



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT

INTERNATIONAL BRITISH SCHOOL OF BUCHAREST

MARCH 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	International British School of Bucharest			
Address	21-25 Agricultori Street District 2 Bucharest Romania			
Telephone number	+40 21 253 16 98			
Email address	office@ibsb.ro			
Head of School	Mr Kendall Peet			
Executive director	Mrs Aura Bogdan			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	326			
	Boys	163	Girls	163
	EYFS	20	Juniors	138
	Seniors	125	Sixth Form	43
Inspection dates	5 to 6 March 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The International British School of Bucharest is a day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 18. The school was founded in 2000 as a primary school, and the secondary school started in 2002.
- 1.2 The school is a not-for-profit foundation established and owned by two founding directors who, together with the executive director, form the board of directors. It is registered with the Romanian Ministry of Education (ARACIP).
- 1.3 It is situated close to the centre of Bucharest on a small urban site, which has expanded over the years into adjoining properties. The school uses external facilities for physical education lessons and for some of its extra-curricular activities. Since the previous inspection, the primary and secondary school buildings have been refurbished and the school has expanded the sixth-form facilities into a building located a short distance from the main campus.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school seeks to provide a learning environment which values academic success, high moral standards, self-discipline and mutual respect for the cultures, opinions and values of others. It aims to focus on the total development of each pupil and to provide a learning environment which encourages active participation, helps pupils to discover and develop their special talents and challenges them to strive to be the best they can be. The school seeks to help pupils develop critical thinking skills and become confident, successful, independent learners who are able to make a positive difference to the lives of those around them.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come largely from families with a wide range of professional and business backgrounds. Around two-thirds are Romanian, with the remaining third coming from around 20 different nationalities, the largest groups of which are British, Indian, Turkish, Israeli, American and Chinese. Pupils' ability, as measured by standardised assessment tests, is slightly above the national average for the UK. The very large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language; around 20 receive intensive additional support. The school has identified 11 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include dyslexia, ADHD and mild Asperger syndrome; all of these receive additional support.

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. It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements.

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.

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 last inspection was in November 2014.

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 Up to the end of Year 9, pupils follow a curriculum which is based on the English National Curriculum and the framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children under the age of five. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum prepares pupils to sit examinations for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education and, in Years 12 and 13, to sit A-level examinations and to gain places at a wide range of universities around the world, predominantly in the UK, Romania, other European countries and the United States.
- 2.4 The curriculum provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. It enables them to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills and a good understanding of English. It also provides personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and offers careers guidance for pupils in the secondary school. Policies, plans and schemes of work for all subjects take account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils. Pupils in the primary school have a wide range of extra-curricular activities; the range of additional activities for pupils in the secondary school is much narrower but, nevertheless, provides opportunities for pupils to gain additional skills and, together with the formal curriculum, prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life beyond school, underpinned by an understanding of fundamental British values which reflect the value systems of many other countries.

- 2.5 The teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress. For those who start the school with little knowledge of English, additional support is provided until they can understand lessons taught in English. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive specialist support to meet their needs. The teaching is generally well planned, employs effective teaching methods, uses a range of resources and demonstrates good subject knowledge and understanding. Strategies for managing behaviour are effective in the primary school. This is not always the case in the secondary school, where occasional low-level disruption is an irritant to teachers and the majority of pupils but not severe enough to prejudice pupils' chances of making good progress. The school has a suitable framework to assess pupils' performance and to track their progress.

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

2.6 The Standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

- 2.7 Through adherence to the school's aims, its programme for PSHE, assemblies and a variety of special activities and events which take place throughout the year, the school provides many opportunities to promote the sort of values which are fundamental to life in Britain and many other countries, such as democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance. In the primary school, pupils are taught effectively to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour; such teaching is not as effective in parts of the secondary school although, by the time pupils leave the sixth form, these values are well embedded. The school prepares pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship in Romania and the wider world. Enthusiastic participation in activities such as Model United Nations and the school's Community Action Service (CAS) programme deepens pupils' respect for democracy and the democratic process, helps them to develop balanced views on political issues and provides opportunities for them to make meaningful contributions to the lives of others.

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.8 The Standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and takes into account both local requirements and guidance provided for schools in England. It takes very seriously the need to train staff, not only when they join the school, but through annual training sessions and regular updates. All staff are required to undertake a series of distance-learning modules each year. The school brings a safeguarding specialist from the UK to provide basic training for all staff and specialist training for those with particular safeguarding responsibilities and has made this training available to other international schools in Bucharest. The safeguarding policy covers all of the areas required of schools in England and is implemented effectively. The executive director and head of school maintain effective oversight of safeguarding procedures, monitor the implementation of the policy and ensure that an annual review of policy and procedures is undertaken. The designated safeguarding lead (known in the school as the child safeguarding officer [CSO]) maintains confidential records of all child protection concerns and is readily available to deal with any issues that arise. Pupils are made fully aware of issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through assemblies and topics covered in the school's PSHE programme.
- 2.1 The school has appropriate policies in place to prevent bullying, including cyber-bullying. Various initiatives take place during the year to educate pupils about bullying, how to prevent it and what to do should they encounter it, and pupils understand the advice they are given. As a result, bullying is a rare occurrence. Procedures to promote good behaviour are known and understood by pupils and staff, although are not always implemented consistently with the result that a minority of pupils in the secondary school feel that they are not always treated fairly. Despite this, a generally calm and orderly atmosphere pervades the school, relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are generally cordial, and pupils confirm that bullying is a rare occurrence. However, recent attempts to

