



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, SHERBORNE SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## International College, Sherborne School

Full Name of School	<b>International College, Sherborne School</b>		
DCSF Number	<b>835/6030</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1081228</b>		
Address	<b>International College, Sherborne School Newell Grange Sherborne Dorset DT9 4EZ</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01935 814743</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01935 816863</b>		
Email Address	<b>reception@sherborne-ic.net</b>		
Principal	<b>Dr. Christopher Greenfield</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Maj. Gen. Patrick Cordingley DSO</b>		
Age Range	<b>11 to 16</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>137</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (92 boys; 45 girls;)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>0</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	11-18: <b>137</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>0</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	<b>Nil</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>137</b>	
	Full:	<b>137</b>	Weekly: <b>0</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010</b>		

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous ISI inspection was in May 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in October 2009 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills	<b>2</b>
The quality of the pupils' personal development	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	<b>3</b>
<b>3 ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	<b>5</b>
(ii) Recommended action	<b>5</b>
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>6</b>

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

- 1.1 International College, Sherborne School was set up in 1977, initially in part of Sherborne School. It moved to its present site in purpose-built premises on the edge of the town in 1991. Although separately registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, it is part of the Sherborne School foundation; its governors are a sub-committee of the Sherborne School main board, containing a mixture of main board governors and others. In almost all respects, the college operates autonomously on a day-to-day basis. At the time of the inspection, the college chairman was vice-chairman of the main board. The headmaster, known as the principal, had been in post for 13 years.
- 1.2 The college provides courses for overseas students to develop their skills in English and introduce them to an English curriculum; students come from a wide range of nationalities, cultures and ethnicities. Most students stay for one year; however, those who join the college in Year 10 stay to complete their GCSEs and IGCSEs in Year 11. At the time of the inspection, there were 137 students on roll, of whom 92 were boys and 45 girls. There is no test of ability on entry though a degree of proficiency in English is sought when students are recruited. All students have English as a second language (ESL) and, at the time of the inspection, four had additional learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). Based on limited information, though confirmed by the college, the range of students' abilities is broadly in line with the national average in England, but on entry their level of English is well below that of British students at the same stage of education. When they leave, the great majority of students move to mainstream independent schools to complete their secondary education, with a few completing this in their own countries.
- 1.3 The college aims to make rapid improvements in students' English language competence; to practise the study skills necessary in the English educational system and to improve each student's level of scholarship.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 The students' excellent progress in English during their short time in the college enables them to achieve high standards of literacy and also to apply their linguistic skills across a broad curriculum. In addition to success in ESL examinations, they achieve GCSE results which are high compared with the average for all maintained schools and similar to those in selective schools. Almost all students in Year 11 gain five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE despite, in many cases, having little English when they arrive. A few students enter AS level examinations where most do well. Year 11 students demonstrate excellent comprehension, pronunciation and vocabulary, producing written work of high quality. They use information and communication technology (ICT) well, for instance in research. Project work is outstanding. However, some younger students find it hard to draw conclusions for themselves. Students are well prepared for their move to mainstream schools. They have learned to work hard, ask and answer questions and to take a full part in lessons.
- 2.2 The education provided by the school is exceptionally well planned and supports students' progress extremely well, not only in their learning of English, but also in other subjects. The curriculum is broad, with a good range of options leading to GCSE and IGCSE. The most able students benefit from challenging tasks and extension work in lessons. Qualifications are chosen carefully to show performance in English and provide a focus for improvement. Learning support is exceptionally strong; all staff are trained in ESL teaching and, since the last inspection, greater emphasis has recently been placed on helping students with LDD. The curriculum is enriched through independent learning projects such as the cross-curricular initiative in Year 9 focusing on the town of Sherborne. The facilities for ICT have been improved, and staff have been trained to make better use of the equipment, resulting in more confident use of interactive whiteboards and increased use of computer-assisted learning. The range of sporting activities is exceptional for the size of school and uses outstanding facilities, both indoors and outdoors, at the main school site. The choice of other activities is narrower, ranging from music and drama to charity ventures. Links exist with the local community, but are limited because of the short length of time spent by the students in the college.
- 2.3 Excellent teaching is underpinned by a close knowledge of and concern for students, combined with teachers' particular expertise in support for students with ESL. Teaching combines a lively style with careful attention to the details of spelling, comprehension and grammar. Teachers check students' understanding carefully at every stage, reinforcing vocabulary and providing much individual attention to students' needs. In most lessons, teaching is brisk, challenging and makes students think for themselves, so that they are focused and interested throughout. - Computers are well used to support learning. Marking is almost always thorough, helpful and constructive, providing plenty of help as to how students can improve their work.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.4 The students' personal development is excellent. They become confident and aware young people, as seen both in the relationships between them and in the respect they show to adults. They develop a keen sense of right and wrong,

