



The  
**P**RAGUE  
**B**RITISH  
**S**CHOOL

**Independent Schools  
Inspection November 6<sup>th</sup>  
2006**

**Independent Schools  
Council (ISC)**

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**Inspection of**

**The Prague British School  
(formerly 'the British  
International School,  
Prague')**

**By the Independent  
Schools Inspectorate (ISI)**

**On November 6 – 9, 2006**

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# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### **The British International School, Prague**

Full Name of the School	<b>The British International School, Prague</b>
DfES Number	<b>703/6233</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>ICO 27092364</b>
Address	<b>K Lesu 558/2, 142 00 Praha 4, Czech Republic</b>
Telephone Number	<b>00420 226 096 200</b>
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Educational Director	<b>Mr Jeremy Long</b>
Proprietor	<b>Mr Robert Blasko</b>
Age Range	<b>1 1/2 – 18</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2006</b>

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the United Kingdom (UK) government, under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2005, for the purpose of inspecting schools in England which are members of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) associations. The government also recognises ISI inspections of British schools elsewhere in membership of the Council of British Independent Schools in the European Communities (COBISEC). ISI inspections use a framework and criteria consistent with those used by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the government's inspection agency in England, which is responsible for the inspection of maintained schools and non-association independent schools. ISI applies similar standards of judgement and is monitored by Ofsted. ISI inspections in England also report to the UK government on whether schools meet the requirements of the law in England. While British schools elsewhere in the world are not subject to English legal requirements, these schools are nevertheless encouraged to meet them voluntarily, as far as is possible in their local circumstances, and ISI and Ofsted inspections take account of this. This inspection has been conducted by ISI on the above basis.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the School**

- 1.1 The school sets out a statement of its vision to "deliver a modern and relevant curriculum with high academic standards and attention to the individual." Specific aims emphasise a high standard of English and the development of international understanding, tolerance and respect

for human rights. These are to be achieved within a “safe, secure and stimulating environment” for the school’s pupils, where courtesy, enjoyment of learning, self-confidence and moral values are esteemed.

- 1.2 The British International School opened in 1992 and grew rapidly to cover the full age range from 18 months to 18 years. English is the language of instruction and support is provided for non-English speakers. The school is continuing to grow and currently operates on four sites. The Primary School is based in all four: Kamyk and Modrany, which is Foundation Stage only and incorporates the Acorns Day-Care Centre for very young children, in the South, with Bubenec (Foundation Stage and Years I and 2) and Petriny (Years 3-6) in the North. The Grammar School (secondary) operates entirely on the Kamyk site with the exception of a single Year 7 class in Petriny. Over 50 nationalities are represented in the school, although about one third are from Czech families. The school provides an additional curriculum, undertaken outside normal school hours, for Czech pupils wishing to retain the option of re-entering the Czech school system and is at an early stage of developing a Czech language medium school. Inevitably, as the school caters for an often transient population, there is considerable movement in and out during the year, albeit mainly at term ends: approximately a fifth of the pupils leave during each year and are replaced by newcomers. It is recognised by the Czech Ministry of Education and registered with the Department for Education and Skills for England. The school had an initial short inspection in 2004, when it became a member of the Council of British Independent Schools in the European Community (COBISEC). There are currently over 600 pupils, over 100 in the Foundation Stage, just over 300 in the rest of the Primary School and in excess of 200 in the Grammar School, coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Currently there are more boys in the Primary School and more girls in the Grammar School.
- 1.3 The school does not select pupils on academic ability. A Foundation Stage assessment is undertaken for the youngest pupils and the Primary School chooses to use internally tests which are also available to schools in England and Wales, although comparative national data is available only at the end of Year 6. Observation and tests, however, indicate that, at the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils’ average ability is broadly in line with the national average in England and Wales. On entry to the Grammar School, however, it is well above average. Therefore, if pupils are performing in line with their abilities, results would be broadly in line with national averages in England and Wales at the end of the Primary School and well above them at the end of their secondary education. Well over three-quarters of pupils in the primary section and virtually all those of secondary age do not have English as their principal language and about a third receive additional support. Twenty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and all receive some support.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The educational experience for pupils is consistent with the school’s aims and includes a wide and appropriate range of subjects and activities. A sound balance of time is allocated to each in the Foundation Stage and the Grammar School, and a heavy emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy in Years 1 to 6.

