

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Kent College International Study Centre

The junior school and senior school were inspected at the same time, and separate reports published.

Full Name of the School	Kent College International Study Centre
DCSF Number	886/6097
Registered Charity Number	307844
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Headmaster	Dr David Lamper
Chairman of Governors	Mr Geoff Connolly
Age Range	11 to 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	9th to 12th February 2009

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to students' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics

- 1.1 Kent College International Study Centre (ISC) is a department within Kent College. It teaches English as an additional language (EAL) to newly arrived overseas students. As students become more fluent English speakers they progressively participate in the main school. It is a recognised examination centre for Year 11 students.
- 1.2 The ISC is a co-educational day and boarding school for students aged eleven to eighteen. It was established in 2003. It is located on the senior school site on the outskirts of Canterbury.
- 1.3 The ISC aims to support students in learning English and to enable them to access the curriculum progressively. It seeks to meet the needs of international students, to foster high standards of relationships with parents and to establish the basis for social integration. The ISC welcomes students of all faiths and none and upholds Christian values within the Methodist tradition. It fosters a spirit of openness and tolerance. It aims to maximise the potential of all students and provide a broad curriculum. It seeks to enable students to be confident and responsible citizens with a personal faith to guide their lives.
- 1.4 The ISC is currently attended by 44 boys and 15 girls. A wide range of nationalities are represented. Many students have limited English when they join the school. The school does not assess their ability using standardised data, but taking into account their background and limited English it is likely that the students' ability profile is below the national average. If students are performing in line with their abilities their results should be below the national average for maintained secondary schools.
- 1.5 There are no students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). No students have a statement of special educational needs. All students have EAL and receive help with English. Almost all students proceed to higher education. The ISC has not been inspected separately before.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the ISC.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The quality of the educational experience provided is outstanding. The intensive EAL support rapidly enables students to access the full senior school curriculum, thereby fulfilling the ISC's aim to provide a broad curriculum.
- 2.2 Following an initial assessment of each student's linguistic ability, individual timetables are drafted. When they first arrive students spend much of their time learning English in the ISC and receive three lessons of mathematics a week taught by specialist teachers from the main school. The ISC monitors and supports teaching in mainstream classes to ensure that its students continue to gain access to the curriculum effectively.
- 2.3 In Years 7 to 9 language support takes place in the ISC. Students follow a thorough programme of English language development designed to develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Some students participate in modern foreign language lessons. Progressively students join subjects in the main school. Liaison between the ISC and subject department staff ensures that students make a smooth transition. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to language support they take at least five optional subjects. All students study information and communication technology (ICT). In keeping with the central beliefs of the main school, all take religious education on either short or full GCSE courses. All students participate in physical education and games. The sixth-form curriculum provides a substantial choice of subjects and courses. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination courses enable students to raise their level of proficiency in English to levels required by UK universities.
- 2.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is one of the first subjects students join in the main school. Discussions about topics, such as physical and emotional health, and moral and behavioural issues, give students valuable insights and help them develop their conversational skills. An element of citizenship in the tutorial programme gives them valuable insight into UK life and institutions. In the sixth form, an initial focus on study skills is provided in tutorials prior to preparation for university application.
- 2.5 Students participate in the wide-ranging, well-balanced programme of extra-curricular activities at lunchtimes, in the evenings and at weekends. The weekend activities programme is well supported by staff and students. They join in charitable fund-raising, such as Millennium Volunteers or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.
- 2.6 Careers education and guidance is taught by specialist teachers. In Years 9, 11 and 12 students undertake an evaluation of their own aptitudes and begin to consider possible careers. All students are interviewed by a careers advisory service. Weekly sessions from February in Year 12 initiate consideration of higher education which focuses on applying to universities. Tutors and senior management work together to support the students through a well-targeted procedure with successful outcomes. In the period after the end of the GCSE examinations, work experience is available for Year 11 students.
- 2.7 Curriculum planning within the ISC is of high quality. Schemes of work provide a secure basis for teachers' planning. Teachers in the ISC modify and adapt their planning to suit individual students' progress as necessary. However, schemes of work in mainstream subjects do not consistently include planning for EAL students. Where such guidance is available, teachers plan lessons well.

