



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory and Educational Quality Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

St. Lawrence College Senior School

May 2022

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School's Details

College	St Lawrence College Ramsgate Senior School			
DfE number	886/6010			
Registered charity number	307921			
Address	St Lawrence College College Road Ramsgate Kent CT11 7AE			
Telephone number	01843 572900			
Email address	info@slcuk.com			
Headteacher	Mr Barney Durrant			
Chair of governors	Mr Mike Bolton			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	439			
	Day pupils	264	Boarders	175
	Seniors	317	Sixth Form	122
Inspection dates	24 to 26 May 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Lawrence College is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school. It opened in 1879 as South-Eastern College, with a strong Christian foundation, and took its current name in 1906. The school became fully co-educational in 1983. There is a separate junior school on the same site. It is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors, known as the Council.
- 1.2 The headmaster has been in post since April 2020, and a new chair of governors and two new deputies have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to add value to every child, whether that is in the classroom, theatre, concert hall, sports pitch or in the local community. It believes that a genuinely holistic education will develop individuals who not only gain excellent academic results, but who also hone the soft skills required to thrive in the modern world: positivity, flexibility, teamwork and problem-solving. All this is to be achieved within a Christian ethos that emphasises care and compassion for all.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The majority of pupils come from professional and business families within the local area. A quarter of the pupils are from international backgrounds with more than twenty-five different nationalities represented. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is average when compared to those taking the same test nationally. The school has identified 141 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 48 receive additional support for a range of needs including dyslexia and dyspraxia. Five pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 94 pupils, of whom 52 receive additional support. The school has identified 99 pupils as more able, whose needs are met by a programme of extension work.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2018 to 2021 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.18 The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.20 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils have a good and sometimes excellent level of knowledge and can apply their understanding effectively.
- Pupils display strong communication skills in diverse contexts, both orally and in their written work.
- Pupils are focused and positive in their work and are very successful as collaborative learners.
- Pupils achieve considerable success in a wide range of activities through their active engagement with the varied extra-curricular programme.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils display notably strong levels of confidence and resilience as individuals and hold mature ambitions and aspirations.
- Pupils collaborate to great effect when working to achieve common goals, creating a strong family bond, especially within boarding, to the benefit of all.
- Pupils are highly effective decision-makers, fully understanding that they need to be responsible for their own futures.
- Pupils show a genuine appreciation for the different cultures of this international community and seek to celebrate these.

Recommendations

3.3 The school should make the following improvements.

- Ensure that pupils fully develop their potential, through greater opportunities for using information and communication technology (ICT) in their work.
- Enable pupils to contribute more fully to the lives of others in the wider community.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 Pupils achieve a good level of results, often exceeding expectations in relation to their abilities. Examination results at A-level in 2018 and 2019 were in line with the national average for maintained schools, and those at GCSE were above average. Teacher and centre-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021

show an improvement on these levels of attainment at A level and similar levels at GCSE. There are no significant differences between the achievements of the main cohort and those pupils with SEND or EAL and no clear differences of gender. Many sixth form pupils undertake independent projects, further extending their expertise and knowledge. Most leavers move onto university courses with the large majority obtaining places at their first-choice institutions. This positive achievement in public examination reflects the good progress made by pupils through the younger years.

- 3.6 Pupils display a good level of knowledge in their lessons and in their written work and at times they are excellent. They demonstrate a range of skills in the different subject areas and in some lessons observed, were able to apply these skills effectively to new situations. Pupils learn information, retain it and achieve successful results, through the many and varied opportunities open to them. In an English lesson younger pupils correctly identified the rhetorical techniques in a model persuasive speech with excellent understanding for their age. In science, pupils demonstrated a strong grasp of complex electrical circuits, building in extra components as they worked through the task. Pupils in a sixth form business lesson confidently talked through the concept of corporate social responsibility and were able to explain terms of subjectivity and ethics in the context of financial decisions. Pupils respond successfully to challenges of ambitious literary and linguistic learning, while their keen engagement in scientific learning allows them to progress effectively in their critical thinking. The quality of their creative work in art and design technology is excellent and they show enthusiasm and skill in their physical education programme. Pupils stated in the questionnaires their appreciation of the support they received from the commitment of the teaching, though a small minority also commented that some lessons were less interesting. Pupils in boarding also comment positively on how much they benefit from the academic support of the whole community, helping them to make further progress.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills are strong and they are able and willing to express themselves effectively, in a controlled environment where their views are listened to and respected. Pupils apply their good and often excellent communication skills to good effect across the curriculum. In a science lesson, Year 7 pupils asked pertinent questions about electrical circuits, using appropriate terminology accurately and then produced cogent explanations of their understanding. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a rigorous analysis of language both orally and in their written work. Those in a sixth form French lesson demonstrated an excellent understanding of the text and the relationships portrayed, communicating equally effectively in English and French and moving between the two with ease. The most able pupils construct essays, synthesising complex material with sophisticated thinking and professional execution. Their use of focused and effective dialogue supports their strong learning in class and they demonstrate the reapplication of skills in new contexts.
- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good, and often excellent. They are enthusiastic and strongly motivated, encouraged by the high expectations of the teaching. Pupils develop a strong level of self-reliance which they use to good effect in their work. They collaborate effectively in both creative and analytical learning situations. In a science lesson pupils showed an excellent ability to collaborate with their peers as they discussed whether variables are dependent or independent. Pupils benefit from their teachers' establishment of a safe learning environment, so they can make greater progress. Pupils are candidly ambitious and supportive of each other's academic risk taking. They engage in their learning with confidence, to meet challenges head on with diligence, focus and desire. They take to different assignments with focus and meet challenges with dexterity. The community and family atmosphere of the school permeates pupils' approach to learning and gives them the confidence which, in turn, leads to positive results.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve success in a wide range of activities both within and beyond the classroom, gaining valuable new skills from their involvement. Pupils expressed their appreciation of these opportunities in the questionnaires, and they benefit from the timetabling of activities sessions within the week where they are able to choose areas of interest to them. Individuals and teams perform at a high level in a variety of sports and also gain recognition at regional and national level. Pupils participate at