#### *Primary School - Foundation Stage*

- 2.2 The education provided fully meets the school’s declared aims and is of good quality. Emphasis is placed on a high standard of English and the development of tolerance within a

caring, safe and secure and stimulating environment. It is well geared to children's needs. The English and Welsh 'Birth to Three Matters Framework' is fully in place and pupils' experience covers all the six areas of learning: personal development, communication, language and literacy, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Learning continues even in the lunch break where children handle cutlery, talk about healthy food and look at its colour, texture, flavours and consistency. Extra-curricular activities are limited but include a gym ball club. Parents are welcome and much involved in school. Links with the local community include visits to a farm, a dentist and a potter's workshop.

- 2.3 Children are well prepared for work in Year 1 through a carefully structured induction process which includes visits both by teachers to them and by them to the appropriate site. They learn about responsibility by being 'Today's Helper' in their classrooms. The curriculum is organised effectively with medium and long-term plans being developed allowing sensible flexibility in the short term. However, children's needs for educational support are not always effectively identified in order that adequate and appropriate provision can be made. Nonetheless, the needs of children who speak English as an additional language, or have no English at all, are well met.

#### ***Primary School - Years 1 to 6***

- 2.4 The school's provision contributes effectively to the linguistic, mathematical, human and social development of pupils, enabling them also to acquire proficiency in the skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The curriculum provided is broad in scope, but the heavy emphasis on linguistic, particularly formal grammar, and mathematical skills produces a lack of balance. This imbalance marginalises other subjects such as science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE) and humanities. The curriculum is clearly structured, with short-term plans offering good, detailed information. Some subject policies and schemes of work show well-planned development in the difficulty of work set, although checking what has actually been done and coordinating the work is, as yet, in its early stages as the appointment of teachers with curricular responsibility is very recent. Extra-curricular activities are seen as important and, overall, the provision is extensive and well planned, although it varies across the sites. Day trips linked to the curriculum take learning beyond the classroom and pupils in Years 3 to 6 can participate in both winter and summer residential trips.
- 2.5 The large number of pupils for whom English is not their first language is well catered for. Facilities for this provision are a strength of the school: immersion courses and additional support enable pupils to access the full curriculum within a relatively short time. Current policy provides for the identification of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and offers some support on all sites. The school has begun further planning both for these pupils and for gifted and talented pupils, for whom no formal provision currently exists. This includes recent in-service-training for staff. Effective planning of separate work for pupils of different abilities within individual lessons was also seen.
- 2.6 The school has a good structure for pupils' transition to the next phase of their education. A detailed programme of preliminary visits, activities and meetings for pupils allows them to become familiar with their new teachers and helps to settle them quickly into the Grammar School.

#### ***Grammar School***

- 2.7 The curriculum suits the needs and abilities of the wide range of pupils and contributes to their intellectual, physical, social and moral development. It is appropriately balanced for pupils in Years 7 to 9, although no design and technology is taught. The range of options for the

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) is sound and provides a good base for the International Baccalaureate (IB) courses which follow.

- 2.8 Pupils are offered a limited, but growing, range of extra-curricular activities in which they participate with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Many are involved in service activities as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the Creativity-Action-Service element of the IB course. The opportunities for work experience, however, are minimal for all except fluent Czech speakers.
- 2.9 The curricular links between phases are relatively undeveloped, partly owing to the limited time available to heads of departments. Some support is provided to pupils moving into IB courses and work is in progress to improve this transition. Pupils have access to careers guidance in Year 11 and careers education is being developed as part of the personal, social and health education course (PSHE) in Years 7 to 11. Although a pamphlet is provided to assist with university entrance and individual external consultancy is available, there is no structured provision for careers education and guidance for pupils in the sixth form.
- 2.10 Curriculum planning is developing and schemes of work are being produced; current practice ranges from the excellent materials produced for geography and mathematics to some very cursory and incomplete schemes. Much work remains to be done but a sound start has been made, supported by a good structure.
- 2.11 Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is at an early stage but is developing. There is currently no assessment of pupils on entry to the school and no review of current practice. Pupils who are not native English speakers are provided with a course in English as a Modern Language (EML). This is a well-structured course. Those with very little or no English on entry initially attend a language learning support class. This class can contain a large age range, posing problems for some areas of the curriculum such as PE. When they transfer into mainstream classes there is little in-class support for that transition.

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.12 The school meets its aims well. Pupils are well educated bearing in mind their age, ability and linguistic background. They achieve good levels of knowledge, skills, understanding and application and are successful in developing the essential skills for work and study.