coupled with an awareness of the needs of others, and are unfailingly polite and courteous. This reflects the college's ethos of concerned care. Students make a positive contribution both to the college and to the wider community. Individuals serve on committees representing the interests of other students and are worthy representatives of the college when visiting the town. Students have an excellent appreciation of the world they live in through the multi-cultural identity of the college. One commented 'I now have friends in different countries.' The college draws on the backgrounds from which students come. However, some say they feel insufficiently exposed to British culture, despite a programme of visits to places as diverse as a cathedral city, the seaside and a Premiership football match.

- 2.5 Personal, social and health education adds much to students' personal development. It contributes effectively to the nurturing ethos which supports students when they first arrive. Students are helped to appreciate what is different about living in England, for example when they learn about staying safe in public. They are encouraged to adopt and foster healthy lifestyles, both through vigorous physical activities and through healthy eating. Meals are varied, nutritious and appreciated by most students.
- 2.6 Students speak warmly and spontaneously of the outstanding care and attention they receive from all members of staff, both around the college and in their boarding houses. House staff, who have pastoral responsibility, work closely with form staff, who are responsible for academic progress, so that a coherent view of students' needs is established. Students' personal development is monitored sensitively through consistent reporting and individual interviews. They receive careful guidance over their choice of future schools, and appropriate help is given about the links between courses and careers they might want to pursue. Students say they are happy at school and that bullying is not a problem. They also say they enjoy excellent relationships with other students and with staff. Boarding houses are well staffed so that there is a range of adults to talk to. The recent Ofsted boarding report found most areas of boarding life to be good and some outstanding, with no significant criticisms. The students' health needs are well catered for and the college has robust systems for safeguarding them.

### **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.7 Governors make outstanding use of the opportunities they have created to gain informed views of the life of the college. These enable them to make wise decisions based on a good understanding of the college's needs and the standards it achieves. They benefit from clear and effective leadership which allocates clear responsibilities to individuals for reviewing aspects of the college's work and reporting to the board on them. Governors make announced and unannounced visits to the college, review records and policies to ensure the college complies with regulations, and carefully oversee both health and safety and child protection. Their stewardship of the college over time has enabled important improvements to be carried out.
- 2.8 Leadership at all levels provides an outstandingly clear vision of the purpose of the college and of its commitment to securing the excellent progress made by students in their linguistic ability, progress across the curriculum and personal development. Students appreciate the way all staff work together to provide the support they need. Staff training is given a high priority so that teachers are well able to meet students' particular needs. Standards of care and of teaching are monitored carefully, to ensure constant improvement in all aspects of the college's life. Detailed

development planning is complemented by thorough action planning, review and evaluation. Appropriate care is taken over the appointment of staff, and college finances are carefully managed to enable high quality resources and accommodation to be provided.

- 2.9 The college has outstanding and imaginative arrangements to communicate with its world-wide parent community. These include translating key documents into parents' own languages, with local agents translating others as required. For their part, the small number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about many aspects of the college. These aspects include information about their child's progress, support for students' educational needs, the help and guidance their children receive, the attitudes and values the school inculcates, the range of activities, and their relationships with the college. The college does all it can to involve parents despite their distance away, for example by posting photographs of college activities on the website. Reports give a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in students' work and any concerns are dealt with appropriately and promptly; the college has a proper procedure for dealing with complaints if needed.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.

#### **(ii) Recommended action**

- 3.2 The college is advised to make the following improvement:
1. develop further the range of extra-curricular activities available to students.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured students. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Ian Newton

Mr Robert Chatburn

Mr Tom Fisher-Smith

Reporting inspector

Senior Team Inspector (Deputy Head, SHMIS/ISA)

Ofsted Additional Inspector