



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report**

**Transylvania College**

**Cluj-Napoca**  
**Romania**

Date  
Inspection number

**11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**20241111**

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## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

The inspection and this report follow the 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 pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation; the school's complaints procedures; and leadership and management. If appropriate, there is a separate section on the quality of boarding provision. 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 pupils and pupils' 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 DfE on the extent to which schools meet the standards for BSO.

During the inspection visit, 46 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Simon Sharron. The team members were Lesley Birtwell and Sarah Dillon.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British schools overseas. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

## 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides overall an exceptionally high quality of education where the exemplary progress and attainment of the students are rooted in a community culture of promoting student and staff wellbeing and ensuring that all individuals are cared for and valued.

### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- leadership and management
- strategic direction and identification of school development priorities
- commitment to developing teachers' skills to provide high quality teaching and learning
- vast majority of lessons are good or better
- rigorous assessment, tracking and student catch up plans
- progress and attainment of students
- focus on wellbeing for both students and staff
- relationships between staff and students and students and students
- confident, supportive, welcoming students with a strong sense of self discipline
- strength of the school community
- welfare, health and safety are a priority for the school
- enrichment opportunities in the wider curriculum
- successful programmes of global awareness and student leadership
- parent engagement
- addressing artificial intelligence issues within the school community
- bright welcoming environment for all - staff, students, parents, visitors.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- i. Develop a greater repertoire of differentiation by task to promote independent student-led learning.
- ii. Ensure all new curriculum initiatives are embedded and their impact assessed.
- iii. Consider providing within the realms of the possible more dedicated space for staff to prepare, mark and socialise.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Transylvania College				
Address	Biasoara 2A Street, Cluj Napoca, Romania				
Telephone Number/s	+40756141581				
Website Address	<a href="https://transylvania-college.ro/">https://transylvania-college.ro/</a>				
Key Email Address	diana.vancea@transylvania-college.ro				
Headteacher/ Principal	Diana Vancea				
Chair of board/ Proprietor	Ruxandra Mercea				
Age Range	2-19 years				
Total number of pupils	<b>706</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>363</b>
Numbers by age	<i>0-2 years</i>	29	<i>12-16 years</i>	231	
	<i>3-5 years</i>	126	<i>17-18 years</i>	55	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	260	<i>18+ years</i>	5	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Transylvania College is a co-educational school catering for students aged 2 -19 years. It is an intensely multicultural and international community in which 30 nations are represented. However, the vast majority of students are Romanian or have mixed Romanian heritage. The school is well established having been founded over 30 years ago by a local family to which the current proprietor belongs. Transylvania College became a recognised international school in 2004 and gained its first BSO accreditation in 2013. The school is popular and over-subscribed in many year groups.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

- The school provides a pre-dominantly UK curriculum which is delivered in English except for mandatory Romanian and modern language lessons;
- Although the youngest kindergarten children are introduced to instruction in English gradually, their classes are aligned closely to the UK's EYFS framework and early learning goals;
- Safeguarding and child protection are modelled on UK guidance, practice and standards;
- The school is an accredited centre for UK examination boards such as Cambridge and Edexcel;
- The school is organised into recognisable British phases of education;
- Most educational resources are sourced from Britain;
- Holistic education and the well-being of children and young people are central to the mission and practice of the school;
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students had parity with the quest for academic excellence;
- Opportunities for youth leadership are an essential and successful element of the wider curriculum offer;
- The school embraces proudly the Romanian culture surrounding it, whilst celebrating the rich multicultural and global diversity of its own international community.

## 5. *Standard 1* The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is of an exceptionally high order because the outstanding curriculum and the consistently good or better teaching and assessment deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people at the school.

### 5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

The school provides full time, supervised education for students aged 2-19. The school adopts a flexible dual system of international and Romanian education. In the recently introduced new curriculum offer, the school aims that: “each child in our care becomes a happy fulfilled individual, while having their needs closely matched every step of the way.” This unique curriculum reflects the mission, ethos and values of the school based on an audit of the needs of students. Its strength is its flexibility tailored to the personalised needs of the young person.

