

Case study International British School of Bucharest



INTERNATIONAL
BRITISH SCHOOL OF BUCHAREST
EDUCATION WITHOUT FRONTIERS

Using Alps Data to achieve high performance learning

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The International British School of Bucharest (IBSB) was established in 2000, and now has around 430 students from over 20 nationalities. IBSB is a 3-18 all through school, with the secondary school making up the significant part of the school roll. All students follow the National Curriculum for England and Wales, which prepares them for GCSE, IGCSE, AS and A Level examinations. Graduates from IBSB have been accepted into some of the most prestigious universities in the UK, the USA and Europe. IBSB offers a broad and diverse GCSE and A Level programme, including subjects such as classical studies.

In terms of inspection, IBSB was rated as “Excellent” in September 2022, in what was its most recent British Schools Overseas (BSO) inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). IBSB has also been accredited as a World Class School by High Performance Learning (HPL), which recognised that “the International British School of Bucharest is a wonderful school with children at the centre of everything they do. They are a risk-taking team and driven by success at every opportunity.” IBSB is also an active member of COBIS, HPL Fellowship of World Class Schools and the Association of British Schools Overseas (AoBSO).

How does Alps culture of aspiration fit with IBSB?

As mentioned previously, IBSB is a World Class school within the HPL framework. HPL is a research-based philosophy that states all students have the potential to be high performing and not limited by ability. The HPL framework is teaching and learning based, which aims to grow and develop cognitive skills. Schools should strive to continuously improve, and the decision should be made to utilise the HPL framework to give structure to the maintenance of a growth mindset. At IBSB, we believe that all pupils have the ability to perform and achieve at the highest levels and should strive for success. Using Alps to generate the data and the targets, and track the progress that students are making, allows this aspiration in many cases to become reality.

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Using Alps in an international school setting

I was introduced to Alps through a conversation with other senior leaders of schools that were going through the accreditation process of becoming HPL schools. This led to a conversation with Simon O'Connor of Jumeirah College, regarding the impact that Alps had on his setting in the UAE. One of the issues that we often have in an international setting is the availability of prior attainment data that you would have in a UK school, such as KS2 SATS data or FFT data. The ability to be able to use GL assessment CAT4 data in the Alps platform, Connect, to generate a minimum expected grade (MEG) for a student in year 10, that will act as a target that progress can be measured against, was a game changer as far as we were concerned as a school. This allowed us to demonstrate to pupils, parents and teachers exactly what the minimum expectations could be for a student and, extrapolating forward, for a class of students in a particular subject. From this, more aspirational targets can be negotiated.



Alps has been invaluable in allowing staff to be able to track the progress of pupils within their subject areas, and to allow middle leaders, and senior leaders to be able to identify areas of strength, and areas of development within subject areas, and within the school as a whole.

How do we use Alps at the International British School of Bucharest?

At IBSB, all pupils in years 7, 10, and 12 take the CAT4 assessment from GL assessment. In years 7 to 9 this CAT4 data is used to generate a target grade in every subject. When pupils move into KS4 the CAT4 assessment is taken again and the CAT4 data is then uploaded to Alps, where a Minimum Expected Grade (MEG) is generated. This MEG is aspirational and is based upon the CAT4. Teachers will then use the data from previous years, along with conversations with the student to set an aspirational, personalised target (PT) which is reviewed regularly.

In KS5, the results obtained at IGCSE/GCSE are used to generate a point score, which then generates the MEG for A Level. Again, conversations take place between students and teachers regarding personalised targets, and these targets are regularly reviewed over the course of the two years to ensure that they remain aspirational and relevant.

How does Alps help teachers and students?

Alps has been invaluable in allowing staff to be able to track the progress of pupils within their subject areas and to allow middle leaders and senior leaders to be able to identify areas of strength and areas of development within subject areas, and within the school as a whole. As a World Class HPL school, our philosophy is that "all pupils are capable of high performance" and Alps, and in particular Connect, allows all staff at IBSB to be able to use the data that has been generated through classroom assessment and reported on, to be able to see how pupils are progressing, not just in one subject, but in all subjects that are being taken.

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Senior leaders use Connect to set targets for middle leaders related to subject T scores, with departments being set challenging targets to achieve Alps scores of 1 to 3. An Alps score of 1 means we are exceeding the top performance in the Alps benchmark, a score of 2 means we are matching the performance at the top 10% and a score of 3 means we are matching the performance of the top 25% against the Alps benchmarks. Middle leaders then have similar conversations with subject teachers relating to T scores for the class, the progress that students are making to their aspirational targets and the impact that can be had through intervening with students who are working below targets set.

This reporting data is used by the KS4 and KS5 coordinator who can then cross reference with GL PASS data to see how pupils are feeling about school and also how this has impacted on their progress, looking at the bigger picture. Staff feedback has been universally positive about the ease of use and simplicity of Connect, especially the thermometer!

Impact of Alps

Since IBSB began using Alps in 2020, a T score of 4 or above has been maintained at A Level, with a score of 1 in 2020-21. History, economics and geography have maintained scores of 3 or above during this time. At AS Level, the T score has been 1 for every year that IBSB has been using Alps, with physics, mathematics, psychology and economics attaining a score of 2 or above in each year.

Obviously, the grades achieved by the students cannot be attributed to Alps, but the ability to identify students who are underachieving and then be a tool to promote conversation between colleagues and also between students and teachers is invaluable. Alps keeps students honest and also develops accountability, as well as starting conversations related to whole school development, allowing schools to continually strive to be their best, which is true high-performance learning in action.

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