#### ***Primary School - Foundation Stage***

- 2.13 Good levels of children's knowledge, skills, understanding and application is evident in work-books, photographic records and displays, supported by profiles, reports, journals and diaries. Children showed themselves to be able to pursue tasks successfully in the lessons observed. Two children together 'pegging out washing' on a number line, each item marked with a different number to develop sequencing, whilst two more played hopscotch on number boards, all developing language, number and physical skills. No differences are apparent between the attainment of different groups of children. Children entering the Foundation Stage are given an informal baseline assessment which shows that, overall, they are of average ability. Some children have little or no English.
- 2.14 Children gradually develop positive attitudes to their work. They learn to work both individually and together with others, listening to each other. Reading skills progressively develop and children learn how books work and derive great pleasure from stories. Mark making develops into writing and literacy plays a large part in the curriculum. Numeracy also features in everyday activities, such as counting children at registration time as well as more focussed activities, such as developing number lines and volumetric activities. Children develop mathematical vocabulary such as 'more than', 'less than', 'time' and 'space'. Little was seen of the effective use of ICT and control technology. Resources for these are

inadequate. Although interactive whiteboards are available in reception classes they are not used effectively by the children.

- 2.15 In circle time children can express thoughts and ideas, learn to listen and take turns. They are very sensible in independent play, choosing an activity, responding positively when asked to help to tidy up and showing consideration for one another, as when one girl in reception helped a new pupil with work on the computer. In groups or whole classes they also work well, for example in singing together in a music lesson. Concentration and perseverance are evident in the way children tackle tasks, but they also show enthusiasm and enjoyment, as when a nursery class made a three dimensional habitat for Elmer the Elephant.

### ***Primary School - Years 1 to 6***

- 2.16 Pupils at this age have a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding. They respond well to the strong emphasis on the acquisition of the formal English skills of grammar, spelling, punctuation and textual comprehension. However, when given the opportunity, pupils can also apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to express themselves, to think and act creatively and to enjoy literature. No significant differences in relative achievement were observed between different areas of the curriculum or different groups or gender of pupils. However, pupils who join the school with a limited command of English make rapid progress and good levels of achievement were seen both in lessons and in the written work scrutinised. Standards observed, supported by the school's internal assessment, show a level of attainment in Year 2 broadly in line with the national average for England and Wales. Given that the majority are learning English as non-native speakers they are likely to be performing at least in line with their abilities. At the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests has been above the national average for all maintained schools, although very variable across the years, in science. Attainment in mathematics and English, the school's priorities, has been more consistent and usually well above the average. This indicates that pupils' attainment at this age is good in relation to their abilities and there has been no very significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
- 2.17 Pupils listen well and speak with confidence, articulately contributing their own ideas to class discussion in a wide variety of subjects. They read and write effectively. Although pupils apply mathematical skills and concepts well in structured lessons, using textbooks and worksheets for guidance, little opportunity exists for investigation and problem solving. In most year groups pupils rarely use ICT within lessons, either as a tool for learning or to extend their knowledge of the technology itself. However, in a Year 5 geography lesson pupils gave effective presentations using appropriate software and in an ICT lesson the same pupils used software for graphic design with confidence. Equally rare was the opportunity for pupils to make notes or to organise their work independently: however, in one Year 3 history lesson pupils did good work both independently and collaboratively to tackle a research task on Tudor houses. Pupils do work well both co-operatively and individually. They generally settle quickly and quietly to work, concentrate, persevere with the task and show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their work.

### ***Grammar School***

- 2.18 Pupils achieve good levels of understanding, knowledge and skills in the subjects and activities provided. They can apply these effectively and think and act critically and creatively. No significant differences in relative attainment were perceived between different groups of pupils or between areas of the curriculum, although the school does not attempt to analyse such differences, for example between girls and boys. The achievement of pupils whose native language is not English is very commendable and represents a significant achievement for the school. Over the last three years results overall in IGCSE examinations have been well above national averages for England and Wales indicating that, even given the considerable movement in and out of the school, pupils' attainment in relation to their abilities

is at least satisfactory. The numbers taking IB examinations have been small, although growing, but results overall show the proportion of grades achieved at levels 6/7 to be above the world average in 2005 and well above it in 2006.

