

# **Redeemer International School Thailand**

## **Bangkok, Thailand**

### **INITIAL VISIT**

9 March 2005

#### **Visiting Committee**

Charles Barton, *Headmaster*  
Nagoya International School  
Nagoya, Japan

Alastair Kay, *Headmaster*  
The Beacon International School  
Manila, Philippines

# Initial Visit Report

## *Introduction:*

The Redeemer International School Thailand was founded in 1996 as the Intensive English Program, a feeder school of Ruamrudee International School. In 2001, the program became known as the Intensive Learning School, a section of Ruamrudee. In 2003, the Intensive Learning School was awarded a separate school license from the Thai Ministry of Education and is now the Redeemer International School Thailand (RIST).

The school has a current enrolment of 82 students in grades 3 through 10 from various East Asian and Southeast Asian countries. The curriculum is based on standards adopted from the United States with modifications for Asian cultures and values. The language of instruction is English and all the students are designated English language learners (ELLs). The majority of students represent East Asian and Southeast Asian cultures, languages, and values. All are second language learners. Thais represent the largest national group, but their number is capped by policy at 30% to ensure the school's mission to serve an international student population.

Because of the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, RIST offers the opportunity to learn English through the academic subjects within an environment that is supportive of their intellectual development as well as their moral and spiritual growth. The creation of a learning community for both teachers and students is an ideal to which RIST aspires.

## *Criteria Review:*

- *Has the school developed and published a clear statement of purposes, together with plans for a curriculum to carry out these purposes?*

Redeemer International School's purpose statement is clearly stated in the policy documents, information brochures, handbooks and website. This information is translated into four languages: Thai, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. Founded on the Christian spirit of love, RIST is dedicated to providing children equal access to learning. RIST programs are, therefore, designed to enable students to function and succeed in a multicultural educational environment where the language of instruction is English.

The school was established primarily to accommodate the linguistic and academic needs of expatriate children whose level of English would not allow them to enter an international school where English was the language of instruction. Curricular philosophy and instructional methods are pedagogically sound and based on current research regarding second language learning. Thus, instruction seeks to meet the needs of all students who have differentiated learning and language abilities and needs. To assist students to make connections between what they have learned previously and what they are now learning, teachers center their units of study on essential concepts derived from the content area disciplines. Students continue their academic development while they are learning in English. All learning activities aim to encourage students to work together in order to

learn to use English to communicate within and between diverse cultural groups, and to succeed in an academically rigorous environment.

- *Does the school have a properly functioning governance structure?*

The school board is composed of seven members representing the license holder (Redemptorist Order), the school manager, the headmaster, a teacher, a parent, a professional expert and a representative of the community. The Redemptorist Foundation, as license holder, appoints board members to serve on the board. The board's function is one of oversight and advocacy: to set goals and policy consistent with its philosophy and mission, and to ensure the school is responsive to the needs of the community. Board Policy follows that of Ruamrudee International School in regard to employee compensation and benefits.

- *Has a chief administrative officer been employed?*

The school administrator is Dr. Penny Lorwatanapongsa who has her doctorate in Education and who has served in various capacities over the years at Ruamrudee International School. Dr. Penny has a clear focus and vision for RIST and a sound understanding of the WASC philosophy and practice of school improvement.

- *Does the school have an organization, structure, course offerings and staffing sufficient to carry out the school's purpose?*

Evidence of organization and curricular structure were seen in school documents and gleaned informally through the onsite visit and discussion with the school staff and administration. Staffing is more than adequate with an excellent student-teacher ratio of approximately 5 to 1. Such a ratio supports a quality, second language learning program. The majority of teachers are certified (89%) and 44% hold a masters degree or higher. As a group the teachers are multi-national and about 88% have had experience teaching second language learners in an international school setting or in a national school with significant ESL populations. RIST offers ongoing professional development in "ESL in the Mainstream" to support teachers. Parents and students report significant growth in English language and appreciate the low student-teacher ratios and credit caring teachers and appropriate methodology for the growth in language. Formal reporting to parents happens six times a year.

- *Does the school have an admissions policy compatible with its stated objectives?*

The admissions policy, as understood by the visiting committee, is compatible with the school's stated objectives. Admissions testing for language and math is required and successful applicants are then interviewed before an admissions decision is made. Admissions to the school appear to be in line with the school's mission and stated objectives of supporting second language acquisition through instruction in the content area.

- *Is instruction offered in all subjects required by law?*

A standard American curricular program is offered and all major subject areas are taught, including math, science, social studies, language arts, music, art, technology, religion/values, physical education, and business studies. English language is, as stated earlier, taught in context through the regular curriculum. Thai citizens are required to attend daily courses in Thai literacy.

- *Has the school developed an adequate financial base to give reasonable assurance of continuing financial stability?*

The school is owned by the Redemptorist Foundation of Thailand. As such, there is a considerable financial base to support the school. All start-up costs and early income shortfalls have been covered by the Foundation, the Visiting Committee was told. However, the school board anticipates that the school should be earning a surplus within a short time, and a review of the school's audited financial statements for the year '03-04 would indicate that the school is now on a sounder financial footing. Additionally, the fact that the Foundation also owns and operates Ruamrudee International School provides very reasonable assurance of financial stability for RIST.

- *Are the school's facilities (buildings, laboratories, technology and other) sufficient to support the program in a functional, safe and healthy setting?*

The school has been established with some outstanding facilities. Within the structure of the main building there are well-appointed classrooms, with adequate space for further enrolment. There are also some excellent shared facilities such as a mini-theater, an attractive library, an audio-visual center, etc. The visiting team was assured that the building complies with all relevant Thai building standards and safety codes. The school is particularly fortunate to have access to some of Ruamrudee International School's facilities, such as a 50-meter pool, a large gymnasium and spacious playing fields. The school has ample Information Technology resources, including computers in all classrooms as well as in the Library.

Thus the facilities offered by RIST significantly enhance the learning opportunities for its students.

*Commendations:*

**The Visiting Committee commends:**

1. The school for establishing a clear purpose and set of beliefs, in order to fulfill the community's need for a quality international school experience for its students with a non-English speaking background.
2. The school board and leadership for the vision in providing outstanding facilities which significantly enhance learning for RIST students.
3. The school for its approach to professional development opportunities that focus on the second language learning / teaching strategies and ESOL in the content areas.
4. The school leadership and teachers for the efforts thus far in developing its written curriculum.

5. The staff for their commitment and support for RIST students and their learning.
6. The school's Board and leadership for supporting the learning needs of RIST students by providing very favorable student-teacher ratios.

*Recommendations:*

**The Visiting Committee recommends:**

1. That the governing body continues to review its purpose and mission so that the school's unique character is maintained, clearly articulated and understood by all stakeholders.
2. That the school continues to revise Action Plans directed at school improvement in a way that ensures active participation of all stakeholders in development, implementation, and evaluation.
3. That the school continues to develop its assessment practices and uses the results to inform and drive the development of curriculum and instruction.
4. That the school explores viable and meaningful ways in which to provide for the academic and extra-curricular needs of all its students.
5. That the school put in place the necessary policies and practices to ensure clear communication and school decision-making by all stakeholders.
6. The school continues to develop and refine its written curriculum so that it is clear, well-articulated, and aligned, with well-defined standards and benchmarks.