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part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

**British Schools Overseas**

**Inspection Report**

**British International School of Ljubljana**

**March 2024**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	British International School of Ljubljana			
<b>Address</b>	British International School of Ljubljana Cesta 24. Junija 92 1231 Ljubljana-Črnuče Slovenia			
<b>Telephone number</b>	+386 40 618 356			
<b>Email address</b>	admissions@britishschool.si			
<b>Principal</b>	Miss Mel Hitchcocks			
<b>Chair of proprietors</b>	Mr Kevin McNeany			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Orbital Education Group			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	291			
	<b>Early years</b>	22	<b>Juniors</b>	130
	<b>Seniors</b>	113	<b>Sixth Form</b>	26
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4 to 5 March 2024			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 The British International School of Ljubljana is a co-educational day school. The school was founded in 2008 and is currently situated in the north of the city. It obtained the use of an additional building in 2021 and this is joined to the original building by a skywalk. Since 2015, it has been owned and governed by the Orbital Educational Group. The regional head of schools provides oversight of the daily management of the school.
- 1.2 The current principal joined in April 2023, and the leadership team structure has been reviewed. Senior leaders have defined areas of responsibility in both the primary and secondary sections of the school.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a high-quality British education for all pupils by following the UK framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS), the English national curriculum and IGCSE and A-level programmes. The school seeks to teach and instil British values in pupils through the school's five values: excellence, respect, integrity, compassion and responsibility. The school endeavours to be inclusive, and to provide a comprehensive pastoral programme to improve pupils' wellbeing and a comprehensive safeguarding approach modelled on current UK practice.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 The pupil body is made up of 34 different nationalities. Just over a third are from Slovenia. The second largest ethnicity groups are from Russia and the Ukraine, followed by Britain and Germany. The ability profile of the pupils is broadly in line with similar international schools. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 19 of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for most pupils, although many demonstrate a fluency in this language. The school's Gateway department caters for individual needs and provides additional support for pupils with EAL. The school has identified 28 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

## 2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

### Preface

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

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

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

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

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

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was undertaken by Penta International in March 2021.

## 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 Leaders provide a suitable curriculum which follows the English national curriculum and reflects the aims of the school. It is appropriately planned at all levels and is backed up by schemes of work that take into account the aptitudes and needs of the pupils. It provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. It also enables them to acquire effective speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills and a good understanding of English. It is effectively supported through the Gateway department.
- 2.4 The school provides an appropriate programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) from the EYFS to Year 13, including relationships and sex education from Year 5. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of parents stated that they do not feel the school offers a good choice of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors found that the newly introduced system of asking the pupils to choose what they would like to do, and leaders then seeking to meet their request, has strengthened this area of provision. The activities provide opportunities for pupils to gain additional skills and interests, which vary throughout the year. These activities, which include special events throughout the year and the formal curriculum, prepare pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life beyond school. This is underpinned by a growing understanding of British values, which also align with the values inherent to the host country.
- 2.5 The teaching throughout the school is delivered in English. It enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and to make good progress. The Gateway department provides support for pupils who have English as a second or third language, through a range of well-planned group and individual classes designed to meet the needs of these pupils. Additional support is provided for those pupils who have SEND, with different levels of intervention and support dependent on their individual need. A register of pupils who have SEND and individual educational plans (IEPs) support teachers' planning.
- 2.6 Teaching is well planned, employs effective teaching methods, uses a range of resources, demonstrates good subject knowledge and understanding. Teachers manage behaviour well, based on the school's clear five-step behaviour framework for all classes. In their response to the questionnaire, a minority of pupils felt that lessons are not interesting, although a large majority said that their teachers are supportive of them. The teaching does not discriminate against pupils because of their individual characteristics.
- 2.7 The school provides a suitable framework for assessing pupils' performance and tracking their progress. The school uses a combination of standardised benchmarks and ability testing to produce individual progress tracking sheets for each pupil. For those pupils studying for examinations, the school analyses results from tests and mock examinations to ensure the pupils are making effective progress. In 2023, A-level results were higher than predicted, based upon their starting points. However, IGCSE results were lower. Leaders are aware of this and are currently using the data effectively to inform their planning and support for all pupils.

