



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR SIXTH-FORM STUDIES**

**BOARDING WELFARE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Cambridge Centre for Sixth-form Studies

Full Name of College	<b>Cambridge Centre for Sixth-form Studies</b>
DfE Number	<b>873/6021</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1084601</b>
Address	<b>Cambridge Centre for Sixth-form Studies 4-5 Benet Place Lensfield Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 1EL</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01223 716890</b>
Fax Number	<b>01223 517530</b>
Email Address	<b>office@ccss.co.uk</b>
Principal	<b>Mr Stuart Nicholson</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Randall White</b>
Age Range	<b>15 to 21</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>144</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys and Girls (79 boys; 65 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>33</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>111</b>
	Full: <b>111</b> Weekly <b>0</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>09 Feb to 11 Feb 2016</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended. This inspection focuses on the school's compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS). The inspection occurs over a period of two and a half continuous days in the school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgement.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited each of the boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured students. The responses of parents and boarding students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Ms Juliet Jaggs	Reporting Inspector
Mr Nick Brown	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Doug Quinn	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Department, ISA school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Cambridge Centre for Sixth-form Studies was established in 1981 in the centre of Cambridge. It aims to prepare students for the demands and possibilities of adult life by supporting their achievement, and their ability to co-operate and to appreciate diversity, as well as to help them develop independence. The college provides one- and two-year certification courses for students between the ages of 15 and 21. Students making the adjustment to the English education system from overseas have the option of a year-long pre-academic programme.
- 1.2 A board of trustees governs the college. They delegate their responsibilities to three committees, one of which takes responsibility for boarding. Teaching and boarding premises are located separately around Cambridge. The sciences, arts and modern foreign languages are taught in one building, and social sciences, humanities and mathematics are taught on another site within walking distance. The four boarding houses are located around Cambridge; two of these are for male and female students alone and the other two houses accommodate both male and female students. The college engages the services of a third party organisation when boarders require emergency lodgings.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 144 students attended the college, with a range of different educational experiences. Over half the students at the college come from overseas, with typically 30 different nationalities represented amongst the student body. English has not previously been the language of instruction for some of these students and 77 of them speak English as an additional language (EAL). The college provides additional support for 44 of these students. It has identified 34 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). None of these students has an education, health and care plan and none receives additional support.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, the director of boarding and operations manager has become more involved in the development of boarding. The college has increased the proportion of academic staff supervising the boarding houses.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups.

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop the analysis of the information held about individual students in order to better identify improvements to welfare provision.
2. Ensure more consistent practice amongst boarding staff in the implementation of procedures for signing in and out, and in reviewing risk assessments.

### **(iii) Progress since the previous inspection**

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in February 2013. At the time, the college was recommended to encourage more students to take part in activities. The introduction of the compulsory activity programme for the majority of students has had a positive impact by increasing the proportion of students who participate in recreational activities.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS**

#### **3.(a) Boarding provision and care**

- 3.1 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 An appropriate process of induction allows boarders to familiarise themselves with the city of Cambridge and with the arrangements for boarding. Boarders are able to choose from several members of staff for support and guidance, including tutors and house managers. The college provides appropriate guidance in relation to the demands of the academic courses that students select. Boarders are provided with the contact information of an individual independent of the college to whom they can turn for advice as well as the telephone numbers of appropriate helplines. Most parents and boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that the college supports boarders well. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The college implements suitable medical policies. Boarding staff are appropriately qualified to administer first aid and to promote the mental health and emotional well-being of boarders. Medication is stored securely; boarding staff and medical personnel exchange records to ensure that household remedies are administered safely. Prescribed medication is only given to the boarder to whom it is prescribed and a suitable assessment is made before boarders are allowed to self-medicate. Adequate accommodation is available for boarders in their study bedrooms when they are unwell. The rights of boarders as patients are respected and suitable facilities are available for them to consult with medical personnel at the college. The college makes adequate arrangements for boarders to visit specialist medical services in the city, in addition to promoting boarders' health awareness on site. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders use various electronic communications to contact their parents and friends in private. The college operates appropriate routines for monitoring students' access to the internet in order to prevent abuse or unsafe practice. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarders' accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised persons, including during vacations when college students remain in residence. Surveillance equipment does not intrude on boarders' privacy. A small minority of parents who returned the questionnaire were dissatisfied with the level of comfort provided in the boarding accommodation. Inspection evidence indicated that boarding accommodation is well organised, suitably furnished, and appropriately lit, heated and ventilated. Boarders are provided with individual study bedrooms, which they can personalise if they wish. These areas allow adequate privacy and space for study, as well as suitable toilet and washing facilities. Additional communal study areas are provided in other college buildings, with suitable social areas in each boarding house. Appropriate maintenance procedures are implemented to identify and address potential risks in each of the boarding houses. Suitable routines ensure the cleanliness of the buildings. Bedding is clean and suitable, and is sufficiently warm. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A minority of boarders responding to their questionnaire indicated that they do not think the food provided by the college is good. Inspectors joined the students at mealtimes and found that the food is nutritious and that menus offer sufficient choice. Appropriate provision is made for students with particular dietary, medical or religious needs. Food is prepared and served in hygienic areas. A small minority of students expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of snacks and drinking water at reasonable times. Inspection evidence indicated that kitchen facilities in each

