

# Chase Academy International Study Centre

Independent school inspection report

---

DCSF registration number	860/6023
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131695
URN for social care	038716
Inspection number	353837
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Angela Hunt HMI
Social care inspector	Angela Hunt HMI

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2009



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education 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<sup>3</sup> 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

Chase Academy International Study Centre is an independent school with boarding provision. It opened in September 2000 and is located in Cannock. The principal is also the proprietor of the school. All of the students come from overseas, mainly from Hong Kong, although a few are from other countries such as China, Spain and Turkey. All are boarders and all except one speak English as an additional language. International students are taught alongside Chase Academy day school students for much of their time. Chase Academy day school is a separate school that is also registered as an independent school. Students receive specialist individual and/or group tuition to improve their English skills.

The school admits students between the ages of 10 and 19 years. No students have a statement of special educational needs. There are currently 71 students on roll and the vast majority are aged 14 years and above. The previous inspection of boarding provision was in October 2008. This is the second inspection of education with a published report. The first inspection was in October 2007.

The school's mission is to:

- provide a high quality, affordable, independent education in a supportive, congenial and family-based community
- educate in an international setting, so that students can better appreciate other cultures and their role in the global community
- offer pastoral care for each student that is encouraging, supportive and disciplined
- develop the academic and other talents of each student in order to educate the whole person
- enable school leavers to be confident, capable and compassionate people, with independent minds and a proper sense of personal responsibility.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

<sup>3</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_20000014\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000014_en_1)

## Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The overall provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate, as is the overall quality of boarding. This is because procedures to keep students safe and secure are not robust enough. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are satisfactory as are child protection arrangements. Provision enables students to make satisfactory progress in various subjects, including English.

The school failed two regulations the last time it was inspected. Both weaknesses have been put right. Accident records and the admissions register now contain all of the required information. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools. Not all national minimum standards for boarding are met.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. A suitable written curriculum policy exists and it is supported by sound schemes of work, mainly based on national guidance or examination syllabi. The curriculum is broad and is suitably planned, although as at the time of the last inspection, subject schemes of work do not generally include enough information on how international students are to be supported to improve their English language development in mainstream lessons. Students study a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and different branches of science. A good range of physical and art-related activities are provided. Many courses lead to recognised qualifications such as GCSE and A level.

Students have extensive opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects such as geography and history. Their written work is a sound mixture of copied texts and free writing, with older and more experienced students becoming more adept at writing independently as time goes by.

A wide range of clubs are provided and students regularly visit places of interest such as theme parks, castles and professional football clubs. Many take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. These experiences broaden students' horizons and the provision effectively develops students' understanding of British culture and way of life. Boarding staff provide a good range of opportunities for students to promote learning out of school hours, but the take up of activities is variable. This said, when students do mix with others at barbeques, armed forces events and prom concerts, it helps to further develop their social skills, confidence and understanding of cultural diversity. As at the time of the last inspection, provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught through a good quality 'Life Skills' programme that effectively covers such topics as sex and drugs education. A suitable careers education programme is in place and Year 11 students have the opportunity to undertake work experience.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Provision enables students to make satisfactory progress in various subjects and good progress in mathematics and sciences. Students' learning in English varies, largely depending on how well they adjust to the 'immersion' method of teaching, where international students are taught alongside native English speaking day students. Many students who speak English as an additional language cope well with this method of acquiring a new language, and their English skills are improving steadily, and for some their progress in English is good.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and enjoy positive relationships with students and this ensures a positive climate in classrooms. In the most effective lessons, expectations are high and work is challenging. A good range of open ended questioning is used to check students' understanding of concepts and when gaps in learning are identified they are quickly filled so that learning is extended. This said, in general teachers do not encourage international students to speak often enough, too readily accepting short utterances rather than encouraging them to speak at length. The separate individual and/or group tuition provide for those that require additional English support is effective in improving students' use of English.

