Certification Inspection Report

BRITISH COLUMBIA PROGRAM

at

GRAND CANADIAN ACADEMY (JIAXING)

TONGXIANG, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

NOVEMBER 18-19, 2019

INTRODUCTION

On November 18-19, 2019, a virtual certification inspection was completed on Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing) in Tongxiang, Zhejiang Province, Peoples Republic of China, referred to as the School or GCA in this report. The purpose of this inspection was to determine whether the requirements for the British Columbia (BC) education program have been met, according to the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement. The Inspection Team (the Team), appointed by the Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education, British Columbia Ministry of Education (MoE) in accordance with the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement (the Agreement), consisted of Collette Ellis-Toddington and Peter Drescher (Chair).

The School’s BC program has an enrolment of 67 students, in Grades 10, 11 and 12. The BC program is housed on two floors within Mao Dun High School, a twenty-year old Chinese public-school offering Grades 10-12 to approximately 2800 students. Mao Dun High School is identified as an ‘A level’ school in Zhejiang Province. The campus is equipped with an observatory and is well endowed with sports and fine arts facilities, including a 1200-seat theatre.

During their virtual visit to the School, the Team reviewed all standards required in the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement and Operating Manual and met with the School’s Owner/Operator, Offshore School Representative (OSR), BC Principal, BC teachers, the International Director, a group of Grade 12 students and the principal of Mao Dun High School.

The Owner/Operator, Grand Canadian Academy (Asia) Ltd, is responsible for the BC program. They are headquartered in Hong Kong and maintain an office in Greater Vancouver. They assist the School in maintaining its website and in procuring resources.
The BC program’s mission is 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.

The School has identified two goals for improving student achievement for this school year:

1) To achieve a graduation rate of 95%
2) To achieve a total subject pass rate of 90% for all grades

The Team would like to thank Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing) for its cooperation and preparedness for this virtual inspection.

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<tr>
<th>The School has satisfactorily addressed requirements contained in the previous inspection report.</th>
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Comment: There were no requirements contained in the previous inspection report. The School has taken initial steps to address the suggestions also contained therein.

**BUSINESS PLAN 1.0**

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<th>The Owner/Operator has submitted a business plan to the BC Ministry of Education, confirming the sustainability of the program.</th>
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Comment: The Team reviewed the business plan filed by the Owner/Operator. The Team noted the intake of 26 Grade 10 students into the program for 2019/20 and the many challenges faced by the School in recruiting students. The steady enrolment decline from a high of 104 students in 2016/17 to 68 this year is concerning. There are many English language international schools competing for students in the same region. The School would ultimately like to have 2-3 classes at each grade level, bringing it closer to its estimated capacity of about 220 students.

The School has partnered with a Norwegian company in an effort to have 25 Norwegian students come to GCA for one year of study. This was initiated by the principal of the host school. Should this plan come to fruition their anticipated arrival would be September of 2020.
The International Director and School Principal visit all local middle schools (18) in order to recruit students. The School is attempting to expand its marketing and recruitment efforts by widening the target search area for recruitment.

The Owner/Operator also plans to engage a private company to do additional recruiting in China and promote the notion of a “3 years in 4” graduation pathway.

The Team reviewed the School’s approaches to communicating with parents. A variety of written communications take place, and parents have an opportunity to connect with the school through orientation meetings, and parent/teacher/student conferences.

The Team reviewed the School’s website and noted that various sections are in need of updating. The Team suggests that the Owner/Operator review the website form and content and determine if it provides maximum promotional value in order to attract new students and parents to the school.

At the time of the inspection, the School had a professional staff of three, all with full teaching assignments, including the Principal, a Science teacher, and the OSR, who was filling an English teacher position vacant since the start of the school year. The OSR believes he has candidates to relieve the Principal and himself of teaching responsibilities and hopes to have them in place in the new year. For a variety reasons, the School has recently had difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers including, but not limited to 1) a two-year experience “Foreign Expert” requirement by the local education authority, 2) a teacher shortage in British Columbia, 3) small and declining enrolment, 4) the political climate and China/Canada relations, and 5) location. It is suggested that the Owner/Operator review the compensation package for teachers to determine if it is still competitive in the Chinese marketplace.

