

Inspection of Oxford International College, Brighton

Ovingdean Hall, Ovingdean, Greenways, Brighton BN2 7BA

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are mostly excited and very positive about their fledgling school. Despite its being modelled closely on the proprietor's successful college in Oxford, pupils know that they are at the centre of their own unique, international family, growing purposefully in the new college at Brighton. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Pupils themselves are ambitious. They behave well. Many are already keenly aware of their potential next steps on leaving the school.

Pupils talk eagerly about the positives here. The list shared with inspectors was long, including the way 'knowledgeable' staff teach, friendships and the enrichment provided by the school's 'super-curriculum' programme. One pupil described this last element as the component that made his life 'more colourful'. Pupils also talk about the school being a safe environment where staff act on concerns quickly.

Pupils are measured when discussing aspects that they feel could be better. They are particularly aware of their own role in building the school's defining ethos. Poor manners are frowned on. Older students in the sixth form are additionally mindful of the contribution they themselves can make in developing the school's values and are keen to leave their mark for those who will follow.

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

This is a new school that already has many strengths. Leaders at all levels are very focused on laying firm foundations across all aspects of provision. They are passionate about what the future holds. They know what the school's emerging strengths are and have sensible plans to build on these. They are also reflective about the areas that need to be developed as the school goes forward.

Governance is a strength. This aspect of leadership and management is multifaceted and built on a successful and well-established model. School leaders at all levels benefit from clear guidance and support from officers who work on behalf of the proprietor.

The strategic oversight of those in positions of governance is also strong. Equalities and other statutory duties are covered well. Support for aspects linked to the independent school standards (the standards) is equally strong, ensuring that all relevant standards are met across both education and boarding provisions.

The school's curriculum has ample breadth. Inspection activities showed a high degree of consistency in teaching and learning across the range of subjects on which inspectors focused. Visits to the sixth form confirmed high expectations and a growing degree of independent thinking and learning from students. Subjects other than mathematics, English and the sciences are equally consistent in their curriculum design, although leaders are looking to strengthen further the school's physical education and sports facilities in the near future.

Teaching staff are experienced and dedicated in their work across all phases of the school. They enjoy their work and appreciate the various elements of support given to them by leaders. Heads of department have excellent subject knowledge. They understand the importance of getting the different learning pathways right so that students achieve well by the end of the sixth form. This starts in Year 9, where pupils enjoy a varied menu of academic and enrichment activities. It continues into key stage 4, where pupils study a wide range of subjects to support their academic and pastoral development. The school's sixth-form provision is equally sound, though only currently includes students in Year 12.

The school's life skills and super-curriculum programmes, which support pupils' personal development, are firmly established. Much ground has been covered to ensure a correct balance of activities to develop pupils' knowledge of British values, including deeper understanding of matters linked to mutual respect and tolerance of different beliefs and ways of life. The programme includes appropriate coverage of aspects such as staying safe when online, sex and relationships education, and careers information and guidance.

Pupils follow an assortment of bespoke programmes of study. Most join from different countries and education systems from around the world. All join with different degrees of experience and academic accomplishment. Staff understand the importance of pitching learning at the right level from the start. They have a good understanding of most pupils' barriers to learning. However, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) whose needs were undiagnosed or undisclosed before joining the school is not as consistent as leaders want it to be. Although staff have their own strategies to support pupils with SEND, oversight of their provision is still being developed. A newly appointed, suitably experienced special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is due to join the school in January 2024.

Classroom visits by inspectors found the school to be a happy and industrious place. Expectations of engagement in learning are high, though staff are always on hand to confirm pupils' understanding and give additional support when required. This is particularly the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language. This aspect of provision is suitably strong due to the overt and well-defined expectations leaders have of staff across all phases of the school. Extra support is also available to promote reading across the curriculum for these pupils, including a range of additional interventions and resources overseen by suitably experienced staff.

The school's oversight of pupils' behaviour and attendance is sound. Systems are in place to ensure that staff can anticipate problems before these arise. Pupils are well aware of what is expected. They have a clear understanding of the merit and demerit systems in place. Attendance is tracked well, although the punctuality of some pupils is not as good as it might be. Although leaders have started to address this problem, more needs to be done to ensure that the late arrival of pupils to lessons does not impact negatively on learning. This includes potential disruption to the learning of those pupils who consistently arrive on time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent across the school. Leaders know this and have made it an early priority for improvement. A SENCo is due to join the school soon. Leaders need to ensure that this new appointment strengthens the provision for pupils with SEND significantly, including in formalising the support that pupils with previously unidentified SEND receive.
- Too many pupils are not attending lessons on time. This impacts negatively on their learning and that of other pupils. Although leaders track attendance and punctuality well, some pupils are not present at the start of lessons. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils understand the importance of attending on time and are ready to learn from the start of each lesson throughout the school day.

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	149337
DfE registration number	846/6033
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10299267
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	67
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	159
Proprietor	Oxford International School Limited
Chair	Andrew Fitzmaurice
Principal	Tess St Clair-Ford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,550 to £52,065
Annual fees (boarders)	£34,450 to £52,065
Telephone number	0300 3733 334
Website	www.oicbrighton.com
Email address	enquiries@oicbrighton.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection to take place since the school was registered by the Department for Education on 27 February 2023. It was an aligned inspection of both the boarding and the education provision.
- The school opened in August 2023. It caters almost exclusively for pupils from overseas, though does admit a small number of day pupils from the local area.
- The purpose of the school is to enable pupils to gain places at a range of highly ranked universities.
- At the time of this inspection, the school did not have any students studying in Year 13.
- The proprietorial company, Oxford International School Limited is part of Nord Anglia Education, which operates independent schools in the United Kingdom and in other countries around the world.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the boarding provision.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the principal, vice-principals, other leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the proprietor company. He also met with the chair and three other members of the school's governing board.
- Inspectors met formally with two representative groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. Pupils were also spoken to during classroom visits and as inspectors moved around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, geography and biology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed other records regarding the welfare, and health and safety of pupils and staff, linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Inspectors took the responses to Ofsted Parent View into account. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys were also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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