



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

Avenor College

Bucharest, Romania

Date **9th - 11th March 2026**
Inspection number **20260309**

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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 schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas as set out in the DfE document, Standards for British Schools Overseas, 2023.

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.

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 whether schools meet the standards for BSO.

During the inspection:

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about subjects and activities.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor and governors, including the chair.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the BSO standards.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of information including policies, the school's self-evaluation, examination results, parent surveys, extra-curricular activities and the school's accommodation and facilities.

The lead inspector was Ruth Dollner. The team members were Sharon Barr, Justin Blakebrough, Judith Pollock and Alfons Vident.

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

Avenor has improved since its previous inspection. Pupils receive a high quality of education because of strong leadership and highly committed staff. Staff are reflective and do the best that they can to continually improve their skills and the quality of education offered. Continually improve their practice to strengthen the quality of education.

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They share a clear vision for the school with parents, governors and pupils.

Leaders' expertise, improve the quality of education and pupils' outcomes, which are improving over time.

The curriculum is broad, rich and ambitious across all phases of the school.

Leaders and staff make sure that pupils' personal development underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils thrive because of the wide range of activities they experience within and beyond the school day. Pupils are happy, confident and welcoming young citizens.

Pupils love their school. They greatly value all the rich opportunities that Avenor offers them. They are proud to be 'Avenorians'.

British values underpin the work of the school. Pupils are polite, respectful, friendly and welcoming. They demonstrate British values of tolerance and respect. This is clear in every interaction with these delightfully engaging and interesting pupils.

Pupils have an extremely positive attitude to learning. They behave well and never fail to treat everyone with respect and kindness, regardless of background or culture. Pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education or working lives.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- aspirational leadership at all levels;
- school's work to promote personal development and British Values;
- pupils' exemplary behaviour;
- quality of governance and the impact of this over time;
- broad curriculum which is enriched through a wide range of exciting opportunities;
- Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is well embedded in the school and has high participation across all levels;
- community cohesion and shared values.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

Leaders should ensure that:

1. all staff receive high quality training to help them adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils;
2. best practice in adaptive teaching, and expertise in special educational needs is shared across all phases of the school;
3. they analyse attainment data across all phases. This will give the school a precise understanding of how outcomes compare with UK benchmarks and highlight any differences in the achievement of groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who are less able and the most able;
4. the review leadership roles and responsibilities for inclusion to ensure strategies of support have clear and visible impact on pupils' achievement.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Avenor College				
Address	Street Drumul Padurea Pustnicu Nr.125A, Sector 1 Bucharest				
Telephone number/s	Sarah Oprea, Primary and Nursery Office Coordinator, +40 (741) 158 108 Valentina Guță, Secondary School Office Coordinator, +40 (744) 490 520 Raluca Tarcea, Director of Experience & Strategic Development, +40 (737) 043480				
Website address	http://www.avenor.ro/				
Key email address	diana.segarceanu@avenor.ro admissions@avenor.ro office@avenor.ro				
Headteacher/ principal	Diana Segărceanu				
Chair of board	Diana Segărceanu (Executive Director)				
Age range	2-19				
Total number of pupils	834	Boys	409	Girls	425
Numbers by age	<i>0-5 years</i>	127	<i>12-19 years</i>	422	
	<i>6-11 years</i>	285	Number of part time pupils	0	

Avenor College is a non-profit, British International school rooted in Romanian culture, with a strong bi-lingual focus. Half of all of lessons are taught in English. The college's mission is to 'create the best possible future that is a fulfilled life for each of us and for all of us together'. The school is situated in two locations in northern Bucharest: an historic villa housing a Nursery, and a purpose-built campus for nursery, primary and secondary phases.

The majority of the school's community is Romanian.

4.1 British nature of the school

- British values are embedded within the school's vision and values.
- British values are threaded within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum.
- The school's curriculum reflects the content of the National Curriculum for England.
- The school delivers the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum.
- An UK approved phonics programme is taught to pupils in EYFS and key stage 1.
- Standardised assessments reflect those undertaken in British Schools.
- The schools' board of governors replicates that of a UK school.
- The senior leadership replicates a British school structure as do the leadership roles which pupils take on.
- Policies reflect those required in British schools in the UK.
- Aspects of school life mirror that of a British school such as assemblies and reward systems. Special events mirror celebrations and festivals within the UK.