- 2.8 The ISC meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Students' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Students learn well and achieve high standards. They acquire a firm foundation in English. This is fully consistent with the ISC aim to maximise the potential of each student.
- 2.10 Progress in the ISC is rapid; students soon become familiar with English and grow in confidence and competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Most students progress well in mainstream classes because of the individual attention they receive. Critical thinking skills are established, particularly in some of the more practical subjects. Most enjoy creative activities and are meticulous in their attention to detail.
- 2.11 They become increasingly confident when speaking to their peers and teachers. They are initially reluctant to participate in oral work but sympathetic peers and encouraging teachers rapidly give students the confidence to take part. Similarly, though hesitant writers in the early stages of their learning English, they make rapid progress and soon produce work of quality; however, spelling and grammar sometimes go uncorrected. Students listen attentively but absorb information more readily when visual or practical examples are also provided. Students become increasingly competent readers when encouragement and support is provided.
- 2.12 Many make good use of the library and particularly enjoy audio books. Students use their mathematical skills well in subjects such as the sciences, humanities or technology. Throughout the curriculum, students demonstrate well developed logical thinking skills and work enthusiastically on independent work, particularly extended project work. Students are confident and competent users of ICT and make wide and appropriate uses of applications across the curriculum.
- 2.13 All ISC students progress well with no discernible differences in relation to gender. The most able students achieve the high standards of which they are capable. Students' attainment in GCSE and A level is high in relation to their abilities. Results are well above the average for all maintained secondary schools. Students do not always achieve the higher IELTS grades. The ISC is aware of this and is providing additional tuition to enable students to achieve higher grades.
- 2.14 Some students participate in sport and achieve success in rugby, hockey and other sports. They achieve well in science and Young Enterprise activities. Students participate in the Millennium Volunteers and by the Gold Award participants in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Fund-raising ventures in support of specific charitable causes take place at frequent intervals.
- 2.15 As students proceed through the ISC, they develop their capacity to take notes and most organise them suitably. Most work well independently and, as their confidence increases, participate in group and team work productively. Students are quick to focus and sustain their concentration well. They persevere and are extremely conscientious; they enjoy their work and their leisure activities.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Students

