

# Certification Inspection Report

## BRITISH COLUMBIA PROGRAM

at

GRAND CANADIAN ACADEMY (JIAXING)

TONGXIANG, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

NOVEMBER 7-8, 2022

### INTRODUCTION

On November 7 and 8, 2022, a virtual certification inspection was completed on Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing), in Tongxiang, Zhejiang Province, People's Republic of China, referred to as the School or GCA in this report. The purpose of this inspection was to determine if the requirements for the British Columbia (BC) education program have been met, according to the *BC Offshore School Program Certification Agreement* (the Agreement). The Inspector, appointed by the Executive Director of the Independent Schools and International Education Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) in accordance with Agreement, was Dr. John Churchley.

The School's BC program has an enrolment of 41 students, in grades 10-12. The BC program is hosted by Mao Dun High School. The entire school, which houses the BC program, enrolls 2542 students.

During the virtual inspection of the School, the Inspector reviewed all standards required in the Agreement and *Operating Manual* and met with the School's Owner/Operator, Offshore School Representative (OSR), BC Principal, BC teachers, host school Principal, homeroom teachers, the Director of the International Department and students.

The Owner/Operator, Grand Canadian Academy (Asia) Ltd. is responsible for the BC program and is based in Hong Kong and has offices in Greater Vancouver.

The BC program's philosophy, objectives and special features include:

- a mission to "offer first-rate educational options to Chinese high school students in order to help them prepare successfully to gain acceptance to and complete a post-secondary education".
- core values of respect, honesty, and diligence.
- goals in 2022/23 to increase student achievement on provincial assessments and on the school honour roll.



The Inspector would like to thank Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing) for its cooperation and preparedness for the virtual inspection visit.

<b>The School has satisfactorily addressed requirements contained in the previous inspection report.</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
Comment: There were no requirements from the previous inspection report.			

## BUSINESS PLAN 1.0

<b>The Owner/Operator has submitted a business plan to the BC Ministry of Education, confirming the sustainability of the program.</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met
Comment: The Owner/Operator has submitted a detailed business plan and the Inspector confirms the information in the plan. There has been a decline in enrolment since 2018/19, which continued into the 2022/23 school year which creates sustainability challenges for the program. The School has indicated many reasons for the decline including COVID-19 concerns, competition from nearby international schools, and less parent interest in sending students to overseas western universities.  The School is located in Tongxiang, in the northeast corner of Zhejiang province, and is a short train ride from the large cities of Jiaxing, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Hangzhou. Within this large market there are many competing international schools. Tongxiang has a population of 1.5 million. The BC program is a day school for approximately 2/3 of the students, who live within commuting distance. The other 1/3 stay in the dormitory during the week.  The School has undertaken a number of recruitment strategies to increase enrolment. Strategies include print and broadcast advertising campaigns, visits to middle schools and an education fair, and a meet-and-greet dinner with staff from a feeder school. The School is starting to build a presence on social media which could be further expanded to encourage recruitment by word-of-mouth from families, students, and alumni.  The host school has done extensive renovations to the physical space used by the BC program, including floors, ceilings, walls, classroom furniture, a computer lab, new teacher workrooms, and large classroom TV monitors. The renovations have made classroom and		



other workspaces attractive and modernized. These improvements may help with the recruitment initiatives. The School is also considering additional means by which to increase enrolment.

While low enrolment influences the number of staff available, the BC and Chinese staff in the School all demonstrate a high commitment to the success of all students. With low numbers, students that are struggling have “nowhere to hide”. Therefore, extra support is consistently provided from the caring adults at the School to assist them in their success. This family-like atmosphere has contributed to strong post-secondary transitions with a 100% high transition rate to post-secondary in 2021/22. Of these graduates, 72% transitioned to universities in Australia, the UK, and Canada. The rest transitioned to universities in China – some of which are affiliated with western universities. The School indicates that graduates have had success at both domestic and international universities. These school alumni may be a resource to use in future recruiting efforts.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for facility upgrades to support student learning and to encourage enrolment.

The School is commended for the joint efforts of all staff – BC teachers and homeroom teachers working collaboratively to ensure the success of each individual student.

## INSPECTION CATALOGUE 2.0

### 2.02 The Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the Agreement.

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the Agreement.

### 2.03 The Owner/Operator has written approval from the appropriate government entity to operate the School, as outlined in section 5.03 of the Agreement.

