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part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**British School of Bucharest**

**March 2025**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	British School of Bucharest			
<b>Address</b>	British School of Bucharest 42 Erou Iancu Nicolae 077190 Voluntari Ilfov County Bucharest Romania			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0040 21 267 8919			
<b>Email address</b>	office@britishschool.ro			
<b>Primary headteacher</b>	Mrs Victoria Smith			
<b>Secondary headteacher</b>	Mr Jason Porter			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Ms Corina Corda			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Crawford House Foundation			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	727			
	<b>Early years</b>	145	<b>Juniors</b>	214
	<b>Seniors</b>	286	<b>Sixth form</b>	82
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11 to 14 March 2025			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 The British School of Bucharest (BSB) is a co-educational day school. It was established on its current site in a district north of Bucharest city centre in 2008. It prepares pupils for entry to the UK and other European independent schools and to universities across the world. The school is owned by Crawford House, a not-for-profit foundation. The proprietor is president of the board of the foundation and administrator of BSB Sports and Services. The proprietor oversees the management of the school and works with its leadership to support and develop the school's educational provision. The campus is based around the original two three-storey buildings, to which other indoor and outdoor facilities have been added. The school comprises two sections: primary, which includes the early years, and secondary, which includes a sixth form. Each school section has its own headteacher.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide an international education with a significant intellectual foundation that prepares pupils to continue their education anywhere in the world. It seeks to provide pupils with a positive, stimulating, secure and caring environment that encourages the fulfilment of individual potential and the growth of self-esteem in all areas. In addition, the school seeks to encourage open enquiry, creativity, decision-making and independent thought. The school places a high priority on preparing pupils to become responsible citizens of the world community, based on its core values.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from both expatriate and Romanian families, with parents working in a range of businesses as well as embassies and governmental and non-governmental organisations. One third of the pupils are Romanian and about one fifth are British. Pupils also represent 65 other nationalities. The ability profile of both the primary and the secondary schools, including the sixth form, is above the average for those taking similar tests. The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 29 of whom receive specialist learning support for speech and language needs, dyspraxia, dyslexia and other learning difficulties. There are 505 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 61 receive additional support. There are 96 pupils who have been identified by the school as more able, and they are supported through additional challenge in lessons and separate enrichment programs in both sections of the school.

## 2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

**This is a COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas.** The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

**Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.**

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in March 2022.

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets all the Standards for British Schools Overseas and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

### Part 1 – Quality of education provided

#### 2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

- 2.3 The curriculum in both sections of the school, including in the early years and sixth form, is well balanced and successfully meets the school's aims to provide a high quality, creative and challenging education for its pupils. It provides pupils with experience in a broad range of curriculum areas, including languages, mathematics, science and technology as well as social studies, physical education (PE) and creative subjects, whilst developing pupils' command of English as a written and spoken language. Departmental and lesson planning is well developed in most subject areas and takes account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, including those who have SEND, for whom appropriate support is provided. In both school sections, the curriculum offers a suitable range of extra-curricular activities and provides opportunities in sport, drama, the creative arts and adventurous activities. In particular, the school provides a unique technological opportunity for pupils to work together on designing and building an electric car from scratch, which they then subsequently test in an Arctic environment.
- 2.4 A number of pupils at IGCSE and A level have been ranked as top performers academically in Romania and worldwide. Pupils are well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life beyond school, which include undertaking university courses throughout Europe, the USA, Australia and the UK. The pupils' school experience is underpinned by their good understanding of fundamental British and Romanian values, which closely reflect the school's own promoted values.
- 2.5 Teaching throughout the primary and secondary sections enables pupils to gain new knowledge and skills and to make good progress, a view endorsed by most parents and pupils. Additional support is provided for those pupils who join the school with a more limited understanding of English, although the majority of pupils are bilingual, and in some cases trilingual. Teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons, which provide suitable challenge for most pupils. The majority of lessons employ effective teaching methods, allow pupils to access a range of resources and reflect good teacher knowledge. Pupils are responsive and engaged in most lessons, and their behaviour is of a high standard. The curriculum and teaching are based on the English national curriculum, with the majority of pupils graduating from the school with the opportunity to attend competitive universities overseas. Both primary and secondary sections have an effective framework in place to measure and record attainment and performance. Leaders use a range of assessment methods to monitor and track pupils' progress as they move through the schools. Departments are required to use this data to produce subject action plans in order to promote and prioritise the performance of pupils over time.
- 2.6 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' learning and achievements and the contribution that the curriculum and teaching make to these outcomes.

### Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

#### 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

- 2.8 The school promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those who have different faiths and beliefs to the pupils' own. It promotes principles that enable pupils to develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence, distinguish right from wrong, accept responsibility for their behaviour, contribute to the lives of others, and gain knowledge and respect for public institutions in England and for the responsibilities of Romanian citizenship. Further, it encourages tolerance and harmony between different cultural

traditions and a balanced presentation of political views and preclusion of any that are partisan. The schools encourage respect for other people with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the UK Equality Act 2010, including age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity leave, disability, race, religion or belief and sex.

- 2.9 A small minority of pupils have expressed that they feel their views are not always listened to. In discussions across all age groups, however, pupils confirmed that they are encouraged to contribute views on the operation of the school and are able to raise concerns and complaints. Pupils were able to indicate changes that had been made in response to their concerns, which included requests for the re-introduction of drama lessons and the early introduction of summer uniform, both of which were accepted by school leaders.
- 2.10 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the quality of the pupils' personal development and the factors which contribute to their development.

### **Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

#### **2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.**

- 2.12 There are effective processes and procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. Such arrangements take account of Romanian law and have regard to guidance in the United Kingdom. The school ensures that staff training, including that for the governors, is appropriate. It enables pupils to be listened to and provided with early help. The particular vulnerability of the small number of pupils who have SEND is acknowledged, and allowances are made for them. The training for leaders with particular responsibility for safeguarding, including in the early years, is up to date. The safeguarding member of the governing board works with the safeguarding leads of both schools to oversee the school's safeguarding arrangements and undertakes an annual review of safeguarding procedures. New staff receive appropriate induction training, and all staff receive annual updates to their safeguarding training.
- 2.13 Pupils receive suitable guidance relating to issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, assemblies and tutor time. Pupils observe that they feel safe and well looked after in the school. Discussions with pupils indicated that they would feel comfortable to approach most members of staff, and they cited the school nurses and psychologists as being the key pastoral staff to whom they would choose to go if they had any concerns or worries. A large majority of staff feel that the pastoral provision is a strength of the school. In discussions, pupils expressed that they find the school culture to be friendly and welcoming and that the school leaders do their best to treat them fairly. Most pupils demonstrate a clear sense of pride in being a member of the school community and say they would recommend the school to others.
- 2.14 Procedures to promote good behaviour are understood by pupils and staff and are implemented effectively. A suitable system of rewards celebrates pupils' successes, efforts and achievements, and appropriate sanctions are applied if the need arises. Records are kept of all behavioural issues, and these are effectively monitored to identify any trends. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is prevented in so far as is reasonably practical. Records indicate that sanctions are applied consistently. The school meets local requirements with regard to the safe use of the internet and social media. Pupil behaviour, as seen around the schools, is of a high standard and reflects the school values of empathy and kindness.
- 2.15 The school complies with relevant health and safety laws and fire safety standards, including those that apply in Romanian law. Record-keeping is thorough and shows that there is an effective overview of health and safety procedures. Fire drills are carried out regularly and are suitably recorded. There is a suitable system for the provision and maintenance of emergency routes and exits and an effective maintenance programme for fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers. Pupils of all ages are

appropriately supervised throughout the school day and on school trips. The premises are maintained to a high standard with suitable levels of safety and hygiene. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained.

- 2.16 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and its effective implementation. Pupil discussions and records confirm that pupils who are ill or injured are almost always treated in a timely and appropriate manner. A suitable programme of risk assessments has been drawn up for all areas of the primary and senior schools and any related activities that pupils, including children in the early years, undertake.