In some satisfactory lessons the work is not always properly matched to students' specific needs. On occasions students are given unproductive tasks to do, such as copying from the board or textbooks, so time is not always used wisely. At times, lessons are overly directed by the teacher and international students are too passive and are not encouraged to speak aloud; to express a view or join in activities. Teachers do not always check that those who have difficulty with English understand subject-specific terminology or the vocabulary used in reading material. These shortcomings were also identified by the previous inspection team. Overall, too few opportunities are provided in mainstream lessons for international students to talk with native English speakers to consolidate and extend their speaking skills.

The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Examination courses are externally marked and this ensures that judgements made about attainment are valid. Internal assessment takes several forms: regular formal assessments and testing provide an indication about students' progress. Assessment information is used to set targets or a focus for the next stage of learning. However, these targets are not always clear or helpful in guiding or measuring progress. Teachers' marking of students' work is inconsistent. Sometimes it is not done for several lessons; teachers' writing may be unreadable, and students have difficulty understanding comments; teachers tend to comment on the work being marked but do not tell students what they must do next to improve. These shortcomings were identified by the previous inspection.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students get along well together and enjoy each others' company in lessons and

other activities. Students are tolerant and live and work together in harmony. This said, in class, international students could mix more with English day students and could engage together in more paired and group work to improve international students' linguistic skills and boost their confidence. Students say that they enjoy their education but miss their homes and parents. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is good. Their attendance is outstanding, as is their punctuality. Boarding and day provision contributes well to students' understanding of British culture and suitably reinforces their own. Students' knowledge of institutions and services in England is developing well through engaging in activities such as visiting a court and by doing work experience. Creative and aesthetic subjects, assemblies and events such as Christmas and Easter church services make a good contribution to enhancing students' spiritual development. Students take part in sponsored walks and non-uniform days to raise money for charities. However, the school and boarding councils do not give international students a strong voice in the decision making process.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

The overall provision for the welfare, health and safety of all students is inadequate because students and boarders are not kept safe or secure due to some unsatisfactory security arrangements.

There is a written health and safety policy but it is not effectively implemented. Risk assessments for the premises and grounds are not robust enough and this means that significant health and safety hazards have not been identified and rectified. As a result, students are not properly safeguarded at all times. There is no electrical equipment register and not all portable electrical appliances are subject to testing by a competent person. A sound child protection policy is in place and all staff, including the designated person for child protection, have been suitably trained to carry out their responsibilities. The first aid policy is satisfactory. At the last inspection, accident reports did not specify details of when and where accidents occurred. This weakness has been remedied effectively. Sound fire and internet safety measures are adopted and satisfactory risk assessments are carried out for activities outside school. When students are in class or playing outside they are appropriately supervised. Behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place and are suitably implemented. Students say that they are not bullied and guidance promotes good behaviour. The school meets its responsibilities with respect to the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes all of the required recruitment and vetting checks on all staff, including supply teachers, the proprietor, contractors and volunteers. All of the necessary checks have been carried out on host families to ensure that they are

suitable to look after boarding students for short periods. The single central register contains all of the necessary detail and it can be reproduced in a legible form.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school accommodation is of good quality. Boarding facilities are satisfactory with some good aspects. There is plenty of outdoor space for play and recreation. Classrooms vary in size but are suitable for the numbers on roll. There is a large sports hall and a range of specialist teaching areas for sciences, art, information and design technology that are put to good use. There are appropriate facilities for those who are ill. The school and boarding accommodation are kept in a clean, tidy and hygienic condition.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school prospectus, website and handbook for parents of boarders provide the required information to parents and others. The school maintains suitable contact with parents and carers through regular telephone contact, newsletters and by sending them annual reports on their children's attainment and progress.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

## Effectiveness of the boarding provision

Boarding provision and its organisation are inadequate. This is primarily because some security arrangements are inadequate. Not all of the national minimum standards are met.

All except one of the previous recommendations identified by the last boarding inspection have been addressed. Satisfactory risk assessments are now in place for trips off site and Criminal Record Bureau checks are carried out before staff start work. All of the required checks and references undertaken on host families are suitably evidenced. Written permission for the administration of non-prescribed medication and medical treatment for all boarders is now in place. Written information accurately describes the prefect system and action is taken when any concentration or trend in recorded punishments is identified. While the child protection policy is satisfactory, wording within it refers to the Area Child Protection Committee rather than the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This weakness was identified as a recommendation at the last inspection and has not been addressed.