The international stream is based on the English national curriculum, early years foundation stage curriculum, Cambridge and Edexcel iGCSEs and A levels. This is enhanced by an innovative cocktail of project-based learning (PBL), global awareness learning, service learning, outdoor and adventure learning, and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and leadership opportunities. Lessons are taught in English, except Romanian and modern languages. As a result, all students have opportunities to make rapid progress in English and most achieve excellent outcomes in the British curriculum.

Transition programmes are in place at all stages within school. Those few students who may struggle in the international stream and British curriculum can switch to and succeed in the Romanian stream from where there is earlier access to Romanian tertiary education.

A written curriculum policy is in place supported by a number of other policies, for example, marking, feedback, homework. Staff are supported by schemes of work and shared planning. This approach enables staff to share best practice both amongst themselves and with other schools locally. Staff value the support the policies provide. Curriculum information, including detailed curriculum maps, are shared with parents. The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of students as shown by the introduction of the new curriculum offer in 2024. Students describe their learning as fun.

In upper primary (year 5 and 6), the curriculum is innovative, memorable and well planned. Core subjects are taught through discrete lessons enabling students to develop and embed speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Other foundation subjects are integrated into PBL or transdisciplinary projects. The cross-curricular approach allows students to make links between the different subject areas. This helps them pose and answer their own questions, whilst developing problem solving and critical thinking skills. Students have specialist teaching for ICT, Romanian, Spanish, German, PE and music. They have access to individual computer devices to support classroom and independent learning.

Middle school (year 7, 8 and 9) are bridging years between the primary school and high school providing the foundation for formal examination programmes. Core subjects, Romanian, computer science and the wellbeing programme continue to be taught through discrete lessons every week. Science and humanities are integrated into the PBL approach. Discovery subjects (arts, humanities, science) are staggered over half term blocks to enable the students to study fewer subjects for more intense periods to maximise progress. Students have access to digital learning through the Century Learning Platform. Programmes in the international and Romanian line are aligned to enable students to make appropriate decisions about their chosen pathway in year 10 and beyond.

In both upper primary and middle school, the PSHE curriculum has a high focus through a variety of programmes. These include, for example, connection time, assemblies, global awareness, forest education, leader in me and service learning. Relationships education is taught through the restorative approaches in line with Romanian law. The formal curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of additional opportunities, clubs, external visits and residentials.

In both upper primary and middle school, progress is tracked through regular internal and standardised testing. Results are analysed and, where appropriate, short term intervention programmes are put in place.

The secondary curriculum is broad, balanced, ambitious and innovative. It fully meets the needs of the students. The innovative duality of the curriculum provision Romanian and International lines continue into secondary classes. There are opportunities for students to switch between these according to their performance and assessment of their potential to succeed.

In KS4-5 the students follow IGCSE and A Level courses. For IGCSE, there is a broad and generous range of options that are divided into different pathways that may have for example an emphasis on STEM or humanities. At A Level, 20 subjects are offered which is, proportionally to the number of students, an extremely broad and generous range. Some classes like Art are small and require the combining of Year 12 and 13

students, whose exceptional artwork portfolios and excellent examination success show they are not disadvantaged by this.

The extracurricular activities, particularly the high number of exciting world and European trips, bring to life the programme of global awareness. The PSHE curriculum and pastoral system of Epraise points and restorative approaches strengthen the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and sense of well-being that is the bedrock of the students' academic success. There is an effective careers education programme that relies heavily on the 'Unifrog' platform.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is at least good. The vast majority of lessons observed were good or better with many distinguished by outstanding practice.

Students across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) demonstrate good levels of engagement, courtesy and cooperation, alongside a strong enthusiasm for learning. This positive attitude significantly enhances the effectiveness of many learning activities. The recent transition to continuous provision is still under development but considered a priority to further promote independent learning among the children. Engaging and thoughtfully designed activities engender quality interactions between teachers and students. The classrooms are bright and inviting but displaying more of the children's work will add to their vibrancy.

The early years bilingual approach at the school allows students to develop language skills in both Romanian and English. This allows parents to choose the stream that best suits their child when they transition to primary school. In the most effective lessons, teachers actively engage students by speaking both languages, encouraging children to use Romanian and English in their responses. While most tasks are currently teacher-led, some child-led activities are in evidence as the kindergarten develops continuous provision. The adjacent forest education and outdoor learning environment increases valuable opportunities for high-quality interactions between teachers and students that support bilingual language development.