#### **Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

**2.17 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

- 2.18 The school carries out the required checks on staff, its governors and any other adults working at the school to ensure their suitability to work with children, in line with Romanian local requirements and guidance issued to schools in the UK. All staff are required to have a Romanian police clearance certificate and police also issue a certificate of behavioural integrity. Additionally, staff medical checks are a mandatory requirement. All UK nationals are checked through the disclosure and barring service (DBS), which includes a barred-list check, as well as through the international child protection certificate (ICPC) checks.

- 2.19 A suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments, which details the recruitment checks undertaken, is maintained appropriately. Staff files include all the required documentation and are well maintained, reflecting good practice in the safer recruitment of all categories of staff.

#### **Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

**2.20 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

- 2.21 The school provides good-quality washing and toilet facilities for pupils of all ages, including those in the early years. There is appropriate changing accommodation for all pupils and a suitable facility to cater for the needs of pupils who are unwell or injured. The premises are maintained to a high standard commensurate with health and safety requirements, including those required by Romanian law. Identified issues are reported promptly and rectified accordingly. Acoustic conditions, including in music rehearsal and practice rooms, and internal and external lighting are suitable. The provision of drinking water is plentiful as water dispenser units are located throughout the school sections.

- 2.22 The primary and secondary villas are suitably furnished and well maintained. There is suitable provision of outdoor and indoor spaces for physical education and play across the school site, including hardcourt play areas, an outdoor swimming pool, an adventurous zip wire course and a playing field at the front of the campus. Across the primary and secondary school sites, suitable overhead shading for pupils is provided to manage hot weather conditions. In addition, in the primary school there are separate play areas for pupils in the early years.

#### **Part 6 – Provision of information**

**2.23 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

- 2.24 All of the required information to comply with the Standards for British Schools Overseas is provided or made available to current parents and parents of prospective pupils. The contact details for the school, the headteachers and the proprietor and a statement of the school's aims and ethos are published on the school's website. Policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for pupils who have SEND and EAL; the procedure for complaints; the curriculum; arrangements to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying; health



and safety and the school's provision for first aid are also made available on the school's website. The school's policy on safeguarding pupils is published on the school's website and the school provides parents with a written report on their children's progress and attainment on at least a termly basis.

## **Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

### **2.25 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

2.26 The school's complaints procedure is available on the school's website. It allows for concerns and complaints to be considered on an informal basis and a formal procedure for complaints to be made in writing both to the individual school heads and to the proprietor. Should parents remain dissatisfied, they may request a hearing before a panel, which includes an independent member, and allows for parents to be accompanied. The panel may make findings and recommendations and keeps a confidential record of the findings, including action taken by the school, whether or not the complaint is upheld. The school's records indicate that most parents receive prompt responses to any concerns, almost all of which are resolved informally.

## **Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

### **2.27 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

2.28 The leadership and management of the school, including members of the governing board, demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities so that the Standards for British Schools Overseas are met consistently, and the wellbeing of the pupils is promoted. The proprietor, who was responsible for the foundation of the school, is in regular attendance at the school, and convenes weekly operational meetings to ensure that governors are kept fully informed on school matters. In addition, specialist advisors regularly conduct audits of safeguarding, health and safety and staff recruitment, and all governors are required to undertake appropriate training. This arrangement ensures that there is effective oversight and monitoring of the school's policies and procedures. Members of the governing board have a clear understanding, as do the school staff, of how to safeguard children and promote their wellbeing. There is a consistent drive amongst senior leaders to continually look at where improvements can be made, the majority of which are clearly focused on matters relating to pupils' mental health and wellbeing. The majority of parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school's provision and pupils throughout the school express how the support offered by their teachers and the physical environment of the school greatly enhances their learning experience.

2.29 Section 3 of this report provides a more detailed evaluation of the impact of leadership and management on the pupils' learning, achievement and personal development.