- 2.19 The majority of pupils are articulate, listen effectively, write fluently and read intelligently. In a Year 13 economics lesson pupils offered clear explanations of apparent contradictions. Pupils of all ages who were interviewed by inspectors spoke fluently and with considerable confidence. In science and geography there was some good application of mathematical concepts, although little was seen across the rest of the curriculum. Some effective use of ICT was seen in an EML lesson where pupils worked with enthusiasm on an internet-based interactive quiz on prepositions. In general, however, the use of ICT does not appear to be fully developed or embedded in the curriculum. Very frequently pupils show they can think for themselves and argue cogently, as in a Year 13 discussion on 'Othello' and, at the other end of the age range, in a Year 7 English lesson where pupils made and explained effective choices of figurative language.
- 2.20 As they progress through the school, pupils increasingly take their own notes and organise their work independently. Most work effectively both on their own and co-operatively with others. Competent independent study was observed in a science lesson on generating electricity, whilst good co-operative working was seen in a Year 7 science discussion on the environment and feeding relationships. The great majority of pupils apply themselves well and enjoy their work, developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective study.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.21 The moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a strong feature of the school. Pupils show confidence and self esteem and are able to distinguish right and wrong from an early age. The school is successful in promoting values of tolerance and mutual respect of cultural diversity, in line with its stated aims. Relatively few opportunities exist for raising pupils' awareness of spirituality.

#### ***Primary School***

- 2.22 Assemblies can provide occasions when pupils are able to explore the spiritual aspects of life. In an assembly for Years 1 and 2 on remembrance, pupils were given time to reflect on people they cared for and those they no longer saw. In some lessons, such as art and dance, pupils learn how to explore their inner world of creativity and imagination. Pupils develop an increasing self esteem and confidence as they pass through the school, encouraged by the use of praise and rewards and good relationships between pupils and staff.
- 2.23 Pupils are able to distinguish right and wrong from an early age. They have a clear understanding of moral issues through the PSHE programme and the youngest pupils are able to discuss concerns through "circle" time. An example of this was seen in a reception class which was considering 'fairness'. Moral dilemmas are also highlighted in other lessons, such as Year 6 science, where pupils discussed how waste disposal affects the world.
- 2.24 Pupils develop well socially. They care for each other and are kind and tolerant, as shown by the high standard of behaviour and by pupils' awareness of the feelings of others. From the very start, pupils in the pre-school groups learn to share and consider others within an organisation with clear routines. Older pupils are aware of the "Golden Rules" which are reinforced in the daily life of the school and supported by house points and certificates for effort and success. Pupils interviewed in Year 2 clearly respected these rules and understood that they existed for their benefit. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to begin to learn to play their part in the community such as when a group of Year 2 children served lunch to others. They can also take responsibility, for example, by being elected to the School

Council. Year 3 pupils interviewed were positive about the benefits of the Council and felt that their ideas were sometimes put into effect.

- 2.25 Pupils develop respect and tolerance of cultural diversity and readily make friends with others from a range of countries and cultural backgrounds. They gain an understanding of other cultures through the celebrations of festivals in assemblies and in activities, such as marking Chinese New Year and Divali, seen in the Foundation Stage. Displays also celebrate diversity, such as that created by pupils learning English as an additional language entitled “We are the World”. Through events such as the International Day, pupils are able to learn at first hand from each other about the lives of the international community represented at the school.

### ***Grammar School***

- 2.26 Pupils are encouraged to develop self-awareness and self-esteem. Co-operative working and the mutual trust existing between pupils and staff help to instil confidence and personal responsibility. Whilst these values are fostered by the school community, there are few opportunities in timetabled provision for the examination and discussion of different beliefs and ideologies and only occasional scope for exploring the non-material or spiritual aspects of human existence.
- 2.27 The role model provided by the staff is helpful in setting standards of moral conduct. Pupils are friendly and considerate and moral concepts are considered in the curriculum. A Year 11 English lesson examined issues of racial prejudice in ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’, whilst an assembly challenged pupils with a powerful presentation on their moral duty to protect the environment. Pupils of all ages enjoy working together and have a firm sense of right and wrong.
- 2.28 Pupils develop well socially, working effectively in groups and pairs in classroom activities. Assemblies encourage pupils to understand what it means to be members of a community. They are keen to contribute to community life as members of the school council and House Captains. Although the school has no formal community service programme, some older pupils do volunteer to work in a soup kitchen or visit a mother and baby refuge in their spare time.
- 2.29 In humanities lessons pupils learn about Czech culture and they are sensitive to the wide cultural diversity within the school community. The teaching staff are drawn from many different countries and the pupils follow their example in respecting each others’ cultures and traditions particularly in the Annual International Day, in which national dress and cuisine is seen in school. In discussions it became very clear that pupils have strong views on the importance of tolerance and the ethos of the school is supportive of this.