Children from Year 1 onwards demonstrate high levels of English language communication, with teachers reinforcing this through the targeted teaching of key vocabulary in every lesson. The 'Letters and Sounds' phonics program is well established in Year 1. Students are making strong progress by successfully transferring their phonics knowledge and skills into other curriculum areas. Teachers maintain excellent relationships with students, understanding how to motivate and engage them effectively in their learning. Lessons observed were fun and interactive. Continuous provision in Year 1 will allow students to build further on their independent and autonomous learning. Some extra resourcing will help teachers orchestrate this.

Even for these young students, learning to lead is important. Lessons are often organised to foster leadership skills which aligns with school's commitment to the ethos inherent in the 'Leader in Me' programme. In one effective KS1 lesson, students worked collaboratively in pairs to create a maze while learning about directional language. This was a lesson, where students listened respectfully to one another and engaged in productive discussions. The teamwork, social and communication skills displayed by the children demonstrated the value of this type of collaborative learning. It was a pleasure to observe the children's enthusiasm and commitment to learning.

The 'Connection Time' lessons provide students with a safe and nurturing environment to share their feelings and thoughts. This daily PSHE session offers students the opportunity to engage with "check-in" questions and discuss a thought-provoking question of the day, which is often personally relevant. The positive impact of this time is evident in the students' interactions throughout the school day, where they consistently demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and care towards one another. This practice fosters a supportive school culture and plays a crucial role in promoting emotional wellbeing and empathy among the children.

The students' behaviour for learning is exemplary, with the majority of students remaining fully engaged in their lessons. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson observed, students demonstrated an excellent grasp of mathematical vocabulary and were able to articulate their reasoning clearly, making connections between numbers and explaining their thought processes. At the end of the lesson, students were given the opportunity to share their learning with peers, fostering a collaborative environment where they could learn from one another.

In a Year 3 lesson, students successfully recalled prior learning and applied it to the current lesson, demonstrating strong retention and understanding. During a KS2 student meeting, the children shared how they are consistently encouraged to attempt tasks independently before seeking help from a teacher, an approach that was clearly reflected in the lower primary lessons. This fosters both resilience and a growth mindset among the students, enabling them to take ownership of their learning while also knowing when to seek support.

Many teachers use questioning effectively to assess students' understanding and encourage deeper thinking. Throughout lessons, verbal feedback is consistently provided to both the whole class and individual students, supporting their learning and fostering continuous development. A more rigorous implementation of regular marking and feedback will allow the children to reflect further on their learning.

In upper primary and Key Stage 3, teaching enabled students to acquire new knowledge and practise skills through well planned lessons using a variety of teaching and assessment strategies. Sharing objectives ensured that the students were aware of what they were trying to learn. In the best lessons, students used paired work to clarify ideas and maximise engagement. In year 6 writing, there was a buzz in the classroom as students interviewed each other as preparation to write an autobiography. Linking learning with the students' own experience helped to develop understanding. In year 5 English, students discussed types of communication they use when gaming in order to understand why the characters in the text used a particular style of communication.

Stretch and challenge and student led learning is an area that the school is actively seeking to develop. In the best lessons, students are given autonomy over their learning resulting in high levels of engagement and the opportunity to set and solve

problems. In a year 8 ICT lesson, students were creating a short animation sequence using a variety of software tools. The open-ended task encouraged students to explore the tools that create a variety of effects and one student set himself the challenge to find out how to create an explosion, another wanted to make the water splash. In a Year 11 class, , differentiation, stretch and challenge were very visible as one half of the class were following an AS syllabus, while the other was still embarked on the iGCSE. Student led presentations on distinct aspects of a curriculum topic were seen in several lessons. This allows students to determine, within a teacher prescribed framework, the content and complexity of the content they choose to grapple with. However, too many lessons shied away from this type of differentiation by task.

IT was effectively used to move learning forward and enabled teachers to model and scaffold teaching points and objectives. In year 7 mathematics, students using their devices created shapes quickly and were able to focus on the lesson objective of bisecting angles. Similarly in year 9, they were able to explore on screen nets of 3D shapes and mirror the actions of the teacher.

