities, and global citizenship underpin the learning in the co-curricular program. Special diplomas and awards are presented to students who show a commitment to school life beyond academics or service to others.

Assessment is a major driver of programming at HA. Backward mapping from the DP and IGCSE examinations helps ensure that skills are learned and constructed vertically, leading to the development of deeper meaning of concepts at each stage of student development. Assessments are moderated within subjects and faculties across the school. Student progress is monitored against international standards and linked to "pupil action plans."

Walk-throughs and formal observations form the foundation of the system of staff appraisal and support. Feedback to staff was reported as robust and well-received. The new Blue Sky online program enables analysis of teacher performance and provides a detailed rationale of goals that are set for the following year. School-wide goals are sometimes scaffolded over a teacher's individual goals to keep everyone focused on section-wide and school-wide priorities.

The NEASC Visitor observed 12 classes in all sections of the school for periods of time ranging from 10 to 12 minutes. Clearly, impressions gained from these visits cannot lay claim to comprehensiveness or scientific accuracy. They represent, at best, brief glimpses of prevailing pedagogical models, learner engagement, and the school's

learning environment. Nonetheless, these observations have yielded a consistent picture that is also generally compatible with the school's FA report sections.

Learners in several classes were asked to make estimations, verify (or disprove) them through measuring, and also to speculate as to why literary characters felt a certain way or how a war could have been prevented. The pace of lessons changed frequently, while discussions with partners or in groups were observed in most classes. Some teachers appeared not to differentiate instruction based on different learning styles, perhaps warranting a closer look from administrators.

The learning environment was uniformly pleasant, visually appealing, and colorful, even in the Secondary section. Early Childhood and many Elementary rooms were brimming with visual and intellectual stimulation, evidence of work accomplished, and student-generated work. Secondary classrooms were bright, inviting, comfortable, and warm, and had been effectively decorated by the teachers.

### **Recommendations:**

- the administration develop and empower teachers at all levels to be more conversant in what the internal and external data shows in terms of student learning, particularly with the CEM data in Primary stages;
- the administration consider a more purposeful examination of teacher differentiation serving different learning styles as part of both curriculum revision and HA's teacher appraisal and support system.

## **Foundation Standard 2: Organizational Structure**

**The school has in place a clear governance and leadership structure with defined roles and responsibilities, and a faculty and staff qualified for the roles to which they are assigned. Expectations defined in policy are carried out and observed in practice. Mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness and functionality of the school's organizational structures have been developed.**

Standard is fully met and implemented

## **Summary Observations**

HA's organizational structure has evolved into one that is abundant in its ability to provide a strong balance of support and accountability for effective practices across all school functions and levels, including those of the two layers of Governing Bodies that assume responsibility for this non-profit private school. The financial responsibility lies with a Board of Directors which ensures that the financial interests of the school's philanthropic investors are protected and that the educational program and its facilities are well-funded to actualize the child-centered motives of the investors. Their role is detailed further in Foundation Standard 4.

The governance of all non-financial aspects of the school's programs and services rests with the Board of Governors, to whom the Headmaster reports for all non-financial matters and to whom the Head of HA's sister school in Almaty also reports. The Board was reported by the Headmaster and the Board Chairman to be the strategic direction-setter of the academic and non-academic programs and services and acts as a soft-handed and productive partner to the

Headmaster, whereby the respective roles are well understood and adhered to by each party. Board composition and selection policies are in place, as is a new-member training program. While Board efficacy is evident in the overall positive findings throughout this report and it solicits feedback from parents and administrators, the Board has not yet developed a formal self-appraisal instrument. The Board's appraisal of the Headmaster is comprehensive and an effective tool in setting mutual expectations and monitoring the progress toward achieving prioritized school goals.

The Headmaster, in his second year at HA, was reported by staff, other administrators, and the Board Chairman as having strengthened the efficacy of senior leadership, improved financial management oversight, streamlined reporting lines among staff, and distributed parent questions and concerns to the appropriate level for quicker action, while still remaining accessible when concerns that are not settled at other institutional levels warrant his attention.