regional level in cricket and rugby and at national level in hockey, netball and athletics, and teams are highly successful both regionally and nationally in rugby, hockey and cricket. Pupils enjoy success in ABRSM and LAMDA examinations including at the highest levels, as well as performing in concerts and productions of a high quality. Artists within the school have gained success in the national Arts Award, reflecting the excellent artwork on display in the school. Pupils actively engage in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and develop their leadership and teamwork skills to a high level. There are individual winners in a variety of subject-based regional and national competitions, in economics essays, enterprise projects, mathematics and science Olympiads.

- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate good and sometimes excellent study skills. In a sixth form Latin lesson, pupils analysed verbs effectively, deconstructing words they didn't know, so they could work out their meaning. Pupils' written work showed skills of comprehension and analysis, of a high quality but this was less apparent in the lessons observed. In part this was because of a lack of sufficient challenge in the tasks, so that pupils were limited in what they could do. Some pupils show ambition and exploration in their learning and display a desire to attain a greater depth to their knowledge. In a history lesson, pupils ambitiously tackled source evidence to debate and infer the conditions on the slave ships. They used complex analytical skills to extract inference and context and showed good progress in their learning. The project work submitted for national essay competitions and the extended project qualification (EPQ) demonstrates the pupils' excellent use of research skills. These are complemented by their ability to create ideas and modify their thinking as the project develops, before reaching a final conclusion that pulls all their ideas together.
- 3.11 Pupils have very competent numeracy skills. They use these in science and other areas of the curriculum, confident that they have the knowledge required to support their wider learning. This was very apparent in a sixth form business lesson where pupils were discussing the different options available to them for borrowing money and saving it. Sixth form pupils also showed a strong focus on numerical work in a physics lesson, calculating density and pressure, and in a mathematics lesson when calculating probability. Senior pupils in design technology demonstrated good application of their mathematical skills when measuring angles and lengths to produce the best design and finish. A project on artificial intelligence in technology and architecture required pupils to make full use of graphs to present ideas and an effective ability to calculate angles and relative size in the design of the building. Pupils consolidate their numerical understanding through diligent practice and they both seek out and respond to challenge.
- 3.12 Pupils have a good understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) and can transfer these skills to other areas of their work. Pupils in the sixth form showed an excellent use of graphical calculators to calculate the product moment correlation coefficient between two variables. Pupils make good use of fundamental aids such as word processing and presentational formats, seen in a Year 10 science lesson where pupils used a variety of ICT techniques to aid revision. Pupils throughout the school expressed confidence in their ability to use ICT, although opportunities for them to fully utilise their understanding and skills to enhance their learning across the curriculum are limited.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate an excellent level of self-understanding, stating in interview that they are happy with their subject and lifestyle choices. They express clear ideas on where they want to go next with their lives and understand their responsibility in achieving their aspirations. School leaders foster a close-knit community within both boarding and day houses which enables pupils to develop great strength of character and resilience, something emphasised by parents in the questionnaires. Pupils are active in their pursuit of experience and want to develop both their engagement and self-esteem.

In their lessons, the pupils display similar traits of self-understanding. This was seen in a senior tutorial session where pupils discussed revision techniques and argued their case with each other, confident to express their ideas to others who may have disagreed with them.