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

The quality of education provided meets the standard for BSO and is good.

The school's curriculum is broad, rich and ambitious. It reflects the English National Curriculum.

Most pupils achieve well academically and thrive personally because they receive high-quality education. This is clear in their books and in the work that they do across all subjects. However, leaders' analysis of how pupils' achievement compares with schools in the UK is limited. Their evaluation of the cohort data they do consider, is not always accurate.

Pupils gain a good grounding in basic skills in literacy and numeracy which supports their learning across a range of subjects as they move through the school.

Teaching generally builds well on pupils' starting points and prior learning, but not consistently well for some pupils who have specific needs.

Teachers implement the planned curriculum successfully and support pupils to achieve well. However, teachers need further training to adapt the curriculum confidently to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs (SEND), and those who are the most and least able.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum across all phases of the school is broad and well sequenced. As a result, most pupils make good progress through the planned curriculum. Leaders ensure that there is clear progression at points of transition across the phases including post 16.

Foundational skills in reading and mathematics are prioritised when children join the nursery. The phonics programme is well embedded and children progress well. Reading is taught systematically. Once pupils become competent readers in English, they use these skills to support their learning across the curriculum. The curriculum successfully promotes a love of reading.

The Early Years curriculum reflects the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The nurturing learning environment and relationships between children and adults support children's academic and personal development. The curriculum is enhanced through visits to the nearby forest. For example to children collect materials to create inventions.

In the primary phase, the British and Romanian curricula are blended effectively. Children learn in an enriching and positive environment that supports the curriculum.

The primary curriculum is rich and varied. Specialist teachers deliver art, drama, music, PE and English. Reading continues to be a high priority. There is a comprehensive, highly effective PSHE programme. Children benefit from a project-based learning approach. Teachers plan cross curricular links to enthuse and engage pupils. For example, pupils applied their mathematics skills in their work on 'Space'.

The secondary curriculum offers a wide range of courses., Age-appropriate schemes of work provide consistency and progression across subjects. .There is a strong international dimension with an emphasis on teaching languages. Pupils are able to take French, Spanish, German and English, or Romanian, depending on their first language.

The range of optional subjects at IGCSE level provides pupils with access to subjects which reflect their interests and aspirations. The breadth of options is supported by clear guidance to help pupils make informed choices.

The school's 'portrait of an Avenor learner' supports pupils in developing key learning attributes across the curriculum. It charts pupils' understanding of concepts, competences and character.

Careers guidance and advice is a strength of the curriculum across the secondary phase. This is reflected in the Career Mark International award that the school received. Sixth form students appreciate the support given to them relating to future careers and university selection.

The extra-curricular (co-curricular) programme is extensive, and pupil participation is high. They are particularly proud of their achievements within the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching generally enables most pupils to progress well through the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge across all phases is strong.

Strong, nurturing relationships between teachers and pupils underpin learning. Pupils learn and collaborate well together.

Oral language, and high-quality discussion between pupils and adults support learning. Teachers think carefully about ways to interest and engage pupils when they implement the

planned curriculum. For example, pupils exploring argument and debate discussed how ‘strict parenting’ can either help or hinder their achievement. Teachers use skilled questioning to challenge pupils to think critically and challenge their initial thoughts during subject specific lessons.

Across all phases, teachers and leaders check on individual pupil’s progress carefully and identify ways to support them to keep up with their peers. Teachers provide positive and effective feedback to help pupils improve. Pupils appreciate this support. Pupil comments included: “My teacher is great” and “My teacher helps me get better”.

However, the curriculum is not adapted consistently for some pupils. Pupils with additional or specific needs, are sometimes set tasks that do not enable them to make the progress they should.

Pupils are typically well focused and engaged in lessons. They enjoy learning and are proud of their achievements. Occasionally, when activities or teaching does not meet their needs, pupils lose focus.

Teachers have high expectations, and most pupils meet them. . Occasionally, teachers’ expectations are too high or too low when the curriculum has not been effectively adapted to support pupils’ needs. Teachers need further training and support to help them adapt the curriculum effectively.