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.30 The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make progress, especially those for whom English is not their mother tongue, suitably meeting the aims of the school. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory but marking is inconsistent and insufficient use is made of assessment data.

### ***Primary School - Foundation Stage***

- 2.31 All the lessons seen were of at least satisfactory quality and the great majority were of a high standard. Teaching enables all children to acquire new knowledge and understanding and to make suitable progress in the development of important skills. This is particularly true of pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue and must learn the language which will be the medium of instruction. Provision for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, however, is much less secure and progress is often slower. Teachers have high expectations of

children, encouraging them to enjoy their work and challenging them to think for themselves, as in a lesson with a nursery class in which children had to think about what they would put into a box to take to the moon and to draw and describe what they had chosen.

- 2.32 Lessons are well planned and children are given clear, precise instructions relating to their activities. Time is used effectively and lessons are conducted at a suitable pace. Much teaching involves children in a range of activities, including discussions, investigations, theory and practical work and the older children work both individually and in groups. Resources are sufficient and well used to create a rich and stimulating environment. Libraries are well stocked and classrooms have an appropriate range of books needed to support the teaching. Insufficient use, however, is made of computers and control technology, such as remote control cars, to support children's learning in this area.
- 2.33 Relationships between staff and children are strong and based on mutual respect, leading to good, responsible behaviour. Children are confident in expressing their ideas and teaching is based on a good knowledge of them and on the ability to provide sensitive help wherever possible. Teachers have a very good understanding of the six areas of learning and also of the needs and attainments of their charges. They use a baseline assessment in the first few weeks of school. Half-termly assessments are made in both nursery and reception for tracing, mark-making and cutting and in reception for alphabet/sounds and key words together with termly assessments in all areas of the Foundation Stage. The outcomes are used to assist in planning work to ensure progress. Marking is helpful, detailed and positive without ignoring what is wrong.

#### ***Primary School - Years 1-6***

- 2.34 Almost all the lessons seen were of at least satisfactory quality. Over half were good and a significant number were judged to be outstanding. Teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress. An emphasis on literacy provides access for all pupils. Those for whom English is not their mother tongue develop vocabulary rapidly, whilst those for whom it is, acquire increasingly sophisticated language. Year 6 pupils were observed defining 'brawny' and 'ribald'. Teaching is well planned and uses mainly effective strategies. Good lessons seen were well paced, engaging the interest of pupils. Pupils were given clear instructions with effective questioning and brainstorming. Worksheets, used widely, enable work to be set at different linguistic levels. Some variation between the three sites was observed. For example, fewer examples of free writing were seen in Kamyk than in Bubenec, where good imaginative writing in Years 1 and 2 was seen. Whilst provision is made for pupils on different linguistic levels, less evidence was seen of support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or of provision for the very able for whom learning could be very limited. A Year 4 art class, however, did provide three separate targets, set at different levels of difficulty, for assessing purpose and suggesting improvements to the design of a chair.
- 2.35 In almost all lessons teaching showed appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and of the pupils' abilities. Classrooms have good resources, ranging from a giant abacus to big, furry dice and counting boards. Teachers used prepared visual aids as well as electronic whiteboards. Display was effective and lessons seen were orderly. Year 2 pupils in Kamyk were reminded in their PSHE lesson of the importance of listening carefully.
- 2.36 The school evaluates pupils' performance on a number of levels. Standard attainment tasks are analysed annually to monitor standards, identify patterns of performance and look for exceptional progress or causes for concern. The school holds assessed work for the major subjects in files for individual pupils. These are discussed and compared with parallel year groups on the same or different sites. Despite this, the standards of marking are uneven, varying from outstanding, in Year 4 in Kamyk, to some which was minimal. In Bubenec and Petryny marking seen was usually effective and particularly so in English. One good example

of pupils' self-assessment was seen in ICT, but examples of marking being used to inform the subsequent planning of work were rare.