- 2.16 Students demonstrate high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is fully consistent with the school's Methodist aims.
- 2.17 As time progresses, students become confident members of the school community and form links and friendships with their peers in the main school. They attend worship in chapel but sometimes experience difficulty participating. The ISC is aware of this and provides opportunity for the students to attend Chinese worship at the weekend. When students move to the main school, they are fully involved in preparing class assemblies with their peers. In PSHE, it is clear that they respect each other's opinions.
- 2.18 Students demonstrate well developed moral awareness. Central to the educational philosophy of the ISC is the belief that everyone should be treated as a valued individual, guiding relationships between staff and students and amongst students. The demeanour and behaviour of students are clear indicators of a community whose members have an excellent sense of right and wrong. Students conduct themselves in a courteous and civilised manner. They respect ISC and school property and equipment. A friendly, relaxed and inclusive ambience is evident in the ISC.
- 2.19 Students exhibit social skills initially within their own cultural group. As their confidence grows, they interact well with other students forming friendships and links. Although students coexist harmoniously with the mainstream students, the ISC is actively seeking to develop students' integration further. Students become increasingly involved in school life, willingly accept responsibility and undertake their roles as prefects or monitors. Students learn about public institutions and services in England through the well organised tutorial programme which places emphasis on the promotion of citizenship. Students are represented on the student council of the main school, where they participate in democratic decision making. The school takes account of the views and opinions of the school council and usually acts on students' recommendations.
- 2.20 Cultural development is strong. With 23 different first languages in the school, students are able to associate with contemporaries from an unusually wide range of ethnic backgrounds and cultural traditions. The ISC successfully fulfils its stated aim of promoting tolerance and openness. Cultural diversity is celebrated in various ways, such as the Chinese New Year festivities and specific presentations in morning chapel. ISC students participate in school journeys to destinations such as Berlin and Gibraltar, and in an Olympic year, as far afield as Beijing and Hong Kong. The students' responses to these ventures show that they gain markedly in knowledge and understanding of different cultures. The creative and performing arts provide significant cultural enrichment for the students. Art is strong and the drama department stages a varied programme of productions, the most recent being *Annie* in the week before the inspection. Students participate fully in the International Arts week as they do in fundraising for charities. Following an inspirational presentation from a Chinese student on a recent earthquake in China the school raised a considerable sum in a single day.
- 2.21 The ISC meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 Teaching and assessment is of high quality and is fully consistent with the ISC's aim to maximise the potential of all of its students.
- 2.23 Following an initial assessment, students embark upon an intensive programme of English teaching in the ISC. This focuses on developing students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, whilst introducing them to UK life and culture. Close individual attention and well focused and varied activities characterise most lessons. Students are enabled to make rapid progress when teaching places emphasis on all aspects of communication. Teachers know the students well and provide stimulating and interesting lessons which progressively develop students' confidence. In a mathematics lesson, Year 10 students were provided with the necessary vocabulary to describe and assess the range in graphs. Teaching skilfully elicited answers and helped them ask appropriate questions. Teaching demonstrates high levels of expertise in teaching English as an additional language. Lessons are well organised and make use of suitable resources. Those with visual information are particularly beneficial.
- 2.24 The quality of teaching provided for ISC students when they enter the mainstream is generally of a high standard. Teaching demonstrates positive rapport and makes extensive use of praise and encouragement. Teachers ensure they involve the reticent students and use a wide variety of teaching strategies to stimulate students' interest. The best teaching provides considerable additional help and clear instructions. Presentation software is particularly useful in this respect. Animated presentations with clear vocal modulation ensure students understand and are able to keep up. Most teachers vary the range of tasks to suit the full range of ability and students' confidence in English. The ISC provides support where students experience difficulties with technical vocabulary in subjects such as science.
- 2.25 High expectations are evident both in the ISC and in mainstream lessons. Students are successfully encouraged to behave responsibly and think for themselves. For example, in design and technology, Year 12 students designed unusual clocks for a particular client group based on wide research they had undertaken. The quality of lesson planning is thorough in the ISC and in most mainstream lessons. All mainstream teaching demonstrates secure knowledge of the subjects being taught and most shows knowledge of teaching English as an additional language.
- 2.26 In the ISC, assessment arrangements are thorough and beneficial. Progress is closely monitored in relation to initial assessments through individual education plans. These inform the teaching for every student. Periodic reviews, enable where necessary, appropriate modifications to take place. Individual tuition may be provided to assist students. Progress in mainstream lessons is closely monitored and students are given positive encouraging spoken feedback but the quality of teachers' marking varies widely in quality and usefulness to these students. Where it is clear, encouraging and supportive, it is usually well received and acted upon.
- 2.27 The ISC meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Students

