



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

Cambridge School of Bucharest

November 2018



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School's Details

School	Cambridge School of Bucharest			
Address	Calea Dorobantilor 39 Sector 1 Bucharest 010553 Romania			
Telephone number	0040 788 344 849			
Email address	rita.maluf@cambridgeschool.ro			
Director	Mrs Rita Hayek Maalouf			
Chair of governors	Mr Joseph Khoury			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	542			
	Boys	271	Girls	271
	EYFS	32	Juniors	238
	Seniors	222	Sixth form	50
Inspection dates	14 to 15 November 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Cambridge School of Bucharest is a day school for boys and girls from Nursery to Year 13, catering for a full range of ability. The school is owned by the Mateas Foundation, of which there are three directors, and one of these acts as the chair of the school's small governing body.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1994 and is an International School operating in Romania under the accreditation of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education and acknowledged by the Romanian Ministry of Education through its agency, ARACIP (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education.) The curriculum is modelled on the National Curriculum of England with support from the SABIS global network in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects the school follows the National Curriculum for England.
- 1.3 The school operates on three sites. Senior and junior pupils are educated in two nearby historic buildings. The Kindergarten which comprises Nursery, Reception and Year 1 is in a recently refurbished building slightly further away. In the autumn of 2019 the school hopes to relocate to a purpose-built campus in the north of the city.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to produce independent, collaborative, forward-thinking, tolerant and respectful young people. It aspires to promote in its pupils a strong sense of community and service. Within a supportive and caring environment, it seeks to foster in its pupils high academic standards.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils are judged by the school to be of a range of abilities. The school has identified six pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and all of these receive additional support. The needs/disabilities vary from under-developed gross and fine motor skills to issues of speech and language development. There are 525 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). There are 39 pupils who receive additional English support of whom 29 pupils lack the understanding to fully engage in lessons. The school identifies identifies about a quarter of its pupils as being the most able in its population and they, together with those who have special talent in sport, are given additional challenges. Pupils comprise 42 nationalities. Half the pupils are Romanian but there are significant minorities of Chinese, Lebanese and Turkish pupils. Most pupils live within an hours' travelling time 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. 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 has not previously had a British inspection.

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 pupils follow a curriculum based on the English National Curriculum and the framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). All subjects are exclusively taught in English, except the school's modern languages, French and German, and its mother-tongue classes in Chinese, Romanian, Arabic and Turkish.

- 2.4 The school's curriculum is suitable for the ages and aptitudes of the pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The amount of teaching time per week is in line with British practice. Pupils gain experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. The curriculum is supported by schemes of work which direct and assist teachers in planning for all abilities in their classes. In this way the curriculum provides all pupils with the opportunity to learn and make progress. The curriculum also includes a programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). This has been developed so that it provides for the support of, as well as the learning about, British values, a respect for other people, an awareness of diversity, and with the outcome that pupils are prepared for adult life in modern democratic societies. During the inspection, pupils attended an address from officials from the British Embassy; an event to use British links that the school has established. The parental questionnaire responses showed that almost all parents appreciate the breadth of the curriculum.

- 2.5 The curriculum is supported by a programme of extra-curricular activities. For older pupils there is a suitable careers programme and support for those making university applications.
- 2.6 Pupils' progress is promoted by teaching which is generally well planned and supported by suitable resources. Teachers have a good understanding of their subjects and their pupils' needs, and are able to explain things clearly, thus helping pupils' understanding. It does not discriminate against pupils because of their differences. Behaviour in lessons is good and well managed, especially in classes of older pupils. Through its use of tracking systems with younger pupils and the use of IGCSE and A-level examinations in the case of senior pupils, the school has a suitable framework to assess pupils' progress and attainment.

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 PSHE programme, its assemblies such as that described above, its use of display and its general ethos ensure that the school fosters pupils' personal development and provides them with the opportunities to understand values such as the rule of law, democratic institutions (starting with their own school meetings), individual liberty, and respect and tolerance of others whatever their differences. In this way pupils are enabled to acquire a broad knowledge and respect for public institutions and services in England and are prepared for the duties and responsibility of citizenship in the host and other countries.
- 2.9 The systematic PSHE programme, as well as the way it is developed in subject classes such as history and English, encourage self-awareness, moral thinking, positive behaviour, thoughtfulness and respect. In so doing pupils follow the aims of the school, including its aim of public service.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- 2.11 The school employs suitable arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. It attends to local requirements as well as the UK guidance in the recently updated document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. The school has recently revised its safeguarding policy in order to respond to UK guidance. The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively. The identification among staff and pupils of the principal designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the two assistant DSLs are clear, as are roles and contact details. Pupils' safe use of technology is closely monitored by the school. All staff including non-teaching staff have regular update training provided by the DSLs who themselves have had training appropriate to their responsibilities. All staff have received recent training, new staff receive training on appointment, and further updates are planned. Romanian translators are used with staff who have no English. All procedures for reporting are clear and staff are familiar with what they have to do. As a consequence, pupils state that they feel safe in school and online.
- 2.12 The school has a suitable policy to engender good behaviour with a series of rewards and sanctions, and with the maintenance of records to track any patterns. There is also a suitable anti-bullying protocol. Careful records are again kept. In their questionnaire responses a small number of pupils said there was some bullying which went unchallenged by teachers. In discussion it was apparent that these responses were as a result of a misunderstanding of the definition of bullying, and senior pupils reported that although there has been significant bullying in the past, this was no longer a problem in the school.

