

School inspection report

8 to 10 April 2025

International School of Creative Arts

Framewood Road

Wexham

Buckinghamshire

SL2 4QS

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors do not have the knowledge and understanding necessary to discharge all their responsibilities properly. Leaders do not always take appropriate action when safeguarding concerns arise. This means that the school has not consistently taken effective measures to protect pupils from harm, and Standards are not met.
2. The curriculum reflects the school's stated aims and is appropriate for the aspirations and needs of the pupils. The curriculum is tailored to meet the specific needs of the pupils, all of whom aspire to degree courses in art and design. Individualised and cross-curricular teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Assessment and feedback are used effectively to support pupils' progress in their creative subjects. Teaching places emphasis on producing quality work for portfolios that are required for applications to colleges of art and design. Pupils' achievement in A level examinations does not reflect the high quality of work that pupils demonstrate in compiling their portfolios.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported in the classroom by individual guidance from suitably trained staff. All current pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The curriculum includes regular timetabled lessons to improve pupils' English language knowledge and fluency so that they are supported to reach the standard required for university entrance.
4. There are suitable extra-curricular recreational opportunities available for pupils, all of whom are boarders. Pupils also choose to spend time in the evenings and weekends working in the studios.
5. Pupils understand the importance of respect and kindness. Relationships are positive and supportive. Pupils' wider knowledge and understanding is supported by a thorough programme for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Pupils grow in self-assurance and self-esteem as their confidence in their work and in English develops.
6. Pupils understand and respect the school's behavioural expectations, including in relation to bullying. Attendance is monitored, absenteeism followed up effectively and the appropriate authorities contacted as necessary in relation to pupils' attendance.
7. Leaders give careful consideration to the security of the school site and the grounds and premises are well maintained. Health and safety requirements are met, although the oversight of daily adherence to safety protocols is not rigorous. All requirements for boarding accommodation are met and the appropriate records are maintained. Leaders ensure that all required information is made available to parents on the school's website.
8. Pupils develop a deep appreciation of different cultures and traditions in the course of their studies. As a result, pupils demonstrate the importance of respect and tolerance for all. Pupils learn about democracy and Britain's political institutions through discussions and visits to significant sites within the United Kingdom.
9. The careers programme is well planned and appropriate to the school's specific focus on art and design. Pupils learn to think widely about potential career paths that build on their knowledge and wider interests. Leaders ensure that there is appropriate support for pupils as they complete their university applications.

10. Pupils take responsibility within the boarding community, contributing to communal life in routine tasks and in planning some social activities. Pupils in Year 11 participate in a local community project, to their benefit and that of local residents.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- advice is sought and prompt action taken when safeguarding concerns arise
- boarders understand potential dangers presented by social use of the internet
- all the required checks of staff's suitability are completed before an individual is allowed to start work at the school.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen processes for the oversight and monitoring of policies to ensure that all policies are consistently and accurately implemented
- make more effective use of data analysis so that pupils achieve to their best in their A-level subjects as well as in their portfolio work.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. School leaders and governors do not have the knowledge and understanding necessary to carry out their responsibilities in safeguarding pupils effectively. As a result, they do not ensure that pupils' wellbeing is consistently promoted or that all Standards are met.
12. Leaders have put in place effective arrangements to oversee boarding provision and to monitor pupils' attendance effectively.
13. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is designed to meet the school's stated aims. Leadership decisions are taken in line with the school's focus on preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education at specialist colleges.
14. In their self-evaluation of the school, leaders focus on how they support pupils in preparing for their further education. Leaders have ambitious plans to promote greater awareness of the school's work internationally. Leaders do not evaluate in the same detail the school's current provision or how this can be improved.
15. Leaders establish appropriate links with other agencies, such as local authority children's social services and local psychotherapists so that pupils can access therapeutic support. There are well-established links with art and design colleges, supporting pupils' career ambitions.
16. Leaders are alert to actual or potential contextual risk and take appropriate mitigating action. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in writing risk assessments. There are thorough assessments of risk for activities in classrooms, for the boarding house and for social activities, with appropriate actions in place to mitigate risk. There are suitable systems in place to filter and monitor internet use.
17. The complaints policy sets out appropriate measures for managing concerns from parents or pupils. Any concern relating to boarding is recorded separately. Records are reviewed by senior leaders to identify any themes so that action can be taken as appropriate. The records show that complaints have been managed in accordance with the policy.
18. Parents have easy access to the school's policies and other required information through the school's website.
19. There is a suitable plan in place to improve accessibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders use the plan effectively to identify and break down barriers to learning so that all pupils can achieve to the best of their ability. The plan covers the required areas and is reviewed annually. Leaders ensure that when pupils who have SEND join the school, they and their parents are involved in discussions so that suitable adjustments can be made to enable pupils to participate fully in their education and in the life of the school. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

20. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. The curriculum is highly specialised, with a focus on the study of creative arts. The curriculum also includes a course of tuition in English which is designed for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils in Year 11 are taught mathematics in discrete lessons. Other subjects, which include science, technology and humanities subjects, are taught through a cross-curricular approach. For example, pupils extend their scientific understanding in the course of their creative lessons by studying colour theory or the biological processes related to different materials in textiles. In contextual studies, pupils learn to reflect on the impact of social and political events on art, such as the industrialisation of Victorian Britain and the impact of the Spanish Civil War on the work of artists such as Picasso.
22. Pupils' literacy skills develop well as their confidence in English grows. Pupils write fluently as they make annotations in their sketchbooks. Pupils are articulate when discussing their work, using subject-specific terminology confidently to describe techniques. They use technology confidently, producing work in three dimensions and in a range of materials.
23. Teachers are experts in their fields. They structure lessons clearly, ensuring that pupils know what is expected of them in a lesson and creating a positive, productive classroom atmosphere based on mutual respect. Teaching is adapted well to the needs of each pupil, with individual guidance in lessons supporting pupils, so that pupils make good progress in developing their creative skill and deepening their understanding. Pupils have produced portfolios of their work which reflect a high standard of achievement. Portfolios support pupils well to gain places at a range of institutions to continue their studies in art and design.
24. Subject tutors make effective use of assessment to plan the lessons and individualised support for pupils. Pupils benefit from focused feedback and advice they are given in lessons to develop their work and deepen their understanding of artistic technique. Parents receive regular reports on their child's progress.
25. Subject tutors regularly share their assessment of pupils' progress with senior leaders. However, the system used does not allow for a full picture of pupils' progress across all their subjects or throughout their time in the school. Leaders do not use assessment information sufficiently effectively in setting targets for attainment at A level. Consequently, pupils' achievement at A level does not match the quality of their portfolio work.
26. Pupils take baseline assessments for literacy and mathematics on arrival, to identify any specific needs pupils may have. Individual plans are created to enable staff to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Individual plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Additional support is provided within the classroom. The highly individualised teaching, which ensures that teachers frequently work on a one-to-one basis with the pupils, supports pupils well to make good progress from their starting points.
27. Timetabled English lessons for the pupils, all of whom speak English as an additional language, is reinforced by teachers' reminders to practise speaking English throughout the school day. Teachers provide clarification on subject-specific terminology to support pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils make good progress in English and achieve the standard of English required for university entrance.

28. Pupils are highly motivated and ambitious. They are focused and absorbed when working on their creations. They often choose to spend time in evenings and weekends in the studios rather than in the boarding house. Pupils' skills in the analysis of their own and others' work develop swiftly because teaching consistently encourages pupils to reflect on their creative process and to provide constructive criticism to their peers. Pupils draw imaginatively on a range of inspirations to create pieces that reflect their own personalities.
29. The programme of extra-curricular activities includes activities such as jewellery making or baking. These allow pupils to develop or learn new skills, or simply to relax and socialise.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

30. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

31. Leaders consistently emphasise the importance of respect and kindness as essential in creating a positive environment across the boarding community. Relationships between pupils within their own year groups are positive and supportive. Pupils understand the need to respect each other and value each other's differences.
32. The development of creative skills lies at the core of the school's purpose. Pupils develop their aesthetic and creative knowledge and skills well. Through their work they also deepen their understanding of the spiritual dimensions of art. This is reflected in some of the themes they choose, such as using the Biblical story of the seven days of creation as the design for a mosaic path. They explore philosophical concepts of the nature of beauty and of art in discussions and in their personal research.
33. Pupils' self-assurance and confidence to be active participants in discussion is supported by pupils' progress in developing their fluency in English. Pupils develop their linguistic skills so that they are confident in explaining the thinking behind their artistic process. Pupils learn that experimentation and exploration are necessary parts of their learning and to be confident in re-thinking and refining their ideas to produce their completed artwork.
34. Pupils understand the importance of taking care of their physical health, with attention to their diet and sleep patterns. The curriculum provides weekly games sessions for each year group and recreational opportunities to encourage physical exercise. Staff have created effective support arrangements to promote pupils' wellbeing. Pupils meet pastoral leaders when they join the school and regularly thereafter. Pupils know they can seek help from boarding staff in informal welfare drop-in sessions in the boarding house as well as from any member of staff as they wish.
35. There is a thorough programme of PSHE in place which includes a suitable programme of relationships and sex education. The RSE programme is appropriate to pupils' age and needs and ensures that pupils are taught to consider what makes for healthy relationships and how to care for their physical and emotional health.
36. Leaders have set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour which pupils understand and follow. Pupils behave well. Any inappropriate behaviour is managed appropriately. The anti-bullying strategy is effective and understood by staff and pupils.
37. Processes for admissions and attendance follow the most recent statutory guidance. Pupils are registered at key points throughout the day and in the boarding house. Attendance rates are high and absences are promptly followed up. Leaders ensure that the appropriate authorities are informed if pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
38. Security measures are rigorous. The building and grounds are well maintained, providing a pleasant environment for pupils to learn and socialise. Leaders have put in place a detailed and effective health and safety policy. Maintenance checks and health and safety tests, including those for prevention of fire, are carried out regularly. However, staff are not consistently rigorous in following the correct safety protocols; for example, on occasion fire doors are propped open, safety signage

for use of machinery is not always positioned next to the relevant device and cupboards storing chemicals are not always locked.

39. Boarding accommodation is clean and suitably furnished. All necessary records for boarders are maintained and reviewed effectively by senior leaders, so that the provision for boarding consistently promotes boarders' wellbeing.
40. There are sufficient numbers of staff trained in first aid. Medicines are correctly stored and careful records are kept when they are administered. All boarders are registered with the local medical practice and arrangements are made for pupils to access local medical, dental or optometric services as necessary. Leaders also ensure that boarders can access local counsellors for support if they wish.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 41. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

