



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

### **BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS (BSO) INSPECTION REPORT FOR MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, PRAGUE**

#### **The key inspection judgements for this school are:**

<b>The quality of education</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' personal development</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership, management and governance</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>

#### **Compliance with the British Schools Overseas Standards:**

The school meets the standards required of British schools overseas (BSO).

**Date of inspection: 12-14 June 2018**

## **SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

Meridian International School meets all the BSO standards and its own aims. It provides a good education for its pupils. One of the school's main aims is that all pupils should speak good English: the school's provision in this area is excellent and all pupils, except those new to the school, speak, read and write fluently. Pupils' learning and achievement are good. They all, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those that are additionally gifted and talented (AGT), make good progress from their individual starting points. Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which is used effectively to motivate and engage pupils. The school has a rigorous assessment framework which includes external standardised tests and internal assessments. The curriculum is good. The school uses a commercial scheme throughout the school. It provides age-appropriate curriculum content which ensures continuity and progression from year to year. Workbooks linked to the scheme are used to consolidate pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. While this is effective, more frequent adaptation of the activities provided in the workbooks would further enhance pupils' learning. Pupils' personal development is good. They are courteous and thoughtful young people who benefit greatly in tolerance and understanding from attending an international school and learning alongside those of different nationalities, faiths and cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of British values and institutions. They understand British law and the laws of the Czech Republic. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good and are consistently implemented. The procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff are clear, appropriate and consistently applied but at the time of the inspection there were some minor administrative errors on the single central register (SCR), which were rectified promptly during the inspection. Leadership and management are good. The proprietor, head of school and senior leaders have created an effective school within which all pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in the kindergarten, particularly in their understanding of English and their personal and social development. Their learning could be further enhanced by providing more opportunities for self-initiated learning and access to a wider range of resources. Kindergarten staff would benefit from more training in this area.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

To secure further improvement, the proprietor should:

- further extend and challenge all pupils' learning by encouraging all teachers to adapt the activities provided in the scheme of work;
- implement procedures to ensure that all the required information from recruitment checks is consistently recorded on the SCR;
- provide children in the kindergarten with more opportunities for self-initiated learning both indoors and outdoors and ensure children can access a greater range of classroom resources; and
- arrange further training for all kindergarten staff.

## SECTION B: INFORMATION

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE) in England for the inspection of British schools overseas.

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons, carried out joint observations with the senior leadership team, held meetings with the proprietor, head of school, senior leadership team and pupils. They examined the school's website, documents and records, scrutinised pupils' work and reviewed responses to the parents' and pupils' questionnaires completed before the inspection.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Christine Graham
Team inspectors:	Dilip Kadodwala, Elisabeth Linley

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Meridian International School is a co-educational, selective day school for pupils aged 3 to 18 years. It was founded in 2004. The school is on two sites both of which are located in a residential area of Prague 8. The first site, catering for kindergarten, pre-school and primary pupils, was opened in 2004 and the second site for pupils of secondary age was opened in 2016. There are 456 pupils on roll, 89 are in the kindergarten or pre-school. There are nineteen pupils in the sixth form. Twenty seven pupils are identified as AGT. There are 62 nationalities in the school and 35 home languages. 390 pupils are identified as having EAL but very few are at an early stage of English acquisition. Twenty-one pupils have been identified by the school as having SEND. The school does not accept pupils with significant needs. Many older pupils move to Czech schools to complete their education because they need the Czech leaving certificate, the maturita, to study at Czech universities. The school provides opportunities for pupils to study for this certificate at a partner school and in recent years a higher proportion of pupils have remained at the school although the overall numbers remain low. Nearly all pupils go onto higher or further education at the end of their time in school. The proprietor carries out governance responsibilities. The school is accredited by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The school's mission statement is as follows: *At Meridian International School we aim to provide a wholesome, quality education that thoroughly prepares our pupils for the key hurdles and stages of life. We promote tolerance and diversity. We ensure that all our pupils can communicate effectively in English.* The school is a member of the Council of British Independent Schools (COBIS). This was the school's first inspection.