Small class sizes, the skilful use of open-ended and high-level questioning, as well other formative assessment techniques, enable teachers to check on and secure individual student learning if necessary. Students actively engage in self and peer assessment, enabling them to understand what they have achieved and how to improve. In year 9 English focussing on several types of adverbs, students worked in pairs to identify adverbs in a text and then compared their answers to a teacher model before completing an activity choosing the most appropriate adverb. The paired work and teacher modelling gave the students confidence to achieve the task. Feedback marking by teachers is at an early stage of development and is yet to be applied consistently across all classes and subject areas.

Strong trusting relationships with teachers and a supportive classroom ethos, build students' confidence to tackle new learning. Students were confident to say, "I have a question." or "What do you mean?" or they would quietly go and support a peer who, for example, was struggling with their ICT device. In year 5, students starting a unit on fractions were asked how they felt about previous learning and were reminded that it was OK not to get it first time. The subsequent use of a practical paired activity folding paper into equivalent fractions increased their understanding and met the needs of more visual learners. They were then expected to explain their thinking using correct mathematical language.

In the minority of lessons that were less effective, teacher talk dominated; there was a one-size-fits-all approach; the learning became a notetaking task and students, although well behaved, were less engaged.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students are outstanding.

In EYFS, children's learning and development are tracked in accordance with the UK's Early Learning Goals, ensuring that each child makes a Good Level of Development from base line test starting points. Progress is reported to the parents twice a year through the school's reporting system that also includes the characteristics of effective learning. Children's progress in English phonics is tracked and monitored in Year 1 with catch-up interventions for those that need them. Reading progress is logged in a reading record using the decodable books scheme 'Reading Eggs' from Phase 2. This information is being passed onto Year 1.

In all lessons observed in KS1 and early KS2, spoken English was of a high and appropriate standard. By Year 3, the standard of independent writing is particularly good. Evidence from students' copybooks shows substantial written work, suggesting consistent practice and progress. Most students are projected to meet or exceed the expected writing levels by the end of the academic year.

School data from GL testing demonstrates that 92% of students in Years 4-6 achieved expected and above age-related levels. In mathematics and science, this was 94% and 86% respectively. Similar standards and progress over time are seen in classrooms and student workbooks. For example, in year 6 writing students are on track to meet the expected level at the end of the year, there was also evidence of students developing the skills and language features to be working at greater depth.

School data from GL testing in year 7, 8 and 9 demonstrates that the vast majority of students make expected progress or better. The school is aware of a dip in English progress in year 7, identifying both the reasons behind this (new students from Romanian schools or line choose to switch to international line starting with Middle School) and strategies to raise attainment in the future. Attainment at the end of year 9, as measured by Cambridge check point results, is high and improving over time. Attainment is well above the international average in English and mathematics and above the international average in science.

IGCSE results, in terms of grades 4/C and above and grades 7/A and above, consistently exceed UK averages over the period 2022-2024. While caution needs to be exercised making comparisons based on small cohorts, the school has seen a steady improvement in results in both categories, from 70%-89% and from 27% to 51% respectively. Although the school's average 2024 A Level results for passes at grade D or above were at 79.5% below the UK average of 90.2%, they were well above the average International Cambridge results of 71.5%.

IT skills are well established. For example, students in year 6 were independently using devices to support their classroom work, had efficient keyboard skills and confidently used tools within software to create effects.

Students are proud of their learning as shown by neatly presented work and a willingness to share outcomes with others. They have positive learning attitudes demonstrating resilience, a growth mindset and an ability to independently resolve problems they may encounter. This was seen in a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson where student project groups reviewed what they had learnt from conceptualising and delivering their presentations and what they had learnt from the process of critical peer assessment.

Behaviour overall is excellent in classrooms, around school and during breaktimes. A calm, orderly learning and social environment has been established. Although there are no bells signalling the start and end of lessons, students of all ages arrive punctually to lessons. Students are respectful and supportive of each other. They observed the 2 minutes silence for Remembrance Day during the inspection.

