

International Stanborough School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	919/6209
Unique Reference Number	134933
URN for social care	SCO19554
Inspection number	332455
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Pauline Allison HMI
Social care inspector	Kay Mehrrens

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.

Information about the school

International Stanborough School makes provision for students for who are learning to speak English as an additional language. It is separately registered and operates within Stanborough School, which is an independent secondary school. Both are owned by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and are open to students of all faiths or none. The main purpose of the international school is to help students develop the necessary fluency and competency in English to transfer to the main school. It is registered for up to 25 students aged between 11 and 18 years and currently 16 students aged between 11 and 17 attend. Of these, 11 are boarders and the rest live locally with their families or with guardians. More than half of the current students come from Hong Kong or Korea and the rest from six other countries. The school is situated on an attractive site on the outskirts of Watford and shares staffing and all facilities with the main secondary school. It aims to provide 'a caring secure Christian environment which enables all students to reach their potential', and to do this by providing a specialised, but broad and balanced curriculum which promotes each student's well-being. The school was last inspected in November 2005 and the boarding provision in January 2007.

Evaluation of the school

International Stanborough School provides a satisfactory quality of education and care for its students. The school's strong Christian ethos is central to its work and it has the welfare and education of its international students firmly at its heart. The recent appointment of a director with responsibility for these students is further proof of the school's commitment to providing the best possible education for them. The school has a range of clear procedures to keep the students safe but some areas of policy and practice need to be addressed as a priority to ensure full implementation. The school makes good efforts to keep parents, many of whom are far away, fully informed of their child's progress. The school meets its aims and meets most of the regulations. The boarding provision, which was also judged to be satisfactory, has a number of areas of non compliance.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school rightly gives a high priority to ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of students, some of whom are at very early stages of acquiring fluency in English. Those students most recently arrived have a significant amount of time given to English as a foreign language, including outside of the school day. They gradually add other subjects to suit their skills and build up to the broader curriculum which is available to students in the main secondary school. There is a clear focus on preparation for external examinations. Most students successfully take the GCSE examination in their own language in Year 10. Where appropriate, they are able to add another modern foreign language to their studies. There are some opportunities to take part in after-school clubs for art and sport, an annual swimming gala and athletics events. Students in Year 10 all have work experience which is matched well to their interests. The school organises a range of trips which support the curriculum well. There are sufficient resources, including a library which is being re-organised to improve its appeal to students.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. In the best teaching, work is well planned and carefully matched to students' abilities and teachers pay good attention to ensuring that students have the vocabulary they need for the task. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance and add interest to the lessons. Where teaching is not as strong, there is little evidence in lesson plans to show how the teacher intends to meet the specific needs of these students. This was an issue raised at the time of the last inspection. Occasionally teachers talk too quickly or do not write clearly enough on the board and this inhibits learning. Despite a clear school policy, the quality of marking varies and there is insufficient evidence of helpful comments to which students can refer and which would help them know what they need to do to improve. Staff in the boarding house support the work of the school well by encouraging students in their personal study.

Careful baseline assessment takes place when students enter the school. In line with the main secondary school, students are assessed each half term and these grades are sent to parents. Students also take examinations for international English for speakers of other languages (IESOL) to assess their written and spoken levels of competency. The school is developing its assessment systems and formalising target setting for students. It currently tracks their individual progress satisfactorily.

The ethos of the school is also a contributory factor in the good progress students make and the school ensures that students make good gains in all aspects of their development. Students are strongly motivated to succeed; they have confidence that they are doing well at school and that teachers help them to make progress. This is shown by their achievement in the end of Key Stage 3 tests, by their successful transition into the main secondary school and in their success in GCSE examinations. Last year the two Year 11 students gained five or more A* to C grades and current students are making good progress. The school provides dedicated support to these students, individually and in groups. Students clearly gain in their understanding and

use of English and usually have good success in their IESOL examinations. However, the most recent results are disappointing. Students achieved very well in the reading and listening elements of this examination but a number of students were insufficiently prepared to meet the requirements for the written element.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. The strong promotion of the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is explicit in the school. Spiritual development is promoted very well through assemblies where there is time given to reflection, and by students leading prayers at the start of each lesson. Not all students are members of the Church but they have opportunities to consider what is presented to them about belief and to debate these views. There is a strong moral code in the school; codes of conduct and the sanctions that ensue should these not be followed are made clear to students and their behaviour is good. They are polite and friendly to everyone and demonstrate the positive impact of the school's promotion of respect and tolerance which is particularly evident in the curriculum for personal, social and health education. The strength of affection for the school and the good relationships formed between students, and between students and staff, were evident in the special Year 11 leavers' assembly held during the inspection.