## **SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

### **1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

#### **Pupils' learning and achievement**

Pupils' learning and achievement are good. Pupils' knowledge of and fluency in English are very well developed in the kindergarten and in the early years of school so that by the start of Year 2 their speaking, reading and writing skills are in line with or above those in British schools. The school has effective systems to support pupils who join the school at other than the usual times so they can access the curriculum at an appropriate level and pupils say that non-English speakers can communicate effectively within a term. Pupils continue to make good progress in all subjects as they move through the school. They read fluently and can apply higher order comprehension skills. Their speaking skills, including the use of descriptive language, are excellent. Their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is accurate and these skills are applied well in all subjects. They have a secure understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts and they apply mathematical strategies well in problem-solving tasks. Older pupils have very well developed independent learning skills. They carry out research and present their findings confidently. They show respect for differing viewpoints and have highly developed discursive skills. They have mastered English to a high standard and use their analytical and evaluative skills very proficiently. Pupils with SEND make the same progress as their peers because of the well-targeted support they receive. The outcomes of external assessments taken in key stages 2 and 3 and evidence seen during the inspection indicate that pupils' achievement is in line with and often above that seen in British schools. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take the maturita, the Czech leaving certificate required for entry to Czech universities, but many pupils prefer to move to Czech schools at the end of key stage 3. As a result very few pupils have taken IGCSE examinations over the last three years, although the number of entries increased in 2018. Most pupils reach their predicted grades and a number of subjects have a clear trend of year-on-year improvement. A very small number of pupils sit AS and/or A Level examinations, mostly in English language, mathematics and three sciences. These pupils achieve results which are in line with their expected grades. All pupils who leave the school at 18, with the exception of the few taking a gap year or moving into employment, go on to higher or further education.

#### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

Teaching and assessment are good. Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they explain new learning well and use questioning very effectively to consolidate pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. The pace of lessons is brisk and teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. The school is very well resourced and there is an effective, commercial scheme of work which provides a structure for teaching and pupils' learning, this is particularly effective

for pupils with EAL. Pupils consolidate their understanding by completing tasks in workbooks linked to the scheme of work. In the most effective lessons teachers adapt these tasks and provide opportunities for pupils to plan, organise and present their work independently. This adds interest and depth to pupils' learning. All teachers provide pupils with regular homework which consolidates work completed in class.

The school's assessment procedures are very thorough. There are external, standardised assessments in all year groups in key stages 2 and 3 and end of key stage assessments in Years 6 and 9. There are mock examinations in Years 11, 12 and 13. Teachers assess pupils' achievement throughout the year. All internal and external assessment data is uploaded onto an online system which allows teachers and senior staff to monitor pupils' progress and look for trends over time. Any individual underperformance is identified and pupils receive support which helps them close the gaps in their learning. Czech pupils take Czech examinations every two years. These take place at a partner school. Pupils receive good oral feedback in lessons which helps them to improve, teachers mark pupils work regularly but written marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good. It meets the school's aims, pupils' needs and Czech curriculum requirements. It is based on the British National Curriculum in key stages 1-3 and IGCSE and A/AS Level examination requirements in key stages 4 and 5. All pupils in key stage 4 take seven IGCSE examinations. The number of subject options available at IGCSE and A/AS Level has increased in recent years and the school accommodates pupils' personal choices, for example, by taking home language IGCSE examinations. The curriculum is taught through the use of a commercial scheme of work which provides continuity and progression in all subjects and year groups. The use of this scheme underpins the school's academic success because it ensures that all teachers, whatever their nationality or training, can deliver the British National Curriculum effectively. The curriculum is well adapted to the needs of pupils, there are first and second language options in Czech, English and French. Art is particularly well developed across the school and pupils' achievement in the subject is very high. Under Czech law pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 are required to remain in school until the end of term, and so the school provides an interesting curriculum for these pupils during the post examination period. The school's curriculum planning is exemplary. Long term curriculum plans are completed by all staff and uploaded along with appropriate resources onto an online system. The plans and related materials and resources are saved from year to year and can be adapted to meet the needs of different groups. This provides a helpful starting point for staff that are new to the school and unfamiliar with the British curriculum.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of co-curricular activities, visits, visitors and competitions. The provision made for AGT pupils is particularly strong, the school has a Model United Nations (MUN) and the school sends delegates to international events, some students received Best Delegate