### 3. Inspection of Educational Quality

#### Preface

In addition to evaluating whether or not the school met all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas, this inspection evaluated the **quality** of the school's work, focusing on the two key outcomes for pupils:

- the quality of the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the quality of the pupils' personal development.

Headline judgements of educational quality include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition, the text identifies clearly the impact of the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, leadership and management on outcomes for pupils.

As ISI inspections of British schools overseas are for the benefit of the pupils, inspections aim to:

- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education.

The report refers to year groups in accordance with the system most commonly used in England.

#### Key findings

**3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.**

**3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

#### Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Ensuring that marking and feedback provides pupils in Years 7 to 11 with clear and consistent guidance on how they can improve their work further.

#### The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement

**3.4 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent.**

3.5 The overall achievement of pupils in the primary and secondary sections is excellent. A significant contributory factor to pupils' high achievement is the commitment of the leaders, teachers and those responsible for governance to ensure that all pupils are valued, encouraged and taught effectively so that they achieve to a high level.

3.6 In the early years, children make rapid progress from their starting points. Their language development in English is facilitated through a programme of targeted EAL support where needed. Attainment data from standardised tests shows that pupils in Years 1 to 6 typically make better than expected progress in English and mathematics. There is a consistent pattern of progress over the past three years. Secondary pupils in Years 7 to 9 perform well against standardised averages, with the majority making expected or higher than expected progress.

3.7 Results at IGCSE over a three-year period show attainment to be above the average for similar BSO schools. Results in English language, English literature, mathematics, biology, business and further

mathematics are excellent, with one half of the Year 11 cohort obtaining either A\* to A or grade 9 to 7 in all their IGCSE examinations, and with several pupils gaining top achiever awards in Romania, Europe and worldwide.

- 3.8 Results at A level have been consistently well above the world average for the past three years, with over half the cohort obtaining A to A\* grades and nearly three-quarters achieving A\* to B grades in 2024. A number of pupils scored top achiever awards in Romania and worldwide in A-level art and mathematics in 2024. These results show excellent progress from pupils' starting points, in particular for those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 3.9 Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points due to targeted support provided in response to their individual needs. Tracking and monitoring systems enable teachers to carefully identify where pupils are underperforming. This works successfully in both school sections where teachers use these systems to ensure that suitable support is put in place, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Those who speak EAL also receive effective targeted support well matched to their needs, and typically make rapid progress in their fluency and understanding of English.
- 3.10 Across the school, the quality and presentation of pupils' work is excellent. In many lessons, pupils make good progress because teachers have good subject knowledge and plan effectively to meet their needs through engaging learning activities. Marking and feedback of pupils' work is excellent in the primary and sixth-form sections and helps to promote rapid progress. However, this is less effective in Years 7 to 11. In these years, a number of subject areas do not routinely provide pupils with marking and feedback that contains clear guidance to indicate how they may improve their work further, which can restrict their progress.
- 3.11 The considered and reflective approach to curriculum planning enables pupils to develop excellent knowledge, skills and understanding that have depth and breadth. Early years children have a well-developed knowledge of the sounds that letters make and use these in their writing to independently construct sentences. They choose tasks in outdoor learning, such as measuring or trying out different ways of transporting water, which lead to further experimentation and observation.
- 3.12 Pupils' skills and understanding are excellent, as demonstrated in a Year 10 history lesson when pupils explained factors affecting appeasement in the 1930s, formulating arguments that were coherent and logical. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils accurately recalled factors affecting climate change and were able to describe the differences between natural and enhanced greenhouse effects.
- 3.13 Pupils' communication skills are excellent throughout the school. They develop strong speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and are provided with many opportunities during lessons to collaborate and share their ideas and opinions. Communication is a key skill which is developed progressively as pupils move through the school. Pupils are highly articulate and confident communicators, as seen in English and Spanish lessons during which pupils listen carefully and respond effectively to their teachers. Pupils ask sophisticated questions and use specialist vocabulary to recall relevant information to aid and develop their understanding. Pupils in the sixth form commented that they enjoy presenting to their peers, for example in assemblies and in performances as a part of the arts and drama programme. Around the site and in lessons, pupils use English as their language of communication almost without exception.
- 3.14 Pupils' numeracy skills are notably strong. Effective planning and a well-resourced curriculum result in pupils making good progress as they build up their mathematical knowledge. In lessons, Year 2 pupils show confidence about the relationship between inches and centimetres, while Year 6 pupils expound enthusiastically on patterns in algebra. The high levels of numeracy seen in pupils' workbooks demonstrate that the basics are well learnt at an early age. This continues through to the secondary school, where accelerated mathematics is offered to the more able mathematicians at IGCSE. Pupils are also able to apply mathematics to other curricular areas with confidence, such as when completing calculations in Year 11 biology and Year 13 physics.