Students mix together well at break times and in the boarding house. They are part of the local community, mainly through worship and fellowship within the local Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are also opportunities for them to take part in local sporting activities and where they have a particular interest, for example solving Rubik's cube puzzles, they are able to pursue this at a national level. Students can take part in the Student Association and undertake responsibilities as monitors and prefects as part of the main secondary school. The school seeks students' views about a range of matters but students feel these are insufficiently taken into account in both the school and the boarding house and would like more feedback from staff.

The rich mix of students brings a great cultural benefit to the school. This is further enhanced by visits from overseas students, such as the party of Austrian students, and by Stanborough students' participation in residential visits abroad. There is an annual International Night and the school is currently involving students in making masks to form a display celebrating all the different cultures represented in the school. Students take part in fund-raising events such as Comic Relief and raise money for humanitarian projects such as an orphanage in India, and in Albania. The school arranges a good range of educational outings which specifically pinpoint British culture, for example visits to major London attractions and to Stratford-upon-Avon and these are supported by staff in the boarding house. Visiting speakers such as local politicians and representatives from the emergency services also help to increase students' awareness of public life and institutions in Britain.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The school makes satisfactory provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students. There are thorough procedures for health and safety and careful risk assessments are made for educational outings. A good number of staff are trained in first aid. All staff have had child protection training either as a group or from the designated person. However, the designated person's training has recently become out of date and the school's policy has not been updated to fully meet the latest requirements. The school has arranged for attendance on the appropriate course and, as an interim measure, it has made arrangements for the designated person for child protection from the primary school on the same site to fulfil this role for the international school. However, this arrangement was not known by all staff. The school takes any concerns about bullying very seriously and deals with them promptly. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well in lessons and sport. Students receive very helpful information about the dangers of substance misuse. Although the school promotes healthy eating, students are critical about the range of food available to them. The school has reviewed its accessibility plan and meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has mainly good procedures for the recruitment of staff and checks references and identity thoroughly. However, it has not obtained enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) checks for all overseas members of staff.

School's premises and accommodation

The school provides good teaching accommodation in its main block. Classrooms are attractive, clean and well maintained. They are enhanced by displays of students' work. Standards of decoration and the quality of fittings are not as high in the boarding house. The school has large and attractive grounds which provide good space for students to play and relax in. It makes good use of specialist sports facilities locally.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has an extensive range of policies which are available to parents, including specific information relating to boarding. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress through the comprehensive reports sent to them by the school. Another good feature of communication is shown by a member of staff taking the opportunity to meet with parents when representing the international school during visits to Hong Kong.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints procedure which meets the regulations fully. There was one complaint regarding the school over the last year which was dealt with appropriately.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The quality of the boarding provision is satisfactory. There were no recommendations made at the last inspection. The school has not met 13 of the National Minimum Standards inspected at this inspection. The boarding house is managed by a housemaster who is assisted by other staff who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It has the capacity to house 80 students ranging in age from 11 to 18, both male and female, and occupies a section of the main school building. All the bedrooms have en-suite facilities. The shared bedrooms are of varying sizes and can accommodate two or three boarders. The boarders are separated by gender with the boys on the first floor and the girls on the second floor. Boarders have access to all communal facilities, including the school library, fitness area and grounds and share the school cafeteria for their main meals.

The school has clear policies in place to promote young people's health. Young people are provided with advice and information regarding personal, social and health issues. Care and support, in these areas, is also provided in an appropriate and considered manner by the boarding house staff. The school is near to health facilities and staff support boarders to access these as required. The systems for recording and gathering relevant health information are good. However, records of administration of medication are not well maintained. Menus include the provision of fresh foods and different cultural foods, all of which are vegetarian in keeping with the school's policy. In the recreational lounge there is a mini-kitchen where boarders can prepare their own meals and snacks. However, catering arrangements for young people are not satisfactory and their comments about the food provided are very negative. They regularly visit local shops to purchase food to cook as no snacks are available and the quantity of food at mealtimes is sometimes limited.

Policies and procedures are in place to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. Staff receive appropriate child protection training and are clear about the limits of their role in responding to young people. Bullying is not identified as a problem by young people and they have a clear understanding of what they should do if someone is making them unhappy. The management of behaviour is based on rewarding achievement and young people respond well to the system of rewards and praise. Young people say that they feel safe and protected living in the boarding house and in school. Health and safety policies and procedures are in place to support the maintenance of a safe environment. Risk assessments on premises and hazards are completed, although they do not include the fitness area located in the boarding house.

Good procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff. However, Criminal Records Bureau checks are not in place for overseas boarding staff and checks are not completed on adults living in the boarding house who are not employed by the school. The school regularly allows visitors such as exchange students and teachers, to use the school and boarding facilities. Records are in place that include evidence of exchange visitors' identification but criminal records checks are not recorded. There is no evidence of a written agreement between the school and any adults, not employed but living in the same building as boarding accommodation, which specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with boarders and their responsibilities to supervise their visitors.