Boarding accommodation is spread across four houses, with three on the school site and one adjacent to it. The boarding accommodation is of a satisfactory standard and some parts are good. Provision is suitably maintained. Sleeping accommodation

is satisfactory and there are a range of communal areas to support opportunities for boarders to socialise and enjoy their leisure time outside of the school day.

Sound child protection procedures and fire safety measures protect the welfare of boarders. Staff know who to contact in the event of a child protection concern. Appropriate recruitment and staff vetting procedures ensure boarders are safeguarded from unsuitable people being employed. An effective monitoring system is in place to ensure that staff training in first aid and child protection is renewed in line with requirements.

Good discipline is maintained and boarders say that they are free from intimidation and have respect for one another. They enjoy good relationships with staff and are able to express their views if needs be. This said, boarders do not always feel listened to or able to influence changes in the operation of the boarding provision, for example in relation to making sure internet wireless connection is available across all boarding houses. While details of how to access an independent listener are advertised in the school, none of the boarders interviewed was either aware of who this person is or of their role. As a result, the school has not ensured easy access to the full range of people boarders can approach for personal guidance and support.

School leaders and teachers oversee boarding provision and make sure the required records are monitored and that boarders are well cared for. A well-organised medical room in the main boarding house, underpinned by suitable policies and procedures, ensures boarders' health is promoted satisfactorily. While there is a sufficient quantity of food overall, the quality of meals could be improved to more fully meet the dietary preferences, particularly of Cantonese boarders. Many boarders are dissatisfied with the food provided.

The majority of boarding staff are also teachers. This assists in the sharing of information about welfare issues to promote boarders general well-being. However, supervision of boarders across the four boarding houses at the end of the school day is limited to just two members of staff. One member of staff is required to supervise prep which takes place in one of the school's classrooms. This leaves only one member of staff monitoring the four houses, where some of the older boarders are allowed to study. The current staffing arrangement means that staff are not always able to give sufficient support or time to help with homework when needed. Opportunities for boarders to access wireless networking computers are restricted with only one boarding house having wifi connectivity.



## 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.<sup>4</sup>

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

- ensure that the school has regard to the national minimum standards for boarding (paragraph 3(3))
- pay due regard to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance, in particular:
  - ensure that robust risk assessments are carried out for the grounds and premises to ensure that health and safety hazards are identified effectively to ensure students are kept safe and secure (paragraph 3(4))
  - ensure that an up-to-date portable electrical equipment register is kept and that all items on the inventory are subject to regular inspection by a competent person (paragraph 3(4)).

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

- ensure that the school has 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:

- address the security matters which result in national minimum standards 41.4, 41.5 and 41.6 not being met (breach of national minimum standards 41.4, 41.5 and 41.6)
- make sure boarders are aware of the independent listener and their role and that there is easy access to this person (breach of national minimum standard 14.4)
- update the child protection policy to ensure that wording in the policy refers to the Local Safeguarding Children Board not the Area Child Protection Committee (breach of national minimum standard 3.1)
- review the staffing arrangements for supervising boarders after school to ensure that there are sufficient staff and that they are appropriately

---

<sup>4</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)

deployed to meet the age, numbers and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities that they are involved in (breach of national minimum standard 31.1).

## Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

### 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				✓
--	--	--	--	---

### The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision				✓
----------------------------------	--	--	--	---

## School details

Name of school	Chase Academy International Study Centre		
DCSF number	860/6023		
Unique reference number (URN)	131695		
Type of school	Primary and secondary boarding school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2000		
Age range of students	10–19 years		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 45	Girls: 26	Total: 71
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 45	Girls: 26	Total: 71
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day students)	£7,752		
Annual fees (boarders)	£15,050 to 17,550		
Address of school	Lyncroft House Convent Close Cannock WS11 0UR		
Telephone number	01543 501800		
Fax number	01543 501801		
Email address	info@chaseacademy.com		
Principal	Mr Mark Ellse		
Proprietor	Mr Mark Ellse		
Reporting inspector	Angela Hunt HMI		
Dates of inspection	29–30 June 2010		