



THE ENGLISH COLLEGE IN PRAGUE
ANGLICKÉ GYMNÁZIUM

Česká školní inspekce
Pražský inspektorát



INSPECTION REPORT

Čj. ČŠIA-234/19-A

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Location: Sokolovská 320, Špitálská 855/2a, 190 00 Praha 9
Date of inspection: 7. 2. 2019 - 12.2.2019

Inspection activity was started by presenting the authorisation to carry out inspection activity.

Subject of inspection activity

Evaluating conditions, the process and results of education provided by a secondary school according to § 174, paragraph 2 letter b) and c) of the Act. No. 561/2004 Coll, on pre-school, primary, secondary, higher specialist and other education (the School Act), as amended.

Characteristics

The English College in Prague - Anglické gymnázium o. p. s., (hereinafter referred to as „school" or „grammar school") is an English language day school providing secondary education in two parts - a bilingual grammar school (Years 1 to 3) and education with selected subjects taught in English (Years 4 to 6). The interconnection of the British and Czech educational systems is the specific characteristic of the school. Students complete their studies by sitting international external International Baccalaureate exams (hereinafter referred to as "IB") and the Czech Maturita exam in Czech language and literature or the IB exam only (based on the student's choice). The educational programme is strongly focused on the all-round development of the pupil's personality and lessons are supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

On the date of the inspection the school had an enrollment of 364 pupils, of whom 104 had other native languages or were from a bilingual environment and 54 had special educational needs. This represents 83% of the maximum capacity of the school. The school also provides education to motivated pupils from disadvantaged social backgrounds by providing scholarships.

Evaluation of conditions of education

The Headmaster has been in his position since the academic year 2016/2017. He is effective in applying his previous managerial and educational experience when managing the activities of the grammar school. The school's development plan stipulates specific aims, which reflect the efforts of ECP management to continuously improve the quality of bilingual education being provided. The set aims are gradually being successfully met (e.g. the creation of a complex pastoral system, the support for continual professional development of teachers, the use of digital technology in lessons). The interconnection of the British and Czech educational systems is reflected in, for instance the specific organisation of the learning day (starting each day with a tutor period, the division of the school year into terms as well as half-years, a lower number of pupils per classroom) and in the establishment of so-called houses, in which pupils are gathered across year groups (in Years 1 to 4).

The established multi-level management system, which corresponds with the division of managerial competencies common in the UK independent sector and reflects the specifics of the school, is contributing to a successful realisation of the school's plans. The Headmaster has delegated precisely defined duties to his four deputies, to the heads of faculties and also the heads of houses. The established system of regular meetings on various management levels, including numerous sessions of the pedagogical council, allows frequent sharing of ideas and information, which contributes to a higher quality of education and flexible resolution of problems.

Numerous partnership relationships contribute to the achievement of the school's developmental aims. The grammar school management actively creates the space for open communication with pupil representatives and allows for their involvement in the school's operation. Ideas submitted by the Student Council contribute to improving the quality of the conditions and the process of education in the school. The school has been developing a long-term constructive cooperation programme with similarly focused schools in the Czech Republic (especially in Prague) and also abroad (visits to foreign universities, exchange trips, etc.). In line with their focus on the all-round development of the pupils' personalities, relationships with institutions, which allow pupils to become involved in socially beneficial activities (a hospice, a hospital, a children's home, etc.) are supported. The activity of the school is positively affected by regular cooperation with the founder, e.g. joint meetings of representatives of the school, the founder and school graduates.

The management of education, including lesson observations, is systematic. It supports a continuous evaluation of the achieved level in the educational process. Frequent lesson observations are carried out by the management of the school and heads of faculties and result in detailed recommendations for improvement. Improvements in the quality of teaching are regularly evaluated. The established system of mutual evaluation and self-reflection of teachers has a strongly positive impact on the level of education provided. During the academic year, joint lesson

observations (2 to 3 teachers observing the same lesson) are carried out regularly, the findings are then shared and teachers receive detailed feedback. The conclusions from these mutual lesson observations aim to establish effective teaching methods whose application in lessons is continuously assessed by school management.