### ***Grammar School***

- 2.37 Teaching was at least satisfactory in virtually all lessons. Most were good or outstanding, providing a lively and stimulating experience for pupils and leading them to a deeper understanding of the topics studied. Clear and detailed explanations take into account the abilities and backgrounds of the pupils. Pupils with mother tongues other than English are sensitively supported whilst the most able pupils are sometimes given appropriate extension work. Lessons have a positive atmosphere which encourages pupils to contribute ideas, persevere and behave responsibly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, praising and encouraging them to think creatively for themselves. Most teaching is well planned with a clear structure and uses a range of activities. In a Year 9 ICT lesson pupils worked towards solving a murder mystery which taught them how to construct a database. Occasionally, when a lesson was not thoroughly planned, pupils lost concentration or were unsure what was expected of them. Lessons for the two Year 7 groups, one based in the main Grammar school site at Kamyk and the other in the new, largely primary, site at Petriny have both followed the same Grammar school curriculum. The teaching styles experienced by the two classes are different, but, at present, equally satisfactory. In Petriny the teaching of English and mathematics is more primary in style and in science produces more open-ended tasks allowing for swifter progress. Monitoring is taking place.
- 2.38 Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and of the aptitudes of the pupils they teach. Lively questioning tests understanding and gives pupils positive feedback. The most enthusiastic teachers can share their passion and produce an atmosphere conducive to learning and enjoyment. Resources are utilised effectively and the recently refurbished library is both well stocked and well used.
- 2.39 Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and there are many examples of constructive comments, but marking of work is uneven and often cursory. It varies considerably across subjects, some using grades, others marks and yet others National Curriculum levels. Some subjects are developing a system of targets and pupils are sometimes given the opportunity to write their own. The use of IGCSE and IB examinations provides an external standard against which the school can measure itself at the end of the secondary phase. At the beginning, a diagnostic baseline testing is in its infancy, with English, mathematics and science just starting testing in Year 7 in a process which will make it possible to analyse more accurately the progress of individual pupils.

## **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

- 3.1 The teaching and support staff meet the school's aims in providing effective guidance and support for all pupils. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils and their peers is very good. Systems to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are currently not satisfactory in several respects.

#### ***Primary School Pastoral Care***

- 3.2 Overall, staff in the Primary School provide effective support and guidance for all pupils. The quality of relationships is very good and permeates the school. The friendly and supportive approach of staff is much appreciated by the pupils. During interviews many pupils commented on the help they receive from their teachers and also the approachability of most of the staff. Relationships between pupils of all ages are very good: they treat each other with

respect and consideration. They are often heard apologising spontaneously to each other after, for example, an accidental collision in a PE lesson. The responsibilities of form tutors are clearly defined in their job description, although, in the absence of any monitoring, performance varies in quality. The school has a brief pastoral care policy.

- 3.3 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are effective. The “Golden Rules” which are displayed in form rooms and the anti-bullying policy provide pupils with clear guidelines to which they respond positively. Pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions and feel that, on the whole, it is a fair system. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to deal with problems for themselves. Many examples of the success of this approach were seen during the inspection. Levels of supervision of pupils are high in the Primary School at all times but in particular when pupils are in areas of the buildings shared by other schools, for example the playground at Petriny. All staff carry out their supervisory duties very efficiently. In Petriny, the Year 7 pupils enjoy and take very seriously their role of monitor, which involves supporting staff in the care of the younger pupils, for example, escorting them to the playground at break.

#### ***Grammar School Pastoral Care***

- 3.4 Pastoral arrangements are of high quality and appropriate policies are set out in the staff handbook. Pupils trust and appreciate the support and guidance provided, particularly by the form tutors, and feel able to turn both to them and to subject teachers for help with both educational and personal problems. Pupils are expected to behave well and generally do so. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy a positive and happy environment.
- 3.5 The school’s policy on rewards and sanctions is well understood. Pupils consider the rules to be reasonable and fair. There is currently no formal anti-bullying policy in the Grammar School, but any unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, is dealt with effectively. There is also a merit and award system which works well in the lower years, losing its appeal for older pupils.

#### ***Whole School Welfare, Health and Safety***

- 3.6 There is no overall policy for welfare, health and safety: provision is currently fragmented. There is a Health and Safety Committee which meets monthly and has representation from each phase of the school. It is chaired by the head teacher of the Grammar School, although she does not have overall responsibility for this area and no job description of anyone with this responsibility was seen. The committee has not dealt effectively with matters needing attention: poor audibility of a fire alarm in some parts of the main site was discussed, but was still a problem three months later when a fire practice was held.
- 3.7 Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils meet Czech requirements as the inspection team understands them. They therefore, for the most part, comply with regulatory requirements for independent schools in England and Wales. However, where arrangements would not fully satisfy these requirements, and where the inspection team felt this variation could compromise welfare, health and safety for pupils, note has been made in the following paragraph and recommendations made in paragraph 5.4.3.
- 3.8 The Primary School has a child protection policy, although it gives little guidance on how to recognise child abuse. The Grammar School has no such policy at present although there is a clear intention to produce a whole school policy. There is no designated child protection officer with responsibility to take action in the event of abuse being found. Comprehensive and detailed risk assessments are prepared for off-site visits, but no risk assessments have been prepared for potentially hazardous activities within school, such as chemical use and storage or physical education activities. Procedures for fire safety are in place and approved by the fire officer, but in a number of classrooms no instructions for emergency evacuation were seen during the inspection. A whole school first aid policy is in place, supported by regular training

for staff. The Primary School benefits from the work of a well-qualified health and hygiene officer, based in Modrany.