- 3.15 Pupils are confident in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a learning tool across the curriculum. During a tutorial session, Year 7 pupils used software to create a presentation about study skills. It is clear from pupils' sixth-form work that pupils use technology to assess resources, submit work to their teachers and create documents and projects. A lesson on artificial intelligence (AI) in Year 10 showed pupils to be highly engaged, extremely competent and equipped with a high level of understanding of the ethical issues associated with AI. Younger primary pupils were seen using robotics to significant effect in a university class, where they delighted in designing and building models to use on a racetrack as part of an extra-curricular session.
- 3.16 Pupils have excellent study skills, as evidenced by the speed with which pupils commence their work and are able to present their arguments coherently and convincingly. Examples of sophisticated problem-solving were seen in a Year 3 design and technology lesson in which pupils working in pairs had to apply trial and error with a limited range of materials as they built a prototype of a catapult design. Early years children working in the outdoor area demonstrated strong resilience and determination when they attempted by experimentation to mend a broken water system, in order to restore the water flow. Sixth-form pupils, in observed lessons, demonstrated a high-level ability to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise arguments verbally and, in a Year 12 English and economics lesson, produced exemplary answers to past examination questions.
- 3.17 Academic success is excellent, as evidenced through examination results at IGCSE and A level. Pupils achieve places and scholarships at a wide range of universities both at home and abroad, including to study medicine, engineering, art, languages and the humanities. Pupils take pride in their work and show initiative and independence, as well as a keenness to work collaboratively. Pupils showed the skills they had employed to tackle challenging homework, appropriate to their competency levels, including high-quality individual work, in the form of an extended project in the sixth form. In the primary school, pupils have excelled in the Black Sea Schools Art Competition and pupils in the secondary school consistently gain high levels of success in the UK Mathematics Trust Challenge and in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) awards.
- 3.18 Beyond the formal curriculum, the achievements of pupils are excellent across a wide variety of opportunities including sport and the performing arts. In the primary school, pupils' individual achievements in activities such as music, sport and drama are advanced for their age, and they often receive recognition outside school. Pupils in Year 5 have competed at national and international level in hockey and Year 6 pupils at regional and national level in fencing. Pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities is notably strong. In the secondary school, a wide range of extra-curricular activities is on offer which pupils are encouraged to attend either before or during the lunchtime break or at the end of each school day. These involve debating, football, netball, basketball, swimming and the performing arts. This programme helps pupils to develop skills in a broad range of areas, including leadership training.
- 3.19 A significant and noteworthy achievement which includes mixed age groups from Year 6 to 13 has been the success of pupils in their project work in connection with the school's 'innovation hub'. This involves groups of pupils engineering and building electric cars from scratch, which once assembled are taken to the Arctic in Sweden for trial and testing. This project has developed into an automotive design project called 'Project Zephyr', which enables pupils to gain a deeper insight into car design and sustainability. Primary and secondary pupils are highly motivated by this project and comment on the technological, design, computing and environmental skills they acquire as a result of their participation in it.
- 3.20 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are ready and eager to learn, take pride in their work and are keen to improve their performance. Collaborative work throughout the school is a real strength where pupils are very enthusiastic to help each other and to develop their knowledge and understanding. In the early years, attitudes to learning are excellent. Children are positive about what they are learning and take a genuine interest in what is happening in the classroom. The enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching staff is central to this. Most pupils respond highly positively when

teachers allow pupils to take the lead in their learning. For example, in an international English language testing system (IELTS) lesson, Year 12 pupils were particularly keen to practise their language skills, using appropriate vocabulary and phrases for the task.