Forty percent (40%) of the School’s 2019 graduating class are now enrolled in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Post-secondary destinations included Ontario (14), PRC (11), Australia (10), British Columbia (1), and other provinces (3). Lower tuition costs, lower English language requirements, and fewer years to degree completion (Australia) factor into decision-making. The International Director is to be commended for his diligent tracking of post-secondary enrolment of GCA students, as well as their progress in completing degrees. GCA students have a very high post-secondary completion rate (approximately 90%). Former students who have graduated from foreign universities are often invited to return to GCA to speak to its future graduates.

**Commendation:**

The International Director is to be commended for his diligent tracking of post-secondary enrolment of GCA students, as well as their progress in completing degrees. Also commendable is inviting university graduates back to tell their success story and highlight how the BC Program prepared them for their post-secondary studies.
### INSPECTION CATALOGUE 2.0

#### 2.02 The Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the BC Global Education Program Offshore Schools Certification Agreement (the Agreement).

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**Comment:**
The Owner/Operator, Grand Canadian Academy (Asia) Ltd. meets all of the requirements specified in the BC Global Education Program Offshore Schools Agreement.

The Owner/Operator resides in the Greater Vancouver area and met with the Team in person. He is in regular contact with the OSR and the Director of International Education and visits the School once or twice each year. He is very knowledgeable about the international school marketplace and heavily influences the School’s marketing strategies.

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

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**Comment:**
The Owner/Operator has written approval by the Zhejiang Education Bureau to operate the BC program. Its expiry date is December 31, 2022.

The Team met with the principal of Mao Dun High School, who declared his strong support for the program and his desire to do what he could to help it grow and flourish. It was apparent to the Team that there was a good working relationship between the School and Mao Dun High School.

**Commendation:**
The School is to be commended for developing a positive and supportive working relationship with the administration of Mao Dun High School.

#### 2.04 The School meets local building, safety and cafeteria codes and regulations. The facilities are deemed to be suitable to support the BC program.

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**Comment:**
As the BC program is housed within a larger school, Mao Dun High School has overall responsibility for the facilities. The Team reviewed the documents pertaining to municipal
codes and safety requirements and found them to be in order. An evacuation plan is in place for the entire school, and emergency drills are conducted by the BC program three times per year. There is documentation which includes a protocol for unplanned temporary or permanent closure of the School which has been vetted by the OSR for accuracy and functionality.

The campus facilities include conventional classrooms, laboratories, a large gymnasium, fine arts classrooms, a 1200-seat theatre, a second 200-seat theatre, playing fields and cafeteria, along with dormitory buildings, a campus store and a medical centre. The campus is also well endowed with ample green space and waterways.

The BC program occupies two floors and has its own library and computer lab. The program has access to shared space such as Science labs, additional computer labs, and gymnasium with the host school. The OSR reports that the working relationship around the use of shared spaces is good.

The Team is satisfied that the facilities are in compliance and are suitable to support the BC program.

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

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Comment:
The Offshore School Representative, appointed by the Owner/Operator, meets the suitability requirements for the position. This is his first year as the OSR, having previously served as the principal of the School for four years and vice principal for two. He has twenty years experience in education.

The OSR has reached out to his predecessor and other OSR’s to assist him in understanding his new role.
### 2.06 The Principal meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.06 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

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**Comment:**
The Principal is in his first year in this position having served as the vice principal at GCA for the previous four years. He has more than 30 years experience in education in British Columbia and internationally. He meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.06.

The Team reviewed the duties and responsibilities with the Principal. The Team found him to have an expressed desire to learn and a demonstrated commitment to exploring effective ways to improve student achievement.

The Principal meets with the host school principal regularly with a view to sustaining the positive working relationship that is in place.

This is not the first time that the vice principal has followed his predecessor into the principalship role. The Owner/Operator is responsive to the need for planning leadership succession and is committed to retaining its school leaders and developing future leaders. To this end, despite its small enrolment, the School has had a history of appointing one or two vice principals and will do so again when the opportunity arises.

**Commendation:**
The Team commends the Owner/Operator for attending to matters of leadership succession, by maintaining a regular practice of providing for vice principal positions as opportunities arise.

### 2.07 The School meets the administrative support requirements as outlined in section 2.07 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

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**Comment:**
The School meets the requirements for administrative support. An English-speaking Chinese administrative assistant has responsibility for maintaining student records, translation services, parent contact, Ministry data transfers and a range of other duties.