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the Owner/Operator has approval from the Zhejiang Provincial Education Department which is valid until December 31, 2023.



**2.04-2.05 The School meets building inspection/safety, food preparation/cafeteria and fire safety codes and regulations. The facilities are deemed to be suitable to support the BC program.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School is located on the 35 acre campus of the host school, and shares some facilities with the host school, such as the playing fields, cafeteria, gymnasium, arts centre (with theatre), science labs, auditorium, and library. The BC program has five classrooms, a meeting room, a library, computer lab, and offices.

The Inspector reviewed local building, safety and cafeteria documents and permits with translations and confirms that local requirements are being met. The School reports that the building recently had a structural assessment as part of the renovation process. No documents were available from that assessment.

The Inspector verified that emergency drills are conducted as required including earthquake drills. The School has policies and procedures to respond to a variety of emergency situations and are included in the teacher handbook and in the GCA emergency response manual, which is a comprehensive guide to a variety of emergency situations.

Health and safety protocols have been implemented due to COVID-19 and are managed by the host school and shared in the parent/student handbook. The School also has written plans to manage the school through COVID-19 and in the event of a temporary or permanent closure of the School. These plans have been vetted by the Offshore School Representative (OSR) for accuracy and functionality.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for developing a comprehensive emergency response manual to provide detailed plans for a variety of situations.



**2.06 Offshore School Representative (OSR) - The Owner/Operator must appoint an individual to act as an OSR. This individual must be confirmed by the Province and must meet all the requirements set out in section 14 of the Agreement.**

☒ Requirement Met

☐ Requirement Partially Met

☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Offshore School Representative (OSR) is in his third year in this role. Prior to this, he was the principal of the School, and has detailed knowledge and experience in the operation of an offshore school. The OSR is confirmed by the Province and meets all requirements in section 14 of the Agreement.

The Inspector appreciated the cooperation and participation of the OSR in the virtual inspection.

The OSR is aware of the obligation to report critical information relating to changes in the operation of the School or ownership structure that could significantly impact the School's operations.

**2.07 The Principal meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.07 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met

☐ Requirement Partially Met

☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the Principal meets all requirements as outlined in section 2.07 of the Annual Report.

The Principal is serving in his third year as principal of the School. He has previously served as Vice-Principal and teacher at the School since 2014. He is a BC-trained teacher and has a long history as a teacher in BC public schools and international schools in several countries.

**2.08 The School meets the administrative support requirements as outlined in section 2.08 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met

☐ Requirement Partially Met

☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the School meets the administrative support requirements as outlined in section 2.08 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.



The BC program has a teaching Principal supported by an Administrative Assistant, and a program librarian. The host school supports the School with a Director for International Programs, the IT department, and also other administrative and operational supports for the School which are shared with the Owner/Operator.

**2.09 The School meets the Student Record requirements as outlined in section 2.09 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector reviewed a sampling of student records and confirmed the presence of all required elements as outlined in section 2.09 of the Annual Report for offshore schools, including the English language entrance assessment. Hard copies of student files are secured in a locked filing cabinet in the BC office, and digital student records are managed securely within TESS.

**2.10-2.18 The School meets the teacher certification requirements as outlined in sections 2.10-2.18 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that all Authorized Persons under the Agreement are eligible and possess valid and current certification or a Letter of Exemption (LOE) under the Ministry of Education and Child Care. One teacher has an LOE and is being supported to complete certification requirements. The application requirements were expected to be completed by the end of the week of the inspection.

The Inspector confirms that locally certified teachers have valid certification and criminal record checks as per local regulations.

Professional development opportunities have been offered for new BC staff individually as they join the School. Topics typically include assessment and Core Competencies. Once all teachers are on-site, professional development days will be offered, focussing on Core Competency-centred lessons and unit planning. Teachers indicated an interest in connecting with other specialists working with BC's curriculum for subject-specific professional development.



Teacher and administrator contracts of employment include all required information including a statement of acknowledgement that the Province is not party to the contract.

**2.19 The School meets the requirements for curriculum implementation outlined in section 2.19 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

Through a review of planning materials and online interviews with teachers, administration and a selection of grade 10, 11, and 12 students, the Inspector verified that the BC grade 10 to 12 curriculum is being implemented by teachers at the School.

Teachers new to the School and to BC's curriculum are supported with the provision of curriculum planning documents and individualized professional development. This support is provided with online seminars and direct support from the Principal. As the Principal has a significant teaching role, the time for this support is limited.