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care and the provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. It is fully consistent with the ISC aims to meet the needs of international students.
- 3.2 Upon arrival students are made very welcome. Relationships between students and with ISC and boarding staff are positive and students soon settle into ISC life. When they join the main school they are integrated into tutor groups. Year heads maintain an overview of each student's progress and effective liaison is established with subject teachers, ISC and boarding staff. Students' progress is monitored closely. Regular staff meetings enable concerns and issues to be shared and for coherent strategies to be agreed and implemented. In this way each student's welfare is carefully monitored and supported.
- 3.3 Form tutors and ISC staff take a close pastoral interest in the students and provide support and guidance as it is required. The tutorial programme complements the PSHE course and provides additional individual support for each student from their tutor. The tutorial programme includes careers education and guidance and assists Year 12 and 13 students preparing for university applications.
- 3.4 The students' code of conduct lays down the school's and the ISC's expectations of good behaviour, with a clear system of sanctions and rewards in place. Students are polite to visitors and conduct themselves in a positive manner around the school. No evidence of harassment or bullying was found, but, if an incident were to occur, the school's policy and procedures would ensure that it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 3.5 The child protection policy and procedures are of a high standard and suitable in-service training is attended by staff to ensure that they are up to date with requirements. Appropriate steps have been taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Suitable policies and procedures and suitable staff training are in place. Admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained. The medical centre provides a first-class service for students when they are ill; medicines are properly stored and dispensed and first-aid arrangements are thorough. Portable appliance testing has been carried out and thorough records have been maintained. A Special Educational Needs and Disability Act plan has been drafted and the school has a disability access policy.
- 3.6 The ISC effectively encourages healthy eating. The food provided is nutritious and varied and provides for students' differing dietary needs or preferences. Chinese students led the celebrations for the Chinese New Year; in addition to providing other students with an insight into Chinese cuisine, it did much to give students a sense of pride in their culture. The school does not teach food technology but healthy eating is addressed in PSHE and science. A sixth form short course teaches students how to eat well on a limited budget.
- 3.7 The ISC meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of students [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.8 The quality of links with parents is outstanding and fully consistent with the ISC's aims to foster positive relationships with parents.
- 3.9 Parents are pleased with the quality of education provided by the ISC and school and expressed no significant concerns in their responses to the parents' questionnaire. The ISC provides plenty of useful information for parents; the website and publications are of a high quality. Reports are positive in tone and informative and can be translated by students' agents or guardians if necessary. Electronic mail provides an effective link between school and parents. Parents' concerns are promptly and efficiently addressed.
- 3.10 Students participate in the links the main school has with the community. Organisations and schools make extensive use of the facilities, particularly the sports facilities in the evenings. The school also hosts events such as athletics and cross-country championships. The choristers frequently perform in the locality. Considerable funds are raised for charities. Community service is undertaken by the Millennium Volunteers and by the many Gold Award participants in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. A new ecological project has been undertaken to improve nearby woodland. The farm, a distinctive feature of this school, is a valued educational resource for the local community and is visited by many parties of school children during the course of the year. On the wider stage, the school does active charitable work in Limbe, Cameroon, under the auspices of the Methodist Relief and Development Fund and a link has recently been established with a sister Methodist school in America.
- 3.11 The ISC meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.12 The quality of boarding education is excellent and consistent with the school's aims for boarding to develop the whole person and create an atmosphere of tolerance.
- 3.13 Relationships are positive between boarders and with boarding staff. The students are happy in a congenial and contented community. As most overseas students arrive in Year 12 the school has to work hard to achieve rapid integration. The school has effective strategies in place, such as trips and community service, which do much to strengthen the sense of community. House parents are committed and rigorous in providing and monitoring care. An atmosphere of respect is evident and a homely atmosphere is achieved. Housekeepers and resident staff are highly efficient and respected by the students. Liaison with pastoral staff in the main school is strong. Each of the boarding houses has its own identity. The boarders are proud of their houses and appreciative of the high standards of care they receive.
- 3.14 Supervised study time enables students to concentrate on their work and an imaginative programme of extra-curricular activities, in addition to the programme for day students, keeps them busy. Sport is popular and the resources of Canterbury are enjoyed, as is the diverse and exciting programme of trips, ice skating, shopping or cultural.
- 3.15 Accommodation is generally of high quality; it is spacious, comfortable, well equipped and maintained. Students take pride in their boarding houses and take their shoes off in Austen House to keep the carpets clean. The bedrooms are clean and well decorated. Suitable facilities are provided so that students can prepare snacks.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The ISC benefits from the same high quality governance as the main school; governance ensures that the ISC achieves its objectives.
- 4.2 The governing body is appropriately constituted and linked to the Board of Management of Methodist Independent Schools. It includes governors with a wide range of useful expertise for the school, such as educational, business or financial skills. Governors are highly committed to the ISC. They have attended relevant training and are up to date with current issues and legislation. Three sub-committees, development, marketing and finance, estates and personnel meet regularly and inform the twice termly meetings of the board of governors. Minutes and agenda indicate that suitable issues are thoroughly discussed and well-informed decisions regarding the ISC are taken.
- 4.3 The governing body are fully aware of their responsibilities and are fully involved in the planning process. The development committee is fully integrated with the school development planning process. The annual review forms the basis of subsequent planning and takes into account views taken from staff, parents and students. This results in a clear plan of action and suitable allocation of human and material resources. A strong sense of partnership with the school and ISC staff is widely evident, relationships are positive and the governors provide appropriate challenge for the school if necessary. They attend functions and are well known to staff and students.
- 4.4 The governing body oversees all of the parts of the school, including the ISC well. The education subcommittee maintains a close watch on examination results, policies, and development planning and the outcomes of annual reviews of departments. The financial committee maintains a vigilant oversight of financial planning and expenditure. The governing body carries out its responsibilities for child protection and health and safety fully.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 High quality leadership and management enable the ISC to achieve its objectives to meet the needs of international students. The ISC is managed as a department within the whole college. As such, it is suitably represented on the senior management team. The ISC staff work well together as a closely knit team. Sufficient informal and formal meetings ensure that staff are well informed and that a consultative approach is taken to decision making.
- 4.6 The ISC development plan reflects the whole college development plan and has been instrumental in enabling continuous improvement. An annual review enables the ISC to reflect on its performance and agree objectives for the coming year. Each member of the staff team has responsibility for aspects of development such as, developing cross-curricular resources or further development of ICT.
- 4.7 The ISC has sufficient, suitably qualified staff who are appropriately deployed. Some main school mathematics teachers teach in the ISC and ISC staff provide additional support for research and linguistic skills. The backgrounds of all staff have been checked. The performance, management and review process enables each member of staff to review his or her work, receive lesson observation and to discuss priorities for the coming year. Each member of staff has at least one objective linked to the ISC development plan, training needs

