



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection Report

Romanian Gifted School

**Bucharest
Romania**

Date 6th – 8th December 2021
Inspection number 20211206

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1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for and students' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, all teachers were observed in action. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the staff, the management team, a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. Two and a half school days were monitored. Covid-19 precautions were observed.

The inspector at the Romanian Gifted School was Dr Mark Evans, Chief Inspector for Penta International.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The Romanian Gifted School Bucharest (RGS) meets all standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school is overtly focussed on students who are talented but may not find traditional education approach suitable for their needs. RGS is a young school but already there is evidence in lessons and written work that the students attain high standards. The students are very well known to staff and supported in an appropriate and individualised manner. Students' behaviour is good, they clearly enjoy being at school and although sometimes boisterous, their focus is on learning. Parents and students alike are very supportive of the school.

3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths including:

- a clear and evident ethos, based on the meeting the needs of high attaining students
- confident, articulate and happy learners
- academic standards evident in lessons that are high
- good spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of the students
- a passionate and committed principal and admin team
- strong relationships between staff, learners and parents
- positive relationships between teachers and learners, and learners and their peers
- highly knowledgeable teachers

3.2 Points for improvement

Whilst not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Plan ways to improve further the quality of learning and teaching, including considering the following:
 - The development of a clear definition of outstanding learning for the whole school, in the context of RGS;
 - Identification and sharing more best practice through peer lesson observations;
 - Refining of assessment practices to ensure all staff use and understand the system.
- Empower teachers and support students in the use of the English language in lessons
- Ensure that the school's middle leaders are supported and trained to become a more powerful and secure force for school expansion and positive development.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Romanian Gifted School		
Address	Teodosie Rudeanu 15A		
Main telephone #	0721790840		
Website	www.giftedschool.ro		
Email	office@giftedschool.ro		
Principal/ Administrator	Simona Mitrea Cristina Tripon		
Owner	Simona Mitrea		
Age range	5 – 18 years		
Number of students	Total = 32	Boys = 20	Girls = 12
Student numbers by age on date of entry	(0-2 years) 0	(3-5 years) 1	(6-11 years) 11
	(12-16 years) 8	(17-18 years) 1	(18+ years) 1
Total number of part-time students	0		

Romanian Gifted School is the first school in Romania, dedicated solely to children with high abilities. It was established in 2020. The school has sought to follow international principles from the beginning, using BSO and the International Baccalaureate as frameworks around which to build.

Many of the students have been to two or more mainstream traditional government or private schools in Romania before attending RGS.

4.1 British nature of the school

The school has followed UK principles since it was set up last year. It follows much of the English National curriculum requirements in Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in primary. It places emphasis on cross-curricular learning and teaching, using the IB approach in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP).

The school's policies and practices are based on the values, expectations and procedures of British Education.

Secondary students continue their studies journey through preparing for iGCSE and IB diploma examinations. The school implements pastoral structures including a behaviour policy and close working relations with students. English is the key language of instruction.

The school aims to ensure that they are current with developments within England. The school's interpretation of it has been carefully designed to reflect its British nature, but also take into account demographics. Consequently, students would be able to enter schools in the UK without significant disruption.

Before the virus, a camp enlightened students through meetings with representatives of the Romanian Embassy in London, with companies like Facebook and with Romanian businessmen who succeeded in the UK. The school is actively planning school camps (post-Covid-19) to get even more in touch with life in the UK, especially with the universities there.

Styles of teaching and learning are informed by UK best practice: staff professional development is used to develop consistency of approach in this area.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the BSO standards framework.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum at RGS is satisfactory, with some excellent features.

The teachers meet at the beginning of the year and plan the order of the IB units to be taught, as well as the evaluations at the end of each unit. For example, this has included *Exhibition (PYP)*, *Community Project (MYP)* and *Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)* for those students on the diploma program (DP). According to these units, the teachers prepare their plans for each subject, in accordance with the IBO theme, the key concepts and the values chosen to focus on.

Students cover subjects from all curricular areas: applied sciences, social sciences, arts, Romanian language, English language, foreign language (including Japanese), personal development, movement and mindfulness. In preschool program, to the focus is based daily: linguistic intelligence, creativity, logic, personal development and civics.

Activities harmoniously intertwine cognitive, emotional and social development. RGS carefully and successfully integrates gifted children and those who have superimposed on a high ability, a learning difficulty like Asperger's syndrome, attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia.

The school mentions in all its documents, in social media posts and on the institution's website that racial, sex, political and religious discrimination is not accepted.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment across the school is satisfactory: there is good practice evident in many classrooms.

