



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Kent College International Study Centre

October 2022

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School's Details

College	Kent College International Study Centre		
DfE number	886/6097		
Registered charity number	1142794		
Address	Kent College International Study Centre Whitstable Road Canterbury Kent CT2 9DT		
Telephone number	01227 763231		
Email address	enquiries@kentcollege.co.uk		
Head	Ms Josephine Velthoven		
Chair of governors	Mrs Lorna Cocking		
Age range	11 to 17		
Number of pupils on roll	16		
	Day pupils	2	Boarders 14
	Seniors	16	Sixth Form 0
Inspection dates	18 to 20 October 2022		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The International Study Centre (ISC) is a department within Kent College Senior School, a co-educational day and boarding school situated on the outskirts of Canterbury. The ISC was established in 2003 to teach English as an additional language (EAL) to overseas pupils joining the college. Since the previous inspection, the centre has fully established bespoke timetabling for all its pupils, and a new head of the ISC has been appointed.
- 1.2 Kent College was founded in 1885 and was acquired by the board of management of Methodist schools in 1920. The senior school, together with the junior school and the ISC are component institutions of Kent College (Canterbury) that are overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.3 The senior school has five boarding houses on site, two for female pupils and three for male pupils. Twelve ISC pupils are boarders.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The ISC aims to enable its pupils to develop their confidence in English so that they can quickly integrate into mainstream lessons and activities with such support as is necessary to enable them to fully benefit from the education offered.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Separate standardised data to show the ability on entry of ISC pupils is not available, but all pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and receive specialist support for their English. None have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. As pupils make progress in their command of English, they integrate into mainstream lessons in the senior school. Pupils come from many parts of the world and from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 Pupils take GCSE/A-level examinations in their final year at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.6 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.**

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of the English language allowing them to successfully access a broad academic curriculum.
- Pupils rapidly develop strong communication skills in their additional language.
- The large majority of pupils possess notably strong core information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematical skills that they apply highly effectively across the curriculum.
- Pupils develop excellent independent learning skills.
- Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils show great resilience and fully understand how to improve their own learning.
- Pupils show great maturity and take full responsibility for their own excellent behaviour.
- Pupils respond positively to the many opportunities to work collaboratively both within and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils display outstanding mutual respect and understanding of the many backgrounds and cultures represented in the college.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Accelerate the participation of ISC pupils in activities beyond the classroom by encouraging them to evaluate and develop their non-academic interests, skills and talents.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 The Kent College International Study Centre (ISC) is highly successful in meeting its aim to enable pupils to develop their confidence in English so that they can quickly integrate into the mainstream lessons and activities. Pupils, including those who have little or no English when they enter the school, make rapid progress in their acquisition of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as well as their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. This enables them to access successfully bespoke programmes within the broader academic curriculum. Pupils are confident to explore their additional

language without fear of failure. Their progress is hastened by detailed monitoring and personalised feedback by the highly skilled ISC staff who have a deep knowledge of each individual's language development. In a short time, pupils are able to make highly articulate oral contributions using accurate subject-specific terminology. In an IELTS lesson in Year 12, pupils used sophisticated vocabulary such as 'prevalent', 'furthermore' and 'peripheral' and used linking words to structure complex paragraphs. As they integrate into the mainstream curriculum, pupils become fluent readers. Their writing is characterised by a clear grasp of the fundamentals of language including sentence construction, use of tenses, and accurate spelling and grammar. They listen intently to their peers and to adults and gain the confidence to freely offer ideas and opinions or to ask searching questions. In an A-level physics lesson, pupils challenged the teacher with insightful questions such as enquiring why, if light has no mass, is it affected by gravity?

- 3.6 Across all subject areas, pupils' development of knowledge, skills and understanding is excellent. Pupils in the ISC have strong mathematical, technological and scientific knowledge and understanding. A few demonstrate great skill in art, music and sport although many are initially reluctant to nurture these talents in the extra-curricular programme. Pupils in the social sciences show the ability to use subject-specific terminology well, for instance when discussing the inflationary pressures on the UK economy. In the great majority of lessons observed, teaching fully recognised the needs of EAL pupils using information provided by the ISC staff. In mathematics, pupils accessed language-appropriate notes in the digital classroom and, in physics, very able international pupils were challenged by extension materials on event horizons and black holes.
- 3.7 The performance of ISC pupils in GCSE and IGCSE examinations is largely in line with the whole-school average and above or well-above the national average for pupils in maintained schools indicating rapid progress from their starting points. A significant number of GCSE passes have been achieved by ISC pupils on one-year intensive programmes. During their first year in the ISC, pupils are highly successful in a variety of English language tests including IGCSE English as a second language. Overseas pupils entering the sixth form take the IELTS English language examination, achieving scores that are above worldwide averages. Pupils with EAL achieve well in A level and IB programmes where performance in most subjects is in line with whole-school averages and above it in subjects such as mathematics and physics. This is the result of the continued support for language development given by the ISC and an informed knowledge of each pupil's needs by subject teachers in the mainstream curriculum. Pupils are highly successful in accessing their first choice of university destination, many of which have highly competitive entry requirements. This is partly a result of the bespoke timetabling and the clear identification of each individual's strengths.
- 3.8 Many ISC pupils have excellent core mathematical skills and knowledge, and they apply these readily in a number of areas across the curriculum such as physics, geography, business studies, economics, biology, psychology and technology. The majority of ISC pupils are highly successful in GCSE and A level mathematics examinations, achieving grades that are well above national and college norms. Pupils' notably strong mathematical and numerical skills underpin their success in winning places on competitive degree courses such as architecture, accounting, finance, economics and mechanical engineering. In a GCSE electronics lesson, pupils confidently wrote high-quality quantitative statements as part of their assessed coursework. The statements were highly successful in meeting the requirement to assess the measurable functionality of their design circuits.
- 3.9 Pupils employ their excellent ICT skills highly effectively in almost all areas of their academic programmes in college. Pupils benefit from the opportunities afforded to research, create and interact in digital classrooms, and they spoke positively of the ability to collaborate in the production of multi-media projects such as a recent report on space and aliens. The interactive use of ICT allows pupils to respond rapidly to the feedback given online by their teachers such as in an English lesson where they were able to immediately correct errors in their grammar and punctuation. Sixth-form pupils made excellent use of their own devices to record, in slow motion, the rapidly changing values of capacitors when charging and discharging. They were then able to slow their recordings down to log the readings.