Awards in 2018. The school also sends delegates to the Genius Olympiad; at the time of the inspection two students were attending this event in New York. The school introduced the Pangea International Mathematics Competition, to the Czech Republic and the school is a regular participant. There is an annual skiing trip. PE and games are taught effectively but there are no opportunities for pupils to represent the school in sporting events.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Pupils' personal development is good. The school's provision meets all of the required BSO standards for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and actively promotes fundamental British values. The school aims to prepare pupils for all of life's challenges and for life in a multicultural society, and it achieves this very successfully. The quality of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is good. Pupils gain a good understanding of financial capability, the importance of healthy eating and current events. They are courteous, tolerant and friendly young people. They have good opportunities to develop their self-esteem and confidence so that they become resilient learners who persevere when work is challenging. They take pride in their work and their learning skills are good. Some pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh award, which provides tests of character and endurance: this provides them with very effective life skills. Pupils gain a good understanding of British values and British institutions. Their attendance and punctuality are good.

Pupils' moral development is outstanding. They understand the difference between right and wrong, supported by the strong school ethos of honesty and respect for others. They have a good understanding of British and Czech law, including equal opportunities legislation, and they are tolerant of the views and beliefs of others, particularly those of different faiths and cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of modern Britain. They are self-disciplined and respect the boundaries set by school staff. The youngest pupils settle quickly to routines and learn to share and cooperate with each other very well. Older pupils maintain high standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils make a positive contribution to school life and to wider society, for example in raising funds in support of charities and sponsoring children at a local orphanage. The senior pupils participate actively in their school council and the school's plan to extend this aspect of its work to the primary section is well considered. Older pupils were very positive about their time at the school and recognised the impact it had on their personal development. All pupils learn to respect the views of others and to exercise tact when voicing their opinions, this was seen very clearly when older pupils debated some contentious personal and religious issues.

Pupils' spiritual development is good. The art curriculum is particularly successful in promoting pupils' sense of awe and wonder and giving them time to reflect and appreciate the beauty of creation and their personal worth. There are no assemblies, in accordance with Czech law, but pupils are aware of the main world religions and their similarities and differences. The school makes good use of its location within Prague to extend pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils' cultural development is good. They come from many different backgrounds and clearly enjoy the cultural and religious diversity within the school. Opportunities to participate in international events, skiing trips and visits to Christmas markets further extend pupils' cultural experiences as do visits to the theatre and other school events. Older pupils receive effective guidance about examinations and university options. School leaders ensure that pupils receive first-hand information about potential careers by inviting business leaders to the school. Pupils make good use of these opportunities to extend their experience of the world of work.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. There are a range of policies which are accessible to parents through the school's website. They are well written and implemented effectively. The school ensures that staff keep up to date with key safeguarding documents, such as *Keeping children safe in education, 2016* and staff are briefed appropriately to understand their importance. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies make explicit the school's expectations and the sanctions which might be applied if required. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with swiftly and efficiently by staff. Pupils confirm that tolerance and respect for others underpin the school's ethos. Such views provide a strong barrier to radicalisation; pupils know what to do if they hear anything that is inappropriate and know that staff take immediate action. The school has e-safety policies and procedures which include, for older pupils, an awareness of piracy laws in different countries. The use of mobile phones in the school is carefully controlled. E-safety procedures are made clear in posters that are displayed in the computer suites.

Procedures for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff are appropriate. Senior leaders have received safer recruitment training and work closely with the proprietor when making staff appointments. The SCR records the required checks which have been undertaken in recruiting British nationals and staff of other nationalities, as required by the Czech Republic and BSO standards. At the start of the inspection some minor omissions in the SCR were noted. All the necessary information to complete the records was available on site and over the course of the inspection the school ensured that this information was transferred accurately to the SCR. The SCR now meets the BSO requirements.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) share responsibility for safeguarding with deputy DSLs, all of whom are trained at an appropriate level and have a secure understanding of the DSL role. All staff have received up-to-date safeguarding training. Record keeping is appropriate and child protection records are kept securely. The proprietor and senior leaders are fully aware of safeguarding and child protection requirements in the Czech Republic and in Britain.