42. Pupils learn to develop a deep appreciation of different cultural approaches to art by studying the work of artists from across the globe and across time. The pupils draw inspiration from a diverse range of sources including battle armour, national dress and the Royal Air Force Museum. The curriculum teaches pupils to consider the impact of historical and social changes on culture, such as the shift from rural to industrial economies in nineteenth century Britain and in modern China.
43. Pupils demonstrate a clear commitment to respecting individuality and difference through artistic expression. This is also reflected in the respectful way in which they manage their relationships with others. Relationships within the boarding house are positive and friendly. Pupils in Year 11 spend time in 'Knit and Natter' sessions with residents in a local home for the elderly; this gives pupils and residents the opportunity to share insights drawing on their different experiences and perspectives.
44. Educational trips are well planned to extend pupils' understanding of British history and culture. Visits to Runnymede and to the Houses of Parliament help pupils gain an understanding of the origins and development of democracy in Britain. Pupils understand how the British political system supports tolerance, free speech and individual liberty within the rule of law, and that these values are important in British society.
45. Careers education is provided in discrete sessions. In line with the school's stated aims, these focus specifically on preparing pupils for degree courses and careers in art and design. Pupils in Year 11 use on-line programmes to reflect on their own personal characteristics and aptitudes. Staff encourage pupils to think widely about potential career paths which enable them to use and develop their creative skills. Staff guide older pupils through the process of researching university courses and preparing their application. Pupils' awareness of future possibilities is informed by visits from representatives of British and overseas universities as well as opportunities to learn from the experiences of former pupils.
46. The PSHE programme includes sessions on managing money and budgeting in preparation for living independently. Boarders are responsible for keeping and managing their own money and bank accounts.
47. Leaders encourage pupils to take responsibility for their work, possessions and actions. Boarders undertake routine chores in the house on a rota basis. Student representatives from each year group meet with senior leaders to pass on requests from their year group. Action points, such as changes in menus, result from these. The culture committee arranges activities to celebrate different festivals and organise cultural events.
48. Pupils in Year 11 participate in a community project as part of the curriculum. This involves them working in a local church community garden and learning new practical skills. Their involvement encourages the pupils' integration into the wider community and is appreciated by local residents, as the garden provides a recreational and educational space for children in a local nursery.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. School leaders do not always make sure that safeguarding policies are consistently and effectively implemented to promote the safety of pupils.
51. Leaders do not always act swiftly when safeguarding concerns arise. Leaders do not always seek safeguarding advice appropriately. Although there are robust processes for filtering and monitoring pupils' use of the internet so that they are protected from inappropriate material, leaders do not always ensure that pupils are alert to the potential risks that come from the use of social media.
52. Policies for the safer recruitment of staff are not always followed in full. Leaders do not ensure that all required checks are completed before staff take up their employment at the school. Checks of staff's suitability to work with children are accurately recorded on a single central record (SCR) of staff appointments.
53. Safeguarding policies reflect statutory guidance. Staff are regularly trained in safeguarding and know what action to take should they have concerns. Staff training ensures that staff are aware of the 'Prevent' duty and that they have an understanding of contextual safeguarding risks.
54. Staff know how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk and know the importance of reporting concerns promptly to those with prime responsibility for safeguarding. Staff responsible for pupils' general welfare are alert to any signs around pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and act effectively to enable pupils to access the support they need in a timely way.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

55. **Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
NMS 2.1	The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
NMS 2.2	The school's leadership and management, including its governing body where appropriate, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, appropriate to their role and undertake appropriate training as required
NMS 2.4	The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that standards are met.
NMS 2.5	The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 8	Where section 87(1) of the Children Act 1989 applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that -
8(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
8(b)	such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Children under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
NMS 8.1	The school should ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
NMS 8.3	It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The school's approach to online safety should be reflected in the child protection policy, having regard to the Department's <i>Keeping children safe in education</i> guidance.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18(1)	The standard in this paragraph relates to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff.
18(2)	The standard in this paragraph is met if -
18(2)(e)	in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
18(2)(f)	in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, in addition to the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (e), the proprietor checks that Standard 19 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 24 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, is complied with,
	and in the light of the information from the checks referred to in paragraphs (c) to (f) the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the position to which the person is appointed.
18(3)	The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
NMS 19.1	Schools operate safer recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

School details

School	International School of Creative Arts
Department for Education number	825/6050
Address	International School of Creative Arts Framewood Road Wexham Buckinghamshire SL2 4QS
Phone number	01753 208820
Email address	enquiries@isca.uk.com
Website	www.isca.uk.com
Proprietor	International School of Creative Arts Limited
Executive Director	Mr Colin Kerrigan
Headteacher	Mr Robert Hunter
Age range	14 to 19
Number of pupils	63
Number of boarding pupils	63
Date of previous inspection	17 to 19 May 2022

Information about the school

56. The International School of Creative arts was registered in 2021 as an international co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 14 to 19, providing a curriculum dedicated to creative arts. The previous inspection was conducted by Ofsted. The school is located on a rural site near Wexham in Buckinghamshire. The site is shared with a Japanese school. Governance oversight is provided by a board of governors which includes the board of directors.
57. All current pupils are boarders, accommodated in a single boarding house on the school site.
58. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. The school has identified English as an additional language for all its pupils.
60. The school's intention is to prepare pupils to apply for university courses in creative arts and design. It aims to create a safe and stimulating environment in which pupils can develop the technical and intellectual skills required for their chosen university creative arts courses.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

8 to 10 April 2025

61. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons
- observation of tutorial sessions and a community meeting
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the facilities for physical education
- visits to the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net