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.9 The school has formed an effective partnership with parents and has broad links with the wider community which are developing well. There is generally good passage of information between the school and parents. However, procedures for addressing parental complaints are currently unsatisfactory.
- 3.10 The vast majority of parents answering the questionnaire expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the main aspects of the school's education. Parents have good relationships with staff and are very satisfied with the education and support provided for pupils.
- 3.11 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in activities in the school and, through the work of the Friends' Association, these opportunities are quickly growing. The Friends' Association has several sub-committees, including fund-raising, the organisation of events, welcoming new parents and publications. A regular newsletter effectively informs the school community of news and forthcoming events. It also promotes social interaction within the school community such as the fireworks evening, an international evening and a summer ball and barbeque. Each school class has a parent representative on a Friends' Association sub-committee and the staff are also represented. Parents support the work of the staff within the school in a number of curricular and extra-curricular areas. Examples include reading support and help with clubs. The school's 'open door' policy to parents is in evidence.
- 3.12 Parents and prospective parents receive a good range of information from the school. There is an informative school website, a school prospectus and DVD, parents' handbooks for all phases of the school and a school yearbook/magazine. General school information and curriculum information is communicated to parents very well through a range of media. Whole school weekly newsletters are published as well as other regular newsletters from the Acorns Day-Care Centre, Nursery and the Reception. The Acorns Day-Care Centre operates an excellent weekly 'Parents' Corner' which welcomes parents to meet and share experiences with each other and with staff. The Grammar School has a contact book which pupils take home each evening with details of homework.
- 3.13 Within the Grammar School, full written reports are issued twice yearly interspersed with parents' meetings and written interim reports. In the Primary School, including the foundation stage, teachers provide written reports three times per year. In the Grammar School reporting was felt to be wide-ranging and comprehensive. Primary School reports regularly include substantial and informative comments on literacy and numeracy, and information on progress in science, languages, the humanities and the arts is included in the mid-year report.
- 3.14 The great majority of parents felt that the school handled concerns well, particularly those which affected pupils. At present, however, no formal complaints procedure exists. A procedure is in draft form but has yet to be agreed and published to staff and parents.
- 3.15 Links with the community are wide ranging, although necessarily limited by some constraints of language. Reciprocal access to sports facilities exists and the school promotes pupils' enrolment in a range of clubs and activities which operate locally outside of the school day. Examples include the International School for Music and Fine Arts and the Bobby Charlton Football School. The school fundraises for local charities such as a children's home in Roudnice which has been visited by pupils and parents. It also operates The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme which has involved hospital visits, fundraising and helping at a local soup kitchen. A recent fund raising exercise has even enabled pupils to sponsor the care of an eagle, a spider monkey, a wallaby and a polar bear at Prague Zoo. The school

development manager, who has responsibility for admissions, marketing and publicity, effectively assists the growth of these links.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The Board of Directors is part of a well-structured financial management system controlling a group of companies, within which the chairman is the owner of the school.
- 4.2 Roles are clearly defined at each level and an appraisal system has recently been set up to evaluate the contributions made by each member. The educational director represents the school on the board. The directors are actively involved in financial planning and provision but not directly in educational developments. Budgets are agreed but at some distance from the educational objectives.
- 4.3 An action plan has been created, after extensive consultation both outside and within the school, dealing largely with financial, structural and marketing needs. A structure of planning deriving from this has yet to be developed in the school. This initiative apart, the Directors, with the exception of the educational director, have little involvement in the school. It is anticipated that the creation of an Extended Board, with representatives from senior management, parents and including a pupil, will help to improve this situation. This is due to meet for the first time shortly after the inspection. It will provide a valuable channel of communication with the school, giving the Board of Directors greater access to the school's systems of internal consultation.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.4 The senior management of the school has set clear aims, consonant with the quality of education and the caring ethos of the school, and provides effective leadership. In a period of substantial expansion in pupil numbers, the staffing, resources and accommodation provided have continued to meet most of the educational needs of pupils. Budgets are made available from fee income and set on the basis of bids from the school. However, inconsistent delegation of finance currently hampers planning: budget holders do not always have the full control over their budgets needed to ensure that suitable resources are available for pupils. Development plans and policies which relate inappropriately to just one section of the school are currently under review.