Overall attendance for 2023/24 and during the inspection was at 89% slightly below the expected average attendance for the UK. However, although statistical comparisons are impossible because of different methods of national data collection, it is highly likely that attendance rates at the school exceed those of schools in Romania. The school is working on strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Throughout the inspection, it was clear that the school cultivates an environment where relationships among all members of the school community are marked by politeness, respect and genuine care. Students display confidence and courtesy, consistently exhibiting exemplary behaviour both in the classroom and during break times. This positive attitude was observed throughout interactions with students, who exhibited and articulated a keen sense of moral integrity within the school, attributing it to the accessibility and support provided by teachers. Parents also praised the school for the meaningful connections teachers have established with families and students. This was especially noted by two new families who joined the school this year and felt well-supported by the school's wellbeing, leadership and teaching teams. The sense of family, mutual support and belonging clearly has a spiritual impact on the students who acknowledge the importance of their well-being at school.

Students actively embody the school's vision, mission, and values through their considerate behaviour and attitudes. They demonstrate respect and tolerance toward both peers and adults within the school community, reflecting a strong alignment with the school's ethos.

A particular strength of the school is its 'Global Awareness Programme', which offers students diverse opportunities to immerse themselves in global issues. Initiatives like the SILC Erasmus Programme provide students with opportunities to collaborate with peers worldwide, enriching their self-awareness, cultural understanding and knowledge of sustainability. Participation in high-level debate competitions, with both junior and senior teams, further develops students' collaborative skills, preparing them for future public speaking. The Global Awareness badge system, supported by the GA team, acknowledges students' contributions to school life. Their self-motivation to earn these badges is evident throughout the school, as students independently run clubs and actively encourage their peers to participate.

There is a strong pastoral curriculum at the school promoting its socially and culturally inclusive community. The school is dedicated to cultivating a nurturing and supportive environment for all students, with a strong emphasis on wellbeing, effective behaviour management and addressing any concerns or grievances. The school takes a proactive approach by offering parent workshops and student-led conferences, fostering open communication and partnership with families to ensure students feel happy and focused during their time at school. Restorative practices are integrated into classroom routines and the scheduled Connection Time each morning provides students with a safe and supportive space to share their thoughts and feelings.

The leadership curriculum 'Leader In Me' is fully integrated into the life of the school. Self-actualising leadership roles are embedded within each classroom and the pastoral organisation of the school. The 'Lighthouse Team' is a group of student leaders who coordinate and benefit from the responsibility for running whole school projects. Beginning in kindergarten, students engage in 'Service Learning' which instils the importance of giving back to their local community and supporting those in need. This initiative promotes reflection and cultivates a positive impact, reinforcing students' commitment to social responsibility and active community involvement.

Secondary students at the school benefit from comprehensive support as they prepare for university and their future careers. A key initiative is the introduction of the work experience programme, which provides students with valuable hands-on experience in professional settings, helping them explore career interests and develop essential workplace skills. Students also have access to 'Unifrog', which provides information on universities, courses, apprenticeships, work experience opportunities and career exploration tools. The 'MONEYFEST' initiative also offers students practical experience in financial literacy, equipping them with real-world skills such as budgeting, investing and financial decision-making. Together, these initiatives contribute significantly to the holistic development of students, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of university and their future careers.

The parent community is actively encouraged to participate in a wide range of school initiatives that support the wellbeing and holistic development of their children. A principal component of this engagement is the student-led parent consultation meeting, where students take the lead in presenting their learning journey, giving parents meaningful insights into their academic progress, personal growth and achievements. This approach not only builds student confidence but also allows parents to support and celebrate their child's learning actively. During the parent meeting, parents expressed how this is a termly highlight for them and that watching their child's confidence grow each time was impressive. Beyond the classroom, parents are warmly welcomed to engage in various school events that strengthen the community. These include 'Community Spirit Day', where parents, students, and staff collaborate to celebrate school values and 'Hobbies and Interests Day', where parents can share their personal skills and passions with students. Together, these initiatives foster a collaborative and inclusive environment, reinforcing a strong partnership between parents, students, and teachers, which nurtures each child's growth and development within a supportive and connected community.

## 7. Standard 3 The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for welfare, health and safety is outstanding. This area is a huge strength of the school.