Where teaching is highly effective ‘starter’ activities build on pupils’ prior knowledge and engage them in the lesson. For example, in a secondary mathematics lesson pupils were able to show their prior knowledge of complex numbers because the teacher had planned an engaging starter that captured their attention.

Teachers use demonstration and modelling to show pupils how to be successful. For example, in PE lessons, teachers modelled how to throw and catch a ball, and in computer science teachers modelled how to develop a programme to sort data.

Technology is used effectively in lessons to promote learning. In secondary, the use of Google Classroom supports and enhances pupils’ learning.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Pupils across all phases achieve well and make good progress from their individual starting points through the curriculum. Teachers track pupils’ progress rigorously and identify gaps to inform their planning.

By the time students leave the school, they are well prepared for life at the next stage of education, or for work.

Leaders do not yet analyse cohort data effectively in the early years or in the primary phase. As a result, leaders are not fully aware of how the attainment in these phases compares to national benchmarks in the UK.

Progress and attainment in A levels are below UK benchmarks, but leaders were not fully aware of this. Leaders recognise that data analysis is an area for development. They are in the process of creating systems to analyse secondary cohort data effectively.

Attainment at IGCSE level is broadly in line with UK benchmarks and progress from starting points is strong.

There is limited cohort evidence to show whether there are gaps in progress or attainment between groups, such as pupils with SEND or English as an additional language (EAL), because leaders do not analyse data in this way.

Pupils' books show that reading, mathematics and writing skills are strong. This helps pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Pupils' books also show progress across subjects. However, progress is not consistent for all pupils.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils meets the standard for BSO and is outstanding.

The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. The school's values reflect British values. Avenor values Adventure, Vocation, Excellence, Nature, Opportunities and Relationships (AVENOR). These values are embedded and visible throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate these values in their daily life at the school. Pupils show patience and understanding with each other. They are respectful and tolerant.

They understand the rules of democracy and have many opportunities to vote within and beyond the curriculum. Pupils vote for the pupil council which has an impact on school life. Recently, the council helped redesign the school uniform to make it 'more modern'.

There are strong, trusting relationships between all members of the school community. Staff support pupils to develop independence and social skills. Pupils' exceptional behaviour contributes to the safe and harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.

There are a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. In addition, there are a range of community-based charitable projects that are pupil-led. Pupils are confident to initiate events and put forward their ideas because they know that they will be listened to and valued. Pupils value teachers' support in developing independence. One pupil captured this saying, 'They allow us to take baby steps and when we don't fall, we can go further and further'.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development exceptionally well. In addition to a carefully planned PSHE, pupils engage with ethical discussions and debates during Spanish, English and humanities lessons.

There is a comprehensive assemblies programme, and this provides opportunities to learn about and celebrate different faiths and ethnicities. An annual cultural day organised by parents further promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures.

The extensive enrichment, or 'co-curricular' programme allows pupils to try new activities and discover their interests and talents. Pupils' participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme helps them to develop leadership skills. Pupils enjoy the wide range of competitions and projects that they are involved in.

7. *Standard 3*

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils meet the standard and is outstanding.

The school has detailed policies including health and safety, first aid, anti-bullying, safeguarding and behaviour. Carefully kept logs demonstrate the consistent implementation of these policies.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Avenor. Safeguarding structures and processes are rigorous and effective. High-quality safeguarding training is provided to all staff including those who join mid-year.

The school's single central register is meticulously maintained and checked by leaders and governors.

Safeguarding is regularly discussed at staff meetings and regular refresher training is delivered. The whole school designated safeguarding lead (DSL) meets regularly with the DSLs in different sections of the school. This team is also part of a wider group of international schools in Bucharest who meet regularly to share best practice.

Safeguarding records are securely stored and accessible only to authorised staff. Records exemplify an effective system of identifying and managing concerns.

Pupils feel safe and cared for. They know how to access help and support if needed. They learn how to keep themselves safe online. There is strong pastoral care throughout the school. A school counsellor manages a well-being programme which addresses any concerns identified in pupil surveys.

Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is exemplary. Strong, nurturing relationships between staff and pupils underpin all aspects of the school's work.

Any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

The school uses several specialist external services to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. Romanian authorities also carry out regular checks to ensure compliance with national regulations.

The school conducts two fire drills and earthquake drill each year. These drills are evaluated carefully. The school is equipped with up-to-date fire hoses and fire extinguishers. Areas which have potential safety hazards are either locked or are restricted by electronic access. Leaders recognise that the evacuation assembly point requires regular review to ensure sufficient space.

Staff are all trained in basic first aid with some trained to a higher level. Pupils are also involved in first aid training.

The school carries out risk assessments relating to visits outside the school and curriculum subjects such as science and PE.

Attendance registers are in line with requirements. Attendance is broadly in line with UK averages.

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

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

Leaders ensure that all staff at the school are suitable to work at the school. The single central record reflects all requirements of local and British law. Vetting checks reflect those carried out in British schools and adhere to the requirements of Romanian law.

Recruitment procedures are thorough. This reflects leaders' commitment to keeping pupils safe. Personnel records are detailed and well maintained.

Staff who are involved in recruitment have relevant and up-to-date safer recruitment training.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

Premise and accommodation of the school meets the standard for BSO.

The premises and accommodation are well maintained and support the safe and effective operation of the school. Facilities are age-appropriate to the different phases across the school.

The learning environment on both campuses supports pupils' engagement and the progress they make across the school. The site is kept clean and is a very pleasant place to be. Pupils greatly appreciate this.

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 standard for BSO.

The school has clear and well-established systems for communicating with parents. The parent portal is the main platform for sharing information. Parents appreciate the quality of communication from the school. Parental engagement with the school is a strength.

Parents receive appropriate reports on their children's progress and achievement.

Leaders actively respond to general parental feedback, particularly through the Parent Committee, which plays an important role in strengthening links between the school and the parent community.

The school website complies with all requirements.

11. *Standard 7* The school's procedure for handling complaints

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

Systems to address complaints are clear and complaints are addressed in a timely and structured manner. Most complaints are resolved at the informal stage and do not escalate further.

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

The leadership and management of the school meet the standard for BSO and are good.

Leaders are inspirational, visionary and have the highest aspirations for pupils at Avenor. They are role models for their staff and pupils. They promote British values of respect, tolerance, resilience, and integrity. Together, they are a strong, collaborative team who want the very best for their pupils, and community. They have a strong track record of improving the school and have the capacity to build on Avenor's current success.

Leaders, staff and parents share the school's vision and work well together to achieve it.

Leaders are ambitious in their development priorities. Development plans are comprehensive and detailed. However, this sometimes means essential work such as cohort data analysis is incomplete. For example, there is no summative cohort analysis of attainment in the EYFS or primary phases to assure leaders that the school's attainment is in line with UK benchmarks.

Secondary cohort data analysis lacks rigour and comparisons made with UK benchmarks are sometimes inaccurate.

Subject leadership is strong and leaders model effective pedagogy and practice.

Governance has evolved and strengthened since the previous inspection. Governors know the school well and are fully involved in the life of the school. The inclusion of senior leaders on the board ensures a clear and constant focus on improving the quality of education.

Some board members are also past or current parents of pupils in the school which ensures parental perspective is always considered. Governors provide challenge and support to school leaders. Governors are reflective and recognise that some of the priorities identified

during the inspection are not currently part of their development planning. Governors fulfil their duties relating to finance and safeguarding.

Leaders ensure that policies relating to all aspects of the school's work are up to date and implemented by staff.

Performance management is rigorous. Staff receive a wide range of training to develop and enhance their subject knowledge and pedagogy. Teachers who are new to the school receive training to support pupils with different needs. However, other staff have not received recent training on meeting the needs of pupils with SEND or adapting the curriculum for all learners. Some staff have expertise in this area, but this expertise is not shared effectively.

Parents speak positively about the school, highlighting the quality of teaching, strong sense of community and the school's holistic approach. They describe the school as child-centred and balanced, with a strong sense of community and belonging. Parents value the school's nurturing approach, and the range of opportunities available to pupils.