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

- 2.8 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**
- 2.9 Leaders promote values which are inherent to life in Britain as well as the host country through topics in both the primary and secondary curriculums, in assemblies, form time and other activities which take place throughout the year. The school encourages pupils to have respect for others regardless of

their background or the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. A large majority of parents and pupils confirmed this through their responses to the questionnaires. The school's vision, mission and values, which are displayed around the school, link closely to British values. In interviews, pupils spoke about specific events which they supported such as Remembrance Day and the coronation of King Charles III, as well as describing values such as respect and responsibility which they follow. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The school prepares pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship in the UK, Slovenia and the wider world. Leaders encourage respect for democracy and the democratic process.

### **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 makes effective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils which take into account both local requirements and the guidance provided for schools in England. Staff are thoroughly trained in the school's procedures, not only when they join the school, but through regular updates. In response to the questionnaire, all staff felt that their training equips them to deal effectively with any concerns about pupils' welfare. The safeguarding policy covers all of the areas required of schools in England, including those relating the early years, and is implemented effectively.
- 2.12 Safeguarding matters are overseen by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who manages the whole-school wellbeing team. They are supported by the deputy DSL, who is also the principal. A safeguarding governor and the regional head of schools, both of whom are members of the proprietorial board, maintain effective oversight of safeguarding. They monitor the implementation of the policy and ensure that an annual review of policy and procedures is undertaken. The school maintains confidential records of all child protection concerns; these contain sufficient detail and record any discussion, decisions and actions taken. Pupils know that the wellbeing team is there for their support and guidance. They are made fully aware of issues that might affect their welfare, health and safety through topics covered in the school's PSHE programme and assemblies.
- 2.13 The school has appropriate policies to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying. Through its comprehensive PSHE programme, pupils are taught the importance of kindness and establishing good relationships. In response to the questionnaire, the majority of pupils say that the school listens to what they say, and a large majority say they can speak to an adult at school if they are worried about something. The staff help pupils understand the consequences of their actions should they misbehave. In response to the questionnaire, all staff felt that the school treats pupils fairly whatever their gender, faith, race or needs and that the school recognises and deals effectively with all types of bullying.
- 2.14 All pupils are taught about bullying, how to prevent it and what to do if they encounter it. In response to the questionnaires, a very large majority of both pupils and parents say that the school takes bullying seriously and does all that can be reasonably expected to prevent bullying from happening. The school's records, which are appropriately maintained and fit for purpose, show that bullying and poor behaviour are rare and that actions taken by the school are proportionate.
- 2.15 The school's approach to health and safety is thorough; its policies and practice are comprehensive and meet the requirements of the Slovenian authorities and are in accordance with expectations for schools in England. Detailed records are kept of all health and safety checks, almost all of which are undertaken by external specialists and then validated by official government agencies. Arrangements to protect all pupils in case of fire are thorough in both school buildings. A fire risk assessment is carried out by an external fire consultant and there were no outstanding recommendations after the latest one in December 2023. Fire equipment is checked regularly by an external fire specialist as well as being checked by government officials in line with Slovenian law. Fire drills and evacuations for

both buildings are undertaken in line with school policy and procedures. Hazardous materials, such as those in the science laboratories or those used by cleaners, are stored securely to ensure safety.