A school librarian provides student supervision, assisting students with book selection, cataloguing books, scheduling science labs, ordering learning resources and providing assistance to office staff when needed.
An International Program Director acts as a liaison between the BC program and the main school, as well as playing a key role in marketing and recruitment. The Director also assists students in gaining admission to Canadian and other universities and arranges for universities to make campus presentations.

Instructional Technology support is provided by staff from the main school.

The program is also supported by the Owner/Operator’s office staff in Canada, who provide support for the School’s website as well as resourcing.

Commendation:
The School and host school are to be commended for the high level of administrative support that is provided to professional staff and students.

### 2.08 The School meets the Student Record requirements as outlined in section 2.08 of the Inspection Catalogue for offshore schools.

- Requirement Met
- Requirement Not Met

Comment:
Student files are securely stored and are maintained by the administrative assistant. She has had this responsibility for several years and has ensured that files are well organized using well established routines to meet the requirements established by the Ministry. The structure of the virtual inspection made it difficult for the Team to do a thorough inspection of the files. However, the Team is confident that due to past practice by the same administrative assistant, previous positive inspection reports and personal assurances by the principal and OSR, the student files meet requirements. The state of the student files is also monitored by the Principal.

### 2.09-2.14 The School meets the teacher certification requirements as outlined in sections 2.09-2.14 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

- Requirement Met
- Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The Team confirms that all authorized persons under the Agreement possess valid and current certification under the Ministry of Education. The Team verified that they also have the appropriate work visas.

The Team verified that locally certified teachers of approved exempted courses have valid local certification.
Professional development during 2018/19 focussed on 1) language acquisition teaching strategies and 2) curriculum implementation. It is anticipated that new staff will be starting at the School early in the new year and will require orientation to the new curriculum. A February professional development day has been designated for that purpose and a second day in May will be committed to an annual review and curriculum planning for the 2020/21 school year. The Principal plans to engage staff in follow-up activities around curriculum planning and implementation after the February professional development day.

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<tr>
<th>2.17 The School meets the requirements for curriculum implementation outlined in section 2.17 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.</th>
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<td>Comment: The School has fully implemented the new curriculum in Grades 10, 11 and 12. First Peoples’ Principles of Learning (FPPL) are evident in course planning. Big ideas, core competencies and curriculum competencies are addressed in the planning documents of all courses. The staff is developing strategies to increase the use of place-based learning, leadership and real-world problem-solving opportunities for students. The formation of student government involving all grade levels is an example of this undertaking. During interviews with staff and administration the link between planning and the actual incorporation of FPPL and the core competencies into student learning experiences could not be clearly articulated. The Team concluded that the School was still in the developmental stages of addressing these aspects of the new curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<th>2.18 The School meets the requirements for English language assessment and acquisition as outlined in section 2.18 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.</th>
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<td>Comment: The Principal administers an English language assessment to all students who are interested in the BC program and makes the final decision on admission. The process includes listening, grammar, reading comprehension and writing components as well as an interview, Consideration is being given to reviewing the assessment tool. English is taught on a linear year-long schedule for all grades. Grade 10 and 11 students are able to earn 8 credits in English each year. The English-speaking Chinese homeroom teachers support English language acquisition by running an IELTS listening and responding activity for 20 minutes each morning and work with students on vocabulary improvement. Chinese teachers provide additional ESL instruction outside of school hours throughout the year.</td>
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Students use the online program ‘Grammarly’ independently to improve their written communication.

Commendation:
The Team commends the School for its increased efforts to have English language acquisition be the main focus of attention for all staff.

2.19(a-e) The School meets the course credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions and BAA courses) as outlined in section 2.19 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

☐ Requirement Met    ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The School meets the course credit requirements. There are no students from other jurisdictions that required the granting of course equivalency. There are two BAA courses offered this school year, Chinese Culture and Geography 10 and Chinese History 11. The overviews of both courses reflect the “Know, Do, Understand” curriculum design and include Big Ideas and core competencies. These courses are being taught by locally certified teachers. A letter of exemption is on file.