There is an extensive set of policy documents and handbooks articulating the manner in which the school operates, as well as including job descriptions for teachers, administrators, and staff. The organigram shows a strong level of administrative support in all aspects of school life. Academics in all horizontal school sections, within and across key stages, and in subject-area departments are led by appropriately qualified leaders and are sufficient in number. The same is true for student support services, pastoral care, operational systems, and co-curricular activities. An important structural enhancement to pastoral care has come in the form of implementation of a house system in the Secondary School, with formally appointed housemasters who are trained and developed in pastoral care. In prior years, small academic departments of one teacher had formal Department Head labels for such staff members. This was changed to group those departments under one Department Head, resulting in clearer reporting lines and better collaboration across departments.

Administrators, faculty, parents, and students all reported a high degree of support of the administrative structure and overall satisfaction with the services delivered by the Administrative Team. Faculty and administrators further indicated that the abundance of support was appropriately balanced by a high degree of accountability for performance at all levels. Neither the parents nor the students who spoke to the Visitor had reservations about the quality of teaching they experience.

The process of teacher appraisal includes formative as well as summative observations, and addresses support for struggling teachers and professional learning. These are well-documented in the Staff Handbook. An online performance management tracking system has facilitated communication, consistency, and precision in the appraisal of academic staff and in facilitating the identification of strengths and areas of focus for teaching staff and administrators. as well as target-setting from one year to the next.

A combination of the school-wide roles of the Head, Deputy Head, and Director of Studies, in addition to frequent and formal (and sometimes informal) meetings crossing horizontal divisions and Key Stages, have served to give the school a whole-school feeling. This is also reinforced through the program of professional development, which was reported as robust by staff and administrators.

Following a comprehensive needs assessment, HA developed a Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) that is revisited annually for adjustments. The current plan prioritizes needs in areas of academic outcomes, holistic learning, student welfare, strengthening cultural identity, attracting/retaining the best leaders, and the related efforts of improved marketing and strengthening enrollment demand. The plan is comprehensive and is at the heart of leadership

practices and resource allocation. While the success criteria for addressing the aforementioned needs have sufficient qualitative actions to look for in practice, the plan could benefit from setting specific quantitative benchmarks of success in some areas where the efficacy of an intervention or its impact on students is measurable.

In this context it is worth noting that achieving both COBIS accreditation this year and NEASC accreditation in a future year are integrated into the SIP. Having scheduled the NEASC Foundation Standards Visit early this fall and the COBIS full-team accreditation visit for December 2018 which closely examines teaching and learning, the HA has taken early steps to crosswalk the COBIS standards to the ten NEASC Learning Principles. The school appears well-positioned to organize its abundant evidence already prepared for COBIS to the Learning Principles framework without needing to develop many new pieces of evidence or other documentation in order to prepare for the next stage of ACE. It also has the benefit to begin planning for and implementing improvements emanating from the COBIS recommendations immediately upon returning from the winter holiday, therefore giving the school at least a three-month head start to ready itself for the Learning Principles Visit. As several aspects of the ten Learning Principles are already embedded in the SIP, it appeared to the Visitor that the School Management Team is fully committed to the ACE accreditation process.

#### **Recommendations:**

- the Board of Governors and School Management Team consider developing quantitative targets in parts of the SIP where data is readily available;
- the Board of Governors develop a formal self-evaluation instrument.

## **Foundation Standard 3: Health, Safety, & Security**

**The learning environment is healthy, safe, and secure for all members of the school community. Effective and well-established policies and procedures exist and are acted upon to protect children and adults alike.**

Standard is fully met and implemented.

## **Summary Observations**

HA's response to this Foundation Standard was very extensive and evidenced the ongoing and reinforced attention that is placed on the well-being of all students and staff, with detailed procedures on child protection and learning environments that safeguard the health, safety, and security of the children in its care. In the Visitor's judgment, HA meets this particular Foundation Standard exceptionally well. Policies, procedures, and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the school premises are well maintained, emergency evacuations are planned for, medical care and counseling services are effective, and child protection guidelines are comprehensive. The school submitted 17 different health and safety policies and procedures that exhaustively cover this domain. Policies cover everything from risk assessments required for field trips, bullying, and digital citizenship to special needs and pastoral care, critical incident planning/reporting, child restraint, recruitment and appointing staff with respect to child protection, and myriad other protections.