The positive approach of the management is reflected in the high quality of the 52 teachers employed by the school. Only one teacher had not met the specialised qualification prerequisite on the date of the inspection activity. The Headmaster has shown that this teacher has been studying a relevant master's programme and is therefore fully qualified to teach their subject. The majority of the staff are native speakers of English with specialised qualifications in the relevant subjects. Sufficient methodological support is provided to newly arrived teachers, especially by heads of faculties.

Further education of pedagogical employees (hereinafter referred to as "CPD") is well-planned and based on the needs of the school as well as plans for the professional development of teachers. Apart from educational activities organised by external institutions, teachers also take part in internal professional development programmes on a whole school level, as well as through their faculties and in teacher groups across the curriculum. The sharing of acquired knowledge is done systematically 1 - 2 times per month. Sharing experience about the use of innovative methods in lessons is also facilitated through organised sessions involving all teachers (the so-called 'fair' at the end of the academic year). The positive impact of CPD on enhancing the quality of education in the school is monitored and evaluated by the school's management as well as by the heads of faculties.

Financial and material conditions are important factors affecting the implementation of the school's education programme. The ability to access different sources of funding for the school has been positively reflected in the equipment available for students to use. The technical equipment of the school has been gradually supplemented and renewed (e.g. specialised laboratories for Chemistry, Physics and foreign languages). The school's further development is obviously limited by the physical restrictions of lack of space. The school possesses a sufficient number of form classrooms and specialised rooms but some of the lessons take place in rented premises outside the main building. The school management is actively striving to provide good quality facilities for arts subjects, new equipment has been provided for the music and art rooms and a newly renovated drama studio is regularly in use. A variety of communication and information technologies have been introduced in order to enhance the visualisation of teaching and to integrate modern learning methods. The school library makes available a multilingual resource which contributes to the development of literacy and enlarges the range of information sources for pupils as well as teachers. PE lessons are held at rented premises. Catering is provided based on pupils' choice, either in the canteen of a nearby school or in the newly refurbished school refectory. The school's electronically secured entrance contributes to the pupils' safety.

Evaluation of the teaching and learning process

Pupils and teachers share a high degree of responsibility for student progress, with the aim of allowing students to achieve their maximum learning potential. The continuing preparation of pupils at home and open communication within the school

has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The effectiveness of the education provided is being enhanced by a system of differentiation in individual subjects pupils grouped according to their level of knowledge and skills, according to their choice of IB subjects, that has been applied on a long-term basis.

Lessons were characterised by a well thought-out structure, a wide range of teaching forms and methods being used in the majority of lessons in a focussed way. Cooperative forms of work were often used (pupils working in pairs or in a group), Teachers deliberately created space for students to express their opinions in both guided and spontaneous debates. Educational strategies were directed at understanding the reasons and context based on acquired knowledge and the syllabus being studied. Effective switching of activities led to engagement and a balanced participation of most of the pupils. Objective analysis of student errors was used where appropriate. Pupils in the upper years showed their skills in critical thinking and reasoning, in evaluating information and presenting their opinions clearly.

In Czech language and literature lessons (including Czech for Foreigners classes), the development of pupils' knowledge and skills (mastering grammatical structures, vocabulary enrichment) was supported by the application of relevant teaching methods. The teachers effectively supported the education of pupils – foreigners with a variety of Czech language abilities and levels by means of task differentiation and individual approaches. Incomplete knowledge of Czech literary and historical contexts by some pupils (e.g. the period of the Czech national revival) was partly offset by interconnecting cross-subject relations (History) and by stressing regional links. The work being done with artistic and technical texts was exceptional (application of British methodology, deduction of conclusions, interpretation of a text based on one's own reading experience, comparison of a film adaptation and a literary work). Within the framework of History, selected chapters of Czech history are taught in the context of world history. Pupils were encouraged to make independent deductions and to form their own opinions based on various information sources. In foreign language lessons, teachers ensure a balanced development of both the productive and receptive language skills of pupils. In English language lessons, the individual needs of pupils were taken into account accordingly (bilingual pupils or pupils with weak language abilities). Pupils' reading literacy was developed through effective text-based work. The development of pupils' creativity and self-reflection was supported by the application of elements of creative writing. In Maths and Science, pupils were guided to acquire knowledge independently, drawing on their own deductive and logical thinking. The concept of aesthetic education (Art, Design, Drama), which corresponds with a well-rounded preparation of pupils for IB exams, emphasises the development of the individual creative skills of pupils and by successfully supporting their communication skills, e.g. by the way of teaching the active listening technique (a ToK lesson).