improve pupils' adherence to the school's dress code and to crack down on the use of mobile phones in the secondary school has not been greeted favourably by a minority of pupils and parents. The school is seeking to address this through providing more opportunities to gather and listen to pupils' views.

- 2.2 The school demonstrates a rigorous approach to health and safety; the school's policies and practice meet the requirements of the Romanian authorities and are in accordance with expectations for schools in England. Training is provided regularly for staff. Records are kept of all health and safety checks, many of which are undertaken by external specialists. Fire alarms and fire-fighting equipment are serviced regularly, and the school receives advice and training from the local fire services. Fire drills and separate earthquake drills are carried out at least termly and are repeated if any shortcomings are identified. An external company carries out an annual fire risk assessment and checks that the school has dealt with any issues identified in the previous year's assessment. Hazardous materials, such as those used by cleaners or in the science laboratories, are stored securely. Following the pre-inspection visit to the school, an overall risk assessment policy was drawn up to clarify procedures, but a comprehensive range of risk assessments available at that stage and during the inspection indicates that the school takes seriously its duty to identify and mitigate risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and related matters and has comprehensive arrangements for providing for pupils who are ill or injured. A full-time nurse is available throughout the school day and a doctor known to the pupils is on call if needed. All staff are trained in first aid. Appropriate records are kept of any medical incidents or consultations. Medicines are stored securely. First-aid kits are available in different locations around the school and for school sports events and trips. The school communicates promptly with parents should their child be ill or injured.
- 2.4 Staff rotas provide for members of staff to be on duty at breaks and lunchtimes, and pupils are supervised appropriately throughout the school day. Admission and attendance registers meet local and UK requirements, are backup up electronically every day and are maintained for the requisite period of time.

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.5 **The Standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.6 The school carries out the required checks on staff and proprietors to ensure their suitability to work with children. The checks ensure that no person employed by the school has been barred or prohibited from teaching or from managing a school. The checks also ascertain each person's identity, their medical fitness and their right to work in the country. Relevant checks are made in the country or countries in which members of staff have previously lived or worked to ensure they do not have a criminal record. All checks are recorded on a single central register of appointments. At the time of the pre-inspection visit, this register did not meet the Standard required but, before the inspection took place, all of the necessary information which had been recorded in staff files was transferred to the register so that it now meets requirements.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.7 **The Standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.8 Suitable and well-maintained toilet and washing facilities are provided for pupils of all ages. Changing rooms and showers for pupils in the secondary school are available at the location used for physical education lessons. The school's first-aid room provides appropriate accommodation and facilities are for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. The buildings are maintained in good condition and are checked regularly for any issues that might compromise the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

The lighting and acoustics in teaching rooms are suitable. Drinking water dispensers are available for pupils throughout the school. Although the site is small, the staggering of break times ensures that there is adequate space for outdoor play. A small all-weather pitch provides adequately for outdoor games for pupils in the primary school, whilst pupils in the secondary school have access to appropriate games facilities at an external location.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.9 The Standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] are met.

2.10 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and local authorities. This information includes details about the proprietor, the aims of the school and the curriculum offered. Arrangements and policies for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, provision for pupils with SEND and those with EAL are available on the school's informative website along with much other useful information. Particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year and its results in public examinations are published. Parents receive progress reports on their own child's progress at various times during the year and a full written report outlining their child's progress and attainment at the end of the year. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.11 The Standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] are met.

2.12 The school has an appropriate complaints policy which is available to parents through the school website along with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. This process seeks to resolve any complaint informally but, if concerns are not resolved, parents may proceed to lodge a formal complaint in writing. If the complaint remains unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel which includes at least one person independent of the management and running of the school and which parents may attend, accompanied if they wish. The panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. A confidential record is kept of all complaints and findings, including action taken by the school whether or not the complaint is upheld. The policy provides clear time scales for each stage of the complaints process, and the school's records show that complaints are handled promptly and that most are resolved at the informal stage.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.13 The Standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

2.14 The proprietors ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards for British Schools Overseas are met consistently, and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. The school's leaders responded quickly and effectively to a small number of issues which were identified during the pre-inspection visit and demonstrated keen intent to meet more than just the minimum standards.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 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 executive director, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Graham Sims

Reporting inspector

Mr Robert Youlten

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