- 3.10 Pupils respond positively to the numerous opportunities provided by staff in both the ISC and school to develop their higher-order study skills. Over time, they show a heightened ability to hypothesise, analyse a wide range of sources or data, and assimilate evidence to draw valid conclusions. Excellent examples were seen in project work on the *Hound of the Baskervilles* and a detailed analysis of the gross domestic product of Great Britain between 1992 and 2000. Pupils in Years 12 and 13, working towards their IELTS examination, assessed the validity and relevance of a variety of sources before presenting a balanced opinion in the form of an extended essay examining supply and demand forces in the bike rental market in Chinese cities.
- 3.11 A high proportion of ISC pupils, over time, develop a strong and occasionally broad portfolio of wider achievements. Newer pupils often take longer to develop the confidence to attempt new activities or sometimes feel that these may detract from their academic studies. A good number achieve high levels of success in mathematics or science Olympiads, perform to the highest level in instrumental music, art or successfully pursue The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to gold level. A number take advantage of opportunities to represent the school in sport. A smaller proportion of international pupils, particularly ISC pupils who are relatively new to the school, seek fewer activities to broaden their experience beyond their academic programmes and are reluctant to risk taking part in new activities or clubs. In interviews, older pupils spoke of the many opportunities provided to widen their experience outside the classroom such as recording their own music, playing in a rock band or discovering archery as a new hobby. A minority spoke of specific interests and aspirations for the future such as medicine or environmental work but had not yet explored the college clubs and societies that would support their fulfilment of these ambitions.
- 3.12 Pupils have an excellent work ethic and apply themselves assiduously to all areas of their studies. They learn to work collaboratively, encouraged by the strategies in place in the school to ensure strong integration of many nationalities. When opportunities arise, they display great initiative, and as they progress on sixth-form programmes, they take increasing ownership of their work to become excellent independent learners. Scrutiny of online work and books indicates that pupils take great pride in their work, and there is evidence of constant reflection and efforts to improve as they respond positively to the detailed feedback given by staff.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' excellent personal development is a result of their rapid integration into the life of the school. Those who board value the opportunity to experience the international mix in the houses and, in interviews, ISC pupils said that it had helped them to develop their confidence and independence. Pupils also spoke highly of the support and empathy of staff in the ISC and throughout the school to help them settle into life in a new country.
- 3.15 Former ISC pupils who have been in the school for several years understand their strengths, areas for development, interests and aspirations well. They set ambitious targets for themselves and show great resilience in pursuit of their goals. In discussions held with sixth-form overseas pupils, it was evident that the pastoral and careers staff in the school had enabled them to establish appropriate academic programmes that supported their future goals as well as becoming more involved with the vibrant extra-curricular life of the school. These pupils have good self-esteem and appropriate levels of self-confidence resulting from their secure grasp of the English language that allows them to thrive in the sixth form. Those pupils who leave for higher education destinations are extremely well-prepared for the next stage of their lives and evidence suggests that they are highly successful on their university and career pathways. Pupils who have been in the school for less time take longer to develop the confidence to explore their talents, interests and abilities beyond the academic classroom. Their initial focus is on language acquisition and the demands of their academic subjects, and they often feel that this prevents them from pursuing other interests or talents that would build their self-esteem further.