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

☐ Requirement Met    ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The School meets the course overview and planning requirements. Each course has a detailed overview that reflects the new curriculum framework. The overviews include teaching strategies, assessment methods, work habits and content with appropriate reference to Big Ideas, curricular competencies, learning intentions and activities. The unit plans reviewed included background knowledge, Big Ideas, competencies to be covered, evidence of learning and types of assessments that may be used. Planning documents also described the specific competencies that would be addressed through detailed content and related activities. Several of the planning overviews made mention of the abilities of the students in the class and specifically designed activities to address their needs.

2.20 The School meets the instructional time allotment requirements as outlined in section 4.5 of the inspection catalogue 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 Not Met

Comment:
The School exceeds the minimal instructional hours. There are 190 days in session with 6.6 hours per day for a total of 1254 hours of instruction.

2.21 The School meets the assessment methods requirements as outlined in section 2.21 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

☑ Requirement Met ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The Team reviewed planning documents for all courses. Most assessment practices appear to be aligned with Ministry expectations. Teacher designed rubrics are used intermittently. Professional development sessions are planned to better understand the use of performance standards as assessments for and of learning. At the time of the inspection students had not yet begun their self-assessment of the core competencies. Students are practicing these skills in Career Life Education 10 and ongoing self-assessments are occurring in Career Life Connections 12.

2.22 The School meets the learning resources requirements as outlined in section 2.22 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

☑ Requirement Met ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The School increases their print resources each year. This year, levelled reading material was purchased for Grade 10 and 11 students. The print resources in the library include magazines, graphic novels, high interest-low vocabulary fiction and non-fiction books, a daily and weekly newspaper as well as video. This fall the number of subscriptions to Canadian magazines was increased. Four computers for student use have also been added to the library. The library is managed by a librarian who also provides other support services such as textbook management, photocopying and scheduling science labs.

The School has a dedicated computer lab with more than 30 computers and an LED projector. Classes can also access additional labs in the host school. Each classroom is Wi-Fi enabled and has one computer that teachers have access to. Student use of laptops and personal devices in classrooms is limited. This is unusual for schools offering a BC curriculum focused on...
inquiry-based and project-based learning. Convenient and reliable access to technology is of paramount importance in effectively delivering the curriculum.

The library has a collection of over 3400 library books and 2200 textbooks as well as workbooks, and IELTS resources. Reference material relating to science, career education and social studies are part of new additions to the library.

2.23 The School meets the student progress report requirements as outlined in section 2.23 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

☐ Requirement Met   ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
Students and parents receive an interim report and two formal report cards each semester. Parent/student/teacher conferences are held following the first formal report card. Homeroom teachers are the main point of contact with parents where there are issues pertaining to student progress.

A sampling of report card comments was reviewed, and the Team found the information provided to be minimal. The value of formal student reporting could be further enhanced by providing anecdotal comments that are more meaningful, more prescriptive, and have more specificity in terms of what a student is able to do and in what areas they need to improve.

2.24 The School meets the parent/student handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.24 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

☐ Requirement Met   ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The Team confirmed that the parent/student handbook meets the requirements as outlined in the inspection catalogue. The handbook is also updated annually and has been translated into Mandarin for the benefit of parents.

2.25 The School meets the teacher handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.25 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.
The teacher handbook has been updated for the 2019/20 school year and the Team confirms that it meets requirements.

Policies for the evaluation of teachers and administrators are in place. Criteria for teacher evaluation are provided in the form of a checklist, with room for appropriate commentary.

2.26 The School meets the distributed learning requirements as outlined in section 18 of the Agreement and section 2.26 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

No distributed learning courses are being offered at this time.

CONCLUSION

Commendations

The Inspection Team wishes to recognize the Owner/Operator, Principal and staff of Grand Canadian Academy (Jiaxing) and Mau Dun High School for:

- The diligent tracking of post-secondary enrolment of GCA students, as well as their progress in completing degrees. They are also commended for inviting their university graduates back to tell their success story and highlight how the BC Program prepared them for their post-secondary studies.
- The positive and supportive working relationship between the administration of the Program and Mao Dun High School.
- Attending to matters of leadership succession, by maintaining a regular practice of providing for vice principal positions as opportunities arise.
- The high level of administrative support that is provided to professional staff and students at the School.
- The increased efforts to have English language acquisition be the main focus of attention for all staff.

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