In some cases, the effectiveness of education was compromised by the lesson setup (the double period block, a higher number of pupils in the Czech for Foreigners lesson), by the pupils' specific needs not being taken fully into account (principles of psycho-hygiene, relaxation activities) and by the teachers' inconsistency in insisting on compliance with the set rules (classroom tidiness, late arrivals, communication mistakes). In History lessons, the distinct concept of teaching by the non-Czech teachers was demonstrated by less stress being put on factography and on Czech history taught as a continuum. In relation to the preparation of pupils for the Czech

Maturita oral exam, the episodic sub-standard level of language culture in Czech language lessons (use of informal language by pupils and some teachers) was rated negatively. During lesson observations, opportunities for peer assessment based on set criteria, which support the ability to evaluate objectively the level of knowledge achieved were not utilised.

The effective use of educational technology aimed at enhancing visualisation of teaching or the implementation of modern teaching methods (a well-designed diagram, a document from a period studied, work with educational software, motivational video etc.) was a common feature of the observed lessons. Activities supporting pupils' self-concept that serve as a basis for a pupil's individual progress evaluation (reading records, a portfolio of work in individual subjects, experience books) are included in an above-standard level. Pupils often show a level of knowledge and competence exceeding the usual standard of grammar school education and this corresponds with their educational results.

Additional educational activities interconnect theoretical instruction with real life experience, enhance the pupils' cultural and historical overview and allow for the presentation of their interests as an individual or as a group (e.g. trips in certain subjects, a system of year group educational trips, the so-called Prague Programme, a Book Week, literary competitions, school drama performances in English, concerts and exhibitions of pupils' work).

Evaluation of the educational results

The results of education are affected by the specifics of the school and by the demanding nature of the study (a combination of international and Czech educational programmes). Pupils are accepted to the school on the basis of a multi-level admissions procedure (an exam in Czech and Maths based on a unified test, a test of English language skills, a test of general study potential). A personal interview with the Headmaster is an inseparable part of the admissions process as well. It monitors pupils' educational motivation and their language skills.

The international style of the school and its specific organisation as well as the requirements for final exams bring about increased demands on the adaptation of pupils and requires timely tracking of possible study problems or signs of risky behaviour. The sophisticated adaptation process focuses especially on cohesion in newly formed study groups within each year group as well as across all year groups (induction trips, year group trips, the house system). The multi-level system of pastoral service ensures a complex support network for pupils to help them cope with the demands of grammar school education. It is based on clearly defined competencies and responsibilities of individual employees involved in pastoral educational care (e.g. tutors, heads of house, Deputy Head Pastoral, MPP coordinator, Head of Learning Support). The identified issues are usually resolved by the close cooperation of the pastoral team with parents, tutors and educational consultants. The school has its own system of tracking the educational needs of pupils (tracking study potential, level of English and Czech language, learning needs, talented pupils). The relevant recommendations of educational consultants (adjustment of conditions for the Maturita exam) are respected. The degree of support offered is based on pupils' individual educational needs (compensation tools, an academic study plan, i.e. similar to a plan of pedagogical support, individual educational plans). Specific steps aimed at

coping with the demands of study and at preventing failure are taken systematically (a transparent way of assessment in individual subjects, a choice of subject level in the IB programme, Czech lessons for foreigners, English support lessons) or by means of standard pedagogical methods (individual consultations, electronic learning materials, etc.). A periodic monitoring of each pupil's study potential over the course of his/her studies represents a significant strength of the whole system. A complex system of formative assessment is an inseparable part of that process. It records pupils' progress in individual subjects, as well as within overall results in a given year group (written/verbal assessment in the mid-year and at the end of the academic year).