- 2.13 Fire standards meet the British school requirements as well as those of the host country. Fire practices are regularly held and evacuation times are rapid. Pupils explained what they have to do in the event of an earthquake. The school has a suitable policy for risk assessments which was strengthened in the course of the inspection. The school has a comprehensive first-aid policy, with a large number of first aiders. There is suitable provision and staff for those who fall ill or who suffer injury. Record keeping is good. Pupils are well supervised and know how to contact members of staff. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained.

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

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

- 2.15 The school's approach to the verification of the suitability of staff is very rigorous. The school confirmed that all staff, volunteers and the directors are included on its register of appointments. Its human resources officer (HRO) also confirmed that in the two years during which the school had begun to prepare for this inspection, no member of staff had been dismissed for unsuitability to work with children. The HRO usually carries out the necessary checks well before the start of employment; occasionally documentation such as photo identification is presented on the day of arrival to the school. Applicants complete an application form and supply two references, and three in the case of the directors, and the HRO checks curricula vitae for enquiries to pursue in the case of any gaps in employment history. Volunteers are vetted similarly to staff.

- 2.16 The school, as a Romanian organisation, is now unable to obtain an enhanced criminal records (DBS) check for British nationals and those who have worked in the UK, who do not have a British address. Since June 2018 it has obtained International Child Protection Certificates (ICPCs) from the UK for all such staff, which cover necessary barred list and prohibition checks. Other nationals have a Romanian or country-of-nationality police check. One British member of staff was subject to a British management barring check on appointment. Checks are also made of medical fitness and the right to work. The school does not employ staff from supply agencies but requires companies employing contractors to have made the required local checks. Contractors have to produce photo identification and are monitored whilst on-site. Visiting speakers are asked to produce a police check document and a photo ID when they visit.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.17 The Standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met

- 2.18 Pupils are provided with suitable and well-maintained toilet and washing facilities on all three sites. Disabled pupils have access to toilet facilities in their classrooms. Pupils can change for sport and there is a shower for older pupils. The school has suitable accommodation for the short-term care of pupils who become ill or injured during the day. The premises are maintained in a suitable condition to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are promoted. Lighting and acoustic conditions throughout the school are suitable. Water fountains, maintained in clean condition, are dispersed throughout the sites. Pupils have sufficient space for physical education and recreation. The Kindergarten and the Lower School site are equipped with indoor physical education facilities for use when the weather prevents outside play. The main site has a permanent open-air structure that allows play when it is raining.

Part 6 – Provision of information

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

2.20 The school provides or makes available a suitable range of information to parents and prospective parents. This information includes contact details for the school, the company director who is chair of the governing body, and the leadership, as well as a statement of the school's ethos. Policies relating to safeguarding, admissions, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, the curriculum, health and safety, first aid, provision for pupils with SEND and those with EAL, as well as complaints are published on the school's website together with other useful information. Particulars of the school's academic performance in the preceding school year are also posted on the website. Parents receive written reports on their children's progress and attainment in spring and winter.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

2.22 The school has a suitable complaints policy which is available to parents on its website. This provides for a three-stage process with suitable timescales, including an informal first stage. Should a concern not be resolved, parents may proceed to a formal stage. The school also makes provision for complaints which remain unresolved to be heard before a panel which includes one member independent of the management and running of the school, and which may be attended by the parents, accompanied if they so wish. This panel may make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A confidential record is kept of all complaints indicating any action taken by the school, whether or not the complaint is upheld. The school's records indicate that any complaints have so far been resolved at the informal stage.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

2.24 In its quest to be recognised as a BSO, and in preparation for its first British inspection, the school has worked very hard to ensure that all current and prospective staff, volunteers and the proprietors have been checked for work in schools as required by the current Standards for British schools overseas. It has also carried out the considerable task of reconstructing its single central register of staff, volunteers and proprietors so that its format includes all current personnel, and in the future all departing personnel, in line with British recommended practice. Carrying out their own checks of the system, inspectors recognised the diligence with which this work had been done.

2.25 The proprietors ensure that the leadership and management of the school have sufficient knowledge and understanding to 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 leadership responded promptly and effectively to remove any ambiguity or minor errors in its documentation to ensure that the school meets the 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 chair of governors, and attended an assembly and morning registration. 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

Dr Stephen Grounds	Reporting inspector
Mrs Sarah White	Team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS/COBIS school, Belgium)
Mr Timothy Kirk	Team inspector (Former overseas link designate, HMC school, UK)