Teachers work hard to enable students to shape and influence their own learning. Relationships between teachers and students are outstanding: warm, professional, caring and strongly focussed on learning. In lessons, teachers are confident and offer lots of praise and encouragement. Teachers manage students' behaviour appropriately. Classroom time is mainly well managed, and pace is normally appropriate. There is much good teaching, but sharing of strategies and techniques is limited: there is no clear definition of what outstanding learning looks like at RGS.

Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subject matter they are covering. Many teach at a higher academic level in other institutions and the RGS students benefit from these high expectations. The students communicate confidently with each other and with the adults in the room. There is a calm and kind atmosphere in lessons, and social as well as personal development is significant.

Teachers also challenge the learners. In a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher pushed and extended the students' thought on the characteristics of the number 6. Students showed great confidence in their teacher: they were happy to 'have a go' and to share their ideas. In another mathematics lesson, the Key Stage 2 students supported each other in the use of 'Hundreds/Tens/Units', using the digital projector. The teacher made good use of questioning prompts like 'why?' and 'tell me how you know that'.

In another example, with Key Stage 4 students, the level of discussion was high. The topic was migration and the biology of the sperm whale, but the students were keen to talk about whale hunting, too. The conversation was multi-disciplinary too, moving on to analysis of why the wind blows: the law of entropy vs the law of conservation of energy.

The best lessons were fast paced and keep everyone on task: there is no time for anything except learning. In one Key Stage 3 lesson on art and design, students used the app *TinkerCAD* to design spectacular new schools: the students were confident and fluent users, and many pursued individual projects within the main one, for example creating a giant trampoline for moving around the school, or making a huge unicorn's head as a focal point.

Classroom displays are often engaging and attractive. The best make good use of students' work, and support their learning. In one classroom, for example, a map of streets such as 'Respect Avenue' and 'Confidence Street' supported personal development well.

During the selection process, all the children are given an initial evaluation. This data is used to analyse the children's progress from a cognitive, emotional and behavioural point of view, as well as academic.

The school analyses learners' attainment carefully to ensure that learners are achieving competitive standards and are high performers. An assessment policy and clear timetables are in place to assist in the monitoring students' achievements and progress. These are implemented effectively. Internal assessment processes are coherent and consistent being linked to the school's curriculum standards. External benchmarking will start this year.

Individual teachers have very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their learners. Nevertheless, school assessment practices are not yet consistent enough to ensure all staff use and understand the details of what all students know and need.

5.3 *Standards achieved by students*

RGS students are high attainers and make at least satisfactory progress. As there are so few in the school, it is not possible to make specific judgements in terms of progress, but the school monitors each student carefully.

Students are capable and mainly conscientious in their learning. They respond well to new opportunities and take responsibility for their own performance learning.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners at RGS is good and meets the BSO standard. This aspect is a strength of the school.

RGS actively promotes the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The school ensures that opportunities are in place to develop, embed and celebrate individuals' similarities and differences. There are students from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds, different religious beliefs, denominations and orientations: there is obvious acceptance and celebration of all. . Parents spoke positively about the celebration of, and tolerance for, all cultures within the school community.

Students develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, building their understanding of right and wrong, and learning to respect civil and criminal law. The school ensures students accept responsibility for their own behaviour, often show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the school community. Teaching enables students to acquire a good general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in Romania and in the UK, and for the responsibilities of local citizenship.

The staff preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; they also take steps to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of students, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views

The core values of the school are modelled effectively by the staff, are understood and demonstrated by the students and thus make a significant contribution to the development of essential life skills. The youngest students work on various community projects, Key Stage 2 and 3 students complete a significant Community Project, where they are given the opportunity to volunteer, go on working visits and get in touch with members of the municipality, while the oldest students have the opportunity to undertake internships locally.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the students

RGS meets the standard required for BSO.

Health, safety and wellbeing are central to the procedures put into place across all areas of the school. The proprietor and administrator works hand-in-hand with teachers to ensure the safety of all students and staff on campus. The school is compliant with written policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed and updated, currently with a focus on the development of procedures to guard against Covid-19. Minimum safety measures have been implemented during the pandemic: disinfecting hands, changing street shoes with indoor ones once they enter the school, wearing a mask indoors and taking of temperatures. In Romania, the 'green certificate' is not required to enter a school, however 80% of the students are fully vaccinated, and 73% of the teachers – much higher than the average for the country of around 40% .

RGS meets local fire and other safety regulation, including the Emergency Ordinance no. 80 of June 30th, 2021. There has been fire risk and labour protection training. The contracts for security and protection have been submitted to the police, as required, covering burglary risk, preventive procedures (alarm/video surveillance/panic buttons) and a security company is contracted to provide active monitoring.