The established preventive mechanisms are functioning well and they contribute to the prevention of problematic behaviour. The effective tools include clearly defined behaviour rules (an electronic system for reporting incidents), a busy schedule of extra curricular activities supporting pro-social behaviour of pupils, and specific programmes arranged in cooperation with external entities. Occasional disciplinary offences (late arrivals, unauthorised absences, inappropriate behaviour, smoking) are dealt with according to their seriousness in line with the School Code and in meetings with parents. The school registers a higher absence rate of pupils in lessons (105 to 120 missed lessons per pupil in the monitored period) when compared to the average in schools of the same educational category. A slightly higher number of unauthorised absences (approximately 5 lessons per pupil) is seen as negative. This fact is related to the newly established system of precise attendance registers and also to the different acceptance rate of the set rules by parents and pupils (e.g. pupils from international schools, international family environment). However, a lower participation of pupils in lessons is not reflected in the number of pupils not classified at the end of the academic year (95 - 99 % of pupils were fully classified by 30 June) or on the overall results of education.

The pupils' assessment reflects the interconnection of the two educational systems. Assessment rules in individual subjects are transparent and are shared by teachers, an objective evaluation of results as a whole as well as results of groups and individuals is thus facilitated. A sophisticated system of year group tests, extended essays and IB results provides the management with a comprehensive picture of how the educational programme goals are being fulfilled and what the level of acquired competencies of pupils is. It also enables the management to take effective measures aimed at the improvement of the educational process. A traditional classification with a grade is fittingly complemented with verbal assessments and with the assessment of a pupil's engagement in education (effort and activity, meeting deadlines, homework). Thus, pupils are intentionally guided to an increased responsibility for their own results.

In the educational process, pupils achieve excellent results in the long-term. Within the period monitored, about one third of pupils passed with distinction and the number of failing pupils was minimal. The consistently excellent results of the Year 4 pupils in externally assessed exams (IGCSE, modern foreign languages CEFR exams) indicate that pupils have adapted to the learning environment successfully and that the quality of teaching is high. 65% of pupils achieve the top level of assessment. The pupils' success rate at the point of completing their educational programme (IB, Maturita in Czech language and literature) serves as a decisive indicator of the pupils' qualitative development. The results of pupils enrolled in the IB programme are consistently above the worldwide average. Approximately 65-80% of pupils also sit the Maturita

exam in Czech language and literature and the success rate in the written part (Year 5) is in the range of 74-76%. Results in the oral part of the Maturita exam in Czech language and literature (Year 6) are on a level comparable with the general grammar school level, as the oral exam structure corresponds better with assessment at IB.

The school's systematic support of pupils' all round personality development was appraised as being inspirational. Talented pupils and pupils interested in specific subjects take part in a number of competitions in individual subjects held on a regional or international level. The individual potential development of pupils is facilitated by their long-term involvement in diverse activities (:more programme, student conferences, poetic, drama and concert performances, charitable events, internships, the international DofE programme, etc.). Top pupils are systematically rewarded for their activities at traditional school events. A number of scholarships present an important motivational and pro-social element.

The excellent career guidance makes it easy for all pupils to make their optimal choice of an institution of higher education. Presentations by universities from abroad and the linking of study with work experience (internships abroad, involvement of graduates) have been established on a long-term basis. As a consequence of the character of their study programme, graduates continue their further studies at prestigious universities abroad (about 76%) and in the Czech Republic (about 24%).

Conclusions

The school development

- there has been a steadily high demand for education at the school and the number of pupils has increased
- the new school management has been developing successfully the concept of a grammar school education in the English language with an emphasis on open communication amongst all the stakeholders in education
- the high standard of the provided education is reflected by the high quality staffing, especially the sophisticated system of further professional development of teachers
- in accordance with the legislative norm the school enables pupils to complete their studies, apart from the IB examinations, with an exam on Czech language and literature within the common part of the Czech Maturita examination
- the achieved level of pupils' competencies and their success rate in passing the final exams has increased further; the overall quality of the school is above-standard within the given category of schools

Strengths

- conceptual multi-level management of the school reflecting the specifics of the school
- systematic support of professional development of teachers
- staff coverage of education using qualified teachers with relevant subject specialisation and with a majority of native speakers
- use of a wide range of teaching forms and methods including purposeful use of modern didactic technology
- systematic differentiation of lessons according to the knowledge level and study potential as well as focus of the pupils

- a complex system of formative assessment providing progress tracking of individual pupils within a given subject as well as overall results of education
- excellent results in IB examinations as well as in other externally assessed examinations in the long term
- a sophisticated system of merits and commendations for pupils for their performance as well as for their participation in school events, which raises motivation of pupils for education and their identification with the school
- successful formation of a multicultural environment, where the English language is the shared medium of communication in lessons as well as in everyday interactions of all stakeholders in education