## **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

### **3.21 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.**

- 3.22 The school provides a nurturing 'family' environment with strong, professional relationships between staff and pupils, allowing pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge to flourish. Pupils are considerate and caring towards each other. An effective pastoral care system ensures that emotional intelligence is nurtured and pupils' wellbeing is supported effectively across all year groups. For example, when learning about emotions, children in Reception used the 'emotion pharmacy' in the form of role play to explain their emotions to each other. In a Year 7 tutor session, pupils used the 'BSB learning skills programme' to recognise the importance of self-reflection in their lives. Overall, pupils have an excellent self-understanding, knowing who they are and what they need to do to improve and succeed, without arrogance or complacency. Pupils are ambitious to succeed and realise the importance of academic success. Their self-confidence develops in response to the praise and encouragement they receive from their teachers.
- 3.23 Outstanding levels of self-confidence are demonstrated through primary pupils' ability to approach and engage with visitors, often using English as an additional language. Likewise, in the secondary school, pupils' self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem are excellent because pupils are given measured guidance on how to improve their achievement, both from their teachers and peers. Pupils strongly believe they have a voice and the opportunities they are given to be heard has a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 3.24 In the early years, children make decisions, choosing activities and expressing preferences, such as when they are able to select different materials for art projects and why they select different colours and textures to do this. Year 1 and 2 pupils choose a system of 'rainbow challenges', which are suited to all types and levels of learners. For example, they are able to select 'mild', 'spicy' and 'red-hot' reading challenges. An excellent example of primary pupils directing their own learning was observed in a 'hitmakers' masterclass in which pupils wrote their own pop songs. Older pupils understand the benefits of working conscientiously in order to do their best, so that they have the widest choices available to them. This includes options for IGCSE and A level. There exists a clear recognition that their eventual success is largely driven by the efforts and decisions that they make.
- 3.25 School council members in both the primary and secondary school sections indicated how pleased they were to have been able to contribute to a recent decision about school uniform and to consideration about the possibility of introducing vending machines. Prefects have put in place a recently introduced new committee structure which has created effective space for specific interest groups to discuss topics of interest and suggest actions and activities. Recent examples include the promotion of activities such as the performing arts, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and medicine.
- 3.26 Pupils have a good grasp of the religious and non-material aspects of life, gained through strong and effective teaching in the classroom and through assemblies, PSHE and religious studies programmes. Pupils reflect their spirituality through opportunities for individual and creative expression in art, music and poetry. In a Year 8 lesson on world religions, pupils were encouraged to articulate their views and consider diverse perspectives relating to different faiths and beliefs. Personal faith is respected, as demonstrated by the provision of a prayer room for Muslim pupils fasting during Ramadan. In the early years, children develop a sense of the wonder of the universe through regular visits to the woodland environment, which enables them to develop a love and respect for nature.