- 3.15 Pupils are quietly confident and buoyant in making decisions and learning from those choices. They are actively curious, thoughtful and want to be active participants in their futures and see this experience as helping to secure their goals. Pupils feel confident when making decisions, understanding that these will affect their own success and life chances in the future. Boarders feel particularly well-supported by their house staff and peers who have become their 'family' during their time in school, so that they gain greater confidence in making important choices. Sixth formers are confident in making decisions about their future options. Some pupils have chosen to do a qualification in finance and business as an extra option, so they can acquire additional skills. They have weighed up the extra pressures of doing much of the work on their own and decided the advantages were worth the effort. Pupils regularly make choices with tasks, both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils in a science lesson chose their revision topic questions according to different levels of difficulty and work their way through the sections. This they did sensibly and methodically, appreciating that going for the easiest level would not necessarily help them in the long term.
- 3.16 Pupils show a genuine respect and appreciation for the different cultures and religions of pupils within the school and this enhances their understanding of this non-material aspect of life. Pupils display a sensitivity towards the spiritual element of the school with its strong Christian ethos, as seen in the positive atmosphere in the leavers' chapel service. Pupils understand that this is an important part of the school's life, recognising the value of taking time for self-reflection and the need to consider life beyond just the practical and material. In an English lesson, younger pupils discussed trips to a country of their choice, expressing a desire to experience different cultures and to see some of the wonders of the world. Pupils are very interested in environmental issues and recognise the importance of protecting their futures. They show a strong aesthetic understanding, as seen in the powerful artwork on display around the school, which sends a strong message about their feelings and opinions and through musical performances, listened to in recordings during inspection, which require pupils to engage fully with their emotions.
- 3.17 The pupils are unwaveringly polite, courteous and affable in both formal and informal situations. They know how to behave and are keen to demonstrate this at every opportunity. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and are confident in the value of collective and individual responsibility, the house system being key to this sense of the community working together. Pupils show an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities at all levels in the school. They respect the school's systems of sanctions and rewards. They have a good understanding of the school's expectations and are self-regulating for the most part. They recognise that their success in school relates to their behaviour because it is much easier to learn within a calm and positive atmosphere. This attitude is encouraged by the school's belief in the core values of care and compassion. Pupils in a history lesson displayed some thoughtful learning and exploration of ideas, in debating the moral implications of English people at international rugby matches, singing *Swing Low* with its connection to slavery.
- 3.18 Pupils collaborate very effectively when working together to solve problems and achieve common goals. They relish opportunities to contribute their individual strengths to the collective outcome. The house tug of war competition seen during inspection was an excellent example of pupils working together not just in the actual pulling of the rope but in the convivial and enthusiastic atmosphere of the spectators, united in supporting their houses. Pupils demonstrate excellent collaboration in sustaining a supportive and productive community. They enjoy opportunities to excel individually, whilst at all levels working effectively together to generate a constructive mood and produce positive outcomes. This is seen in activities such as the DofE award scheme, the CCF, and house events such as the annual singing competition where pupils all contribute to the end result. Pupils work together very successfully both inside and outside the classroom and understand the value of good teamwork. The boarding community is particularly strong and contributes significantly to the life of the school and

the achievements of pupils, by providing a supportive environment in which they can thrive and reach their full potential.

- 3.19 Pupils contribute fully to their school community at all levels, through acting as mentors and taking on roles of responsibility as prefects and with the various pupil committees. Pupils have a strong focus on their community and described the school to inspectors as a big family. All through the school, they look out for each other and take part in groups and activities to help the school and themselves perform better. Boarders praise their house communities and how these support their learning and there is a very positive atmosphere in the houses. Pupils engage fully in raising funds for different charities both local and international, chosen by themselves, often on a house basis, such as with the international polio eradication appeal. Pupils in Year 10 gain experience from participating in a community service scheme in the summer term. Before the pandemic, pupils involved themselves wholeheartedly in the local community and in interview, and they say this is something they are looking forward to doing again. The school encourages this attitude as part of its ethos of looking out into the world. Pupils appreciate fully their place in the community and have a desire to contribute to the lives of others.
- 3.20 Pupils respect and appreciate those individuals from other cultures and value the opportunities to celebrate events and traditions from other backgrounds. The school is a diverse community with many different nationalities represented and pupils told inspectors that they seek to celebrate where they come from and welcome the opportunity to mix with everyone. Events such as the International Day are major occasions and pupils engage fully with this opportunity to show off their cultures in all their forms and learn from each other. In this multi-cultural community, the school's Christian ethos acts as a focal point, its values of compassion and tolerance providing a guide for pupils. They appreciate that this expectation of respect helps to develop their understanding and empathy. Pupils show an excellent acceptance and valuing of diversity. They are increasingly engaged in questions of equality and recognise that others may hold very different views from their own but that these can be valid and deserve consideration.
- 3.21 Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep safe online, supported by effective monitoring systems in school. In interviews, pupils displayed a good appreciation of the importance of a balanced diet for maintaining good health and referred to helpful talks on nutrition provided by the school. They also take advantage of the many and varied opportunities for sporting activities to improve their all-round physical health. Pupils are conscious of the need to look after their emotional health and make full use of the support provided by the school, including wellbeing programmes and independent listeners. The pupils' understanding of this aspect of their lives is fully in keeping with and reflective of, the school's overarching aim of providing a genuine holistic education which caters for the individual and focuses on values of care and compassion.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Gareth Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Sue Clarke	Accompanying inspector
Mr Ben Edwards	Compliance team inspector (Head of department, HMC school)
Mrs Jane Huntington	Team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mr Richard Jones	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)