

Inspection of South England International School

Lorna Dock Hub, Wilbury Villas, Hove BN3 6AH

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Students from different countries eagerly come to South England International to study and immerse themselves in British culture. Leaders provide support for every student. Their excellent induction work ensures each student feels safe and settled in new surroundings. Leaders carefully match students to host families and plan a bespoke curriculum for each young person.

Educationally, leaders are aspirational and offer students subjects which can meet academic requirements from their home countries. Impartial careers advice is provided to students, including about international higher education.

Extra-curricular activities really develop students personally. They can access a range of sports and the arts to develop talents. This offer includes elite football and rugby, golf, archery, kayaking, drama and dance. Exploring a big city and being able to travel around the UK are real highlights for students. They are relishing their time at a British school.

Students show respect to one another and celebrate different backgrounds and viewpoints. They behave very well and know the importance of working hard to achieve success. Any form of bullying is not tolerated, and students are encouraged to see the good in each other. Where needed, staff can signpost students to well-being professional services.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff have made a strong start to the school's recent opening. Strategically, leaders have taken sensible steps and not rushed into implementing too many things at once. The principal is mindful of how early on it is in the development of this brand-new school. She has wisely started with a small cohort of students first. This has enabled leaders to test out their plans for real. In the first few weeks, staff monitored daily how the school was functioning, and leaders supported teachers in implementing the curriculum. The impact so far is positive, and the principal has a firm grasp of progress. Underpinning leaders' work is a determined focus on the education and welfare of all students.

The school's administrative offices have relocated to new premises. Students do not access these, and this workspace is for the sole use of school staff. As it is a shared building, leaders have ensured that they are meeting all the relevant health and safety requirements. Students' education is happening as planned at a nearby sixth-form college. School leaders work very closely with the college's senior staff. Students have access to classrooms and laboratories to learn the taught curriculum. At breaktimes, students eat happily in the college's canteen and enjoy the spacious grounds to play sports and other recreational activities. Leaders know their responsibilities of checking the college's facilities to assure themselves that the school is continuing to meet the independent school standards (the standards) for premises. However, the principal recognises the need to build in more frequent

checks of the college's premises and report any maintenance issues straight away to the college's leaders.

The school's curriculum is suitably ambitious. Every student is undertaking an A-level qualification in environmental science. Here, the curriculum content outlines the core knowledge to learn, and this is well sequenced. Furthermore, this curriculum area successfully covers students' mathematical, scientific and human and social understanding. Teachers are subject experts in these fields and impart great knowledge to students.

Linguistically, students learn an English curriculum which develops their proficiency in speaking the English language. The curriculum covers the core skills that students need to work and live in English-speaking countries. Again, teachers are knowledgeable in presenting this content in a way students understand. Attention to detail in students' English pronunciation and grammar is prioritised. Leaders offer regular opportunities for students to read aloud to build a high level of fluency. Across all subjects, vocabulary is taught explicitly so students learn as many English words as possible. Nevertheless, leaders are trying to widen students' reading habits further.

Teachers keep a close eye on how securely students are learning the curriculum. They are responsive to students' subject understanding. Teachers build in opportunities to strengthen the recall of knowledge. Because students come from countries with different educational approaches, leaders are mindful of unidentified special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are in regular conversations about students, and leaders inform parents where they feel further support might be needed. In lessons, teachers' approaches cater well for students' needs.

Students' attitudes and conduct in lessons are good. Leaders educate students clearly about the school's rules and these are mostly realised in practice. Students work hard and enjoy debating in class discussions. They move sensibly around the school building.

Leaders place great importance on meeting the expectations of the Equality Act 2010. Students have a clear understanding of the protected characteristics and the importance of respect and tolerance to people of all nationalities and cultures. Leaders have planned a personal development programme that prepares students well at sixth form. It is rich and varied. However, within some aspects of the programme, not all the required knowledge is identified and well sequenced.

Up-to-date policies, which are available on the school's website, reflect the proprietor and school leaders' understanding of the expectations of an independent school. Moving forward, the proprietor recognises that the school needs to appoint a governing body. They understand this is to seek assurances that the school continues to meet the standards and to support the workload of the principal who is also the proprietor. Importantly, there are not yet rigorous mechanisms in place to hold leaders to account for the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are experienced and well informed about keeping overseas students safe. Their vetting processes of adults are thorough. They train staff about particular risks that international students could face when staying in the UK. For example, leaders prioritise training about child exploitation and gang crime. The curriculum informs students about living independently, personal safety, sexual health and alcohol use. Leaders closely monitor students' attendance.

Staff know what signs to look out for that might indicate a student needs help. Leaders understand what to do when raising concerns to the local authority's children's services. They are clear about the information that is recorded in writing.

The school's safeguarding policy complies with the latest government guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Within the personal development programme, some knowledge is not clearly defined. This means students are not making solid connections in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that all the ambitious strands of the personal development programme are coherently planned and sequenced.
- Leaders have recognised there needs to be a governance structure in the school. Currently, the proprietor is the sole person assuring themselves that the school is continuing to meet the standards and is providing an ambitious curriculum. Leaders need to move forward with their plans to establish a governance model. This will help provide the right checks and balances to rigorously hold leaders to account for students' education.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	148591
DfE registration number	846/6030
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10246061
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	15 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	South England Exchange Ltd
Chair	Juliet Cassells
Principal	Juliet Cassells
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,000
Telephone number	01273 840 213
Website	www.southenglandinternational.com
Email address	info@southenglandexchange.org

Information about this school

- South England International School opened on 9 January 2023. Its name and administrative headquarters have both changed since its second pre-registration inspection in December 2021. The proprietor has informed the Department for Education of these changes. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- As outlined at the last pre-registration inspection, the school leases classrooms and other facilities from Newman College, part of Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Sixth Form College, The Upper Drive, Hove, BN3 6ND. It is a short walk from the central administrative offices to the college where students access their education.
- The school caters for international students accessing sixth-form provision for one academic year only. Students then return overseas. At the time of this inspection, one student aged 19 was attending. This was above the school's registered age range.
- The school is registered to admit up to 24 students.
- Students live with host families. South England Exchange Ltd facilitates these arrangements, informs the relevant authorities and monitors the welfare of students.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal and proprietor, staff and students. The lead inspector also met with senior leaders at Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Sixth Form College.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, environmental science and personal, social and health education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and students, visited lessons and looked at students' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and students. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to

examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. He reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.

- Inspectors talked to every student about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff, students and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors visited the school's administrative headquarters and Newman College. This was to check all the premises used and the statutory requirements of the standards. In addition, inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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