The school has compliant policies for health and safety. Risk assessments for buildings and premises and activities on and off site meet requirements. The

school's policies, procedures and training for health, hygiene, fire safety, and first aid are rigorous and subject to regular inspections by the Czech government; the outcomes of these inspections are highly positive. There is appropriate provision and access for disabled pupils.

The carefully planned deployment of staff ensures that pupils are always properly supervised. The school has a fair system of sanctions for poor behaviour. Although there has been no occasion to apply sanctions for serious misdemeanours, the school recognises the importance of keeping parents fully informed and keeping detailed records. The admissions register meets requirements. Regular attendance is a key focus of Czech education law. The school's procedures for recording and monitoring pupils' attendance are exemplary so pupils' attendance is good.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

Leadership, management and governance are good. The proprietor, head of school and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the school which is shared by staff. The school has grown significantly since 2004, and its development has been carefully managed by the proprietor and head of school in order to ensure that the quality of the education and the school's care and support for pupils have been sustained during a period of rapid growth. The school buildings have been extended and refurbished to a very high standard and this supports pupils' learning very effectively. Leaders chose to implement a well-regarded, commercial scheme of work throughout the school. This meets the needs of pupils, especially those with EAL, very effectively. It also provides teachers who are new to the school with access to training and curriculum support. This has ensured that teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are consistently good. This good provision has resulted in an upward trend of improving results in a number of subjects at IGCSE. One of the school's main aims is that all pupils will speak good English. The school's provision in this area is excellent and all pupils, except those new to the school, speak, read and write fluently.

The senior leadership team are very effective. There are clear roles and responsibilities and these are carried out very effectively. School leaders share the proprietor's vision and they are good role models for staff and pupils. Many older pupils commented that senior leaders had a very positive impact on their personal development and academic success. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. There are regular lesson observations and during joint lesson observations carried out with the inspection team all senior leaders made accurate judgements which matched those made by inspectors. The school has robust systems to manage the performance of staff and to promote effective practice throughout the school. All aspects of pupils' welfare and progress are rigorously monitored. Senior leaders scrutinise the outcomes of assessment and match these to their observations of teaching and learning. They have regular meetings with staff to identify and correct any underachievement. School improvement planning is detailed and correctly identifies the school's most important academic priorities. It also identifies building work and refurbishment which will further improve the school's facilities. Middle leaders are well

informed and enthusiastic; they have a good understanding of their subjects and how they might improve. At present there are few academic links between the primary and secondary phases, there is scope for greater collaboration which could benefit all staff. Induction procedures for new staff are very thorough and there is a range of professional development activities and training available. Teachers carry out peer observations with their colleagues. This ensures that good practice is shared and that all staff are aware of the school's expectations. School leaders are very proud of the international element of the school and the opportunities it provides for all pupils, regardless of faith or culture, to make friends and learn together. This aspect of the school is highly effective and it is greatly valued by pupils.

### **Partnership with parents**

The school's partnership with parents is very effective. The responses to parental questionnaires completed before the inspection were very positive, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with the education and care the pupils receive. The school has a well-organised website which provides up-to-date information about the school. Parents receive an excellent quantity of information, including regular written reports about their children's progress. Parents are partners in their children's education, they can see all their child's assessment and attendance data and any minor issues with motivation or achievement, by using a secure, online system, this allows them to work with school staff and provide additional support and encouragement at home. This system can also provide instant communication in the case of an emergency. There is a clear complaints policy which meets the BSO standards. There have been no formal complaints in the last year.

