

# A tradition of excellence: Bratislava's leading international school celebrates its 15th anniversary



THE BRITISH  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL

Bratislava, Slovakia

**In fifteen years The British International School Bratislava has transformed itself from the smallest and newest international school in Bratislava in 1997 to the city's largest and arguably most successful school with a waiting list.**

BISB's greatest period of growth was 2004 to 2006 when a number of multinational companies started to establish themselves and the demand from the increasing number of expats in the city for a British style education rocketed. Since then, while the 'market' has not increased significantly, BISB's share of the market has grown; it is the first choice school for most ex-pats for children aged 2,5 to 18. However the school also owes its success to Slovak families from the professional, diplomatic and business community who have been part of the school since its inception. They remain at its core while many expat families through the nature of their work 'come and go'.

Why has the school been so successful? Firstly, the British style of education is attractive. For purely pragmatic reasons ex-pat families know that if their lifestyle is going to be a cosmopolitan one they can be sure to find a British school in most capitals and major cities of the world. Furthermore the English curriculum is a 'national' curriculum; it is coherent, structured, relevant and progressive and for ex-pats

returning to their home countries whatever their nationality there is an ease of transfer to their own national systems and the subsequent peace of mind. But it is also the British pedagogy that attracts both ex-pats and Slovaks alike. Strong subject knowledge is only a starting point. Even more valuable (and relevant in a world where the knowledge increase is exponential) is the emphasis on learner skills, values, attitudes and attributes. BISB values curiosity, communication skills, creative thinking, self reflection, intellectual risk-taking, debate, enterprise and an understanding of how an individual thinks.

For all who choose BISB an important factor is the high quality of English Language teaching and the doors that open across the world for fluent speakers. Many of our students who enter the school aspire to achieving a university place in the UK or USA but, also secure in the knowledge that the examination taken at 18, the International Baccalaureate, is recognized by the Slovak Ministry of Education and is regarded as the 'gold standard' in pre-university qualifications

all over the world. BISB students regularly gain results higher than the world average and the school consistently achieves some of the best IB results in Central Europe.

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BISB is part of an international group of schools, 'Nord Anglia Education', which gives it many advantages - not least the continued investment in the school site and in technology and other school resources. It also invests heavily in its staff seeking to attract and retain the very best individuals by ensuring continued training and career progression. For its students it means a Virtual Learning Environment, 'The Global Classroom' a unique online facility which links students and staff all over the world in educational activities, discussions and debate.

What is distinctive about BISB? Firstly the sense of creativity you get when you enter the school. Step over the threshold and you will hear a concert pianist practicing her scales, a rock group rehearsing in the basement, a choir rehearsing acapella, groups of eight year old students



composing their own music. On the walls you see colorful murals, sculpture, photography and a display of the latest school musical 'Guys and Dolls'. In the dance studio students are learning Zumba or how to waltz for their "Stužková". Secondly, the importance the school gives to the role of service in the community and care for the environment. ECO and service weekends for all ages are a regular part of the school calendar with community service being part of the curriculum from the age of eleven. Up to 25 different local service projects can be operating in any one year on a weekly basis. This year the whole school community raised over 6000 Euros to support a school in South Africa with BISB students and teachers who went out to the school to work over the summer holiday. They were in no doubt about how much they will gain from this experience.

So what about the next 15 years? With the growth of its music and drama activities the school is hoping to build a large performance space and open a new Early Years facility.

BISB believe that in the coming years it will continue to uphold its mission: 'Helping others thrive'.



Wendy Ellis  
Principal  
BISB