Opportunities for improvement

- to further reflect specifics of pupils in the lower years of grammar school with respect to the length of the lesson unit (double lessons - age, psychological maturity, etc)
- to use more peer assessment on the basis of set criteria in lessons
- to improve the level of language culture in lessons of Czech language and literature (use of informal Czech by some teachers and pupils)
- to reduce the rate of pupil absences compared to schools within the given category (six-year grammar schools)

Examples of inspirational practice

- an above-standard involvement of pupils in co-curricular, educational and free time activities and conceptual work with talented pupils supporting the development of pupils' competencies and an all-round development of their personalities
- a systematically created environment supportive of the teachers' professional growth helping to increase the quality of the educational process

Recommendations to improve school activities

- to reflect more the pupils' specifics in the lower years of grammar school in lessons organisation (double lessons)
- to use peer assessment among pupils more extensively, as it supports the ability to assess objectively the achieved performance and learning progress
- to pay systematic attention to the language culture and to use formal language in lessons of Czech language and literature more consistently
- to include more contextual chronological teaching of Czech history delivered by a Czech teacher (e.g. as an optional subject)
- to take suitable measures aimed at reducing the absence rate in lessons
- to be more consistent in requiring compliance with the established behaviour rules in lessons

For the purpose of recognition of increased subsidies suitability, the school has achieved results required according to Article 5, Paragraph 3, Letter b) of the Act no. 306/1999 Coll. on provision of subsidies to private schools, preschool and school facilities, as amended.

List of documents reflected in inspection findings

1. The MŠMT decision in the matter of granted approval with a different way of completing education with the Maturita exam, čj. MSMT-3 4541/2015-2, taking effect on 1. 11. 2015
2. The MŠMT decision in the matter of registration in the register of schools and school facilities (registering education category 79-41-K/61 Bilingual Grammar School), čj. MSMT-36748/2015-2, taking effect on 1. 9. 2016
3. Appointing decree for the Headmaster dated 29. 8. 2016
4. Headline Aims of the Headmaster for academic years 2017/2018 and 2018 /2019
5. The school educational programme (ŠVP) for education category 79-41-K/610 Grammar School - selected subjects in foreign language and for education category 79-43-K/61 Bilingual Grammar School, effective on the date of the inspection
6. The School Code of secondary school The English College in Prague - Anglické gymnázium o. p. s. effective on the date of the inspection
7. Class registers kept in academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 by the date of inspection activity
8. Register of pupils (Matrika) by the date of the inspection
9. Timetables for academic year 2018/2019
10. The book of injuries from academic year 2009/2010 to the date of the inspection
11. Minutes of pedagogical council meetings in academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 by the date of the inspection activity
12. Minutes from meetings of Heads of Faculties in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 by the date of the inspection - sample
13. Personal files of pedagogical employees by the date of the inspection
14. Pastoral Portfolio in academic year 2018/2019 by the date of the inspection
15. Annual reports on the school's activities for academic years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018
16. Financial settlement of subsidies provided from the state budget in 2017
17. Profit and loss statement for 12/2017
18. The main accounting book for 12/2017
19. Audit report for 2017 - 2018

Notice

According to Article 174, Paragraph 11 of the School Act, the school's Headmaster has the right to submit objections regarding content of the inspection report prepared by the Czech School Inspection within 14 days since handover of the report. You can send potential objections regarding the content of the ČŠI inspection report to the address Česká školní inspekce, Pražský inspektorát, Arabská 683, 160 66 Praha 6, or send it via data box (g7zais9), or through e-podatelna csi.a@csicr.cz with attached electronic signature, addressed FAO the inspectorate's director.

The Czech School Inspection sends the inspection report, together with the objections and a standpoint of the Czech School Inspection towards their content, to the founder and to the School Council. The inspection report, including the objections, is public and it is archived in the school, or the school facility it is related to, for a period of 10 years and it is also stored at the local inspectorate of the Czech School Inspection. The

inspection report is also published on the website of the Czech School Inspection and in the information system of InspIS PORTÁL.