The school's boarding provision provides good opportunities for young people to develop life skills. Young people say their possessions are safe. They can choose to keep their money in the office safe and request and sign for it at any time. Good records are kept of any transactions. Staff know the young people well and ensure support is provided for their education as well as their personal and social needs. Young people are able to go to different staff for support and are very aware of the role and support offered by the chaplain. Many young people enjoy the experience of boarding, particularly outings and time spent with friends. The school's promotion of equality and diversity successfully encourages young people to respect and value diversity and live together in an integrated, supportive school community. Young people feel generally satisfied with their boarding experience but say their views and opinions are not always listened to. Meetings are held in school and the boarding house, but feedback in written and verbal formats is not always provided for the young people, so adding to their frustration. All boarders have access to the internet and most have their own mobile phones. Contact with family and friends is both encouraged and supported by the staff. The school has good procedures for introducing young people to boarding.

The overall standard of boarding accommodation at the school is satisfactory. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedroom areas. The boarding house is clean. However, the communal living and kitchen areas lack colour, features and furnishing that reflect the presence and needs of young people. Some toilets and several mattresses are not in good condition.

A statement of boarding principles and practice is made available to parents, staff and young people. The boarding staff team are committed to their role. They are provided with information regarding boarding house practice and school policies. Supervision and appraisal does not take place for boarding staff and this has a negative impact on their development and training opportunities. The school uses overseas volunteers to support the permanent boarding staff. Staffing levels outside teaching time are not sufficient for the numbers of boarders and the activities they are involved in. There are systems in place for recording the welfare and health of young people. There is no monitoring or review of records or risk assessments in the boarding house so identification of patterns of behaviour or concerns is limited.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum and teaching (standard 1) and must:

- ensure teachers' lesson plans clearly show how they have taken the individual needs of students into account (paragraph 1(3)(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for students' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- update and fully implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools by ensuring that there is regular staff supervision and appraisal (paragraph 3(3)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure that all teaching and boarding house staff, including anyone living in the boarding house, have had an enhanced CRB check and that this, or where applicable a List 99 check, is clearly recorded in the single central register (paragraphs 4(2)(b), 4(2)(e) and 4C(2) and (3)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- improve the quality of the decoration and fittings in the boarding school with regard to Standards 40–52 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 5(u)).

In order to meet the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and associated regulations, the school must:

- maintain clear records of all medication given to young people (NMS 15.12)

- ensure that the school's system for recruiting staff who will work with boarders includes all the required checks before appointment (NMS 38.2)
- ensure that furnishings of boarding houses and other areas for boarders is suitable to the number, ages and needs of boarders accommodated, comfortable and in satisfactory condition (NMS 40.5)
- ensure that there is an appropriate process for the regular review of the performance of each member of staff with boarding duties by a more senior or experienced member of staff (NMS 34.5)
- ensure that the staff supervising boarders outside of teaching time is sufficient in number and deployment for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved (NMS 31.1)
- ensure that boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- ensure that all adults who live on the same premises as children but are not employed by the school have a verifiable Criminal Records Bureau check (NMS 38.3)
- ensure that there is a written agreement between the school and any adult not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation (NMS 39.4)
- ensure there are no significant hazards to boarder safety in indoor areas used by boarders (NMS 47.5)
- ensure that boarders have the opportunity to contribute their views to the operation of boarding provision (NMS 12.1)
- ensure that mattresses are of reasonable depth, clean and in sound condition (NMS 42.2)
- ensure that toilets are in working order (NMS 44.3)
- ensure regular monitoring of records of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents (NMS 23).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure teachers mark students' work consistently and with comments which help students to know what they need to do to improve further
- provide clearer feedback to students when they express their views about the school and boarding house.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs			✓	
How well students make progress in their learning		✓		

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of students		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students			✓	
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The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision			✓	
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School details

Name of school	International Stanborough School		
DCSF number	919/6209		
Unique reference number	134933		
Type of school	Secondary day and boarding school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2005		
Age range of students	11–18		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 10	Girls: 6	Total: 16
Number of boarders	Boys: 8	Girls: 3	Total: 11
Annual fees (day students)	£7,464		
Annual fees (boarders)	£11,478		
Address of school	Stanborough Park		
	Watford		
	Hertfordshire		
	WD25 9JT		
Telephone number	01923 673268		
Fax number	01923 893943		
Email address	rmurphy@spsch.org		
Headteacher	Mr Roger Murphy		
Proprietor	British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists		
Reporting inspector	Pauline Allison HMI		
Dates of inspection	6–7 May 2009		