#### ***Primary School***

- 4.5 Clear leadership is provided by senior managers. A new head of primary has become known and respected rapidly and the heads of the four sites are very effective in analysing need and setting priorities, although there is as yet no formal development plan across the whole school. A new structure of teachers-in-charge and teachers with curricular responsibilities is valuable but lacks adequate time for responsibilities to be effectively discharged. Policies, for example that on marking, are thus not always effectively monitored. Although recruitment of staff has been effective, there is unevenness in their allocation to sites and in the Acorns Day Centre there are no native English speakers. In-service training has been limited and does not support needs identified during appraisal. Teachers and senior staff have not always been able to exercise control over their budgets and therefore, although resources are usually good, they are not necessarily the most appropriate. Accommodation is of good quality on all sites. However, in Petriny there are just sufficient washbasins and toilets for present numbers and facilities for pupils who are ill are inadequate. All the sites benefit from efficient administration.

## ***Grammar School***

- 4.6 Clear leadership is shown in the production of a well-structured development plan which has led to a sound and related format for departmental plans. It remains unrelated, however, to the overall action plan. Policies and procedures are largely in place, although some are ready for review. Staffing is satisfactory but not generous and heads of departments have limited time outside teaching for their new management role. Recruitment has been successful in ensuring a well-qualified teaching staff. Opportunities for training have been set up, including a programme for Qualified Teacher Status in the United Kingdom and full staff training days. A useful appraisal process has identified training needs, although these have not always been met. Resources for teaching are sufficient and the newly established library has a good collection of recent books and ICT equipment. Accommodation is of generally good quality and has been recently refurbished. The day-to-day organisation of the school is effective.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Overall Conclusions**

- 5.1 The school meets well most of the aspirations set out in its vision and philosophy. Teaching throughout the school is of high quality and pupils benefit greatly from this. A particular strength is the development of linguistic skills in those who are not native English speakers. The ethos of the school encourages the effective integration of pupils from a very wide range of cultural backgrounds. Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils in all parts of the school are positive and friendly, helping to encourage pupils' learning and their moral, social and cultural development. However, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is limited and there is no structure of provision for the gifted and talented. The distribution and use of ICT is currently uneven across the school. There is no single person with overall responsibility for health and safety in the school and a policy for handling parental complaints is not available. The lack of effective financial delegation from the Board of Directors through the school militates against the 'transparent management' set out in the vision statement.
- 5.2 This is the first inspection of the school undertaken by ISI acting on behalf of COBISEC. On entry to COBISEC in 2004 a brief initial inspection was undertaken. Whilst providing a valuable external view for the school, the scope and function were very different, making comparison unhelpful.
- 5.3 The school complies with most of the regulatory requirements for independent schools in England and Wales.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 To improve further the school's already effective provision for its pupils, it should:
1. ensure effective identification of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and of gifted and talented pupils at all stages in the school, and provide support for both groups;
  2. provide, as funds permit, additional ICT equipment in the Foundation Stage and expanded ICT training and technical support across the school;
  3. set in place clear procedures for the delegation of budgets from the Board of Directors to the appropriate level within the school, so as to ensure that the budget holder has full responsibility for use of the delegated budget during the relevant financial year;

4. write a policy for the manner in which parental complaints are to be handled and make parents aware of its existence;
5. appoint a person with overall responsibility for health and safety in the school to move forward the work which has begun, to write a whole school child protection policy, oversee the preparation of risk assessments for potentially hazardous activities within the school and ensure that first safety notices are in place.

## **6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, with the proprietor and with directors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

### **List of Inspectors**

Ted Pollard	Reporting Inspector
Jane Hamilton	Assistant Reporting Inspector, former Head, GSA school
Glenys Henry	Assistant Reporting Inspector, former Head, ISA school
Ann Stranack	Assistant Reporting Inspector, former Head ISA school
Ian Adams	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Steve Allen	Director of Studies, HMC school
Richard Butler	Head, COBISEC school
Philippa Foster	Head, HMC school
Jean Goodwin	Director of Studies, GSA school
Sally Gray	Head, COBISEC school
Martin Lloyd	Director of School, ISA school
Sue Marks	Head, GSA school
Pamela Pollock	Head of Pre-prep school
Tessa Smith	Head, IAPS school