Effective evacuation procedures are in place and are tested regularly, including fire drills and lockdowns. Reports are filed after each and reviewed for any deviations from the established procedures. Staff and students reported these as very orderly and taken seriously. Visitors are badged and must identify themselves to security officers at the school gates, while CCTV cameras are in place and recording actions around the school. Lifts and ramps ensure that all of the HA premises are accessible to mobility-impaired students and adults. The school's clinic is staffed by a full-time nurse and a school doctor. Various agency certificates of inspection and safety compliance from government jurisdictions are on file in the office of the Administrative Director. A standing Health & Safety Committee regularly reviews the school's safety and security systems and reports deficiencies to the School Management Team. Currently 35 staff members are reported as having up to date first aid training and covering all sections of the school, and the school intends to increase this number. HA emergency procedures were rated as "outstanding" by the American Embassy staff invited in by the school to help it assess its efficacy in this area.

The students' intellectual, social, and emotional health is well looked after by HA's Student Support Team, which is led by the school's Deputy Head and supported by the school counselor, the housemasters and deputy housemasters, and the Key Stage 1 and 2 Coordinators for the youngest learners, with contributions from the SEN Coordinator, learning support teacher, and classroom/house tutors who assist from classroom to classroom. Services were reported by students, parents, and teachers as very effective, the various roles are widely understood, and staff work well together to provide a highly nurturing and safe environment in pastoral care and social/emotional health.

The admissions process is clear about the level of learning difficulties that can be effectively served by the school. Teachers, specialists, and parents reported that the SENCO, the learning support team, and the EAL specialists provide extensive support for students with learning difficulties and EAL challenges. Currently a counselor/psychologist serves students at school twice a week, and the school's long-term planning calls for this to be raised to a full-time position.

It should be noted that the school acted swiftly to address two mild concerns in the area of health and safety. An observation was made by the Visitor regarding the proximity of football sidelines to unpadded concrete and brick walls adjacent to two miniature fields used by younger Primary students. A detailed and well thought out risk assessment form and remedy was completed and presented to the Visitor's complete satisfaction the next day. When the speed of parent vehicles along one side of the school was noted as potentially unsafe, a camera-based speed monitoring and parent warning procedure was revealed to the Visitor, with evidence that the warning to parents had met with success. The installation of speed bumps remains as a backup option should speed become more than a very isolated problem.

**Recommendations:**

None at this time.

## **Foundation Standard 4: Finances, Facilities & Resources**

The school has in place policies, practices, and procedures that ensure financial health and economic sustainability. The principles governing financial management are designed to provide the resources (in

personnel, equipment, and facilities) required to support the school's learning concept and objectives. The school facilities are fit for purpose.

Standard is fully met and implemented.

## Summary Observations

Financial responsibility lies with a Board of Directors which ensures that the financial interests of the school's philanthropic investors are protected and that the educational program is well-funded to actualize the child-centered motives of the investors. They approve the school's Strategic Development Plan, which lays out financial obligations and sources of revenue for the long-term development of the school. The Headmaster and Bursar report to these Directors with regard to annual budget and for big-ticket capital investment expenditures and future campus development planning.

The Directors continue to invest in the school as future expansion is planned for the long term that involves a mix of investor capital and an annual development fund that builds from an amount set aside annually that ranges from six to eight percent of tuition revenues. This amount is fully funding the current construction of a new sports hall.

HA's Bursar administers day-to-day operational financial transactions and expenditures, as well as oversees financial management as a whole and establishes annual operational budgets, including financial projections. In addition to the surplus referenced above, the most recent audited financial statements reported that the minor procedural suggestions noted in previous reports have all been satisfactorily addressed. As enrollment projections are increasing for the next five years as the High School levels fully fill in, net surpluses are expected to continue at an increased percentage to support the development plans that are in place.

As one of the most sought after schools in Astana, the reasonably high fee structure is directly correlated to an attractive compensation and benefits package that is essential in the recruitment of expatriate staff to a rather remote central Asian location that is also the second coldest capital city in the world. Despite the long and grueling winters, HA enjoys healthy and positive staff morale, and is generally thriving under the high expectations placed on staff by the Administrative Team.