The director is passionate that the emotional wellbeing of students and adults is non-negotiable, and the core purpose of the school is enshrined in their mission of 'teach, connect, care'. The ethos is evident through communication with the school, the warm welcome given to visitors by adults and students and the strong trusting relationships that are built at all levels. Students say they feel safe at school and their teachers care for them. One student summed this up by saying "It is my second home". All staff know their students as individuals, understanding their strengths, areas for development and interests. A student summed this up when asked if her teachers challenged her. She said, "They do, but sometimes they see we are not having a good day and can't take any more, so they don't over pressurise us."

Safeguarding is a high priority for the college. Policies are wide ranging and robust. They include issues relating to on-line safety and allegations against staff. Designated safeguarding leads are known by staff and appropriately trained. Links with external professional agencies, including Romanian social services and police, are available if required. Staff are regularly trained and updated about safeguarding issues. They know how to report concerns and records are securely kept. Students are taught how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of on-line safety issues, including the ethical issues of creating and sharing fake images and videos. ICT facilities in the school are filtered and monitored. They are taught strategies to resist peer pressure. The lunch and breaktime options encourage them to make healthy food choices.

Behaviour observed around the school, in both structured and unstructured times, is excellent. Students are calm and tolerant of each other. Everyone is treated with care and respect and this is modelled by the adults. The restorative and choices approach that has been adopted within the last 18 months underpins policies relating to behaviour and bullying. The approach is underpinned by on-going training for staff and students and is passionately championed by the director of the school. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies emphasise a staged response, opportunities to put things right through discussion and helping people change behaviours rather than reinforcing a negative self-image. Interventions and appropriate consequences are used where appropriate and parents are involved in difficult discussions about their child, as appropriate. The approach is supported by classroom teaching and class contracts. It is also modelled by adults who lead by example and make every effort to challenge meanness whilst celebrating behaviour that is kind, respectful and celebrates diversity. Procedures are in place to record and monitor behaviour issues which are consistently enforced by staff. Students say that bullying is rare and they feel supported that staff will help them resolve any conflict situation that they cannot resolve by themselves. This includes on-line harassment. As a result, the college is a warm, welcoming and safe place to be.

Transylvania College has a robust approach to the health and safety championed by a proactive health and safety officer supported by a raft of robust policies and regular staff training. The health and safety officer conducts regular site checks and is supported by grounds and maintenance teams. Processes are in place for staff to raise maintenance concerns or near misses. All reports are swiftly acted upon. For example, risk assessments identified the need to add safety cushioning to the walls of the new play area. The college complies with local fire regulations. Fire safety and evacuation procedures are clearly displayed in all corridors. International emergency signage is in place. Fire extinguishers and firefighting equipment are regularly checked both internally and by an external contractor. Appropriate record keeping and risk assessments are in place. Evacuations are regularly held and lessons learnt. Risk assessments are in place for all external visits. These are overseen by the health and safety officer prior to the visit taking place.

Written first aid procedures are in place. There is an on-site medical facility which is accessible to both students and staff. This is staffed by an on-site nurse and a doctor is expected to join the team in December 2024. First aid boxes are accessible throughout the college and a defibrillator is located in the entrance area. Travelling first aid kits are available. Several staff hold recognised qualifications in first aid, lifeguarding and use of the defibrillator. When students go off site the external visit must be accompanied by a first aider. There are currently no students with complex medical needs. Some students do have food allergies and the college has EpiPens for emergencies which staff are trained to use. Excellent communication between the college and the catering provider ensures these students are kept safe.

Students are well supervised at the beginning and end of the day and at breaktimes. Procedures are in place to maintain safety when students are entering or leaving the school. The car park and crossing points are supervised and the security guard monitors the entry of parents' cars. Procedures ensure students are safely supervised if parents are late. The school do not currently give supervisors hi-visibility jackets.

Admission and attendance registers are securely maintained in line with local regulations. All students are registered at the start of the day, while middle and high school students' attendance is recorded at the beginning of each lesson. Procedures are in place to register late arrivals and early leavers and to follow up on absentees.

## 8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

The proprietor's involvement with the school has been a life-long mission since the school was founded by her parents. She is also a member of the staff and delivers assemblies on occasions.

There is a single central record that records all the staff's suitability and legal right to work in the school. Police checks are renewed every 2-3 years. Staff identity and teaching qualifications are rigorously checked. 26 out of 29 high school teachers have 10 or more years teaching experience. External agencies process visa requirements for non-EU citizens.