- 3.27 Pupils' moral understanding and responsibility for their own behaviour is exemplary. Pupils form very positive and productive relationships with each other and their teachers, irrespective of culture, race or background. Pupils exhibit a clear and positive sense of responsibility for their own behaviour which makes for a harmonious community. Sixth-form pupils develop strong and purposeful relationships with younger pupils through a mentoring scheme which covers both social and academic matters. From an early age pupils are aware of social boundaries and acceptable behaviour. Pupils are considerate and caring towards each other. If unkindness does occur, pupils are confident that they have trusted adults to turn to.
- 3.28 The embedded ethos of supportive pastoral support enables all parties to grow, make new starts and learn from mistakes. Pupils are polite and happy. They have excellent manners which are natural and not forced. The very large majority of parents feel that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and the overwhelming majority of pupils agree that the school encourages them to behave well. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.29 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are socially aware and work extremely well together in the classroom, on activities and during breaks, as seen in the use of all available recreational facilities during break periods and at lunchtimes. There are many opportunities for pupils to take positions of responsibility in the primary and secondary school sections, including school councils, which they enjoy and take seriously. Community sport leaders in the sixth form commit themselves to weekly sports coaching with younger pupils. Pupils enjoy working closely with each other and also with key staff who support their ideas, as seen in a Year 3 music lesson in which pupils worked collaboratively to perform a Chinese New Year song. A good range of school trips and adventurous activities are offered, and many pupils take up the opportunity to participate both on day and residential trips in Romania and overseas. Through doing so they are able to develop their social development and collaborative skills to a high level, for example during specialist sports tours abroad.
- 3.30 Pupils contribute positively to the lives of others within the school and also make excellent contributions to the local community and wider society. The house system fosters teamwork across different year groups which contributes to a real sense of community across the school. This is enhanced by after-school clubs where pupils can initiate or be involved in a range of activities to develop wider social contribution. Older pupils volunteer to visit a local centre on a weekly basis to help care for disabled children and there is an established 'fun day' to raise money for a local shelter for homeless people organised by staff and pupils. The 'make a difference' group links older pupils with younger pupils in taking the lead to organise events to support various charities. For example, pupils take the lead in organising assemblies, donations, harvest collections and charity 'sleep outs' and visiting centres to deliver donations. Such activities increase pupils' sense of social responsibility and give them experience of taking on leadership responsibilities.
- 3.31 The inclusive and culturally diverse community enables pupils from all backgrounds to feel accepted and have a place to belong. Pupils comment that it is 'okay to be different' and demonstrate high levels of tolerance, open-mindedness, interest and acceptance of one another's cultures and traditions. Older pupils demonstrate a keen awareness of issues relating to equality, inclusion and diversity and willingly speak up against prejudice and discrimination. All pupils have the opportunity to attend an annual 'café of cultures' event as part of the school's languages week celebrations. In this event, secondary pupils and parents assist in the running of various language and culture stalls. Pupils in the primary school take part in event-related topics such as dance, indigenous art, music, cuisine and languages from a variety of countries around the world. There are regular celebrations of annual festivals such as Hanukah, Diwali and Chinese New Year.
- 3.32 Pupils understand how to stay safe. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the benefits of exercise and healthy eating alongside an appreciation of the need to maintain good mental health and achieve a balanced lifestyle. Pupils commented that the PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes cover a wide range of suitable skills and knowledge, which helps them to navigate

through life, for example, in staying safe online. In a Year 8 PSHE lesson on cyber-security, pupils showed excellent levels of knowledge of the threats that they may encounter in the digital world and how they could protect themselves from these. In the early years, children know the food that keeps them healthy, and teachers sit with pupils and model good eating habits as well as discussing different food groups. As a result, pupils know it is important to have a healthy and balanced diet.

- 3.33 Across the school sections there is a very high take-up of voluntary after-school clubs, many of which are sports based. The mental health of the pupils is a high priority for leaders, and it is an area in which the school invests both resources and staff expertise. Outdoor education and adventurous activities programmes and trips offer many opportunities for pupils to develop physically and stay healthy. Examples include kayaking, climbing, skiing and sports tours as well as expedition work through the international version of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), at all three levels. Nearly all pupils engage fully with the activities and opportunities on offer. In discussion, pupils commented that they very much enjoy school life and have lots of friends and feel settled and happy.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house and form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, pupils and staff to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Tony Halliwell	Reporting inspector
Mr Gareth Evans	Team inspector (Head, international school, Belgrade)
Mrs Naomi Fowkes	Team inspector (Former head, ISA school, UK)
Mr Jeremy Hart	Team inspector (Assistant head, international school, Cairo)
Mrs Louise Simpson	Team inspector (Head, HMC school, UK)