All staff contribute to the day-to-day safety of the students through an effective collaborative approach. Embedded structures are in place to ensure that all security and safety procedures are adhered to.

Attendance registers are completed electronically each day, using *kinderpedia*, and there is a suitable admission register. The school has developed a variety of teaching structures to continue to support attendance of learners, especially those who are affected by the ongoing pandemic. Cleanliness across the school is to a high standard and cleaning procedures have been influenced by the impact of COVID-19.

The school has a very calm and productive atmosphere and it is evident that all enjoy working and learning in this school community. There is a happy and supportive feel across all phases of the school, and this is also reflected in the relationships between staff and students within lessons.

8. Standard 4

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The rigorous safe recruitment policies and processes in place meet BSO standards. All employees have employment records. These are either in physical or digital format: the details are recorded in a single centrally held record. Staff have a criminal check that is issued by the police in the area where each person lives.

The safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures follow British legislation, as well that of the host country and the school group. No temporary or supply staff are used at RGS.

9. Standard 5

The premises and accommodation

All aspects of the BSO standards are met.

The school premises and facilities provide a satisfactory physical learning environment which meets the needs of students, including those with special educational needs. There are appropriate security arrangements and these ensure the environment is safe for its students and staff.

The building complies with local regulations and is well-maintained. Resources, fixtures, fittings and furniture match students' educational needs, are of sound quality and are in satisfactory condition. Gender specific toilet and washing facilities are provided and are cleaned on a regular basis. Staff and visitors have separate designated washroom facilities. All washrooms have cold and hot running water. The temperature of water in these facilities does not pose a risk of scalding to users. Drainage systems for the dispersal of waste and surface water are suitable.

There is more than adequate natural light and, where appropriate, good artificial lighting. The school is well ventilated and the temperature is controlled by air-conditioning throughout the building.

Adequate sources of drinking water are available and in compliance with local regulations. Effective timetabling ensures that the use of available outdoor spaces is maximised for learning and play. Suitable indoor and outdoor space ensures physical education (for example yoga and Pilates) is delivered in accordance with the school curriculum.

Corridor displays are reflective of the school's work and goals. In some classrooms, there are excellent and attractive records of students' work, for example using leaves, chalk, geometric patterns and life-size self-portraits.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is good.

The parents are very supportive of the ethos and the practices of RGS.

The school provides a steady stream of useful communication for parents, often verbally because the size of classes is small. There is an open door policy to facilitate engagement with all stakeholders. Parents reported that any concerns they have are answered quickly and they have the information and ability to contact the relevant member of staff for assistance.

The school produces twice yearly reports on students' progress. The school also has scheduled parental meetings to discuss learner progress, as well as parent support events; parents have found them to be helpful and informative.

Parents feel that the school staff know their children very well indeed. They are highly appreciative of the opportunities and support available at RGS. Statements such as "My child has had four educational experiences so far, and this is by far the best", "He is flourishing here" and "He told me, 'Mama I feel great about this school'" were of typical comments made.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school has a clear complaints policy that includes the BSO requirements. The complaints and feedback policy is available in school classrooms and is sent to parents on admission. There is also an option for parents to request a call or a meeting, highlighting the open door ethos the school actively encourages.

RGS responds to all parent feedback. This allows all questions to be registered and relayed quickly to class teachers. A complaints log is kept that would include details of any complaint as well as any action taken: however so far, there have been no formal complaints.

12. *Standard 8* *Leadership and management of the school*

Leadership and management of the school are good.

The principal/owner has a strong vision and is passionate in both setting up the school and in developing it further. She is a pioneer in her country: parents, students and staff are highly supportive of her work and her enthusiasm.

She is very well supported by her administrator and her teachers: the school is still small and thus there is as yet limited middle management to secure her vision. The team is however excited about developing and assisting every student to reach their potential both academically and personally, by providing a caring and supportive learning environment, where differences are cherished and talent is nurtured.

The proprietor ensures that staff demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles so that the BSO standards are met consistently. Wellbeing of the students is the highest priority.

Staff turnover is low. The school's leaders have been successful in recruiting and retaining staff who are proud of the personal contribution they make to the school's success. Around the school, there is a palpable happy, kind and inclusive atmosphere amongst the staff and learners.

There is a real culture of respect and tolerance across the whole school: students are supportive and kind to one another. This is on no small part due to the example set by the teachers and the owner. Staff strongly promote equality of opportunity and diversity for both learners and staff.