The School is implementing English First Peoples – Literary Studies and New Media 11 to meet the 2023/24 graduation requirement of four credits of Indigenous-focused coursework.

**2.20 The School meets the requirements for English language assessment and acquisition as outlined in section 2.20 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

All prospective students are given an English language admission assessment. The Principal makes all entrance decisions. There is ongoing evaluation of language skills of all students. The acquisition of listening, oral communications and reading is assessed through sample provincial literacy assessments and a mock International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test. The School plans to further reassess language learning using the rubric from the entrance assessment.

English language learning (ELL) support is provided in homeroom classes through a daily taped program to support spoken language skills, English language acquisition, oral grammar, and listening comprehension skills. Bilingual homeroom teachers support this and other strategies for ELL.



All classes are considered ELL classes and teachers use strategies to promote language development such as visual aids, vocabulary development, and reteaching in small groups. The School has very small class sizes so there is ample opportunity for individual student support from BC teachers. However, with a small BC staff, there is also an increased need for support for students from the bilingual homeroom teachers.

Student lead activities and cultural performances provide additional opportunities for the use of English language outside the classroom. Examples include debates, assemblies (Remembrance Day), spirit week, and various English speaking competitions in the host school.

**2.21(a-e) The School meets the course credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions and BAA courses) as outlined in section 2.21 (a-e) of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the School meets the course credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions, and Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) courses) as outlined in section 2.21 of the Annual Report.

While not utilized this year, the School has an equivalency policy.

The School offers Chinese Culture 10 and Chinese History as Ministry approved BAA courses. The Principal reviews all overviews associated with BAA courses each time they are offered.

The Ministry approved exempted courses being taught this year by locally certified teachers are Mandarin 10-12, and Physical and Health Education 10 (PHE10). Mandarin courses have English course outlines. PHE10 is co-delivered by a BC-certified teacher responsible for delivering the health components of the course within science courses. The local instructor is under the supervision of the BC Principal.





**2.21(f-g) The School meets the course overview/course planning requirements as outlined in Schedule B Part I, 2. € of the Agreement; namely, that all BC program courses offered in the School meet or exceed Ministry learning outcomes/learning standards identified in the educational program guides for each course.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The course overviews, outlines, lesson plans, and assignment samples reviewed provide evidence that grade 10-12 course documents meet the requirements of BC's curriculum.

The Inspector viewed course overviews, some of which are standardized and include the Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and content for each course. They also include a planning chart by unit that includes ideas for activities, assessment, and connections to First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL). Standardized planning documents are especially beneficial to teachers who are new to BC's curriculum, and/or are hired mid-year. Unit and lesson plans were also reviewed – these go into further detail and include assessment for, as, and of learning. Some planning documents refer to “Enduring Understandings (PLO's)” which are big ideas with elaborations, and other documents refer to “Specific Lesson Objectives (PLOs)” which are the learning intentions for each lesson. While the intent of these headings is consistent with the current BC curriculum, the term PLO is no longer used.

**2.22 The School meets the instructional time allotment requirements as outlined in section 2.22 of the Annual Report for offshore schools, including the requirements set out in sections 1.1 to 6, with the exception of s. 4(5)(b), 4 (6), 5 (8)(a) and (d) and s. 5.3 of Ministerial Order 41/91, the Educational Standards Order, enacted under the Independent School Act.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector reviewed the school calendar and staff timetables. Students have 7.3 hours of instruction per day, and the School more than meets the minimum 850 instructional hour requirements.



**2.23 The School meets the assessment methods requirements as outlined in section 2.23 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that effective and appropriate assessment methods are employed by teachers at the School. The School has a focus on spoken language and many summative assessments encourage this as well as active and group learning. These include: presentations, debates, mock interviews, role plays, and videos.

The School's invigilation and security procedures for the BC Graduation Numeracy and Literacy assessments are consistent with Ministry guidelines. Technical support is provided by the host school. Anomalies are dealt with quickly and effectively by the Principal and follow Ministry procedures.

The School's practices and policies ensure that school grades accurately reflect individual student achievement in BC's curriculum. The School uses a tracking system to follow student achievement from the English language entry assessment through to the provincial literacy and numeracy assessments. The tracking information will be shared in a joint professional development session later in the year with BC teachers and homeroom teachers. Students that are struggling receive extra support from homeroom teachers as well as individualized attention from BC teachers due to the small class size.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for using student-centred summative assessment opportunities that encourage active learning, group work, and oral language development.