There are many reasons why HA would be considered a desirable place to work: the school is well-resourced, and the facilities represent a richness of learning opportunities afforded to students, but with classrooms that are not necessarily designed for a full range of 21st century skill-building. Long-range plans call for a construction of a new STEM center, dormitories for boarding, and a redesign of some existing space to produce more Maker Spaces for hands-on activities that will better align with ACE Learning Principles. The most prominent features of the current venue are:

- the new athletic hall that is currently under construction but is designed to be appropriately large and well-equipped;
- large corridors that double as dedicated/themed learning spaces for Early Primary learners, and attractively furnished small-group meeting areas for older learners;
- an indoor swimming pool;
- a multipurpose room that is also the school's theatre;
- a large dance studio;
- a Library that offers an abundance of digital resources, an appropriate level of print resources given the students' digital offerings, and a pleasing and bright learning environment;
- tennis courts, a large football pitch, and a current sport hall that the school is replacing in the new construction;
- sufficient specialist facilities for curricular and learning supports;
- the welcoming, broad, and aesthetically appealing entrance foyer which invites parents to engage in conversation and enjoy a cup of coffee from the adjacent coffee/sandwich shop.

Although the entire school is essentially under one roof, Early Childhood, Primary Stages, Middle Stages, and High School students are in distinct and separate areas along the shape of a square and across three floors, with some shared communal spaces. As has been mentioned in the comments on Foundation Standards 2, a whole-school feel permeates school life, with student leadership opportunities crossing sections/stages, school-wide events occurring regularly, and school-wide leadership structures mitigating against school fragmentation.

It is also evident that the school's current leadership has spent a great deal of thought and reflection on optimizing usage of internal as well as external space, resulting in many tangible and appreciated arrangements around the school. A single cafeteria is used in waves and seating and queues are managed effectively, with healthy and tasty offerings reported by most everyone who appreciates that only healthy foods are permitted. A well-paced and distributed drop-off and pick-up traffic flow system ensures safe egress and vehicle entry, so much so that the main drop-off to the school's main reception very impressively needed no staff on assignment to manage the flow safely.

#### **Recommendations:**

- continue to monitor enrolment growth over five to seven years, its relationship to tuition revenue growth, and the ability of the Governing Body to fully fund and implement the long-term school development plan.

## **Foundation Standard 5: Ethical Practice**

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**The school has well-established, transparent policies and practices in place to ensure that employees, learners, and parents are treated fairly, equitably, and ethically.**

Standard is fully met and implemented.

## Summary Observations

All members of the school community with whom the Visitor had an opportunity to speak are unanimous in stating that HA is an open, transparent, and generally collaborative school, and that communication is comprehensive, timely, and honest.

Since HA is part of the Haileybury brand with more mature schools both in UK and in Almaty, it has benefited from the organization's experience in creating and overseeing those schools' programs and having overlapping Boards of Governors. Thus, policies exist for all areas of school life, and well-documented handbooks are issued to parents, students, and teachers. Most of these contain standard policies and procedures common to well-run accredited international schools. Electronic communication systems are equally extensive, including SIMS, ManageBac, and Blue Sky. The school's website and school email are used to manage student data, upload student assignments and teacher feedback, keep parents informed of their children's progress, monitor staff performance, analyze data, and announce events. Parents and staff reported being fully informed of school happenings and about their child's progress across the curriculum. They report no financial surprises after the fact, and feel that they are indeed getting their money's worth despite paying among the highest fees in the region.

A further indication that HA aligns with the expectations implicit in this Foundation Standard is that, as reported by the school's leadership, average teacher tenure is now approaching four years despite the exceptionally cold and long winters. This also reflects positively on the leadership's efforts to develop a professional learning culture throughout the school, further exemplified by abundant professional development workshops and taking part in internal supports such as learning walks and peer observation.

Teachers acknowledged that avenues for input into decision making exist and that they feel comfortable airing concerns they might have with the school's direction in specific or general terms, even in cases where the outcome isn't what they had argued for. They appreciate the opportunities for professional development available to them, and the complete honoring of contractual guarantees for compensation and benefits. School leaders at different levels felt similarly.

The HA students with whom the Visitor met were articulate, passionate, and confident in voicing their perceptions of the school. Fundamentally, they are happy to be at HA, appreciate their teachers, and would make the same school choice again if given an option. Students were happy with the new house system and the class tutors, feeling that any student life concerns were more readily supported, and reported that the spirit of competition was healthy and friendly as opposed to divisive. Students were unanimous that teacher expectations are clear as to what is expected of them in their part of the learning process. Interesting and diversely-delivered lessons, peer assistance and teamwork, and hands-on projects were characteristics of their classroom experiences. Bullying is reported as virtually non-existent at all grade levels represented in the student group (ranging from Year 5 to Year 13). Policies were reported as fair, with transparent consequences for misdeeds, while the spirit of internationalism and non-discrimination was nurtured throughout all school levels.