Regular professional training is offered regularly to teaching staff. New staff receive induction training and mentorship for the first year, being closely supervised and supported at the beginning of their employment. In the last 4 years, 10 teachers have completed PGCE in partnership with Buckingham University in the UK. The school has the target that, by 2027/2028, 60% of its teachers will be trained in the British curriculum.

The school has built a strong professional performance management and workplace culture with support of a tool called *Mirro*. All members of staff can share best practices and connect with colleagues from various departments, give and receive 'Kudos'. The tool is designed to enhance teacher performance and to gather all lesson feedback in one place, with positive and also constructive feedback, enabling teachers to refine their teaching strategies. It helps the school foster a culture of continuous improvement, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

The head of the human resources department is trained in safer recruitment. Teachers are asked to do a demonstration lesson where possible. There is a probationary period for new teachers.

## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation of the school are outstanding.

The school buildings and grounds are clean, safe, welcoming and functional in providing high quality facilities that support the delivery of the curriculum. They are well maintained by cleaning and maintenance staff. Since 2022 there has been a major significant investment in the campus. Long term plans are in place for continued improvements in the future and the college has a long-term goal to have purpose built, modern facilities.

Classrooms and shared spaces have recently been remodelled and modernised. They are well lit, sound proofed where appropriate and have temperature regulators. LED lighting in corridors and bathrooms include motion sensors to conserve electricity. The new furniture provides modular and flexible options appreciated by both students and staff. Classrooms are well equipped with interactive teaching boards.

Early years and Year 1 are resourced for the further development of continuous provision. The outdoor area supports physical and gross motor development and provides opportunities for learning in many curriculum areas.

Throughout the school, displays about wellbeing, leadership and global awareness support the college's focus on the holistic and emotional development of the whole student. For example, on the playground is a large feelings wheel and the Key Stage 1 corridor encourages students physical co-ordination through interactive markings. Some displays are used to celebrate student work and support learning. This is particularly evident in corridors throughout the school and in some primary and early years classrooms. This is an area where the college could look to further develop in the future.

The recent refurbishment of the dining room facilities emulates a high-class hotel. The excellent acoustics ensure that lunchtime is a calm, relaxing experience.

The school benefits from several outdoor areas used for both learning and recreation. This includes a kindergarten play area and two other play areas. The sports field has been recently restored to include a new playing surface, and seating area. A new sports court is under construction and will be completed shortly. A swimming pool is available for early years and primary students.

Hygiene facilities for students and staff are located throughout the building. They are age-appropriate offering privacy for younger students and separate male/female facilities for older students. Sanitary facilities are clean with an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Mixer taps ensure that water for hand washing does not pose a scalding hazard. Suitable changing

rooms and showers are located near the swimming pool and sports facilities. The college does not cater for students who are disabled or have complex special needs. A lift is available for students or adults with mobility issues.

Drinking water is available through water dispensers located on all floors. These are regularly cleaned and maintained by an external company.

The school has an on-site medical facility which is accessible to both students and staff. The facility is currently staffed by an on-site nurse. The accommodation includes a treatment area with bed, toilet facilities, lockable medicine cabinet and office area with secure storage for confidential records. First aid boxes are accessible throughout the college and a defibrillator is located in the entrance area. Several staff hold recognised qualifications in first aid, lifeguarding and use of the defibrillator.

Transylvania College has a robust approach to the health and safety of its students championed by a pro-active health and safety officer supported by a raft of robust policies, maintenance schedulers and appropriate record keeping. The campus is secure. Security guards, barriers and signing in procedures monitor who has access to the site. External doors are locked and accessible by key cards with a panic button in place for emergencies. External lighting and cameras are in place and the external fence is regularly monitored for holes. Systems are in place for staff to report maintenance issues. Following the recent refurbishment, the college has identified and is seeking to address a number of 'snagging issues' that need to be addressed. These include visible markings to denote some steps and cushioning on the walls of the outdoor play area.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents, carers and others meets the BSO standards and is outstanding.

The school distributes academic reports at the end of each of the three terms, while parents of newly enrolled children also receive a settling-in report. Parents consistently express their satisfaction with the school's holistic approach to their children's education and its strong emphasis on pastoral care. This is because they are very well informed about it.