### **Governance**

Governance is good. The proprietor carries out the governance role within the school. There are no additional governors or trustees. The proprietor is based in school but is not involved in its day-to-day management. He has a clear vision for the school and monitors its progress rigorously. He decides on the allocation of resources in consultation with school leaders. There are regular meetings with the head of school and senior leaders in which all aspects of the school's work are discussed. Investment in the school's infrastructure in recent years has resulted in the new secondary school site which includes a well-equipped gym which can also be used as a theatre due to its thoughtfully designed acoustics. Current building work, due to be completed this summer, will increase the number of classrooms and extend the dining facilities in the primary school.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION**

The Early Years provision for children aged three to five years of age is good. All lessons are taught in English and the children make good progress across the areas of learning, particularly in their listening skills and spoken English.

Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. The EYFS leader provides training and guidance for staff. She also oversees the preschool (Year 1) and

ensures that the children's transition from kindergarten to Year 1 is well managed and stress free. The EYFS leader has high expectations of staff and of the care and education provided for children. Good partnerships and effective communication with parents enable children to settle well at school; they are happy, safe and secure. As in the rest of the school, welfare, health and safety are good. The leader has a clear vision for the EYFS and is committed to its further development. The kindergarten staff are keen to find out what they can from the internet in respect of the requirements of the EYFS in England. The EYFS leader has correctly identified the need to enhance this training further in the near future.

The curriculum is planned using a thematic approach. Activities such as visits out of school and visitors to school, enhance the provision. Children enjoy yoga and recorder lessons, and other experiences such as experimenting with flowers in vases of coloured water to see what happens to the petals. Teaching is good. A particular strength of teaching is the promotion of the children's English language skills; the staff are good role models in this respect. The positive and caring relationships that staff have with the children promote their good personal, social and emotional development. As a result, they are confident and willing to try new things. They learn to share and take turns, and their behaviour and enthusiasm for learning are very good. The use of teacher-directed activities and child-initiated learning through play, however, is not evenly balanced. As a result, children do not have enough opportunities to make choices for themselves about their learning, particularly outdoors, and they do not always have access to practical resources in lessons so they can be active learners at all times. The teachers recognise children's different needs and there are regular assessments of their skills. Children are placed in different groups which are based on their knowledge and understanding of English, they receive effective support which helps them to make progress from their individual starting points. As a result, the children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children's personal development is very good. They are taught about basic hygiene and effective handwashing. All children have a toothbrush and toothpaste and they clean their teeth after meals. There is a quiet room with beds for those children who still require a nap during the day, and this includes clean, suitable bedding and other resources. The design of the building provides large open spaces where children, with their parents, can change from outdoor clothes and shoes in comfort. The size of the space ensures that they can recognise their own belongings and thus develop independent skills. Children are very well cared for, safeguarded and supervised and they make good progress in all aspects of their development.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Meridian International School. Prague		
School association (if applicable):	COBIS		
Edubase registration number (if applicable):	N/A		
Status of BSO application:	First Application		
Local ages of compulsory schooling	From: 6 years	To: 15 years	
Age range of pupils:	From: 3 years	To: 18 years	
Number on roll (full-time pupils aged over 5):	Boys: 207	Girls: 204	Total: 411
(part-time pupils aged over 5):	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Pupils aged under 5 (full-time):	Boys: 17	Girls: 21	Total: 38
Pupils aged under 5 (part-time):	Boys: 4	Girls:-3	Total: 7
Number of pupils (if any) registered locally as needing educational or medical support:	Boys: 14	Girls: 7	Total: 21
Address of school:	Frýdlantská 1350/1 182 00 Praha 8-Kobylisy Czech Republic		
Telephone number:	+420 286581 805		
Email address:	<a href="mailto:info@meridianedu.cz">info@meridianedu.cz</a>		
Website address:	<a href="http://www.meridianedu.cz">www.meridianedu.cz</a>		
How many sites does the school occupy? If more than one, please include address/telephone details for all sites in the boxes above.	Two		
Name of Headteacher:	Mr Michal Hajek		
Direct contact details for Headteacher	Direct Line: +420 777 633 474 Email address mhajek@meridianedu.cz		
Name of Proprietor:	Mr Ahmet Gursoy		
Name of Chair of Governors	N/A		
Date and type of last BSO inspection (if any):	N/A		

**This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which is approved by the Department for Education in England to provide independent professional inspection of British schools in England and overseas. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: [www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk).**