are identified and staff attend suitable in-service training. Staff are therefore well trained for their posts. The ISC does not have any newly qualified teachers.

- 4.8 The ISC has suitable resources which are used well. ICT is beneficially used in the ISC and in the main school. Plenty of books are provided in the ISC itself and the central school library provides well for EAL students. The quality of accommodation is of a high standard, the rooms are well decorated and displays are attractive and stimulating. Students have full access to the main school, and to its grounds and facilities. The ISC is efficiently administered both from the main school and internally.
- 4.9 The ISC meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The ISC meets its objectives. It provides an outstanding quality of education. Students learn well and achieve high standards. Students demonstrate high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and high quality teaching and assessment are provided. The quality of pastoral care and the provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding as are links with parents. Boarding education is excellent. The ISC benefits from the same high quality governance as the main school. High quality of leadership and management enable the ISC to achieve its objectives.
- 5.2 The ISC is aware that it needs to raise further the level of some students' performance in IELTS. It is well placed to make this improvement.
- 5.3 The ISC meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The ISC has no major weaknesses but should undertake the following.
1. Further raise standards in IELTS by extending its additional support programme.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 9th to 12th February 2009. The inspectors examined samples of students' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with students. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the medical centre. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr John King	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Una Stevens	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr Stuart Brant	Director of Studies GSA school
Mrs Julia Burns	Headmistress GSA school
Mr Ben Edwards	Head of Department HMC school
Mr Paul Spillane	Former Headmaster HMC school
Ms Dot Stone	Head of Department HMC school
Mr Mark Twells	Head of Department HMC school