A particular highlight for parents is the opportunity for their children to develop leadership skills through initiatives like student-led conferences. The school takes pride in these events, which allow students to take ownership of their learning journey, build confidence and showcase their progress to their parents and carers.

Parents appreciate the effective communications with the school. In the primary years, 'Classlist' serves as the primary community communication platform, ensuring streamlined and consistent updates. Parents can choose what information they sign up for and receive. In the secondary years, the parents like the fact that they can keep up to date with their child's progress via the 'Epraise' platform which records attendance; reports, target grades, student achievements such as Global Awareness and house points awarded for going the extra mile.

The school actively involves parents in its community through a variety of events, such as 'Community Spirit Day', 'Interests and Hobbies Day' and involvement with service learning. workshops, communicating updates in the curriculum, when moving to PBL, have proven invaluable for families looking to support their children's learning better.

The school offers a comprehensive program to support students in exploring career options and university pathways. The use of platforms such as 'Unifrog' helps guide secondary students in making informed decisions. Parents are informed about the different university options available to their child. There also 'progression interviews' for parents of students in Year 9 and Year 11 to explain and counsel about important option choices.

The admissions process at the school is designed to warmly welcome families from around the globe. From initial inquiries to the start of the school year, families receive continuous support and can connect with key staff, including class teachers, heads of primary and secondary and the additional learning needs teams, when appropriate. This personalised approach ensures a smooth transition and fosters a sense of belonging and many parents in the forum spoke about how happy they were with the process. They felt it really solidified their decision to choose Transylvania College as a school for their child.

Through its commitment to holistic development, clear communication, and robust career preparation, the school creates a nurturing and inspiring environment for students and their families.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets the standard for BSO.

The school complaint's policy is available in the policies section of the school website entitled 'Compliments, Concerns and Solutions'. Positive as well as negative feedback from the school community is encouraged. The system of handling complaints, including staff grievances, is clearly set out in the document. The school complaints log indicates that the number of complaints is minimal, while parents underline that the school's commitment to conflict resolution and building effective communication channels between home and school nearly always obviates the need to engage the formal complaints process. This is very much part of the school's overall restorative approach to maintaining good social relations throughout its community. For completeness, the school may wish to consider developing a discrete whistleblowing policy in case this is ever needed.

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

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The school owner and the head of school have an inspirational effect on the school and complement each other's tireless input in making Transylvania College a school where the overall standard of education is extremely high and where the whole school community feel safe, happy and valued. In 2024 the staff retention rate was 91% and a staff survey revealed their satisfaction level stood at 97%.

The newly restructured senior leadership team is cohesive and share the owner's ambitious vision to ensure that students' wellbeing is the heart that drives academic achievement. They are supported by a committed team of middle leaders who, together with the SLT, constantly quality assure and support their classroom colleagues.

Leadership teams encourage and support colleagues to be innovative, experimental and energetic for change towards improvement. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their school and therefore its development priorities to improve.

As a result, student outcomes, academic and in their personal development, are excellent. The school is a vibrant hub for learning. The curriculum is innovative and made exciting by teaching which encourages student engagement and by an extracurricular offer whose emphasis on global citizenship, environmental sustainability and local community initiatives multiplies the access the school students have to world class education.

Recent refurbishments have transformed learning spaces so that students, parents and staff enthuse about the environment, even though some classes are operating at maximum capacity and staff would clearly benefit from having more space to prepare, mark and interact.

The restorative and well-being practices introduced by the school are such that it is an exceptionally caring school where student behaviour is exemplary. Both students and staff welfare are paramount. The provision for SMSC is outstanding enhanced by rich opportunities for global awareness through the formal and wider curriculum. The school successfully promotes knowledge and understanding of modern British life including UK attitudes towards tolerance, democracy, respect for freedom of expression and other human rights. This is blended into a celebration of Romanian culture and traditions and the country's achievements inside the European Union. Character forming programmes such as the 'Leader in Me', the global awareness and leadership programme and the service learning community involvement scheme help the school achieve its vision of 'Teach, Connect, Care'.

In addition to the academic and nurturing achievements of the school, the administration department is highly effective in providing the backstage support for the whole of the school's operation.

All performance indicators point towards the outstanding impact of leadership and management on the exemplary education that students of all ages enjoy at the school.