- 3.16 Pupils make informed and often highly aspirational decisions about their choices of sixth-form academic programmes and higher education courses and destinations. In the classroom, as their English language proficiency grows, they are decisive in weighing up evidence and expressing their opinion in a discussion or debate. In an IELTS lesson, pupils were decisive when stating their opinion in response to the assertion that, 'In the future, nobody will buy printed newspapers or books because they will be able to read everything that they want online without paying'. Initially, ISC pupils' decision making is limited with respect to their education and life outside the classroom. Staff in the ISC nurture decision making for new pupils by encouraging them to select their own books to read and ultimately make their own decisions about the timing of IELTS and other English tests. Over a period of time, the boarding experience helps them to make more informed decisions regarding lifestyle, exercise, diet, and recreation. During the inspection, pupils spoke of a conscious decision that they had made to limit the length of time that they spent online.
- 3.17 Most ISC pupils have a good appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, including the natural environment, art and music, but this can be over-shadowed by the desire for academic achievement over spiritual fulfilment. They are very supportive of the ethos of the school that gives them the freedom to hold any belief or none, and many said that they had found chapel services to be an opportunity to reflect on spiritual or philosophical issues regardless of their personal faith. Pupils spoke of their enjoyment of walking in the grounds after a long day in the classroom and of visits to the college farm. Pupils wrote well of the intangible delights of a British seaside resort after returning from an ISC trip to Broadstairs. Pupils' writing articulated a sense of wonder after visits to Leeds Castle and Canterbury and showed empathy for the challenges of life in medieval times.
- 3.18 The conduct of ISC pupils in the classroom, boarding houses and around the campus is excellent. They show great respect for each other and adults and take full responsibility for their own behaviour. This reflects the success of the key aim of governors and senior leaders to create a caring community. Pupils' moral compass is strong giving them a natural respect for rules and guidelines and an innate sense of right and wrong. In a tutorial, pupils showed a clear appreciation of the moral issues surrounding the resignation of the Home Secretary. Pupils report that bullying is rare, and if issues arise, they feel that staff deal with them sensitively and calmly. In all activities observed, there was an atmosphere of mutual respect in which pupils listen carefully to the views of others and are highly respectful of all members of the college community.
- 3.19 Pupils from a wide variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds live and work highly effectively with each other. Pupils in interview said that they had enjoyed the opportunities to make friends with people from other countries, bonded by the need to communicate in English. Evidence from lesson observation confirmed an inclusive environment with no segregation by gender or ethnicity. There is a wealth of activities within and beyond the classroom that demonstrate the pupils' excellent capacity to work together to achieve common goals. Examples include the annual house cross-country event and the observance of International Youth Day with the theme of 'integrational solidarity'. In the house system, pupils from day and boarding and from all age-groups work together highly effectively as well as celebrating individual contributions. Pupils' ability to collaborate effectively in their work is enhanced by the use of digital classrooms for instance when drawing their collective knowledge together to produce notes on transformations in a mathematics lesson.
- 3.20 Former ISC pupils, particularly those in their final year, play a full part in boarding life and contribute to the lives of others by accepting responsibility to act as prefects or mentors. Pupils new to the college fully appreciate the support and guidance of older overseas borders and spoke of the strong sense of community that had helped them to settle in a new country. Pupils appreciate the development of mixed-age tutor groups and felt that they had helped with recent discussions of child-on-child abuse as a part of the relationships and sex education (RSE) programme or the pupils' response to a questionnaire from the food committee. Recently arrived international pupils are slower to come forward to volunteer for community service, environmental or charitable work partly because of the initial language barriers and, sometimes, cultural unfamiliarity with these activities. ISC staff explain

the importance of this aspect of school life by pointing out the relevance of, for instance, fundraising for the Teenage Cancer Trust, but pupils may benefit from a more focused self-evaluation of the skills that they can develop in the wider community.

- 3.21 Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what keeps them safe and healthy. They appreciate the recreational facilities in school and know the importance of physical exercise and the outdoors to their health. They understand how to stay safe online and where to seek advice at times of stress. The school's accessibility plan clearly demonstrates the commitment of the governing body and the leadership team to addressing the health, nutritional, emotional and welfare needs of international pupils. Pupils in the ISC who board benefit from the proximity of the well-appointed medical centre that provides 24-hour care as well as arranging appointments with local doctors and dentists. Pupils confirmed in interview their awareness of the availability of independent counsellors based in one of the boarding houses and how to seek advice online or by telephone if they are encountering personal difficulties.
- 3.22 Pupils' ingrained sensitivity and appreciation of diversity and, for those from different backgrounds and traditions, is a strength of the school. Pupils in the ISC play a full part in contributing to a society where mutual respect, tolerance and understanding permeate all areas of school life. Pupils are proud of their own nationality and inquisitive and respectful of other cultures. Pupils in the ISC have contributed energetically to the promotion of a harmonious school environment by staging a week-long international fair in the quad involving games and quizzes as well as activities such as origami, haiku writing, folk tales and African art. They successfully organised the adaptation of lunch menus to offer Hungarian goulash, katsu curry, falafel and a number of other dishes from their home countries. Asian pupils spoke warmly of the ability to make friends in boarding with pupils from, for instance, Italy, Spain and Peru. Chapel services, religious studies and the personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) programme all play a key role in developing multi-cultural understanding and respect for those that are different. Diversity in all its forms is welcomed and celebrated, and pupils have commented on the easy and relaxed atmosphere that results from the highly inclusive nature of the school.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and form meetings. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Roger Tapping

Reporting inspector

Mrs Wendy Martin

Team inspector for boarding (Former Head, SofH school)