boarding house make adequate provision for boarders to prepare snacks in the evenings, and drinking water is freely available. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Adequate laundry facilities are available for boarders' clothing and the college makes suitable arrangements to provide clean bedding. Boarders make their own arrangements for obtaining personal and stationery items. Their secure study bedrooms provide adequate protection for their possessions, and any searches of boarders' personal belongings are conducted in accordance with appropriate guidance. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Of the small number of boarders who responded to the questionnaire, a majority indicated that they do not agree the college encourages them to participate in activities outside teaching time. A small minority of parents expressed similar views. Inspection evidence showed that the college has made adequate provision by introducing compulsory indoor and outdoor activity programmes for all but Year 13 students. The college informs students of other local activity options and current affairs events, such as topical debates, and the students also have access to information about the world outside the college through the internet. Suitable risk assessments are in place for hazardous activities, and the college provides adequate space for recreation and for students to be alone if they wish. [NMS 10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The college implements an appropriate health and safety policy. Suitable tests and service procedures ensure that the boarding premises and facilities are maintained in a safe condition as far as is practicable. Appropriate risk assessment ensures that suitable actions are in place to reduce the potential risks identified. Review procedures are adequate, with some measures considered more robustly than others. Most parents and students who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated agreement that the college keeps boarders safe. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The college complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire detection equipment and alarms are tested appropriately; emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment are adequately maintained. Appropriate routines ensure that boarders practise evacuation procedures, including during boarding time. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The safeguarding policy has appropriate regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. College leadership establishes appropriate links with the local authority to implement suitable safeguarding training and review procedures, including with the appropriate involvement of members of the governing body. Adequate college systems ensure that students' needs are identified and supported by members of college staff and through appropriate partnerships with other agencies. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 College behaviour policies are implemented to reinforce the boarding principles and to promote positive relationships amongst boarders. Suitable rules promote boarders' independence, for example in meeting expectations about punctuality for lessons and curfew in the boarding houses. Boarders are provided with adequate support for the few incidents when more significant sanctions are imposed. The rare allegations of bullying are managed appropriately. Restraint and search policies are in place and have regard to appropriate guidance, and are followed as necessary. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The college implements safer recruitment procedures for the employment of college staff and governors. These are appropriately recorded on the single central register of appointments, in accordance with the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Appropriate systems are implemented to ensure the safer recruitment of contract workers, including those teaching English as an additional language. The college engages another business to provide emergency cover for boarders when they are unable to remain in the boarding accommodation, for example if they significantly infringe the college rules. The college relies on this business to check the suitability of these temporary hosts. No individuals over the age of 16 who are not on the college roll live on the same premises as the boarders. Appropriate procedures are implemented to ensure that visitors to the boarding house do not gain unsupervised access to boarders; resident staff accompany visiting contractors. [NMS 14]

### **3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision**

- 3.15 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The college makes available a statement of boarding principles. Appropriate policies are implemented to fulfil these principles in practice, promoting boarders' independence as well as their respect for communal living. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The governing body monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of boarding appropriately through regular communication with staff and students. Suitable developments have been identified, including the introduction of a governors' boarding and welfare committee to monitor boarding provision more closely. Staff with responsibility for the leadership of boarding are appropriately experienced, with additional qualifications in boarding practice. They demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate to their roles, maintaining and implementing the policies necessary for the management of boarding on a daily basis. Leadership has made suitable arrangements to promote all colleagues' awareness of regulatory requirements. Appropriate communication links exist between academic tutors and pastoral staff, particularly since the increase in the number of academic staff supervising the boarding accommodation. Records are maintained and monitored so that appropriate action can be taken; however, administrative systems do not facilitate the analysis of information for more comprehensive improvements to boarding procedures. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 New boarding staff are provided with suitable induction training, and job descriptions are available for the various roles in boarding. The spouses of boarding staff are separately employed by the college and their role in the boarding houses is clear. An appropriate annual review procedure is used to identify and respond to the training and professional development needs of boarding staff. They are appropriately qualified, especially in essential medical provision, and adequate supervision is provided in each of the boarding houses. Systems to ensure that boarders inform boarding staff of their whereabouts are inconsistently applied, but boarding staff know how to locate students' whereabouts at all times. Staff know the college policy regarding missing boarders. At least one member of the boarding staff is responsible for each of the boarding premises overnight. Appropriate arrangements are implemented to ensure that boarders are able to contact this member of staff at night. Suitable separate accommodation is provided for boarding staff, to which boarders' infrequent access is appropriately supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The college pays due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and boarders are not discriminated against. It implements appropriate systems to co-ordinate support for students with SEND and those with EAL. Participation in college activities is

adequately monitored to ensure equal opportunity for male and female students. [NMS 16]

- 3.20 The majority of students who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire disagreed that the college listens and responds to their views. Inspection evidence indicated that boarders have appropriate opportunities to share their views, both formally and informally, for example during house meetings and through their house representatives on the student council. Inspectors agreed with college leadership that it is not always appropriate to fulfil boarders' requests without compromising the quality of boarding provision overall. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The college has and follows a suitable complaints procedure. Leadership keeps appropriate records of any complaints received, including the details required about the action taken as a result of the issues that have been raised. Almost all parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the boarding experience promotes their children's development and that the college values the students as individuals. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The college does not appoint prefects from amongst the student body. The majority of students responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that there are too few opportunities for developing responsibility and leadership. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The college does not provide lodgings. [NMS 20]