The School is commended for using a tracking system to follow student achievement and to support numeracy and literacy development across all classes.

**2.24 The School meets the learning resources requirements as outlined in section 2.24 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Principal confers with staff to determine the required resources, and has final authority on approval. Purchase and delivery is arranged through the host school. The School has purchased a large number of resources that support English language learning (ELL), including high interest/low vocabulary books, graphic novels as well as fiction and non-fiction.



The School has a library that is part of the renovation improvements. It is supported by a local librarian and has a collection of approximately 3300 books, 215 videos, as well as magazines.

The School has its own computer lab with 30 computers available. The lab enables the School to administer the BC provincial assessments in its own facility. When it is not available, the School can use labs in the host school. The School has Wi-Fi access throughout classrooms and has an internet bandwidth of 100 Mbps. The Wi-Fi system can be intermittent, so staff and students often use 5G hotspot points which provide superior connectivity. Students have access to laptops at the discretion of teachers. The use of school technology is always under the direction/supervision of school staff. The renovated classrooms have large touch screen panels for teacher and student use.

**2.25 The School meets the student progress report requirements as outlined in section 2.25 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School provides two written progress reports a year (four weeks from the start of each semester) and four formal report cards each school year (November, January, April and June). The School is preparing to update its reporting framework and student self-assessment to reflect the requirements of the draft K-12 Student Reporting Order.

Student/teacher/parent interviews are held in November and individually as needed. The Chinese homeroom teachers support ongoing teacher communications with families through emails, phone calls, and the use of WeChat. They are in contact with parents on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.

**2.26 The School meets the parent/student handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.26 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the parent/student handbook meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.26 of the Annual Report for offshore schools. It has been updated for 2022/23 and includes a table of contents.



A section on appeals and dispute resolution is included in the parent/student handbook as well as in the teacher handbook.

**2.27 The School meets the teacher handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.27 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirms that the teacher handbook meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.27 of the Annual Report for offshore schools. The handbook is easy to use with a table of contents and is a thorough guide for teachers, especially those who are new to the School. The handbook includes: the school philosophy; professional standards for BC educators; school organization; general living information for Tongxiang; curriculum information; and school routines and procedures.

There is a section outlining the policy and procedure for teacher evaluation and school-based administrator evaluation as well as the policy and procedures for parent/student appeals and dispute resolutions.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for developing a thorough teacher handbook that is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the School's policies and procedures along with practical information, useful to current and incoming teachers.

**2.28 The School meets the Online Learning requirements (formerly Distributed Learning) as outlined in section 18 of the Agreement and section 2.28 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met      ☐ Not Applicable

**Comment:**

The School does not have students enrolled in Online Learning this year. Documentation for Online Learning courses that have been taken in previous years is kept on file.



**2.29 The School meets the requirements for offering Remote Instruction under the BC Offshore School Remote Instruction Policy and as outlined in section 2.29 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☐ Requirement  
Met

☐ Requirement  
Partially Met

☐ Requirement  
Not Met

☒ Not  
Applicable

**Comment:**

The School is not offering Remote Instruction this year. One teacher has been instructing online through the Continuity of Learning Policy and is currently waiting for a visa to enter China. The teacher is expected to arrive in China in November. The teacher makes use of DingTalk for synchronous contact and WeChat for file transfers with students in class. The teacher is supported by a homeroom teacher that is physically with the students in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

### Commendations

**The Inspection Inspector wishes to recognize the Owner/Operator, Principal, staff and Offshore School Representative of Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing) for:**

- facility upgrades to support student learning and to encourage enrolment.
- the joint efforts of all staff – BC teachers and homeroom teachers working collaboratively to ensure the success of each individual student.
- developing a comprehensive emergency response manual to provide detailed plans for a variety of situations.
- using student-centred summative assessment opportunities that encourage active learning, group work, and oral language development.
- using a tracking system to follow student achievement and to support numeracy and literacy development across all classes.
- developing a thorough teacher handbook that is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the School's policies and procedures along with practical information, useful to current and incoming teachers.

### SUMMATIVE RECOMMENDATION

**The Offshore Inspector recommends to the Executive Director of the Independent Schools and International Education Branch that the British Columbia education program offered at Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing) *continues* to be recognized as a British Columbia-certified school.**