- 2.16 The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy. The leaders' implementation of this policy ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated. All offsite visits, including to the nearby physical education facility, have associated assessments of risk to ensure pupils' safety. In response to their questionnaire, most parents agree that the school does all it can to ensure their children learn in a healthy and safe environment.
- 2.17 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and related matters. It provides suitable care for pupils who are ill or injured, including children in the early years. There are suitably trained staff who are on duty whenever pupils are on site. In addition, many staff are trained in first aid. Appropriate records are kept of any medical incidents or consultations. Medicines are stored securely. First-aid kits are available in different locations around the site, including in the nearby sports facility, and for school trips.
- 2.18 Rotas throughout the school provide for members of staff to be on duty at drop-off and pick-up times, breaks and lunchtimes at various locations around the school including the outdoor play area. All pupils are supervised appropriately including in the early years where applicable ratios of staff to children are maintained.
- 2.19 Admission and attendance registers meet local and UK requirements, are backed up electronically each day, and are maintained for the requisite period of time.

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

- 2.20 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.21 The school's procedures for carrying out the required checks on staff and proprietors to ensure their suitability to work with children are clear, detailed and appropriate. The school records all pre-appointment checks on a single central record of appointments (SCR) which shows that each person's identity and previous employment history have been checked and that at least two references have been received for each new member of staff. For each new employee, the school carries out various checks, including, where possible, a disclosure and barring service check, an international child protection certificate and, if the person has lived in another country within the last ten years, a police check from that country. The school must apply individually to the government for a work permit for all non-EU citizens, meaning that pre-employment checks have to be completed a long time in advance of these staff commencing work. Medical self-declarations are made for new staff to say that they are medically fit to carry out the work for which they have been appointed. All checks are carried out before a person starts working in the school.
- 2.22 Supply staff have had their appropriate checks undertaken by the relevant agency. Members of the governing body, including those based in the proprietorial body's head office, have all had appropriate checks. Staff files are organised and contain copies of relevant documentation used to carry out suitability checks and to indicate that the information recorded on the SCR is accurate.

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

- 2.23 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.24 The school's accommodation is fit for purpose and well maintained. The school added a new building to the premises in 2021, which is joined to the original building via a skywalk. The school has a play area outside for all year groups, segmented for different types of play and different ages. All pupils have physical education in a nearby facility where there are private changing facilities and access to showering facilities. Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for pupils in different locations



around the school, and separate, clearly labelled facilities are available for staff and visitors. Accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils meets the requirements. Mostly pupils are taken home if they become ill at school. The buildings are maintained in good condition and are checked regularly for any issues that might compromise the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Any identified issues are rectified quickly. The lighting and acoustics in teaching rooms are suitable, and there is adequate external lighting. Suitable drinking water dispensers are available in the school, and all tap water is also clearly labelled as drinking water.

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

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

2.26 In their response to the questionnaire, a vast majority of parents said that information about the school's routines and policies is readily available. A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and relevant local authorities. This information includes details about the proprietor, the aims of the school and the curriculum offered. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. Arrangements and policies for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, complaints, health and safety, first aid, provision for pupils who have SEND and those with EAL are available on the school's website as well as copies of the school's most recent inspection reports. The school provides a full written report at least annually on each child's attainment and progress, as well as holding parent-teacher meetings and providing progress reports at various times during the year.

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

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

2.28 The school's complaints policy sets out arrangements for parents to raise concerns or complaints with the school using a three-stage process. It sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint. The process seeks to resolve any complaint informally in the first instance. If concerns are not resolved in this way, parents may proceed to lodge a formal complaint in writing. If the complaint remains unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. This consists of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The complainant may attend this hearing, accompanied if they wish. The findings and recommendations of the panel are communicated to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

2.29 A confidential record is kept of all complaints and findings, including action taken by the school, whether or not the complaint is upheld. The school's records show that complaints are handled promptly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the complaints policy. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire said that they receive timely and helpful responses to their questions, concerns or complaints. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

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

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

2.31 The proprietors ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards for British Schools Overseas are met consistently, and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted. Almost all parents and staff in their response to the questionnaire agreed that the school is governed, led and managed well. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

### 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 a representative of the proprietorial body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. 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

Miss Sue Duff

Reporting inspector

Mr Joe Eyles

Team inspector (Vice-principal, COBIS school, Czech Republic)