

Inspection of Cardiff Sixth Form College, Cambridge

89 Regent Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1AW

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 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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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

There is a buzz of intellectual curiosity and stimulation at this school. Students are highly motivated to do well. They are thirsty for new knowledge and experiences. Students rise to the challenge of meeting teachers' high expectations and follow an ambitious curriculum. This includes learning to write for academic purposes.

Students enjoy positive relationships with staff. They are of the view that staff listen to their views and act upon their requests. They feel looked after and safe at school. Students know who to turn to should they need advice or support. They respect and value each other's differences and cultural backgrounds. There is a harmonious atmosphere in the school. There are no issues with negative behaviours such as bullying. Students have a strong understanding of behaviours that are not acceptable for further study, including plagiarism.

Students relish the wider experience of living in Cambridge and make full use of the University's library for their studies. They appreciate the extracurricular opportunities that staff provide. This includes the school's programme called 'The Cambridge Edge' which gives students a range of opportunities. They understand that in the first year of operation, some usual activities for an international private school, such as inter-school sporting competitions, have not been available.

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

Leaders are on the journey to realising their goal of providing exceptional education for high-achieving international students. The specialist curriculum focuses on areas of scientific, technological and mathematical study (the STEM subjects). Students sit entrance tests for admission.

Leaders ensure that students are taught by expert teachers in their field. Teachers facilitate research beyond the A-level specifications. They consider precisely how to accelerate and deepen students' learning. Where this works well, teachers think about the best methods for teaching key concepts to students. They take into account their wide-ranging educational backgrounds. Where this is less successful, staff have not planned with the same consideration of students' prior experience. In a few curriculum plans, the best methods of teaching the subject content are unclear.

Teachers check students' prior knowledge and understanding before they begin their courses. This enables students to cope with the demands of the specifications and the wider 'super-curricular' programme. This broadens and deepens students' subject knowledge. Where emphasis on a topic may differ in a student's home country, such as with organic chemistry, students benefit from extra tuition. Highly qualified laboratory technicians support science students to acquire the necessary practical skills for further study.

Students value the importance of academic reading as well as reading for pleasure.

They undertake research projects to follow their interests in their chosen fields. Topics range from exploring stem cell therapy treatment for Alzheimer's disease to how sleep can aid learning. Students receive mentoring and support from university researchers and undergraduates. Students also take part in a range of international competitions and specialist workshops. However, physical and creative education are less developed. There are limited opportunities to pursue students' talents and interests outside of their chosen areas of study. Leaders have plans to strengthen this.

Students behave and attend well. They have high levels of respect for one another. They appreciate and celebrate the diverse backgrounds they have. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education and relationships, including relationships and sex education, is appropriate for the age of the students. This includes finance, independent learning and what it means to live and work in the UK. Students' understanding of fundamental British values is developed through the subject curriculums.

The school community and identity are still developing. As the provision grows, students are having more opportunities to lead and demonstrate responsibility, such as mentoring younger students and contributing to school council.

Careers education is a strength. The programme is comprehensive and gives students meaningful insight into university life and the world of work. Students receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

Leaders have clear policies and procedures for the identification, assessment and review of students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive helpful training, so they are up to date with their knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum for students with SEND.

The proprietor body and its governors provide appropriate support and challenge for leaders. They systematically check that all the independent school standards are met. They have made sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to secure the growth and progression of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff undertake wide-ranging safeguarding training, so they understand the risks that international students face. They know the latest government guidance and follow the school's policies diligently. This includes making sure that students know how to stay safe when online. Leaders know their responsibilities and when to involve external agencies so that students stay safe. They ensure that when students arrive, they receive an orientation of the city. Leaders emphasise how to live safely. Students have access to a range of pastoral services, including a school nurse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A few curriculum plans do not consider carefully enough the best methods to teach key concepts to students who have wide-ranging educational experiences. This does not help students' confidence when learning new subject matter, with approaches they may not be used to and subsequently question. Leaders should ensure high-quality planning and delivery, which enables the students to understand why they are learning in particular ways.
- Students mainly have access to physical and creative education in the evenings and at weekends. Students report that the model of the school day is 'tiring', and they do not get sufficient access to pursue other interests. This is negatively affecting their personal development. Leaders should implement their plans to restructure the school day and to strengthen the wider curriculum offer.

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	149027
DfE registration number	873/6058
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10267718
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Dukes Education Limited
Chair	Aatif Hassan
Headteacher	Julian Davies
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,300
Telephone number	01223 903080
Website	www.ccoex.com
Email address	julian.davies@ccoex.com

Information about this school

- The school was first registered on 30 June 2022. This is the first standard inspection of the school.
- The proprietor body is Dukes Education Limited. Some responsibilities for governance have been delegated to a governing body.
- The school caters for international pupils from 14 to 19 years of age. Admission is selective.
- Currently, all students are in Year 12. Therefore, there is no separate sixth-form judgement.
- The school does not currently use supply or alternative provision.
- The school provides boarding accommodation. Inspectors only inspected the education 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 managing director, who was acting on behalf of Dukes Education Ltd, the executive principal, the headteacher, leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English for academic purposes, computer science, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke with subject leaders, teachers and students. They looked at curriculum plans and examples of students' work.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at safeguarding records and spoke with staff and students.
- Inspectors toured the premises to review the suitability of school buildings.
- Inspectors considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Mellors

His Majesty's Inspector

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