Students were happy with their options for co-curricular activities (CCAs). They cited Model UN, performing arts shows, and tournaments for basketball, running, volleyball, and football as examples of activities that emphasize growth and excellence as well as fun and participation, ending in culminating competitions. CCAs typically meet twice weekly in six-week intervals, after which they need to choose another activity. Students can even create their own CCA after making a proposal for it, thus opening up niche opportunities for small groups or individuals.

**Recommendations:**

None at this time.

## **Foundation Review: Visit Summary**

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### **Is the School eligible to enter the ACE Accreditation Process?**

Yes.

### **Is the School at the "Thinking About" stage for a majority of the Learning Principles?**

Absolutely. Indeed, HA is more than "thinking about" the Learning Principles, and in most cases is solidly working on them. HA has already begun to align its Strategic Improvement Plan with the Learning Principles and to identify synergies between the school's pending COBIS visit on those learning standards and the focus of the ACE Learning Principles.

### **If you checked either "Conditional" or "No" please describe the conditions the School must fulfill in order to become eligible or why the application should be rejected.**

N/A

### **Suggested Timeline: Learning Principles Review Visit**

Because HA is already deep into the accreditation process by COBIS, the Learning Principles Visit preparation will have already been largely completed, with careful planning between two frameworks already done. The self-assessing into the Learning Principles framework from the COBIS framework is mostly crosswalked, with some additional work to fully satisfy what the Learning Principles Visit will expect from the school. Further, much of the Learning Principles documentation was presented for this Foundation Visit, leaving the Visitor with full confidence that the school can move forward. The school has asked that the Learning Principles Visit occur in early April 2019, to be well after a school vacation and well before the IGCSE examinations preparation that begins in earnest later in April. If the Foundation Standards Visit is any indication, and having both the COBIS and Learning Principles results known in December 2018 and April 2019 respectively, HA is in an excellent position to develop an Internal Reflection starting by May 2019 and complete it by January 2020. The Head of School and Accreditation Coordinator were firm in their wishes to tentatively expect to host the External Review by the spring of 2020 (either March or April).

### **Suggested Timeline: Internal Reflection**

Depending on the timing of the Learning Principles Visit (see above) and the extent of the Learning Principles Visitors' findings, the Internal Reflection might very well be completed by January 2020. The school has proven in its recent history that it accomplishes most of the goals it sets out to accomplish from one year's Action Plan to the next.

# Suggested Timeline: External Review Visit

The External Review Visit is likely to take place in the Spring of 2020, contingent upon the timings for the Learning Principles Visit and Internal Reflection as discussed above.

## **Please indicate if there are any other considerations or aspects that have (or should have) a bearing on this School's application and/or on subsequent visits.**

Haileybury Astana indicated in its report that it fully meets all of the ACE Foundation Standards, and the Visitor concurs with this assessment. HA, though barely six years old, is mature beyond its years, having followed the model of its much older sister school in Almaty. It is acutely aware of its strengths and areas that will benefit from further improvement, and confident of the direction it has decided to pursue. It enjoys stable and strong leadership, a cadre of qualified and competent teachers and staff, suitable facilities, supportive parents, and students with high expectations for their futures.

Relationships are healthy, communications appear to be transparent, and the school appears ready to study and apply the Learning Principles to bring the teaching and learning to a more consistently excellent state across the entire school. HA appears to be a school that is free of bias based on national origin and other factors, and safe from bullying or other threats to a harmonious learning environment. HA is in a good position, with most of the school's important structures in place. It is striving to bring teaching and learning up a notch by being more focused on developing deep and lasting meaning of learning concepts in students, along with greater student creativity and innovation throughout the curriculum through greater consistency in teaching practices. ACE Learning Principles will help HA achieve its goals.

The Visitor wishes to acknowledge all with whom he had the pleasure to interact and speak. Conversations were uniformly candid and often passionate in support of the school, but above all they seemed to reflect a genuine appreciation for the education provided by Haileybury Astana. The Visitor also extends thanks to Head of School Jonathan Ullmer and Accreditation Coordinator Paul Rowe for their leadership during the accreditation process and the warm hospitality extended. It is hoped that this report will help accelerate the transformation of teaching and leading to levels that can compete with the very best schools in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

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October 10, 2018